

Presentation of our school in English



Vocational Training in Germany – The Dual System

For many years vocational training in Germany has been divided into training on the job and theoretical education in vocational schools. Theoretical knowledge and practical skills are combined from the very beginning during the vocational training. The trainee becomes aware of social relationships that exist in a „real-life“ company. „Learning by doing“ gives the trainee a sense of accomplishment and additional motivation, independence and a sense of responsibility.

The German Berufsschulverordnung regulates the training within a company after compulsory school attendance requirements have been met. The concept constitutes initial training, further training and vocational retraining. This law provides the overall framework but the regulation of vocational training schools is a state responsibility. Furthermore, there is a general freedom for the employer as well as the trainee to make a contract, but the procedure of the traineeship itself is governed by legal regulations. The responsibilities lie with the designated Federal Secretary of State. For those firms too small to operate their own facilities, training workshops outside companies have been established by the CIC (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) as a supplement to training on the job.

A minimum of 6 hours weekly attendance at the vocational training schools, which accompanies on-the-job training, is compulsory for every trainee. The schools are state-run.

CIC's tasks are to advise companies that train people and apprentices of all training-related problems. The CIC will ascertain whether they have the necessary qualifications or not (for example services to train people, professional and teaching qualifications).

Presentation of our school

Each trainee must take an interim and a final examination during the course of the training. The examination boards set up by the CIC consist of an employer representative, an employee representative and one vocational school teacher. All examiners work on an honorary basis. The Vocational Training Committee of the CIC issues rules concerning final examinations (for example to regulate criteria for admission, marking, repeating and so on). The practical examination will call for samples of work and/or test work pieces. The theoretical test is conducted as a written and/or oral examination. After passing the examination, the trainee receives an examination certificate issued by the CIC. This is one of the conditions for admission to journey-level courses and for becoming a “master craftsman“. The CIC also holds examinations at higher post-traineeship levels and retraining. Ordinances regulating the examinations are issued by the Federal Minister of Education and Science.

2. About us

Last year our vocational college OSZ Bürowirtschaft und Dienstleistungen celebrated its tenth anniversary. Throughout the history of our college we have maintained the idea that even students who did not get the opportunity to gain vocational education and training should have better chances of entering the labour market.

Only 40% of applicants find employment as trainees. The situation for migrants and young mothers is even worse. Often companies are not able to offer a suitable education, especially because of growing requirements. The traditional dual education, with its 12-hour college lessons, often does not meet the expectations of the labour market.

As a specific feature we offer a 3-year, double-qualifying, full-time vocational training within an educational system. That means that students obtain occupational qualifications for office administrator combined with an examination entitling the successful candidate to study at a Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences) anywhere in Germany.

Other features of our training are:

- all practice-orientated subjects
- training consequently orientated towards company processes
- work with up-to-date software, SAP/R3 created by the market leader SAP
- development of independence
- business basics
- general subjects such as English, German, mathematics and social studies
- option to change within the full-time and part-time courses if necessary (for example in case of a training company's insolvency)

Apart from our full-time vocational training within an educational system we also offer a year of preparatory training, the preparation to BOS (Berufsoberschule) university entrance qualification, the entitlement to study at a Fachhochschule FOS and of course the dual system of initial vocational education and training.



Instruction in a Model Company

3. Why do we use up-to date SAP and ARIS software?

SAP is the market leader in business software solutions. Their pioneer role has made it easy for our students to switch to other programs later on. Moreover, SAP software is process-orientated. Our college has developed a programmed learning scheme, erp4school (www.erp3school.de), to display fundamental business processes within a company. This enables students to work with the software and acquire the administrative knowledge independently. Apart from learning how to work with programs students also learn to use them within a MODEL COMPANY. In real companies trainees often cannot experiment with software because making mistakes would be too expensive. In our college students are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. Their education is for free, and they also have the chance to take part in SAP AG certifications. For the past few years we have been the only reference school of SAP AG because we work intensively with their software.

Presentation of our school

4. Visits abroad

Apart from the English and Spanish lessons in the first year of education we also offer an exchange programme with Polish trainees. In the second year a 4-week on-the-job training can be done in Finland and England.



Our students in Poland

5. Sustainability

Background

At the first UN conference on the environment in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, all the participating countries agreed on development based on social equalization between nations, healthy economic development and prevention of pollution.

Only with sustainable development, which takes all three parts into account, can we manage global dangers such as changes in climate.

Our college focuses on this problem in classes by informing students about the background. We want to enable trainees to create their own future and show them how to take action.

