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Educational careers are shaped early

AHS lower secondary school is a stepping stone to higher education for 92%

Vienna, 2025-04-29 – The key course for the further educational career is set early in Austria. This is according to 'Education in Figures 2023/24' by Statistics Austria. The report also shows that the proportion of 25 to 64-year-olds in the Austrian population with a university or academy degree has continued to rise. However, compared to other EU countries, Austrian graduates are less likely to obtain the highest degrees (Master, Diploma and Doctorate).

"High educational qualifications go hand in hand with better employment opportunities on the labour market and higher earning potential. Currently, 36.6% of 25 to 65-year-olds in Austria have a tertiary educational qualification, i.e. either a university degree or a vocational secondary school qualification, which puts Austria in the middle of the EU field. However, Austria lags far behind the EU when it comes to university degrees: While the EU average is currently almost one-third of a year's graduates obtain a bachelor's degree, in Austria the figure is just 20.5%. Furthermore, 13.8% of a year's graduates obtain a master's or doctoral degree, compared to one-fifth on average across the EU. "Decisions made at a young age, in particular, have a significant impact on educational careers," says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas at the occasion of this year's press conference "Education in Figures".

After AHS lower secondary school, 92% continue the path to university entrance qualification

More than a third of children move on to AHS (academic secondary school) after primary school; in the 2023/24 school year, 35.9 % of fifth-grade students attended this type of school. After completing the lower cycle of AHS, 91.8 % continue on to the Matura (school-leaving examinations qualifying for university attendance). The majority (58.4 %) move on to the upper cycle of AHS, and 33.4 % to a BHS (college for higher vocational education).

Even after compulsory secondary school, the path to higher education is generally open. The transition rate to schools leading to the Matura is 40.8 %, with secondary school children more likely to choose the BHS (32.5 %) than the AHS (8.3 %).

Not everyone attends secondary school level II until Matura. The rate of those who drop out of school to switch to another vocational training program or to complete their education altogether is about twice as high for children from compulsory secondary school as for children coming from the lower cycle of AHS.

After successfully completing the AHS Matura, 83.6 % transfer to a university within the first three years. Even among BHS graduates who have already completed vocational training, more than half (50.9 %) transfer to the higher education system within three years.

University degrees continue to increase

Already, 20.4 % of 25- to 64-year-olds have a university, university college or equivalent degree – forty years ago, this was true for just 4.5 % of people in this age group. These developments in educational attainment have a positive impact on labour force participation. In 2024, the employment rate for 25- to 64-year-olds with at most compulsory schooling was 56.8 %. For those with a university, university college or equivalent degree, it was 86.6 %.

Income also increases with education. Results on household income and poverty risks by level of education based on the current survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC 2024) can be found in a [press release](#) also published today.

However, Austria lags significantly behind internationally, especially when it comes to the highest degrees (master, diploma and doctorate). Recently, only 13.8 % of under 35-year-olds in Austria obtained a first degree at this level, compared to the EU22 average of 19.7 %.

One third of bachelor's degrees at universities of applied sciences

33 180 bachelor's degrees were completed in 2022/23, the majority of which (17 521) were obtained at public universities, over a third (11 228) at universities of applied sciences, and the remainder at university colleges of teacher education (2 576), private universities and university colleges (1 846), and theological schools (9). Furthermore, 20 235 master's degrees were recorded, of which 12 312 were obtained at public universities, 5 744 at universities of applied sciences, 916 at universities of teacher education, 1 259 at private universities and university colleges, and 4 at theological schools. Of a total of 3 794 diploma degrees (including, in particular, degrees in medicine and law), 96 %, or 3 648, were awarded at public universities, the remainder at private universities and university colleges (118) and theological schools (28). Of 2 142 doctoral degrees, 2 048 were obtained at public universities, 93 at private universities and one at a theological school.

Highest satisfaction in the field of information and communication technologies

Looking back, the majority of graduates rate their studies positively. Among master's and diploma graduates in the 2020/21 cohort, 68 % are (very) satisfied and only 10 % are (very) dissatisfied with their studies. However, there are significant differences in satisfaction by field of study. Graduates in information and communication technologies rated their studies the highest overall. In this field, 84% of graduates are (very) satisfied.

Satisfaction with bachelor's degree programs is somewhat lower: 64% report being (very) satisfied. Among bachelor's graduates, the highest proportion of positive evaluations (79%) can also be found in the field of information and communication technologies.

The results of the EUROGRADUATE survey of university graduates can be found in the results report on Statistics Austria's [EUROGRADUATE website](#). New STATcube data cubes as well as interactive maps and diagrams in the [STATatlas](#) are available for the first time on the topics of studies and degrees at Austrian universities. The publication 'Education in Figures 2023/24' as well as detailed results and further information on education in Austria can also be found on our [website](#).

The **EUROGRADUATE** project aims to establish a career tracking system for university graduates at the European level. The project was initiated by the EU Commission. 17 countries participated in EUROGRADUATE 2022. Statistics Austria was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) to implement the survey in Austria. Key topics of the survey include educational pathways, study conditions and content, international mobility, and entry into and the situation on the labour market. The survey population consists of graduates from Austrian universities (Bachelor, Master, Diploma) from the 2016/17 and 2020/21 academic years. 22 000 graduates were invited by post and some by email to complete the online questionnaire. Data were collected between 17 October 2022 and 9 January 2023. After data cleansing, 12 433 valid responses were evaluated, corresponding to a response rate of 57 %. Sampling across 19 educational fields allows for detailed comparisons between study programs.

Statistics Austria is the central organisation for official data and statistics on society, the economy, the state and the environment. As a national statistical institute, it is committed to the statutory principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. Statistics Austria is headed by Tobias Thomas, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

Further enquiries:

For information on results and methodology, please contact:

Regina Radinger, phone: +43 1 711 28-7457, e-mail: regina.radinger@statistik.gv.at

Guido Sommer-Binder, phone: +43 1 711 28-7349, e-mail: guido.sommer-binder@statistik.gv.at

For interview requests, please contact the press office: presse@statistik.gv.at

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STATISTICS AUSTRIA | Federal Institution under Public Law | Guglgasse 13 | 1110 Vienna | www.statistik.at

Press: phone: +43 1 711 28-7777 | e-mail: presse@statistik.gv.at

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