



EQF assigned
occupational profiles, curricula and assessment:
Germany

Provided by: IG Metall, DE

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The adaptation of occupation profiles and curricula in Germany (Ausbildungsordnung – training regulation) is currently being implemented in Germany in the framework of the pilot project “Competence-based occupational profiles” initiated by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education. Below is an sample of the methodology for adapting profiles. The project foresees the re-formulation of profiles but NO amendment of qualification contents.

The background:

In terms of classification, German occupational standards are described in the form of initial training regulations (Ausbildungsordnungen), which include:

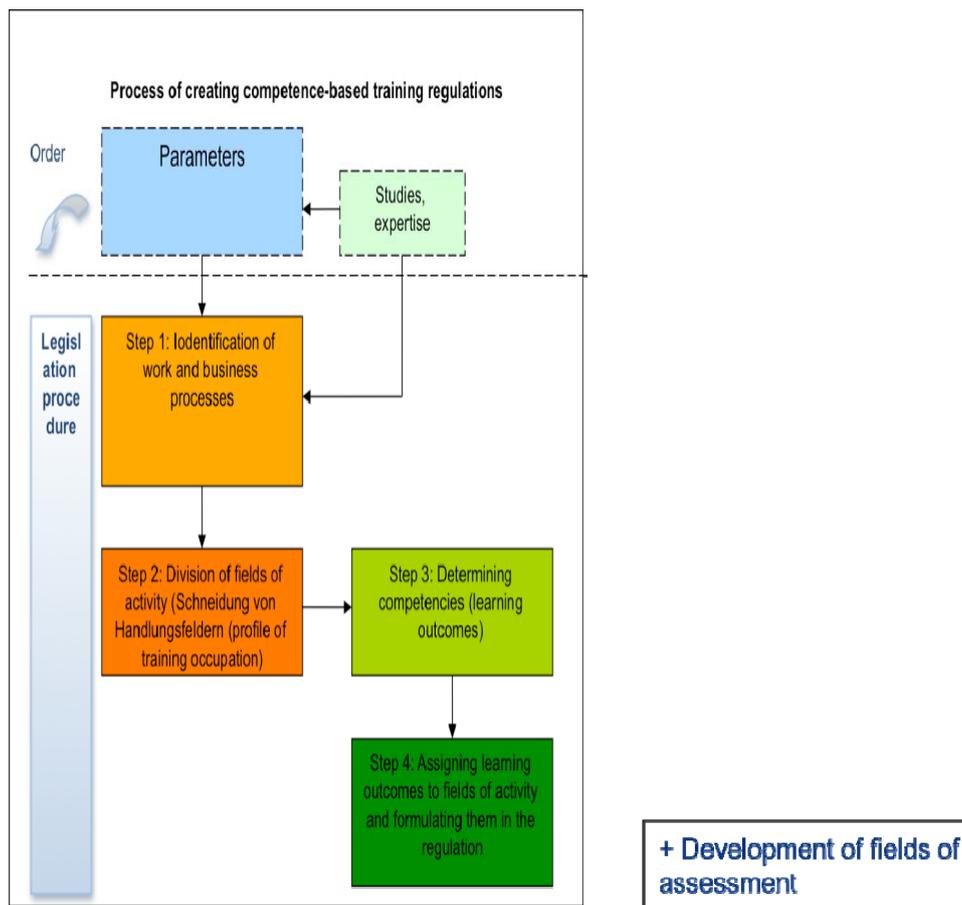
- The name of the occupation
- The duration of training (ranging between 2 and 3,5 years but typically 3 years)
- The occupational profile, meaning the characteristics and main functions of the occupation (Berufsbild)
- The in-company training specification (Ausbildungsrahmenplan), which is an outcome-oriented training curriculum
- Assessment requirements and procedures

Competence-based training regulations - the guiding principles

1. Competence orientation
Subject-specific, methodical, social and personal competencies
2. Learning outcome orientation
Focus on the outcome of the qualification, output vs. input
3. Orientation towards work and business processes
As a point of origin for the structuring and consolidation of competencies

Competence-based training regulations – the methodology for re-formulation of training regulation

