



*National Guidance Forum in
Education, Career and Employment*



Career Guidance in the Life Course

Structures and Services in Germany

COMMISSIONED BY



**The Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research**

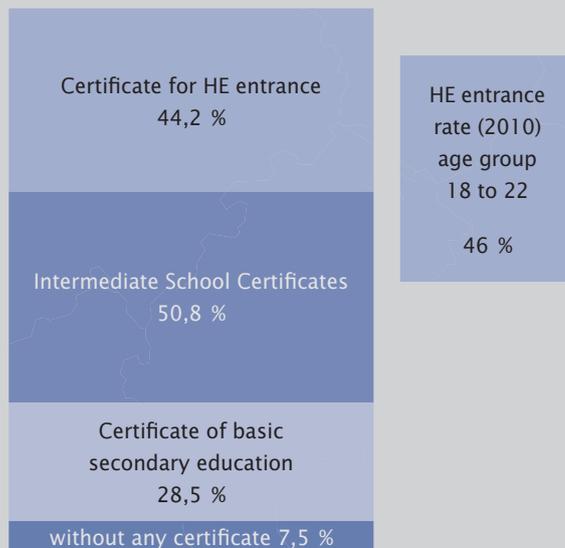
Federal Republic of Germany – Facts and Figures

Population and Employment

Population (2009)	81,8 million	Labour force (2010)	40,5 million
Foreign population (2008)	7,2 million	Labour participation rate (2009)	76,9 %
Age structure (2008)		(15–65 years)	
• under 25 years	25,0 %	Unemployment rate (2010)	7,7 %
• 50 years and older	39,3 %	Youth unemployment (2010)	6,8 %
		(15 to under 25 years)	

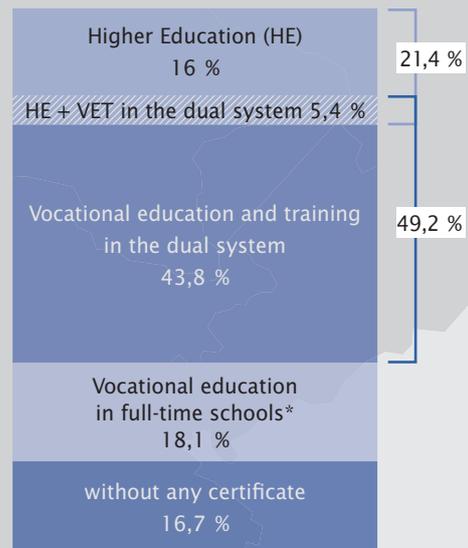
General Education

Highest qualification of school leavers (2008)
referring to the respective age group



Vocational Education and Training VET

Achieved qualification (2005)
referring to people aged 25 to 29



* Full-time vocational schools, schools for medical staff and assistants, VET for public servants

Continuing education participation (2007)

according to type of further training (population aged 19–64)



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Educational and Career Guidance in the Context of Lifelong Learning

Germany's wealth is its people, their skills and knowledge and their potential. Lifelong learning, full development of individual competences and the maintenance of employability are crucial in this respect. Therefore, it is necessary not only to integrate unemployed people into the labour market through learning and better training but also to promote the potential of employed people and support and accompany them in managing their education and career.

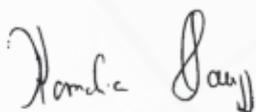
To achieve these goals, people need to be supported by high quality guidance both in general and in continuing education as well as in vocational education and training and in the labour market. In the context of lifelong learning, educational and career guidance is a connecting link between the needs of the citizens and the demands of the educational and labour market. Germany looks back on a long tradition of well established school and career guidance. Nevertheless, social and economic changes cause new challenges for the ongoing further development of guidance structures. The "Expert Group for Innovations in Further Training", set up by the Federal Minister of Education and Research Dr. Annette Schavan, and the Government's Conception for Lifelong Learning (2008) recommended improvements in guidance provision and the promotion of quality and professionalism. Better coordination and co-operation within the guidance system, improved transparency of services and regular further training of practitioners will be important fields of action.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has initiated various measures which aim to enhance the relevance of guidance to lifelong learning and which extend the required infrastructure: To facilitate access to guidance for continuing education, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has commissioned a consortium in co-operation with some Länder to develop a proposal for a nationwide "Educational Guidance Service Telephone and Internet Portal". In addition, the new "Local Learning Programme" intends to enhance cooperation and coordination for a coherent management of education provision at a local level including guidance services as a central action point. To improve the quality of guidance, the Ministry is supporting a project to develop quality standards and a quality development framework for guidance delivery. To improve early career orientation in schools and to facilitate the transition from school to work, the Federal Government is promoting the assignment of career start coaches and volunteer mentors with extra funding.

The contribution of guidance is indispensable for the achievement of the aims of the EU 2020 and ET 2020 strategies. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), which Germany sees as a strong partner for the enhancement of lifelong guidance, provides stimulus and a framework for international exchange. Quality guidance supports the individual's education and career paths and avoids detours. Regarding the future challenges our society faces – ongoing changes in the economy and society with an increased need for multiple career choices, an aging society, skill shortages in the labour market and increased mobility to meet globalisation trends – it is evident that well developed and professional educational and career guidance can play a significant role in solving these problems. In Germany we try to meet these challenges by fostering the role of guidance and its continuous improvement.

Involving all relevant stakeholders in the process of shaping the future guidance system is essential if we want to design guidance services in a way that serves the needs of individuals in managing their educational biography and career.

I am pleased to present with this brochure an overview of the German guidance system and the goals already achieved to our partners in Europe and other parts of the world.



Kornelia Haugg

**Head of Directorate General for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning
Federal Ministry of Education and Research**

Career Guidance in the Life Course Structures and Services in Germany

1. Introduction

In order to enable individuals to manage their educational and working life effectively and make well-informed decisions about their career, all citizens in Germany have access to guidance and counselling services at any stage of their lives – whether they are in education or training, employed, unemployed or out of the workforce. This brochure will provide an overview of the basic structure of the German guidance system – especially for foreign readers or those interested in a brief survey – without any pretension to detailed comprehensiveness.

The structure of guidance provision reflects the constitutional legislation for the German education and employment systems with its split responsibilities between Federation, Federal States (*Länder*) and municipalities. The responsibility for education and culture lies with the 16 *Länder*, including the school sector, the higher education sector, and (partly) adult and continuing education. Employment and labour market policy, however, are under the responsibility of the Federal Government, as well as vocational training and vocational further training policies. This also includes the provision of career guidance by the Federal Employment Agency (FEA) with its local Employment Agencies (EA). In addition to Federal institutions and the *Länder* governments, the local municipalities are important players in the provision of guidance services – either through their Adult Education Centres (*Volkshochschulen*) or through their social welfare services.