In 2006 we were honoured as participant in the decade project “Education for Sustainable Development“ by the UNESCO.



Presentation of our school

6. Apart from learning

Our school has installed solar collectors to reduce the CO₂ emissions. First projects for use in classes have already been planned.



The tenth anniversary was prepared on a project-work day. Dances were performed, piano and saxophone concerts were held. The highlight of the buffet was two cakes in the form of our school buildings in Pappelallee and Mandelstraße.



Presentation of our school

On the anniversary day students took part in a 1-hour 15-km race for our twin school in Tanzania. People sponsored them for every 500 metres they complete. They collected 20,000 euros, which was donated to Tanzania.



Our partner school in Tanzania

Every year the Chamber of Commerce and Industry honours the best students. In 2007 8 trainees were awarded a prize in form of book vouchers and certificates. Because of this our college is one of the best educational institutions in Berlin.



Since 2005 state authorities have sent qualified teams to evaluate schools in Berlin. Our school was visited by school inspectors on 11 and 13 September 2007. In six quality requirements 19 criteria were checked. In 14 we achieved an „A“, which is the best mark.

Apart from that, our students assess their teachers once a year. Afterwards, results are discussed among colleagues and students, and improvements are suggested.

Presentation of our school

Our guests

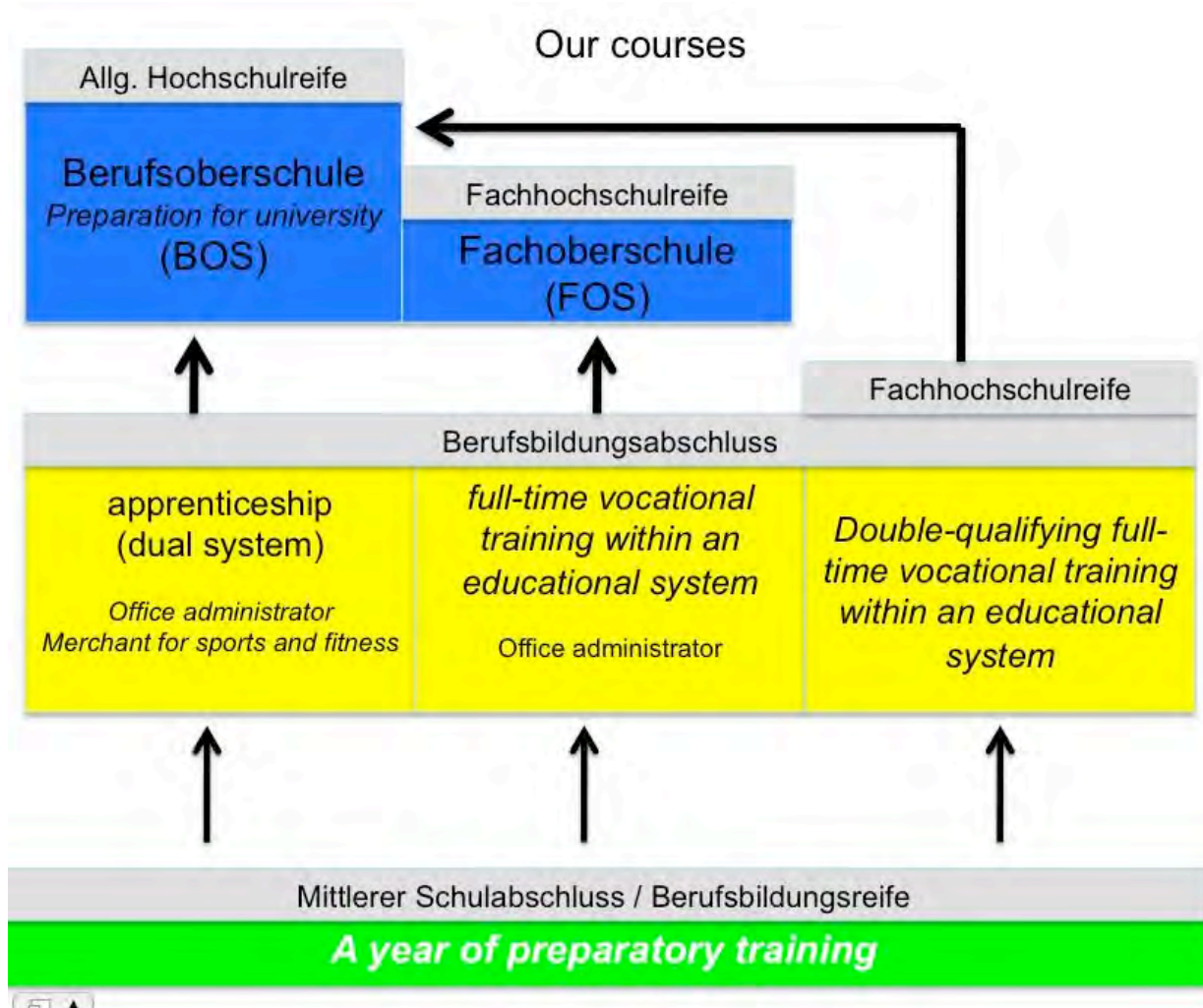
The German Trade Union Federation is also interested in our school. On 29 March 2007 Michael Sommer, the chairman, visited our college. He was impressed by the achievements of our school graduates and with the high computer competence.



