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Fast career entry after apprenticeship

Apprenticeship graduates achieve high starting salaries

Vienna, 2024-10-08 – Apprenticeship graduates not only make a quick transition to working life, they also achieve the highest starting salaries of all secondary education programmes shortly after graduation, as an analysis by Statistics Austria shows. At the same time, however, there are also major differences in starting salaries in the various fields of apprenticeship training. Graduates of male dominated fields are paid higher starting salaries.

“The number of people completing an apprenticeship has fallen sharply in recent years. But not only do apprenticeship graduates make a quick transition to working life, they also achieve higher starting salaries shortly after graduation than graduates of a BHS, BMS or AHS,” says Tobias Thomas, Director General Statistics at Statistics Austria.

Of the total of 511 000 apprenticeships completed between 2008/09 and 2019/20, the majority – around 45 000 per year – were completed in the school years 2009/10 to 2013/14, after which the number fell to around 36 000 by 2019/20.

Women were less likely to complete an apprenticeship compared to men

Women were less likely to opt for an apprenticeship than men. The proportion of women who completed an apprenticeship between 2008/09 and 2019/20 was 39.5%, although there were major differences between the various training fields: in hairdressing and beauty care (proportion of women: 93.6%), pharmacy (93.4%) and secretarial and office work (80.6%), significantly more women completed apprenticeships than men. By contrast, the training fields of transport services (proportion of men: 96.9%), motor vehicles, ships and aircraft (96.7%) or electricity and energy (96.3%) were clearly preferred by men.

Apprenticeship graduates manage to enter working life quickly

Apprenticeship graduates typically work in a (training) company before completing their apprenticeship and often remain employed there. This is reflected in a relatively short period of time until they start their first gainful employment: the median duration was around 1.3 months. Once again, there were noticeable differences between the training fields: While the transition in the fields of forestry, agriculture and transport services, graduates was seamless, graduates in the fields of personal services, architecture and construction started their first job 2.5 months after graduation.

18 months after graduation, 79.3% were in employment. In comparison, only people with a degree of a higher vocational school achieved a higher value (83.8%), while graduates of a lower vocational school (73.2%) or a general secondary school (36.1%) were less likely to be employed at this point.

Apprenticeship graduates earned € 2 418 gross shortly after graduation

The monthly gross median income from employment (including full-time and part-time employment) 18 months after completing an apprenticeship amounted to € 2 418. This means that apprenticeship graduates earned more at this time than graduates of a higher vocational school (BHS; € 2 386), a lower vocational school (BMS; € 2 206) or a general secondary school (AHS; € 1 905).

Particularly high median incomes were recorded by apprenticeship graduates in the training fields of transport services (€ 2 990), interdisciplinary programs and qualifications with a focus on engineering and

technical professions (€ 2 848) and forestry (€ 2 832). On the other hand, people with an apprenticeship qualification in the training fields of personal services (€ 1 889), interdisciplinary programs and qualifications with a focus on business, administration and law (€ 1 937) and the arts (€ 1 991) earned relatively the least.

Women earn less 18 months after completing apprenticeship – except in journalism and information

There was also a clear difference between the genders: women earned an average of € 642 less than their male colleagues 18 months after graduation (women: € 1 996; men: € 2 638). This difference in salary can be partly explained by different full-time rates, as 94.5% of men but only 78.2% of women were working full-time at this point. Another factor is the choice of apprenticeship, as those apprenticeships with particularly high median incomes had a higher proportion of men, while there were more female graduates in those training fields with a tendency towards lower median incomes. However, men also earned more than women within the same training field – the only exception was the field of journalism and information, in which female apprenticeship graduates earned slightly more on average 18 months after graduation (women: € 2 224; men: € 2 150).

Further information and the entire [report \(available in German only\)](#) can be found on our [website](#).

Information on methodology, definitions: The “Monitoring of education-related employment behaviour (Bildungsbezogenes Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring – BibEr)” contains structured administrative data on education and the labour market. BibEr makes the employment and educational careers of all persons residing in Austria after leaving a formal educational institution statistically analysable. The project is carried out by Statistics Austria together with and on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy and the Public Employment Service Austria.

First gainful employment: The first gainful employment (excluding marginal employment) that lasts at least three months and whose end date is after the six months after graduation cut-off date. This is restricted to those persons who have not attended any further training within two years of completing their apprenticeship.

The duration until the first employment is determined to the day, whereby two years are used as the observation period. In order to approximate the actual differences between the genders, the duration until first employment is adjusted for the legally estimated duration of periods of pre-service or community service.

Inflation-adjusted gross median income from employment: Income from employment is calculated from gross earnings, reduced by special payments (such as vacation and Christmas bonuses). A daily income is calculated from this and extrapolated to a monthly income by multiplying by 365/12. In order to ensure comparability of income between years, the consumer price index (CPI) is weighted to the price level of 2022 (CPI base year 2005).

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