EU Guidance Definition:

“In the context of lifelong learning, guidance refers to a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.”

(Council of the European Union 2004)

In the context of these legal responsibilities the German career guidance system is traditionally based on a distinction between educational guidance (*Bildungsberatung*) in the educational sector on one hand and vocational guidance (*Berufsberatung*) in the vocational training and employment sector on the other.

In view of the increasing importance of lifelong learning in the modern knowledge-based society and the growing necessity of adequate guidance services, this differentiation is increasingly losing its meaning in favour of integrative and lifelong guidance provision across all sectors. Therefore, co-ordination, networking and co-operation are necessary preconditions for improving the transparency and coherence as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the multiple guidance services.

Guidance for education, career and employment in Germany is based on the comprehensive definition of guidance commonly agreed between the partners in the European Union. It comprises all forms of educational, vocational and career guidance and counselling including career orientation and education, assessment of competences and self-information facilities. To facilitate reading, the term “career guidance” or briefly “guidance” is used here to indicate all forms of educational, vocational and employment-related guidance activities.

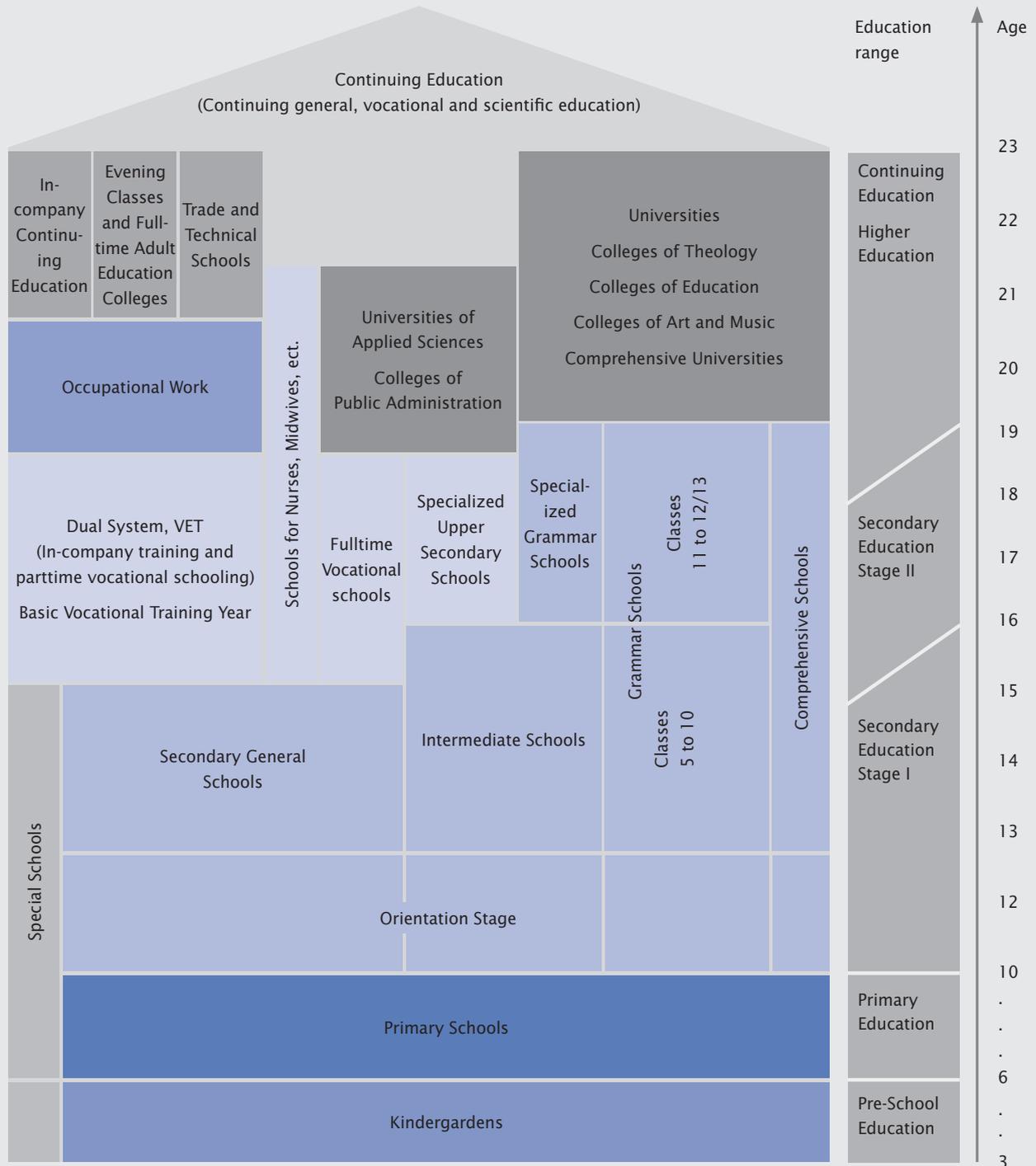
2. Structure of the educational system in Germany

The school system differs from Land to Land. Nevertheless, in general it has the following structure: pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary education and continuing education (see diagram on page 5).

All pupils in Germany attend primary school (*Grundschule*) which covers grades 1 to 4 (in some *Länder*, grades 1 to 6). After primary education, lower secondary education follows in Secondary Schools (*Hauptschule/Sekundarschule*), Intermediate Schools (*Realschule*) or in Grammar Schools (*Gymnasium*). Most *Länder* also maintain Comprehensive Schools (*Gesamtschulen*) and some provide a combination of the different types. After lower secondary education up to grade 9 or 10, compulsory full-time general education is completed.

For pupils with special educational needs whose development cannot be adequately assisted in general education various types of special schools (*Förderschulen*) have been set up.

Structure of the Education System in Germany



- Diagrammatic representation of the typical structure of the education system of the Federal Republic of Germany. In individual Länder there are variations from the above pattern.
- The age given for attendance at the various educational institutions refers to the earliest possible typical entry.

Source: CEDEFOP, ReferNet Germany: VET in Europe – Country Report, 2010, Seite 73.

After compulsory education, upper secondary education ensues. Here the choice of educational career or type of school is based on parents' wishes, pupils' interests, their school performance and the entitlements obtained at the end of lower secondary education. Pupils may continue either in full-time general education or in full-time vocational schools; or they enter the dual system (apprenticeship training in companies and vocational schools) for vocational education and training (VET).

About 44% of the relevant age group achieve A-levels (Abitur) in **upper secondary schools**. This final examination, which gives entry into higher education institutions, can be obtained either in grammar school (Gymnasium), in comprehensive schools or in other secondary schools, as well as in certain vocational schools (see Facts and Figures).

