

THE GERMAN VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM



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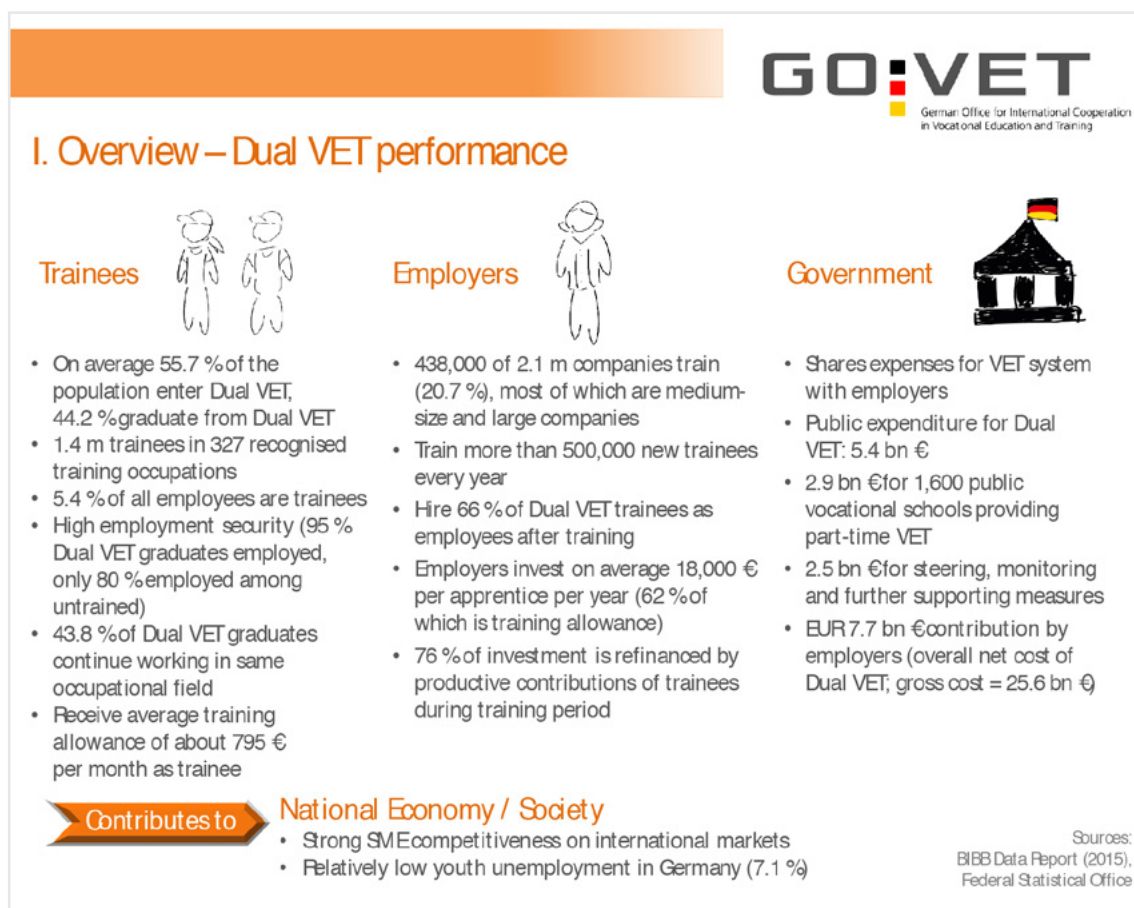
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In the European Union, there are currently 5.7 million young people under the age of 25 without a job. In Greece and Spain, the unemployment rate for this age group is over 50 percent. The affected countries are looking for ways to improve the transition between school and employment and are increasingly turning their sights on the dual vocational training system. Combining theoretical reflection in vocational schools with practical in-company experience not only ensures that the business world will have skilled workers with real-life training, but also facilitates the young people's transition into the labor market.

The German vocational education and training system, known as the dual training scheme, is highly recognized worldwide due to its combination of theory and training embedded in a real-life work environment.

