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# Every tenth elementary school student receives German language support

## A third of compulsory school students require support for longer than a year

Vienna, 2026-04-30 – The educational attainment of the Austrian population continues to rise, as shown in “Education in Figures 2024/25” published by Statistics Austria. The latest edition also contains key data and analyses on the state of education in Austria, as well as data on German language support classes and dropouts.

“The educational attainment of the Austrian population continues to rise. Since 1981, the proportion of people with no more than a compulsory school leaving certificate has fallen to 17.1%. Over the same period, the proportion of university graduates has increased fivefold. As educational trajectories are shaped at an early stage and in order to support pupils with insufficient German language skills as early as possible, they have been receiving support in German language support classes or courses since the 2018/19 school year. Around one in ten primary school pupils receives German language support, in total, a third of pupils in compulsory education receive support for longer than a year,” says Manuela Lenk, Director General Statistics at Statistics Austria.

### About one in five first-graders participates in German language support

Since 2018/19, students with insufficient or poor German language skills have been taught in German language support classes or in German language support courses parallel to regular instruction for a maximum period of 2 years. German language support measures in compulsory education primarily targets children at an early educational age; they begin as early as the preschool level and, at 84%, take place mainly in elementary schools.

In the 2024/25 school year, approximately 62% of preschool children received such support. In the first grade of elementary schools, approximately 23.3% of students attended a German language support class or course in the 2024/25 school year. In higher grades, the proportion of children in German language support decreases steadily. In middle schools, the proportion was 3.0%. German language support is more common in cities; in Vienna, it affects 15.4% of compulsory school students, followed by Upper Austria (7.5%), Vorarlberg (6.3%), and Styria (6.1%).

**Table 1: Proportion of students in German language support by school type**

	Primary School	Compulsory Secondary School	Special Education School	Pre-Vocational School
German language support class	5.4 %	2.2 %	0.9 %	4.8 %
German language support course	5.4 %	0.8 %	0.5 %	1.3 %
Total	10.8 %	3.0 %	1.4 %	6.1 %

S: STATISTICS AUSTIA, School Statistics 2024/25.

In the school year 2022/23, approximately 13 800 students in compulsory education attended a German language support class for the first time. After one year, 13.4% of them no longer received German language support and 42.6% transferred to a German language support course. Just under one in three continued to attend a German language support class after one year.

### Number of dropouts has remained stable in recent years

Of the more than 1 million students in Austria, a total of around 50 000 were not eligible for promotion at the end of the 2023/24 school year. This figure has remained stable over the long term – except for the years surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic – and is generally higher in upper secondary education (e.g., 9% in the upper grades of AHS). Male students are more frequently given failing grades than female students. In the school types middle school, AHS, BHS and BMS about half of all students not eligible for promotion repeat the grade, and about one-third switch to a different educational program. About one-fifth are no longer enrolled in the formal school system.

The educational trajectories of new entrants to the AHS upper level or a BHS show that the proportion of those who switch or drop out of their program after the first year is significantly higher at BHS than at AHS (7.9% vs. 14%). One year after the standard duration, 63.5% of these new entrants have successfully completed the AHS upper secondary level and 53.9% have successfully completed the BHS.

When examining the academic trajectories of first-time enrollees in bachelor’s and diploma programs at public universities, it is evident that approximately one-quarter of students have earned a degree after 4 years. After 10 years, 64.5% have successfully completed their studies at a university; another 27.6% have dropped out or interrupted their studies.

### 22% drop out of education to pursue gainful employment

As part of the 2024 Labor Force Microcensus module ‘Young People in the Labour Market’, teenagers and young adults aged between 15 and 34 were surveyed about dropping out of education. Extrapolated figures show that 469 800 people stated that they had dropped out of at least one formal education programme in the school or higher education system, or from an apprenticeship, before completing it. This corresponds to 22.3% of all 15- to 34-year-olds.

The main reason cited by 52.2% of respondents for dropping out was that the program did not suit them or was too demanding. 21.8 % cited the desire to work or financial reasons as the reason for dropping out. Other personal reasons, such as health limitations or disabilities, led 13.7% to drop out; 4%—mainly women—cited other family-related reasons, such as caring for relatives or children.

**Table 2: Main reasons for dropping out of education among 15- to 34-year-olds**

	Preferred to work, financial reasons	Did not like the training, was too difficult	Other personal reasons (e.g., illness, disability)	Other family reasons (e.g. care of relatives)	Other
Men	22.4%	52.4%	13.6%	(x)	9.0%
Women	21.3%	52.0%	13.7%	5.4%	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Labor Force Microcensus – modul 2024 ‘Young People in the Labour Market’, Annual average across all weeks. – Population aged 15 to 34 who have dropped out of education at least once. – Extrapolated figures from the initial surveys of the 4 quarterly samples. – (x) Values cannot be interpreted statistically (coefficient of variation over 25%).

Detailed results and further information on Education in Figures 2024/25 can be found on our [website](#).

### Information on Methodology and Definitions:

**Special status of students:** Students who score “poor” or “unsatisfactory” on the standardised assessment for determining German proficiency (“MIKA-D”) are classified as students with special status for a maximum of 4 semesters and receive intensive German language support through German support classes or German support courses.

**German language support in German support classes and German support courses:** The type of German language support is regulated in § 8h of the School Organisation Act. Students with insufficient German language skills are either taught in dedicated German support classes or integrated into their regular class according to the German support class curriculum (15 or 20 hours per week, depending on the school type). Students with insufficient German language skills receive, in parallel with instruction in their regular class, German language support in the form of a German language support course amounting to 6 hours per week.

**Discontinuation of education:** In the AKE Module 2024, all discontinuations of formal education within the regular school or higher education system, including apprenticeships, were to be reported. A change of field of study, major, or apprenticeship, as well as current extended interruptions lasting beyond the vacation period, were also considered discontinuations.

**AKE Module 2024**, focusing on “Young People in the Labor Market,” was funded by the European Union in 2024 and conducted additionally across Europe as part of the Labor Force Microcensus (AKE). The Microcensus is a sample survey of households. It collects standardised information on the labor market situation and education in randomly selected private households in Austria. As part of the module, 7 271 individuals (net sample) aged 15 to 34, excluding those in military or civilian service, were surveyed. These data were subsequently extrapolated to the total population.

**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 Manuela Lenk, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

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