About 49% of all people aged 25 to 29 have completed **vocational training in the dual system (apprenticeship)**. Education in the dual system is organized as in-company training which is accompanied by courses in vocational schools. The Federal Government is responsible for legislation regarding the in-company training, whereas the Länder governments make decisions about vocational schooling.

Higher Education, which is also under the legal responsibility of the Länder, is offered by autonomous universities, technical universities, universities of applied sciences and universities for economics, fine arts, music, theology, etc. Despite an increasing number of private academic institutions, 95 % of students attend public Higher Education institutions (Statistisches Bundesamt (a), 2010). As part of concurrent legislation the admission to and graduation at such institutions are under the legal responsibility of the Federal Government. However, the Länder have been granted the power to enact their own provisions complementing federal law.

The **Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder** (*Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder, KMK*) coordinates the necessary harmonization of education matters to secure comparability.

In the German education system, fundamental changes are currently being implemented. The various efforts related to quality assurance and quality development, including the introduction of national educational standards, are especially important. In Higher Education major reforms have also been introduced during the last few years, especially following the Bologna process, which focuses on modernisation and internationalisation as well as the quality assurance of the system.

3. Guidance in education, career and employment

3.1 Educational guidance in general secondary education

The provision of guidance services in schools is the legal responsibility of institutions of general education in all the 16 Länder. Various forms of guidance are offered at the different stages of the school career. These involve advice and counselling on educational paths and on learning difficulties, psychological counselling and assessment by the school psychological services and classroom career education. In schools, guidance is provided by specially trained teachers, social workers, school psychologists and cooperating vocational guidance practitioners from the Employment Agencies (EA).

Individual advice and counselling in schools

School guidance focuses mainly on the choice of school type, school level and subjects. It begins with decisions related to school entrance but is particularly important at points of transition from one type of school to another. Guidance is especially important for pupils who proceed to secondary education, when the choice between the different types of school has to be made. Again, at the end of lower secondary and in upper secondary education, students need guidance related to their individual interests and abilities, subject choices and academic opportunities. School guidance is also aimed at parents who influence their children's school paths.

Some municipalities have established special centres or institutions offering educational guidance. In addition, most Länder offer online information resources for parents and students.

School Psychological Service

The School Psychological Service (*Schulpsychologischer Dienst*) exists in all Länder and is organized across schools in the local community. The service focuses on psychological counselling, psychological diagnostics and assessment, severe learning and behavioural problems as well as conflict management. It offers services to pupils of all ages, parents, teachers and other staff in schools as well as to institutions of primary and secondary education. The service is staffed with professional psychologists, who sometimes also have a teaching qualification.

Guidance in Education, Career and Employment in Germany – Structures and Services

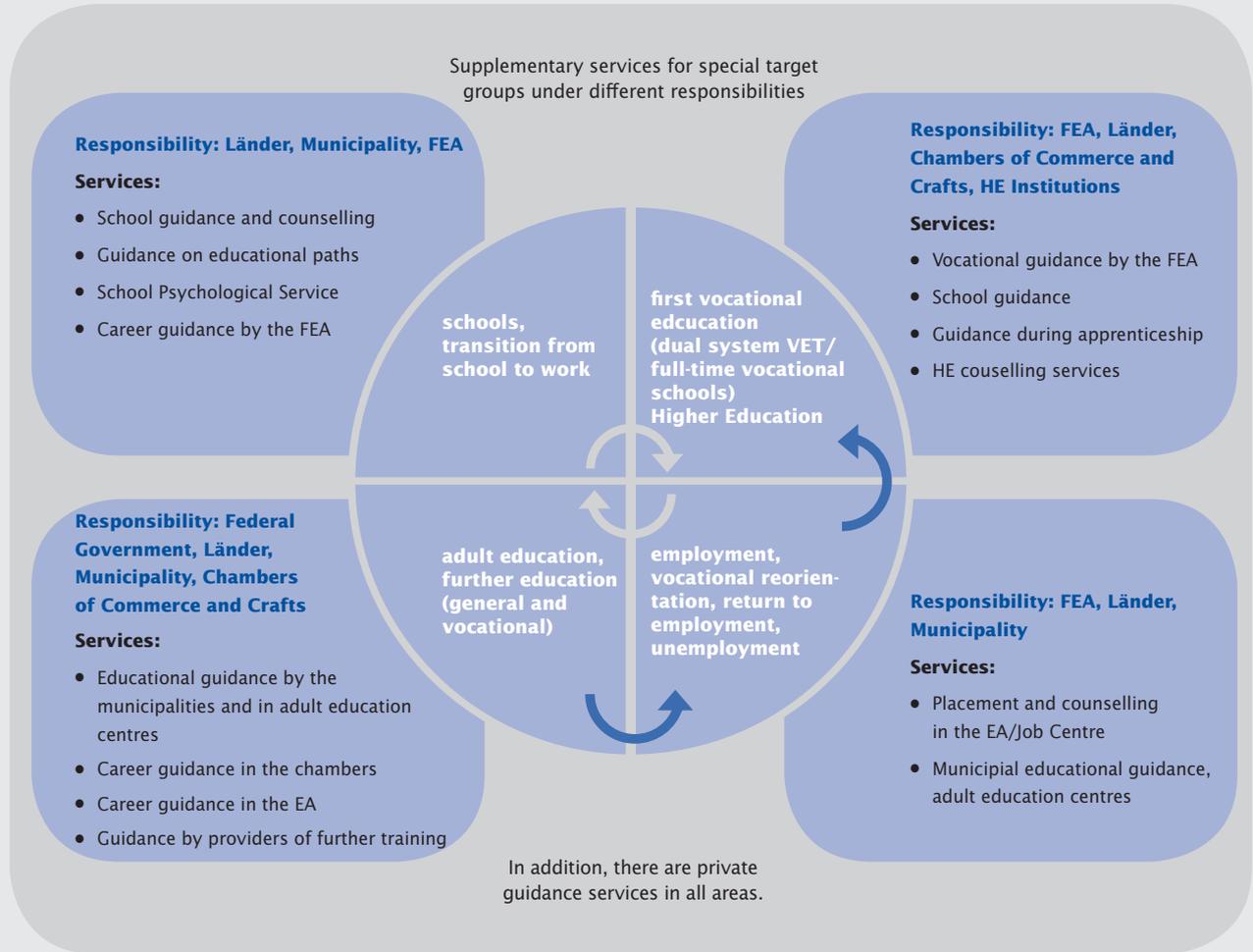


Diagram: National Guidance Forum (nfb)

Career education and vocational orientation

Career education or vocational orientation (*Berufswahlunterricht, Berufsorientierung*) is an integral part of the school curriculum in all Länder and a common guidance activity of most secondary schools. It aims at preparing pupils for the world of work by improving their career management skills and their abilities to seek and use information and make decisions. In some Länder, preparation for working life (*Arbeitslehre*) is a subject in its own right. But career education is also more and more part of other subjects, such as economics, social sciences and law. It is frequently complemented by extra-curricular activities, often in co-operation with companies. The career education curriculum also involves internships and visits to enterprises as well as to the local Career Information Centre (*Berufsinformationszentrum BIZ*), which exists in every local EA. Two or three weeks of work experience in businesses, administration or private companies give pupils a vivid impression of the requirements in the world of work. The use of a career choice passport (portfolio

approach) enables students to report their career-related experiences.