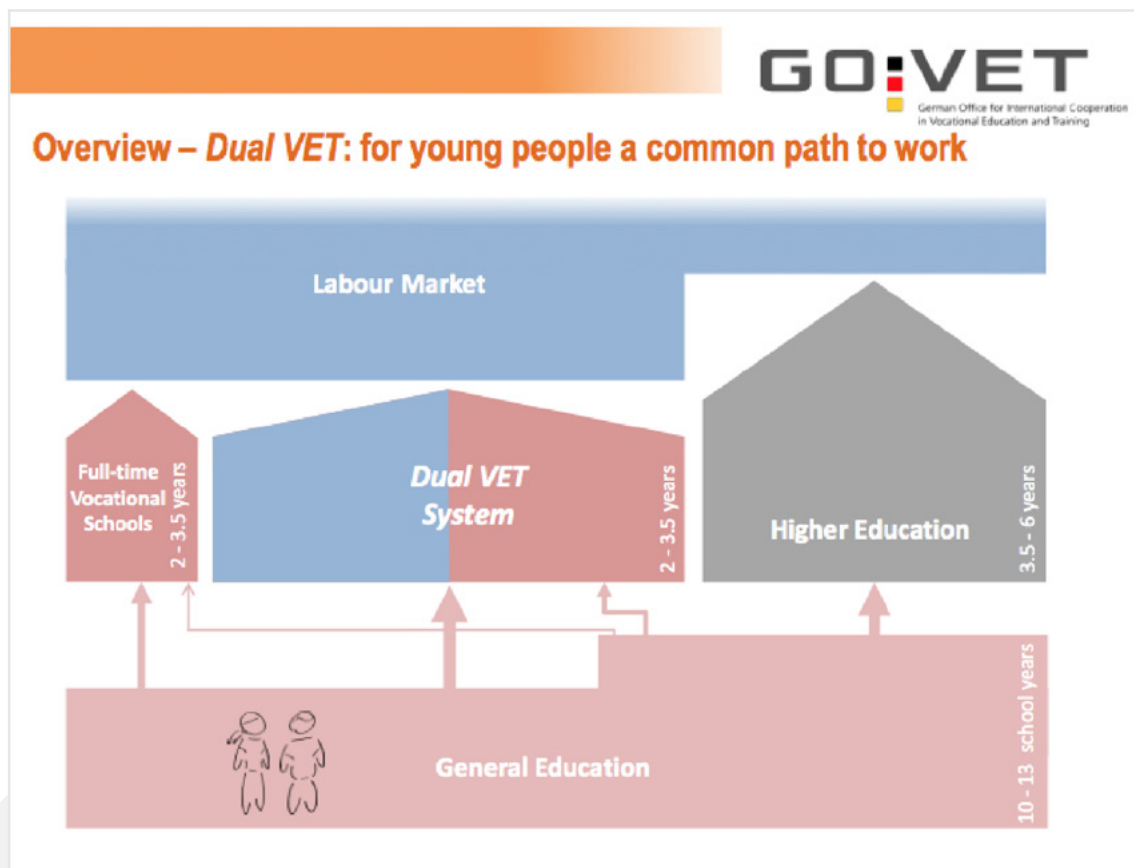
The dual system is firmly established in the German education system. The main characteristic of the dual system is cooperation between for the most part small and medium sized companies, on the one hand, and public vocational schools, on the other. This cooperation is regulated by law.



The Vocational Training Act of 1969, which was amended in 2005, introduced this tight-knit alliance between the Federal Government, the federal states and companies with a view to providing young people with training in occupations that are recognized nation-wide and documented accordingly through certificates issued by a competent body, i.e. chamber of industry and commerce or chamber of crafts and trades respectively.

The German dual system offers a very practical approach to skill development, covering initial vocational education and training, further vocational education and training, careers, employability, occupational competence and identity. Thanks to the dual system, Germany enjoys low youth unemployment and high level skills.

In Germany, about 50 percent of all school-leavers undergo vocational training provided by companies which consider the dual system the best way to acquire skilled staff.





Continuous updating of training regulations

There are currently around 330 officially recognized training occupations. Employer organizations and trade unions are the drivers when it comes to updating and creating new training regulations and occupational profiles or modernizing further training regulations.

As a result, training, testing and certificates are standardized in all industries throughout the country. This assures that all apprentices receive the same training regardless of region and company. Moreover, employers trust in these certificates as they express what an individual knows and is able to do.

Best form of recruitment for companies

Businesses that take part in the dual training scheme consider vocational training to be the most important form of personnel recruitment. Training companies do not only save on recruitment costs but also avoid the latent risk of hiring the wrong employee for the job. Investments in first-class training are a key factor for success in an increasingly competitive world.

