School, vocational training – or both?

Dual vocational training and secondary school education certificates

An interesting alternative

‘With dual vocational training (duale Ausbildung), you can attain several goals at once. Not only do you receive a recognised vocational qualification with excellent prospects for the future, but you also gain a higher secondary school education certificate and earn money. All of this makes dual vocational training an interesting alternative, with all current forecasts predicting excellent opportunities for workers with vocational skills.’

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Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung

PUBLISHING DETAILS
Publisher: Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Landesentwicklung
Departments: IV4 and M2
www.wirtschaft.hessen.de
Source: Vocational Schools Directive (Verordnung über die Berufsschule) of 9 September 2002 (ABl., p. 678), most recently amended by a Directive of 11 July 2011 (ABl., p. 314)
Design: Huth + Wenzel Agentur für Kommunikation
Printing: Justizvollzugsanstalt, Darmstadt
Publication date: November 2015
What’s the best way forward?

Every year, parents and their children ask themselves the very same question. It might be that it’s time to think about what kind of secondary school to go to or about what happens when you leave school.

There are no easy answers. What you do at times like this plays an important role in determining your future. Should you continue down a purely academic route, possibly all the way to university? Or should you opt for vocational training instead?

Everything is possible

There is one route that still gives you the option of obtaining a secondary school education certificate, even in the future: dual vocational training. The following paragraphs explain how.

Dual training as an alternative

The Hessian education system offers you plenty of options. The chart below shows possible routes to achieving the various secondary school education certificates and illustrates that dual vocational training is an equal-value alternative method of obtaining a higher certificate. It also makes it clear that vocational training and a higher secondary school education certificate are in no way mutually exclusive.

How does dual training work?

Dual training takes place in a company and in a vocational school. Companies provide trainees with the practical knowledge they need whilst vocational schools teach the theoretical side. Here’s some more information:

Who:
Young people aged 15 and above

Requirement:
Secondary school education certificate desirable, but not essential

First step:
Apply to a company

Course length:
Two to three and a half years, depending on the occupation

How long and where:
Three to four days a week at a company, one to two days at a vocational school

Vocational qualification:

School qualification:
Final certificate from a vocational school

How can you get help in finding places:
Support is available from the Agentur für Arbeit, job centres and professional bodies

Every year, parents and their children ask themselves the very same question, which route to take eventually. Dual vocational training is an equal-value alternative. Dual training teaches the theoretical side in a vocational school and the practical side in a company. The following paragraphs explain how dual training works.

Routes through the Hessian education system

For more information and entry requirements, please visit the ‘Schools’ section of the Hessian education system, www.dms-schule.bildung.hessen.de.

Hauptschule (Secondary school)

Requirements for obtaining secondary school education certificates

In principle, every secondary school qualification available in Hesse can also be achieved via dual vocational training. Different qualification routes, however, have different requirements.

Hauptschulabschluss (Hauptschule certificate)

Requirements:

Final certificate from a vocational school

Realisulchulabschluss (Realschule certificate)

Requirements:

Hauptschulabommen certificate or equivalent

A pass in the final examination from either the IHK (Chamber of Commerce) or the Handwerkskammer (Chamber of Trades and Crafts)

A minimum overall grade of 3.0 on the vocational school final certificate

A knowledge equivalent to a five-year foreign language course with a grade of at least 'satisfactory' (behindgebunden)

At least 80 hours of lessons in German or a foreign language with a grade of at least 'satisfactory'

Hochschulzugang (university admission)

Requirements:

A pass in the final examination from either the IHK (Chamber of Commerce) or the Handwerkskammer (Chamber of Trades and Crafts)

A pass in the examination to be a 'Meister/Mistress' (master craftsman) or 'Fachwirt/Fachwirtin' (qualified expert)

You will find more information on the secondary school education qualifications available with dual training by contacting the IHK, the Handwerkskammer or a vocational school in your area. This information is also available in English, Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. The flyers are available for download at www.wirtschaft.hessen.de/publikationen.