In addition, links with the world of work and industry as well as school-business partnerships are organised by a well-established national network (*Arbeitskreise Schule-Wirtschaft*) operating across the country. This supports not only work experience programmes for teachers and students but also further training for teachers. It assists pupils in learning how to run a company (*Schülerfirmen*) and encourages twinning arrangements between schools and particular companies in order to give students practical experiences.

Whereas career guidance activities in lower secondary schools concentrate on the transition from school to working life, activities in upper secondary education focus on academic orientation and transition to tertiary education, although a small part (11 %) of upper secondary graduates continue their career in apprenticeship training rather than in an academic institution (BiBB, 2010).

3.2 Career guidance in secondary schools by Employment Agencies (EA)

The provision of vocational guidance for youth and adults in relation to all issues of career choice and career development and the relevant educational paths is a legal task of the Employment Agencies (Social Code III, §§ 29–33). This includes vocational counselling and career orientation for pupils in schools.

Career education in secondary schools is generally supported by career counsellors from the EA. The reason for this unusual practice, compared to most other countries, is the importance of the German apprenticeship training system for the vocational qualifications of a majority of school leavers. Choosing a career and an occupational field linked to in-company training are more effectively done if they are supported by guidance counsellors who have expertise in labour market issues and have close connections with training companies and employers. The local Employment Agencies therefore offer a service combining guidance, individual counselling and placement into apprenticeship training places. This benefits not only young people but also employers hiring apprentices because it facilitates their recruitment.



Career counsellors from the EA offer **individual career counselling** to pupils and school leavers both in the employment office but also on a regular basis on the school's premises. They give class lectures, workshops and seminars, and organise class visits to the Career Information Centre (*BIZ*). At the BIZ they also arrange career fairs and career-related lectures and seminars. In addition, they support teachers who are responsible for school guidance in all matters related to career education and career orientation. These services are provided both in lower and upper secondary schools. The co-operation of schools and guidance service of the EA is regulated through a formal agreement between the Federal Employment Agency and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*KMK*), complemented by agreements at Länder level (*KMK* 2004).

Besides the co-operation with educational institutions, the guidance work of the local EA is closely linked with the chambers of commerce and crafts, employers' organisations, trade unions and other public institutions. The EA also collaborates with the social and youth welfare department and with organisations and agencies for people with special needs.

A wide variety of **printed and online media** on careers, training opportunities, study programmes and labour market information as well as self-assessment tools which is provided by the Federal Employment Agency is available in the BIZ but also in schools and online.

In addition, the local employment agencies have special **Psychological and Medical Services** which offer – in case of necessity – psychological testing and assessment by professional psychologists as well as medical examinations to assess mental and physical aptitude for particular training pathways or occupations. These special services are used on the recommendation of counsellors, in particular to support the career choices and career development of target groups with special needs (e.g. disabled and/or disadvantaged persons).

The service is complemented by **special measures for the youth labour market** and financial support schemes for apprentices as well as for target groups with special needs (e.g. for rehabilitation, work experience, internships, and courses of vocational preparation).

3.3 Study and career guidance in Higher Education

In general, by legislation of the Länder, Higher Education institutions are supposed to provide information and guidance for HE students and applicants and to co-operate with other actors in this respect.

Central counselling services and faculty-based guidance

Nearly all institutions of higher education maintain a **central counselling service** which provides students with orientation and information on all study-related questions: choosing a university, choosing a field or course of study, study programmes, and examination regulations, as well as counselling regarding learning difficulties or personal problems. This service also offers special courses on issues like examination preparation, self-organisation, stress and time management. In addition to face-to-face counselling, most student counselling services maintain a self-help information area and organise information events for upper secondary graduates as well as introductory courses for freshmen. Here, co-operation is essential with a variety of partners including upper secondary schools, the EAs, scientific and academic institutions, and employers' associations.

Decentralised **faculty-based expert guidance** and information on subject-related matters are provided by designated professors or scientific staff, who fulfil this function alongside their research and teaching jobs.

Other services in Higher Education

More and more German HE institutions have established **Career Services/Centres** which offer support in the transition from university to employment through special training courses, career fairs and other labour-market-related events. Career Services usually collaborate with experts from the local EA, employers' associations, chambers of commerce and crafts and local or global enterprises. Moreover, they increasingly engage in reforming study programmes to meet labour market requirements.

The **student support service** (*Studentenwerk*) is responsible for students' social affairs including housing, canteens, financial assistance, and family affairs. They provide counselling in social and personal matters but also on student job opportunities. Some of these services also offer career counselling.

International students and students going abroad receive guidance on various topics from the **Foreign Exchange Office** (*Akademisches Auslandsamt*) of the universities.

Special **HE Teams** have been established in those EAs which are located in areas with large universities. These teams provide a special counselling service for students and graduates, as well as placement services for graduates and unemployed persons with a higher education degree.

The teams normally offer their services on the premises of the university as well as in EAs.

In addition to the public services which are based in schools, HE institutions and employment agencies, numerous private and semi-private career guidance practitioners and management consultancy firms, as well as private training companies, offer guidance to students and university graduates, often charging fees.

3.4 Guidance in the fields of employment, continuing education and unemployment

Services of Employment Agencies and Job Centres

The EAs offer – in addition to placement services and unemployment insurance benefits – **career guidance** as a **public service to all citizens** irrespective of their age, education status or individual working and living conditions. According to a Federal law (Social Code III, §§ 29–33), this service is a legal obligation of the FEA.

Career guidance and counselling is more than ever perceived as a continuing process throughout the educational and working life, from career choices to job changes, including any phases of unemployment, up to retirement.

Accordingly, the EAs provide information and guidance related to all questions of career choice and career development, types of training or study course, occupational change and mobility, further training and retraining, placement and self-employment, as well as to all labour-market-related issues including labour market schemes and financial assistance. Although guidance offered by the EA is comprehensive and very well developed for students and school leavers, in practice the service for adults often focuses mainly on the registered unemployed and those at risk of becoming unemployed.