The main benefit for apprentices, in turn, is that they receive market-relevant training that improves their chances on the labour market as it responds to the challenge of constantly updating and upgrading skills due to innovations in the digital age while simultaneously broadening their social and democratic participation.

How does it work?

"Dual training" captures the idea at the heart of every apprenticeship: Trainees split their days between classroom instruction at a vocational school and on-the-job time at a company.

Dual training programmes usually last between two and three and a half years and comprise theoretical as well as practical elements. Students will spend one or two days a week, or several weeks at once, at a vocational school (called Berufsschule) where they will acquire the theoretical knowledge that they will need in their future occupation. The rest of the time will be spent at a company. There they get to apply your newly acquired knowledge in practice, for example by learning to operate machinery. The students will get to know what their company does, learn how it operates and find out if they can see themselves working there after completing their training.

This combination of theory and practice gives the students a real head start into their job: by the time you have completed your training, they will not only have the required technical knowledge, but will also have hands-on experience in their job. There are around 350 officially recognized training programmes in Germany at the moment.

Stages of dual vocational training

Dual training programmes usually start on 1 August or 1 September each year. They comprise on-the-job training at a company and classes at a vocational school (Berufsschule). Classes include German, English and social studies. Around two thirds of the classes specifically focus on subjects that are important for your future occupation. During the training programme, you are entitled to at least 24 working days or 5 four weeks of annual leave. However, students may only take their leave during school holidays.

Teachers, instructors and colleagues will give all the support the students need during their programme. After the first half of their training programme, students will sit an examination to assess what they have learned at school and how they have been able to apply this knowledge at their company. They will also sit final exams at the end of their training. As a rule, exams are held in German. If you pass your final exams, you stand a good chance of starting a successful career in a German business.

Deliver work-based VET

2 coordinated learning venues ("Dual") for each VET programme

70 % of VET
in company

In-company training

- Legal basis: training contract
- Company which trains, pays trainee a "training allowance"
- Company provides systematic training under real-life working conditions (in-company trainer, up-to-date equipment, etc.)



30 % of VET
in vocational school

Vocational school education

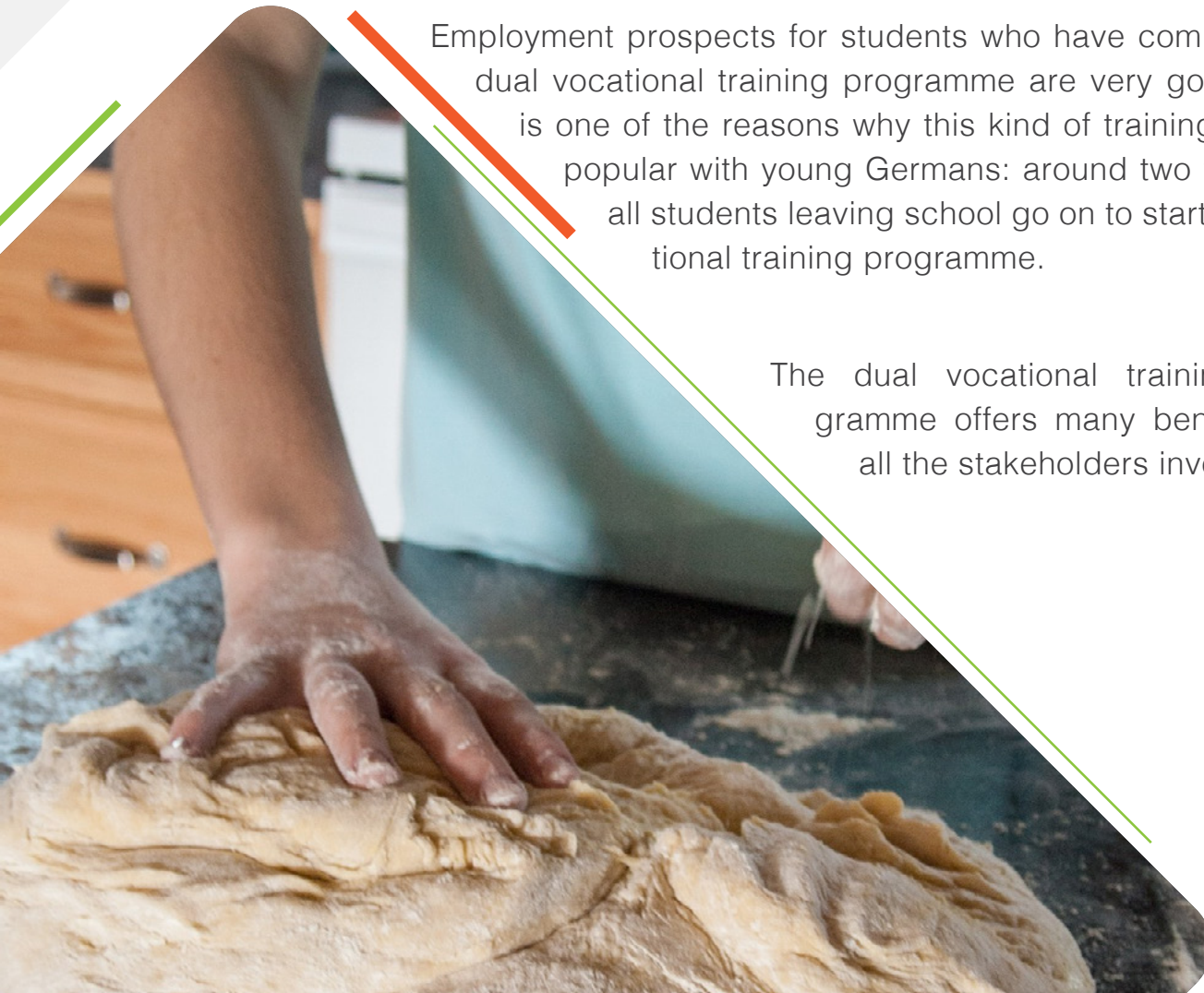
- Legal basis: compulsory education law
- Local government finances public vocational schools (facilities, teachers, etc.)
- Vocational schools offer lessons in professional (2/3) and general education (1/3) subjects free of charge

