

WHERE NEXT AT 14?

Information on the Austrian education system,
schools and apprenticeships



**Stadt
Wien**

Integration
und Diversität



WHERE NEXT AT 14?

What's next after 8th grade?

Dear parents and carers,

Your child has reached an important crossroads. After the 8th year of school, there are several different options for the next stage of education. Many options means there will be many questions! This summary provides an overview of education and training pathways, the different school types, and some key points about apprenticeships.

As we all know, a good education is the basis for self-determination in future employment, careers, and successful life planning.

As parents and carers you have a major influence – both directly and indirectly – on your children's educational and career choices. It is important to understand the options and to find out as much as you can – and to seek advice, if you have further questions.

So what are the options for the next stage of education?

If your child is currently in a Compulsory Secondary School (Mittelschule) and would like to continue with school: then there is a choice between schools that continue for another year, or for three, four or five years. Depending on your child's interests, there are many different areas of specialisation, which we will explain in more detail below.

If your child is now in the 8th grade and plans to start an apprenticeship: then in most cases, they must attend school for another year – for example at a Pre-vocational (polytechnic) or Vocational Compulsory Secondary School (Fachmittelschule).

If your child is at an integrative or special needs school: then depending on the type of support your child needs, there are various specific options. In principle all forms of education are available.

If your child is currently in the Lower Cycle of an Academic Secondary School (AHS): your child can remain in this school, continue into the Upper Cycle, and go on to complete the "Matura" school leaving exam.

If your child would like to change to a different kind of school, but would also like to complete the Matura: they could choose a College for Higher Vocational Education (BHS). Depending on your child's talents and interests there is a choice of specialisms: IT, technical trades, electronics, business, tourism, fashion, art, social care and more.

Here are the options again in summary:

- Pre-vocational School / Vocational Compulsory Secondary School – often followed by an apprenticeship
- School for Intermediate Vocational Education (BMS)
- College for Higher Vocational Education (BHS)
- Upper-cycle Academic Secondary School (AHS) / Secondary School emphasizing Mathematics and Science (ORG)
- Integrative education

And now some more detailed information

Let's start with Pre-vocational School (PTS) or Vocational Compulsory Secondary School (FMS). This lasts for one year. Your child can explore different subject areas. For example: metalwork, electrical trades, IT, mechatronics, construction/wood, services sector, tourism or social care professions.

Pre-vocational School (Poly) / Vocational Compulsory Secondary School

Duration: 1 year / often followed by an apprenticeship

Subject areas:

- **Technical trades: Metalwork, Construction/Wood, Electrical trades, IT, Mechatronics**
- **Office administration, Commerce**
- **Services sector**
- **Tourism**
- **Social care**

Many young people go on to an apprenticeship after Pre-vocational School (PTS/FMS). There are over 200 skilled trades to choose from. It generally takes 3-4 years to complete an apprenticeship.

Students can also continue from a Pre-vocational School or Vocational Compulsory Secondary School into an Intermediate or Higher School, providing they meet the requirements.

Now let's look at the vocational schools – starting with the Schools for Intermediate Vocational Education (BMS) and Vocational Schools

Schools for Intermediate Vocational Education / Vocational Schools

Duration: 3 or 4 years

- **Secondary Business School**
- **Vocational School for Economic Professions**
- **Vocational School for Social Professions**
- **School for Kindergarten Assistants**
- **Fashion School**
- **Vocational Schools for the Hotel Industry**
- **Vocational Schools for the Restaurant Industry**
- **Vocational School for Agriculture**

Schools of Intermediate Vocational Education include the three-year Secondary Business School or a four-year Vocational School. In principle after completing these schools, young people can start their professional life, or they can take an add-on course and complete the school-leaving exam. This option takes one year longer.

Colleges for Higher Vocational Education (BHS)

These higher-level vocational education schools last 5 years. They include the Higher Technical Colleges (HTLs), the Secondary Colleges of Business Administration and schools specialising in subjects such as fashion, tourism, early childhood education etc. To be admitted to a College for Higher Vocational Education (BHS), you must fulfil certain admissions criteria. Generally this means achieving specific grades.