On 5 June 2008 Prof. Dr. E. Zöllner, Berlin`s Senator of Education, visited our school. In a 2-hour panel discussion the participants emphasized the innovative and successful work of our school, which points the way to professional training as full-time classroom study in the future.



7. Details about various courses



1) *Double-qualifying, full-time vocational training within an educational system*

- qualifications in office administration combined with an examination entitling the candidate to study at a Fachhochschule
- duration of training: 3 years
- 5 days a week at school
- exam held by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- professional practice simulated in modern learning offices
- work with WORD, EXCEL, Power Point and databases
- continue in the second year with SAP/R3
- a 3-month practical training in the 3rd semester (in companies such as Siemens, Daimler, BMW&)
- lessons on interdisciplinary lines
- German, English, mathematics, economics and social studies (4 lessons a week in preparation for the examination)
- Spanish offered as the second language for students who want to pass the university entry qualification

Presentation of our school

- prospects to enter the labour market better than the average

Possible options after passed exams:

- work in the job
- attend the BOS within 1 year to obtain the university entry qualification
- start at a Fachhochschule anywhere in Germany

2) *FOS - preparation for Fachhochschule* *BOS - preparation for university*

- duration of FOS: 1 year
- qualification: entitled to study at a Fachhochschule
- possibility to continue for one more year (BOS) to obtain the university entry qualification
- duration of BOS: 2 years
- qualification: university entry qualification

Terms of admission for FOS:

- intermediate school leaving certificate and a completed training
- or 5 years work in a commercial field

Terms of admission for BOS:

- average school mark 3
- average college mark 2.5

Education at FOS and BOS and all other courses are for free. Students can apply for government grants.

3) *A year of preparatory training at our college*

- obtain business basics of economics and administration
- work at their own workstations
- work with up-to-date office software
- extend their general knowledge
- duration of training: 1 year

Terms for admission:

- must have at least a leaving certificate

Possible options after passed exams:

- apply for a 3-year professional training
- attend FOS for 2 years (qualification: entitled to study at a Fachhochschule)

4) *skilled trades: office administrator*

- two different courses
- duration: 3 years
- 5 days a week at school
- exam held by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry - job-related German and English (2 lessons a week each)

Possible options after passed exams:

- work in the job
- attend FOS for 1 year (entitled to study at a Fachhochschule)
- attend of BOS (university entry qualification)

5) merchant for sports and fitness

- duration of training: 3 years
- place of learning: college and firm
- exam passed under the supervision of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- dual skilled trade
- possible company that takes on trainees: sports clubs, fitness clubs,
- sports and leisure departments, sports event agencies, sports equipment branches
- combination of commercial and sport contents
- learn how company processes work in sports clubs and fitness clubs
- deal with a range of services and procurement processes and financing
- learn basics for marketing and how to plan and organize sporting events, training
- units and taking care of athletes during competitions

Terms for admission:

- interested in sports
- possibly active in sports
- interested in dealing with people and figures
- social and communicative abilities

Possible options after passed exams:

- work in fitness centres, sports clubs and almost in all sports-related jobs

8. Students' feedback



- Maria:
“I have a little daughter and when I started to look for a traineeship it was not that easy. At this school it was not a problem at all. We learn a lot here and I have the feeling that the things we learn can be useful for our every day life, for example, when we need help on legal grounds.“
- Nadine:
„I feel the same way. I can be of help at home when it comes to writing letters to public authorities. „
- Femi:
„When I started I was in the preparatory training year. Because it went so well I was able to change to the first year of the 3-year training course. That was great because I saved a whole year. I have friends who are in similar traineeships, but they do not learn as much as we do.“
- Valentina:
➤ “First of all I like working on the computer. The school equipment is great and we are very knowledgeable in MS Office and SAP.“