

The master craftsperson qualification – a qualification which brings success

The master craftsperson qualification is an important higher VET qualification in Austria. It pursues high objectives in terms of specialist competence, company management and apprenticeship training. The results of a graduates' survey reveal that these high objectives are indeed achieved in the business sphere.

The survey among graduates of the master craftsperson examination – which was commissioned by the [Austrian Federal Economic Chamber](#) and conducted in the autumn of 2015 by [ibw](#) – aimed to collect data that allowed statements to be made on whether the objectives of this qualification are also fulfilled. The examination aims to prove that qualification holders have comprehensive specialist competence enabling them to take on responsibility in an executive position for carrying out complex tasks, often combined with tackling unforeseeable challenges. The exam additionally aims to demonstrate that master craftspersons can set up/manage a company and train apprentices.

The facts and figures obtained by this empirical “reality check” show that the master craftsperson qualification indeed fulfils these objectives. After passing the master craftsperson exam, three quarters of the graduates advance to higher-level positions with more managerial and decision-making powers. They hold executive positions in middle management and above all in higher management. In addition, around one third of the graduates become self-employed after the exam by setting up their own company or taking over a business and they are therefore responsible for managing an entire company. Moreover, the master craftsperson exam also has positive effects on the income situation: some 43% of the respondents have benefited from the exam by obtaining a higher income.

This data proves that the objectives pursued with the qualification correlate with reality, which means that master craftspersons are employed in line with their qualification. It also confirms the demand raised by qualification providers that the master craftsperson qualification should be allocated at level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework. The findings of the graduates' survey prove that the learning outcomes connected with the master craftsperson qualification correspond best with the descriptors of level 6 or are characterised best by them.

In connection with the survey it is also interesting that the vast majority of master craftspersons completed a subject-specific apprenticeship and several years of company-based practice before graduating. Although, according to law, the only prerequisite for taking the master craftsperson exam is full legal age, the majority of the respondents consider apprenticeship combined with a few years of practice as a suitable basis for acquiring the qualification. This makes apprenticeship a major “springboard” for tertiary VET qualifications.

Further information:

Information about the [structure of the master craftsperson examination](#) (in German only)
Tritscher-Archan, Sabine, Gruber, Benjamin, Nowak, Sabine and Petanovitsch, Alexander (2016):
Meisterprüfung in Österreich. Absolvent/innenbefragung [Master craftsperson examination in Austria. Graduates' survey]. ibw-Forschungsbericht Nr. 184, Wien 2016. [Download](#) (in German only)
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