Colleges for Higher Vocational Education (BHS)

Duration: 5 years

- Secondary College of Business Administration (HAK)
- Upper Level Institutions (HTL)
- Secondary School for Tourism
- Secondary School for Fashion
- College for Early Childhood Pedagogy (Bafep)
- College for Social Pedagogy

In addition to vocational education schools there are of course the academic schools.

Upper-cycle Academic Secondary School (AHS) / Secondary

Let's start with Academic Secondary Schools (AHS) – Upper Cycle: The Upper Cycle of Academic Secondary Schools (AHS) lasts 4 years and finishes with the school-leaving exam, as do the Secondary Schools emphasizing Mathematics and Science (ORG). The upper-cycle Academic Secondary Schools (AHS) and Secondary Schools emphasizing Mathematics and Science (ORG) offer a focus on music, languages, science or sport, and can be attended after a Compulsory Secondary School (Mittelschule) or lower-cycle Academic Secondary School (AHS).

Duration: 4 years

- Numerous subject areas: music, languages, sport, sciences ...

That completes our overview of the different school types. Whichever type of school appeals to your child, almost all of them have certain admission requirements which must be met:

- Grades in major subjects
- Admission exams
- Admission test
- Special admission procedures
- Watch out for deadlines!

Whether your child is interested in a vocational education school or an academic school (ORG or AHS), make sure you find out about the admission requirements well in advance in order to gain a place. Grades are important, and admission exams may also be required, or there may be an extended admission procedure – for instance in the case of art schools.

Please note: for some schools there are application deadlines that must be met.

Those are the school options. Now let's take a look at apprenticeships:

- Over 200 different skilled trades
- 3– 4 years
- Apprenticeship positions must be found by the students themselves
- Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) → register as apprenticeship seeker
- Supra-company apprenticeship training

After completing compulsory schooling, one option is to start an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship lasts for 3 – 4 years. There is a choice of over 200 skilled trades that are taught by apprenticeship in Austria. It is important to ensure that the apprenticeship position suits your child's talents and interests. This is easier to decide if your child has already explored several different areas and investigated some professions, for instance through work experience days.

You and your child will need to actively search for an apprenticeship position. Sometimes, even after searching intensively it is not possible to find a training place. In this case your child should register with the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) as an apprenticeship seeker. This can be done as early as the start of the 9th school year. If your child is registered as an apprenticeship seeker, the AMS will provide help and support with the search. If no place has been found by the end of the school year, the AMS can arrange for your child to be allocated a place in an inter-company training centre. So whatever happens, your child will have a training place.

How does an apprenticeship work?

- Signing the apprenticeship contract
- Training company & vocational school
- Training regulations specify the curriculum
- Apprenticeship diploma examination
- Apprenticeship with school-leaving exam
- Further education options after an apprenticeship

As soon as you and your child have signed the apprenticeship contract, the training place is confirmed. However, there is a probationary period of 3 months at the beginning of the apprenticeship.

With an apprenticeship, your child learns both at the place of work and in (part-time) vocational school. Depending on the apprenticeship programme, there are different ways that the vocational school element may be organised. Incidentally, you do not need to register your child for vocational school, the employer or training body does that.

At the end of the apprenticeship, there is a final examination, which consists of a written section, and an oral/practical one.

By the way: an apprenticeship can also be combined with the Matura (secondary school leaving certificate). Or your child might wish to continue with more intensive training in the profession they have been learning, and start working towards the master craftsman qualification or to train as an instructor themselves. There are many ways forward after an apprenticeship!

Gather information – Try things out – Ask for help – Seek advice

Dear parents and carers, we know how challenging it is to choose the right educational path for your child. But it is worth spending some time on it!

So gather information, try lots of different things, seek advice and ask for help if you need it!

You can find key contacts and advisory services on our website. Take a look!

■ INFORMATION ABOUT EDUCATION AND CAREER CHOICES

wien.arbeiterkammer.at/bildungsundberufswahl

Any questions?

 WhatsApp 01 510 65 13 801

■ VIENNA BOARD OF EDUCATION

1010, Wipplingerstraße 28

Tel: 01/ 52525 – 77859

schulinfo@bildung-wien.gv.at

■ VOCATIONAL INFORMATION CENTRES (BIZ)

www.ams.at/biz

We wish you and your child all the best, and as you know – there are many roads to reach your goal!