Guidance and placement are facilitated by a wide variety of printed and online media (see page 15) like the FEA's Online-Job-Exchange with its electronic matching procedures and online applications tools both for employers and applicants.

The counselling of **unemployed and job seekers in the EA** is mainly carried out by placement officers, who usually have successfully completed a basic training in counselling. Basing their work on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses (profiling), they check skills, competences and aptitudes required for vacant jobs. An action plan describes the next steps and responsibilities of the unemployed person and the placement officer. If occupational integration requires further training or any

other activities in order to improve the person's employability, these are also written down in the action plan and have to be put into practice.

Since 2005, there have been substantial changes in legislation with respect to the occupational integration of **long-term unemployed persons** (Social Code II), merging unemployment benefits and social assistance for claimants who are capable of work. This assistance applies to all persons who have been unemployed for more than 12 months and to those who have never previously worked in insured employment. In this context, vocational guidance is obligatory following the policy principles of "support and challenge". This means that unemployment benefits are only granted if support options, including vocational guidance and its outcomes, are accepted.

Guidance and support under Social Code II is mostly provided in joint **Job Centres** which are organised by the local EA and the municipality. Here, claimants under Social Code II receive intensive counselling, following a case management approach. In this context vocational guidance not only involves placement and counselling on vocational options and training but also includes information on benefits and other financial support.

Young unemployed under the age of 25 are served by a special unit (*Team U 25*) and in case of multiple problems receive even more intensive coaching (the legal ratio is one case manager for 75 young people). They are entitled to receive a job or training offer immediately.

Employed or unemployed persons who wish to take up **further training or retraining** in order to improve their employability or job perspectives can claim a **voucher** for financial assistance from the EA (*Bildungsgutschein*; § 77 pp Social Code III). The voucher is only issued after a counselling interview by the EA on the applicant's personal aptitude, motivation and individual circumstances as well as on the type of education and training needed. However, EAs are not allowed to recommend any particular educational institution, training provider or course. The beneficiaries of the voucher are supposed to find a recognized and accredited training provider and course by themselves, assisted either by the nationwide database on educational and training courses, KURSNET (see page 15) or by other guidance and counselling services outside the EA.

Guidance for continuing education by the municipalities

Guidance services for adults outside the FEA often focus on adult general education and on continuing vocational education and training (CVET). Most municipalities maintain **adult education centres** (*Volkshochschulen*) which provide both general education and CVET. Information and advice regarding their programmes and assistance in individual learning issues are part of their regular tasks, which are mostly carried out by lecturers alongside their main teaching job.

In addition, a growing number of municipalities maintain independent **Municipal Educational Guidance Services**, which often have been initiated and funded by the Federal Government as well as by Länder programmes. They are open to everybody.

Guidance for further training by Federal Government programmes

Within the framework of the lifelong learning strategy, the Federal Government has initiated and funded several programmes which promote continuing vocational training and related guidance activities. The programmes **Learning Regions – Supporting Networks** (*Lernende Regionen – Förderung von Netzwerken* 2001-2007) and the current programme **Local Learning** (*Lernen vor Ort* 2009–2012) have been focused on specific aspects to promote the establishment of local educational guidance services.

Another programme initiated and funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research BMBF in order to strengthen lifelong learning is the **Education Grant** (*Bildungsprämie*) which is designed to promote **continuing education and training** for employed persons through financial assistance. A voucher up to about 500 € is issued after an obligatory counselling session, which focuses on the personal conditions of financial assistance but also on the aims and preferences which the person has for his/her further education, and on possible training courses. Guidance in this context is provided by certified private institutions (mostly by adult education centres, chambers of commerce and crafts, trade unions or private training institutes).

Furthermore, the BMBF is planning to set up a nationwide **telephone service and an internet portal for educational and career guidance** in co-operation with the Länder. Similar portals and hotlines restricted to some regions, municipalities and Länder already exist.

Provision of career guidance by industrial federations and social partners

The chambers of commerce and crafts, industrial federations and social partners also provide services for information and advice related to VET and CVET addressed to schools, universities and enterprises, but also to apprentices, employed or unemployed persons.

In particular, according to the Federal Vocational Training Act (§ 76 *Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and the Crafts Act (§41a *Handwerksordnung*), the **chambers of commerce and crafts** have a legal obligation to provide **information and advice for employers and apprentices** (*Ausbildungsberatung*) in all matters relating to the dual training system. Guidance practitioners in the chambers give advice to trainees, parents and teachers in vocational schools, companies, trainers, and works councils on questions related to apprenticeships in the dual system. Such questions may concern the course of the apprenticeship, examinations and the training contract with the employer as well as regulations for youth protection in the workplace. Also, in case of difficulties in the vocational school or conflicts in the company, trainees may seek help from a guidance practitioner in the chambers of commerce and crafts.

Chambers of commerce and crafts also provide some guidance for adults aiming for further training or self-employment. In addition, chambers of commerce and crafts offer advice to their member enterprises on issues like upskilling their staff or recruiting qualified staff (qualification consultancy).

Trade Unions also provide career guidance and assistance to their members (employed or unemployed) on questions related to further training. Often this is provided by workers' council and union representatives. In this respect pilot projects have enabled members of the workers' council to qualify as "Educational Coaches" (Project "Learn-

ing and Working", German Trade Union Federation DGB) or as "Learning Mentors" (2010) (trade unions IG Metall and ver.di). In addition, the German Trade Union Federation has developed counselling competences for guidance practitioners in the chambers of crafts in a project called "Campaign for Guidance in Crafts". Part of this was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Private services

There is a growing private sector for guidance provision, in particular since the abolishment of the guidance monopoly of the FEA in 1998. In addition to management consultants and private career guidance practitioners, the number of non-profit organisations who offer guidance services has increased considerably. One reason for this is that several Federal and Länder government programmes on training and labour market issues require guidance activities for their beneficiaries. So far, the private market has been less strongly regulated than the public sector.

Qualification consultancy for enterprises

Qualification consultancy supports companies in developing human resource development strategies and further training options for their employees. It is particularly aimed at small and medium-sized companies (SME), which often face difficulties in these matters. Besides raising the awareness and motivation for investment in training and qualification, such consultancy can help companies to plan, implement and evaluate the further qualification of their staff. In addition to the social partners and institutions of higher education, private and semi-private providers offer this service. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research as well as some Länder governments have funded a number of related programmes and activities in order to enhance activities in this field, which is crucial for the successful implementation of the idea of lifelong learning in enterprises.