Approx. duration of Dual VET: 2 – 3.5 years

BIBB (2016)

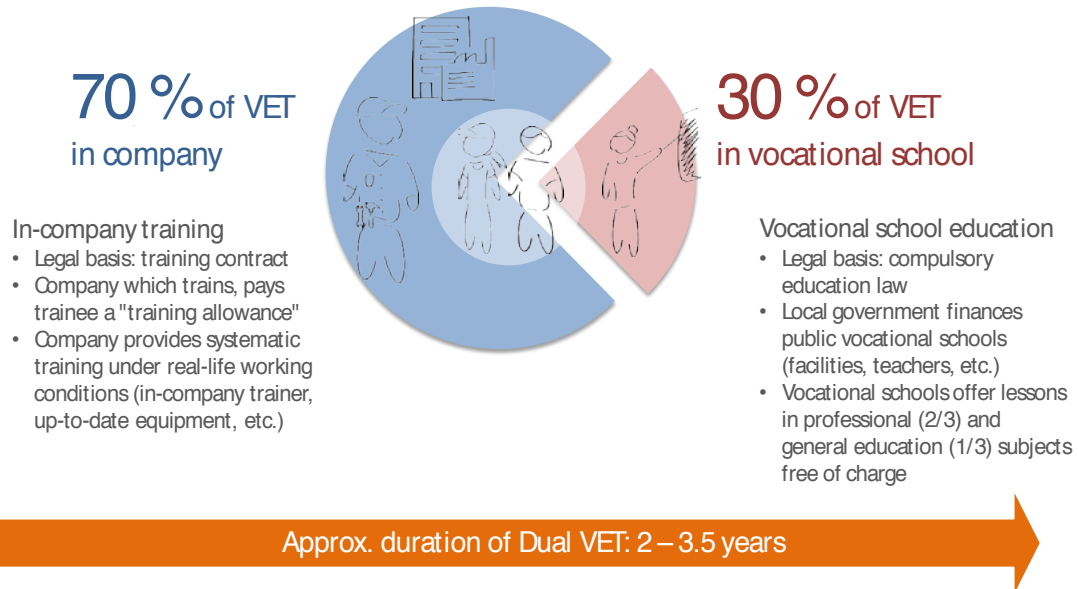
Employment prospects for students who have completed a dual vocational training programme are very good. This is one of the reasons why this kind of training is very popular with young Germans: around two thirds of all students leaving school go on to start a vocational training programme.

The dual vocational training programme offers many benefits for all the stakeholders involved.



Deliver work-based VET

2 coordinated learning venues ("Dual") for each VET programme



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