1. Identification of fields of activity by analysing work and business processes common and typical to professions and domain
2. Matching of learning objectives (old profile) with competence model (new profile)
 - a. Analysis of weighting according to learning time
 - b. Analysis of weighting of individual competence dimensions
3. Assigning competencies to fields of activity



Fields of activity

What is the idea behind fields of activity?: Fields of activity are based on the work process, they are described in a learning outcome-oriented manner. For the sample of the tool mechanic, there are six fields of activity:

1. Receive orders and prepare there processing
2. Produce elements
3. Assembling elements into groups
4. Testing
5. Start-up and commissioning to customer
6. Maintenance



Following the logic of the work process, each field of activity should typically follow this pattern:

- Inform
- Plan
- Decide
- Implement
- Check
- Assess

Additionally, there are interdisciplinary learning outcomes “knowledge, skills and competencies”, which transcend the work process

- Standard contents of occupational profile (i.e. legal aspects, etc.)
- Operative and technical communication
- Planning and organising work, assessing results
- Customer-orientation
- Quality assurance, checking
- Ability to work in a team

What changes? An example of old and new content of the tool mechanic

OLD:

Production of components with different manufacturing methods

- a) Obtaining and utilising engineering data or templates
- b) Identifying and setting machining programmes, selecting, preparing and utilising tools
- c) Adjusting and clamping semi-finished products and component parts under consideration of manufacturing method

NEW

Producing elements

- Tool mechanics are able to produce components using shaping manufacturing methods according to quality specifications and under consideration of health and safety and environmental aspects.
- They select manual and machine-based manufacturing methods taking into account time frame and economic aspects.
- They set-up their workplace and ensure operational availability of tool machines. They develop, modify and optimise programmes, determine technological data taking into account quality of material...

This example shows, how the field of activity puts the emphasis on the outcome of learning (*producing elements* instead of *production of components with different manufacturing methods* – emphasis on the *activity* rather than the *subject*). Meanwhile, the actual contents of the unit are described in the form of (holistic) learning outcomes (tool mechanics *are able to...*).

Shifts in paradigms

As described above, there is a shift to increased output-orientation. The apprenticeship framework curriculum becomes obsolete as the profile merely summarises the outcome of the qualification, not the way to get there.

OLD

- Learning objectives (LO)
- Standard contents of OP (subject-oriented)

NEW

- Learning outcomes as competencies
- Fields of activity (activity-oriented)
- No framework curriculum

This leads to some questions / problems that may result from this new form of describing training regulations. These mainly impact upon the way the training is implemented. Initially, re-formulating the training regulation raises the question of the purpose of a training regulation. Is the main purpose to ease EQF/NQF assignment or to guide the implementation of training in companies? As learning outcome-oriented training regulations only describe the target situation and not the way to get there, it becomes more difficult for practitioners in companies to use the training regulation as a guideline for implementing the training. This situation could be solved by providing additional material in terms of procedural guidelines.

An example of the questions that learning outcome-orientation raises in connection with the training regulation: Understanding of the apprenticeship contract. What is the corresponding target qualification? After finalisation of the apprenticeship, this knowledge is not needed, however, it is important in the course of the apprenticeship.

Assessment

There is also the question of the impact upon assessment. There will be another pilot project in order to assess this impact.

The fields of activity will be transferred into fields of assessment. This is crucial in order to ensure the activity- and competence-based nature of the training. The assessment is also formulated in a learning outcome-based manner, i.e. the trainee has to prove that his competencies are in accordance with the learning outcomes required. This ought to be assessed in a practically-oriented manner, e.g. through case studies, projects, real work tasks, etc. Assessment based solely on testing knowledge (e.g. through multiple choice tests) would reduce the concept to absurdity.

One issue that is still unclear is if and how learning outcome orientation will transcend assessment restrictions, i.e. how informal and non-formal learning can be assessed within the formal system. So far, in Germany, there is only one possibility to sit exams without undergoing the training itself which is the "Externenprüfung" (external assessment). Here, examinees will have to prove that they worked in a specific field for a given period of time before they are allowed to sit the exam. Some stakeholders feel that this is sufficient scope for acknowledging non- and informal learning, others call for more openness. If and how other opportunities will be implemented is still unclear.

For further information on the project please consult:

www.project-predict.eu

For further information on the paper please contact:

EU-project.akademie@dekra.com