The provision of **guidance for employers and companies** is also a legal task of the FEA. Special Employer Service Teams in **EAs** assist private companies in all matters relating to staff recruitment, filling vacancies, upskilling of staff, apprenticeship training and further training, and provide information on labour market developments and changing occupational structures. They also provide information on financial assistance in relation to further training or on the occupational integration of employees with special needs.



4. Guidance for special target groups

Guidance needs often depend on individuals' particular characteristics and situations: parents with young children or people returning to work, youth at risk, disadvantaged people, people with disabilities, senior citizens, people with a migrant background, highly skilled people etc. A variety of services, which are often carried out by public or non-profit organizations funded by Federal or Länder ministries, municipalities or by the EA, cater for these guidance needs. The following sections only present the most important services.

4.1 Guidance for people with disabilities

Germany is committed to actively supporting the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities through appropriate measures. Guidance plays a major role in the implementation of these rights.

Article 27 of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities includes obligations to:

- enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;
- promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment.

(United Nations, 2006)

School guidance for pupils with disabilities is mainly provided within special schools and by the psychological service. The School Psychological Service also co-operates with the Municipal Medical Service and in particular with parents concerning the decisions regarding enrolment in special schools. Here, the inclusion of young people in mainstream general education has priority. In special schools, career education and preparation for the world of work and for career decisions are often also provided in connection with practical lessons and work experience periods. Teachers, social workers and rehabilitation experts from the Health Care Service and the EA work together.

Young disabled people receive regular **vocational training** in companies and vocational schools, following the dual VET system but with additional assistance according to their individual needs. If the nature and seriousness of the disability make it necessary, they attend special vocational training centres (*Berufsbildungswerke*) or similar

specialized institutions which are financed by the FEA. They also receive **guidance on their course and career choices** as well as career orientation from counsellors of the special Rehabilitation Team in the EA. Individual coaching throughout the training is delivered by guidance practitioners and by the social, psychological and medical services of the special training centres.

The local **EAs** offer vocational and career guidance for both young and adult people with disabilities in a separate specialised service called the **Rehabilitation Team**. In order to provide easy access for persons with handicaps, they also provide services within special schools and rehabilitation centres.

In addition, in some cases the **Health Insurance, Pension Insurance** and the **Accident Insurance** are responsible for vocational rehabilitation and offer guidance services to people with disabilities.

In HE institutions, **representatives for the disabled** offer guidance and information to students, applicants and staff with disabilities and chronic illnesses on questions related to studies and social issues. The **student support service** (*Studentenwerk*) also maintains a special guidance service for disabled students which primarily deals with social and financial issues.

Commissioned by the integration authorities and the bodies responsible for rehabilitation, special **Integration Services** (*Integrationsfachdienste*) offer vocational and career guidance for the disabled (Social Code IX § 109). This service focuses particularly on severely disabled adults, who are in need of intensive personal support, and on their employers. In addition to information, guidance, support and placement, a major task of the Integration Services is the assessment of competences, abilities and interests of their clients. They co-operate with various partners who are involved in the process of vocational rehabilitation (e.g. rehabilitation bodies, EAs, employers, chambers of commerce and crafts).

Following Social Code IX (§§ 22-25), the bodies responsible for rehabilitation are required to maintain local **Common Service Agencies** (*Gemeinsame Servicestellen*) which – as a first port of call – offer guidance on all issues of medical and vocational rehabilitation to disabled people and refer them to other relevant services.

4.2. Guidance for disadvantaged youth

Young people from socially disadvantaged groups often need additional support to enter training or employment or to continue their education. At-risk youth in danger of dropping out of education, young people who leave school with little or no qualifications as well as young offenders and youth with family or social problems need special assistance in relation to social and occupational integration.

There are a number of **programmes at Federal, Länder and municipal level** as well as temporary projects which address these needs. Guidance is often an integral part of these programmes which follow a holistic approach offering a wide range of intensive services. Most programmes and projects aim at improving the young people's vocational skills and abilities in order to enhance their chances of entering regular in-company vocational training. Therefore, assessments of abilities, competences and interests are often carried out at the beginning of these interventions. They involve practical experience and internship periods in order to support career orientation as well as to improve the young people's self-confidence. Guidance in these settings usually focuses on developing career management skills and aims at helping young people to develop their competences, setting their goals and taking responsibility. All of these programmes and projects are subject-oriented and comprehensive, involving all aspects of a young person's life. Hence, these programmes and projects co-operate with a wide network of institutions including, as a priority, schools and EAs.

Coaching for the transition to work

In 2008 the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) initiated a coaching programme which aims at easing the transition from school to training for pupils who may have difficulties entering the labour market for reasons of low school achievement or social risks. Starting from the 7th grade, pupils can be supported by an **educational coach** (*Berufseinstiegsbegleiter*) who assists them in their career choice and application process. If necessary, the coaches can maintain their assistance for up to six months after the start of a vocational training course. The approximately 1.000 coaches are based at lower secondary schools and work in co-operation with all local actors involved in career education and guidance, with employers and with voluntary mentors. The FEA organises the programme and commissions suitable organisations to run the programme.

BMBF programme Educational Chains (*Bildungsketten*)

This initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research started in 2010. It complements and expands the FEA programme of educational coaches. It also aims at avoiding school-dropout and improving the transition into the dual training system in order to prevent skills shortages. It combines new and existing instruments. The starting point is an analysis of potential in grade 7, which also takes account of out-of-school or spare-time interests and talents. The support measures are based on the results of this diagnosis and involve individual curricular and extra-curricular measures. Pupils with particular needs for support are accompanied by **educational coaches** throughout their final school years and also at the beginning of their vocational training. Thus, together with the FEA programme mentioned above, 2.000 coaches and 1.000 senior experts (experienced, often retired trainers) will be involved in the programme.

Vocational preparation programmes of the Länder and the FEA

Young people who do not meet the requirements to enter vocational training or who have not achieved a secondary school degree may carry on with a **year of vocational preparation** (*Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*) in vocational schools, which is offered in almost all Länder. Or they may participate in other **vocational preparation courses** initiated and financed by EAs, and carried out by private training providers or non-profit organisations. These courses include work experience and practical train-



ing, which help the young people to acquire vocational skills and capabilities, as well as social pedagogical assistance and career orientation and guidance.

During the apprenticeship training in a company the EA can also grant so called “**training aids**” to support the apprentices’ vocational education and training process through remedial lessons, social pedagogical guidance and assistance.

Competence Agencies of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Targeting disadvantaged youth who could not be reached through mainstream institutions and programmes, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*BMFSFJ*) has established Competence Agencies as part of the “Strengthening Youth” programme since 2006. So far, 400 Competence Agencies have been set up nationwide. They collaborate with a network of resources (e.g. schools, training providers, EAs, Job Centres, municipalities, and social welfare institutions). Using active outreach strategies, the competence agencies follow a case management approach, which enables the case managers to develop individual solutions for multiple problems with the help of assessments and integration and education plans.

