

Transition to a vocational school

- **After attending a general educational school**, pupils can continue learning at a vocational school (“berufliche Schule”) or do an apprenticeship.
- **The vocational schools** are schools that support the transition from a general educational school to working life. They **offer many opportunities** to gain further qualifications either before or during an apprenticeship, and to take further school leaving examinations.
- In a vocational school, adolescents can learn about the **basics of an occupational area**, do an **apprenticeship for an occupation** and improve their **overall educational level**. They can also study for one of the general school leaving qualifications.
- There are **five school leaving qualifications** that the students can attain:
 1. Hauptschulabschluss
 2. Fachschulreife / mittlerer Bildungsabschluss (for example at a Berufsfachschule)
 3. Fachhochschulreife (for example at a Berufskolleg, Berufsschule or Fachschule)
 4. Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (at a Berufsoberschule)
 5. General university entrance qualification (at a Berufliche Gymnasium, a Berufsoberschule)
- In Germany there is **compulsory school attendance**. This normally lasts until the child is eighteen years old (of legal age). The compulsory school attendance can take place either in a general educational school or a vocational school.
- It can be a good idea to attend prevocational courses before starting an apprenticeship for a job. These offer adolescents a good way to **transition to a vocational school or a job**.
- Adolescents can attend these **prevocational courses**:
 - Ausbildungsvorbereitung dual (AVdual)
 - Ausbildungsvorbereitung (AV)
 - Vorqualifizierungsjahr Arbeit/Beruf (VAB)
- Adolescents who have recently arrived in Germany and who have minimal knowledge of German can do a pre-qualification work/job year with a focus on improving their German skills (**VABO**).
- Types of **vocational school include**: Berufsoberschule, Berufsfachschule, Berufskolleg, Berufsoberschule,

Berufliche Gymnasium and Fachschule.

Berufsschule

- In Germany there is **dual vocational training**. This means: After completing their school education, pupils train for a job that is suited to them. To do this they attend a **Berufsschule**. But they also work in a **company** and are trained there.
- In the Berufsschule, the pupils acquire theoretical knowledge and learn the practical skills they will need later in their **profession**. The aim is to achieve the **final qualification in a recognised skilled profession**. Then they can work in this profession.

Berufsfachschule

- Berufsfachschule teach knowledge and skills in a profession. The aim is to get a basic training for a job, to do preparation for starting an apprenticeship or to attain an **occupational qualification and** to deepen the **general educational level**.
- It is also possible to study for the Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss (intermediate school-leaving certificate) This is known as the Fachschulreife. Attending a Berufsfachschule can last **1 year, 2 years or several years**. It depends on the job/profession that the person wants to train for. There are Berufsfachschulen that specialise in **different fields** such as commerce-technical, administration, home economics, agriculture, social-paedagogy, social-nursing, etc.

Fachschule

- **Adolescents and young adults attend the Fachschule if they want to prepare themselves for an activity in middle management after vocational training or want to qualify for occupational self-employment.**
- Fachschulen also include the **Meisterschulen**.

Berufskolleg

- The Berufskolleg teach an occupational qualification and an expanded general educational level. Young people with the **Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss** (intermediate school-leaving certificate) or with the **Fachschulreife** attend the Berufskolleg.
- At a Berufskolleg it is possible to attain the **Fachhochschulreife and** also an **occupational qualification**. With the Fachhochschulreife, pupils can start a study course at a Fachhochschule.
- You do not need a **vocational training contract** to attend a Berufskolleg. For some Berufskollegs you need an internship contract for full-times study.

- Some Berufskollegs **specialise in certain fields**: technical, commercial and home economics, nursing-social pedagogical, etc.

Berufsoberschule

- A Berufsoberschule offers pupils the opportunity, **after completing vocational training/an apprenticeship or with comparable job experience**, to deepen their subject-specific knowledge and obtain further educational qualifications. This is known as the “zweiter Bildungsweg” or “second educational path”.
- The Berufsoberschule is divided into the **one-year Mittelstufe** Berufsaufbauschule BAS (intermediate level) and the **two-year Oberstufe** BOS (advanced level).
- **After the one-year Mittelstufe** pupils can take the Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss (intermediate school-leaving certificate). The Oberstufe can be completed by obtaining the fachgebundene Hochschulreife (subject-specific university entrance qualification). If the pupils learn a second foreign language, they can leave the Berufsoberschule with the Allgemeine Hochschulreife (general university entrance qualification).
- The Berufsoberschule is divided into the following **directions**: Berufsoberschule für Sozialwesen (SO), Technische Oberschule (TO), Wirtschaftsoberschule (WO).

Berufliche Gymnasium

- The Berufliche Gymnasium and its 3 year course is intended for pupils who want to achieve the **Allgemeine Hochschulreife** (general university entrance qualification) after their **Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss** (intermediate school-leaving certificate).
 - There are also **Berufliche Gymnasien** that offer **6-year courses** that pupils can attend from year 8, if they fulfil the requirements.
 - **The knowledge acquired provides a special preparation for working life or studies at a higher education institution.** However pupils cannot obtain an **occupational qualification** there.
- As **parents, we support** our child in **the search and selection of the right vocational school**. Important: the desired qualification and the desired job.
- It is important that we do not leave our child alone with these decisions. But it is also important that our child makes the decision and that we do not decide for them.

■ **For example, parents can...**

- talk to their child about the topic at an early stage. It's a good idea to start thinking about this when the child leaves Grundschule.
- support your child, find out what it can do and what it wants to do.
- help your child to get to know different jobs and filter out potential careers.
- Attend information events and open days at vocational schools and in companies.
- attend career advice centres with your child.
- encourage your child to do internships/work placements or speak with people working in different careers, in order to understand their job better.