4.3 Guidance for people with a migrant background

About 19% of the population in Germany has a migrant background. Of these, 10,1% are German citizens, and 8,9% hold a foreign passport (Statistisches Bundesamt (b), 2010). Most of them have special guidance requirements, including the need for more information on the German

labour market and educational system. Furthermore, their foreign qualifications are often not easily recognized in Germany. Many migrants may only have limited knowledge of the German language. People with a migrant background often have lower qualification levels and work in low-income sectors; for these reasons they are more likely to be unemployed.

In general, people with a migrant background have access to all guidance services. But in order to better understand their cultural background and meet their specific language and information needs, specialized services have been established.

Youth Migration Service

Practitioners from Youth Migration Services support young migrants under 27 years and those with a foreign background in their educational and vocational integration process through career guidance. The aim is to enhance equal opportunities and equal participation for migrants in all aspects of political, vocational, cultural and social life. Applying a comprehensive case management approach, the Youth Migration Services draft individual action plans based on interests, competences and needs in discussion with the young person. The professional pedagogues who work in over 400 offices across the country often have a migrant background themselves so that they can speak the youngsters’ mother tongue and have a better understanding of their problems. They also co-operate with and refer young people to other local services. The Youth Migration Service is financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Information and Qualification Network (IQ-Network)

A number of projects and non-profit organisations at Federal, Länder and local level address the career guidance needs of youths and adults with a migrant background. They are usually located in the larger cities with a sizeable migrant population. In the IQ Network, which was initiated in 2005 by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*BMAS*), several guidance projects and organizations specializing in guidance for people with a migrant background work together. The nationwide network of six centres and further transfer projects is funded by the FEA and co-ordinated by the Central Agency for Advanced Training in the Skilled Crafts. The IQ Network aims to enhance the job situation of adult migrants through guidance and counselling, vocational qualification, skills assessment and business start-up support.



5. Information and guidance through the internet

The significance of information on education, career and employment on the internet has increased considerably with the continuous development of modern information and communication technologies and the changing use of new media. Hence, the extent of such provision has risen substantially.

The following boxes present the most important internet portals and databases developed by public providers. In addition, there are many privately sponsored websites, which are not considered here.

5.1 Web-based guidance services in the education sector (selection)

- The **German Education Server** (*Deutscher Bildungsserver*) and the corresponding **Länder Education Servers** (*Länderbildungsserver*) are the largest online databases on educational systems and structures including information on educational and school-based guidance services www.bildungsserver.de
- **InfoWeb for Continuing Education** www.iwwb.de with search tools for courses, local guidance services and financial assistance.
- The **Higher Education Compass** (*Hochschulkompass*) provided by the “German Rectors’ Conference” (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) is a comprehensive online portal on academic education and university courses including academic further education and international study opportunities in other countries: www.hochschulkompass.de.
- **The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder** (*Kultusministerkonferenz der Länder*) in co-operation with the FEA offers comprehensive internet portals on the choice of studies and career for pupils and graduates of secondary education which includes academic and non-academic education www.studienwahl.de and www.berufswahl.de

5.2 Internet services by the Federal Employment Agency

- **Online job exchange** (*Jobbörse*) which includes online self assessment tools, online application tools and a matching programme for applicants and vacancies <http://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de>;
- **E-learning programmes for job seeking and application**, i.e. for university graduates and academics <https://lernboerse.arbeitsagentur.de>;
- **BERUFENET**, a comprehensive database of occupational descriptions, training, career and labour market information <http://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de> and **BERUFETV**, films, videos, photos on professions and professional fields <http://berufe.tv>;
- **KURSNET**, a comprehensive database on educational and training opportunities, academic subjects and rehabilitation measures <http://kursnet.arbeitsagentur.de>;
- **planet-beruf**, a career choice programme for lower secondary school students, school leavers and teachers as well as parents www.planet-beruf.de;
- **abi.de**, an internet portal for secondary education graduates with entrance qualifications to higher education: www.abi.de

6. Quality and professionalism in career guidance and counselling

Issues of professionalism and quality in career guidance have recently gained importance due to the increased awareness of the role of guidance in implementing lifelong learning strategies. The Federal Government's "Conception for Lifelong Learning" (2008) accordingly highlights the importance of transparency, easy access and quality of guidance and the qualification requirements for guidance practitioners (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (b), 2008).

6.1 Quality standards and quality assurance

In Germany there are a number of sector-specific or provider-specific quality standards and quality assurance systems in operation. However, no generally agreed quality standards which are applicable in all sectors of guidance in education, career and employment are in place. Moreover, only a few legal regulations guarantee minimum standards of quality in guidance, since they mostly refer to the citizen's entitlement to guidance but not to how guidance should be delivered.

The **basic standards for career guidance** formulated in Social Code III for the provision of guidance by EAs require that the individual's autonomy and the recognition of the client's aptitudes, interests and abilities as well as his or her social environment and the general labour market prospects are considered. The law requires that the kind and intensity of guidance service depend on the individual client's needs. Confidentiality and impartiality are also basic standards. In addition, the FEA and the Job Centres have defined more detailed quality guidelines for vocational guidance and case management in their own contexts.

However, in the growing private and semi-private sector, no general requirements for quality or qualification of staff are yet in place. Some providers and **professional associations** have established their **own standards**, e.g.:

- The German Association for Vocational and Educational Guidance (*Deutscher Verband für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung e.V., dvb*) has set up a guidance practitioners register (*BerufsBeratungRegister*) where counselling practitioners who fulfil defined quality standards can be registered and listed <http://www.bbregister.de>.
- The German Association for Counselling (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Beratung e.V.*) accepted in 2009 "Essentials for continuing education in counselling" (*Essentials für Weiterbildung in Beratung/Counselling*) including professional standards for quality and service delivery <http://www.dachverband-beratung.de>.

Several professional associations refer to the "Ethical Standards" and the "International Competences for Guidance Practitioners" of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG 1995, 2003).

Some Länder, regional authorities and municipalities have introduced obligatory standard systems of quality assurance for the guidance services they fund. One of the systems which are used in several regions is the **Learner- and Client-oriented Quality Certificate (LQW)**.

In 2009, the German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (*nfb*) initiated an **"open process of co-ordination for quality development in career guidance"** in order to develop quality standards and a competence profile for counsellors in the field of career guidance, in collaboration with relevant actors and stakeholders from policy, research and practice. The project is being carried out in co-operation with the Institute for Educational Science at the University of Heidelberg. The process aims to reach a common understanding on sustainable quality standards and quality development measures. It is funded by the BMBF.

6.2 Professional status, education and training of guidance practitioners

As in the case of quality assurance, there is no legal regulation of the qualifications, training and professional status of career guidance practitioners and counsellors in Germany. Each sector or provider of guidance defines its own requirements – normally a higher education degree (Bachelor or Master) and some additional further training are a prerequisite.

School-based guidance and counselling usually requires teacher training and some additional guidance-related further training. The Länder define the requirements and provide for the training.

School psychologists have a Master's degree in psychology and in some Länder a teaching qualification, too.

The FEA runs its own University of Applied Sciences (*Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, HdBA*) where **career counsellors** study a three-year multi-disciplinary Bachelor programme which closely links theory to practice in the EA. In addition to the study programme at the HdBA, there are in-house training and further education for staff in local EAs and Job Centres who have various academic backgrounds and move from other posts to career guidance.

Student counsellors in HE usually have a Master's degree in any academic subject and sometimes some additional training in counselling. There is no common regulation.

Guidance in continuing education is often delivered by lecturers in the training institutes alongside their teaching job. In general, they hold a pedagogic qualification but in many cases have had no additional training in counselling. However, with the establishment of special municipal guidance services, the demand for professional training has increased.

6.3 Professional organisations and associations

Most of the professional development of career counselling is carried out by professional organisations, of which some represent guidance practitioners, as well as by training institutes for guidance practitioners and by scientific experts in the field of career guidance. There are numerous professional associations. Listed here are those with major relevance for educational and career guidance and counselling:

Professional associations for guidance in education, career and employment (selection)

Career Service Network Germany (<i>Career Service Netzwerk Deutschland, CSND</i>)	www.csnd.de
German Association for Counselling (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Beratung, DGfB</i>)	www.dachverband-beratung.de
German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (<i>Deutscher Verband für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung, dvb</i>)	www.dvb-fachverband.de
German Society for Behavioural Therapy (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Verhaltenstherapie e.V., DGVT</i>)	www.dgvt.de
German Society for Career Guidance (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Karriereberatung, DGfK</i>)	www.dgfk.org
German Society for Supervision (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Supervision, DGSv</i>)	www.dgsv.de
Society for Information, Guidance and Therapy at Universities (<i>Gesellschaft für Information, Beratung und Therapie an Hochschulen, GIBeT</i>)	www.gibet.de
Professional Association for Counselling, Pedagogy and Psychotherapy (<i>Berufsverband für Beratung, Pädagogik und Psychotherapie e.V., bvpppt</i>)	www.bvpppt.de

A continuing training course programme for guidance practitioners is offered by the **Network of Regional Training Centres in Educational Guidance** (*Verbund Regionaler Qualifizierungszentren, RQZ*), which has been set up as part of the “Learning Regions programme – Supporting Networks” by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Some universities offer a **Master's programme in career counselling** with a different focus, e.g. “counselling science for career counselling and consultancy”, or counselling with a focus on health, law or social work. Recently a Master's programme for qualification consultancy was offered for the first time.

The **National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (nfb)** is not a professional association but a broadly-based network in the guidance sector. The National Guidance Forum is an independent network in which institutions, organizations, relevant research and training institutes, governmental authorities and non-governmental agencies dealing with or offering guidance co-operate. Its aims are to improve transparency, quality and professionalism of guidance in education, in vocational training and in the employment sector. It stimulates the further development of the guidance system, corresponding to the different needs of all citizens. The *nfb* cooperates internationally and supports Germany's participation in the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

7. European co-operation

As one of the founding members of the European Union, Germany has a long tradition of co-operation with other European countries and stakeholders in the field of guidance in education, career and employment, among others in the context of EU programmes PETRA, Leonardo DaVinci and Erasmus as well as EU programmes on lifelong learning.

7.1 Euroguidance and EURES networks

Germany is also engaged in European co-operation with the objective of promoting mobility. Accordingly, the FEA co-operates as the **National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance NRCVG** in the **Euroguidance network**. The Euroguidance network aims at promoting mobility, supporting the development of the European dimension of career guidance. It helps counsellors and individuals to understand the opportunities available to them through the common European labour market. The German Euroguidance centre has been set up at the **Central International Placement Service of the FEA** (*Zentrale Auslands- und Fachvermittlung, ZAV*).

This Central International Placement Service (*ZAV*) offers guidance and counselling as well as placement for studying, working and further education abroad with the aim of promoting transnational educational and professional mobility and experience. It may be used not only by Germans wishing to study or work abroad but also by people looking for work or study opportunities in Germany. In order to fulfil its task, the Central Placement Service co-operates with other international Public Employment Services, particularly within the European network **EURES (European Employment Services)**, and with companies abroad looking for German staff.



7.2 European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

German experts were participants of the **EU Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance** (2002-2007). Subsequently, Germany actively supported the establishment of the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)**, in which it has been an active member. ELGPN represents Member States' interests at EU level on matters concerning lifelong guidance policy and system development. The network identifies lifelong guidance policy issues for which there are gaps in policy development and implementation at national level and which merit collaborative action at EU level.

The German ELGPN delegation consists of a representative from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*BMBF*), a member designated by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*KMK*), and a member from the National Guidance Forum *nfb* as a non-governmental organization. Key issues for co-operation in the ELGPN are the priority areas named in the EU Guidance Resolution 2008: promotion of the development of career management skills (CMS), the improvement of access to guidance (including accreditation of prior and experimental learning and the use of Information and Communication Technologies), improvement of quality and quality assurance in guidance (including evidence-based development of policy and practice) and the intensification of co-operation and co-ordination of guidance policy and systems at regional, national and European levels.

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Career Guidance in Germany

This brochure gives an overview over the basic structure of the German guidance system especially for our partners in the European Union and beyond. In general, the German system provides access to educational and career guidance services for all citizens at any stage of their lives – whether they are in education or training, employed, unemployed or looking for continuing education. The structure of guidance provision reflects the German education and employment system with its shared responsibilities between the Federation, the Länder and the municipalities. Hence, the provision of career guidance is traditionally based on the distinction between educational guidance (*Bildungsberatung*) in the educational sector and vocational guidance (*Berufsberatung*) in the vocational training and employment sector. Cooperation across the sectors is in this context crucial.

Beginning with an introduction into the German educational system, the brochure follows the life course describing guidance provisions in schools, vocational education, higher education, and for employment, unemployment and continuing education. Additional sections deal with guidance for special target groups and guidance through the internet. With chapters on quality and professionalism in guidance and on European cooperation, the brochure also considers systemic issues of professional development. Social and economic changes remain a permanent challenge for further developing lifelong guidance in the context of lifelong learning needs.

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