



THE DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM – STRONG THANKS TO ECONOMIC SELF-GOVERNMENT

The Chambers of Crafts – Ensuring Vocational Training
and Further Education Locally



WESTDEUTSCHER HANDWERKSKAMMERTAG



“What do companies worldwide appreciate most about the dual training system in Germany? The competence of the skilled employees and executives. Anyone who goes through training in crafts, industry or retail has not only learned something about business but done so in business. The principle is that businesses take on the responsibility for training themselves and are a strong partner in the training system. The result is a culture of training and further education within companies which offers German SMEs, in particular, an outstanding level of qualifications. The outlook is to have a dual vocational training system that will be able to cope with the challenges of technological, economic and social change in the future.”

Heino von Meyer, Head of the OECD Centre in Berlin

“The strength of the dual training system is its success. And that lies exactly where it belongs - with the people. The dual system picks them up, takes them along with it, offers them a way in, a way up and connections. It has great experience in combining the imparting of business and academic knowledge and skills. There is no better learning solution for thinking and acting in a professional way. The skilled employees who emerge from it are not only masters of their profession but carry out their job with commitment and social responsibility.”

Prof.Dr. Friedrich Hubert Esser, President of the BIBB (Federal Institute of Vocational Training)

“A profession is more than the sum of its activities. It creates identity and is the prerequisite for passionate commitment to the cause. In addition to knowledge and skills and a good helping of talent and commitment, it is the social and communicative skills which determine whether and how people progress in their profession. Skills for which they develop a feel precisely by working with one another in business. So that this remains so and that training within the dual system also imparts social components in addition to the purely specialist components we, as employees, are actively involved in the design of the dual vocational training.”

Andreas Meyer-Lauber, Chairman of the North-Rhine Westphalia Region of the German Trade Union Federation

“Dual vocational training means **LEARNING AND GAINING EXPERIENCE AT FIRST HAND**. That benefits not only those who are embarking on their professional life and successfully complete a course of training but also ensures, above all, that there is within businesses a long-term policy with regard to staff and a certain culture of responsibility in relation to the next generation in each case. What this means, as a result, is that I, as the proprietor of a business, can improve my competitive position through this, that I ensure the best possible conditions for qualifications in order to arrive at a solution that is close to the market and therefore efficient. In addition, a well-running system of economic self-government on the part of the chambers of crafts and guilds ensures constant quality assurance with regard to the training conditions within companies.”

Willy Hesse, President of the West German Association of Chambers of crafts

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Note on gender: In the case of all descriptions that relate to persons, the wording chosen means both genders, even if, for reasons to do with comprehensibility, the masculine form is used.

1. Dual Vocational Training System – Strengths and Challenges



The dual vocational training system is held in high regard and is firmly anchored in society. It imparts qualifications in a broad spectrum of training and further education professions and flexibly adapts itself to the changing demands of the labour market. Learning in a company is linked to additional learning in a school or business training centre in order to impart comprehensive, vocational skills to the learner which he needs in order for him to perform in the workplace.

Therefore, the particular strength of the vocational training system is the successful transition of the trained qualified personnel into a subsequent job and the career options as executives and self-employed persons that are associated with advanced further training.

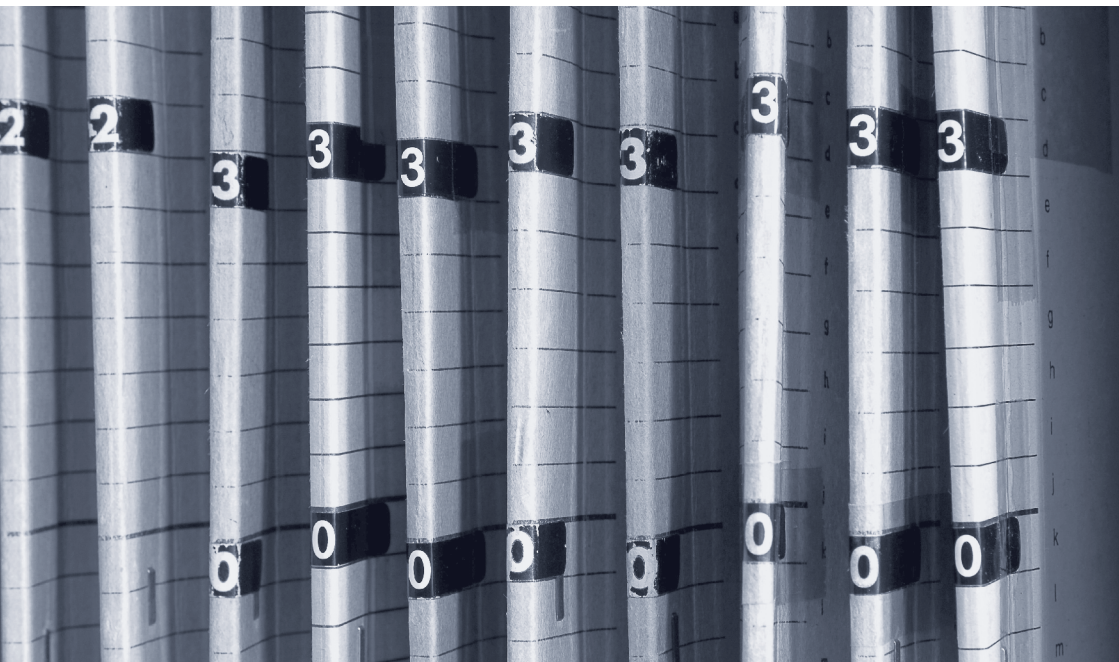
The quality assurance of the dual training is characterised by a complex weave of controls and counter-controls at federal, regional and company level. As a result, it is guaranteed inter alia that training-policy and economic aims are not driven out by short-term requirements on the part of the training companies.

Vocational training fulfils an important economic function with regard to the delivery of higher qualifications to and the integration of young people into working life.

Every year, new young people must be just as enthused by dual vocational training as companies must be persuaded to carry out training. The regulatory instruments in relation to the professions must be continuously adapted as well as all the regulations concerning the implementation of initial training and further education. Vocational training must hold its own in training-policy terms in order to safeguard its status as an attractive training pillar in parallel with academic education. The adaptation of the methodology and didactics so that they keep up with the times is just as much of a long-term task as the organisation and design of examinations in terms of their content.

A clear competitive advantage for companies in Germany is the fact that graduates from vocational training are available in very large numbers as skilled labour in industrial/technical, commercial and service professions, and that graduates from further vocational training with final certificates in the tertiary sector – such as masters or engineers – find jobs that are on a similarly high level in terms of qualifications to those of college or university graduates. The basis of this is the vocational principle as well as the companies as a weight-bearing pillar of vocational training.

2. The Chambers as Self-Governing Bodies



The chambers of crafts, as self-governing bodies, have the task of building on the statutory provisions that have been passed for the regulation of the conditions of the crafts trade, which still require to be supplemented by individual regulations, in relation to their area.

The chambers of crafts are intended to represent the overall interests of the crafts trade and the interests of those working as craftsmen and craftswomen in their area, as well as apprentices, in relation to the legislature and the administration of the state. The chambers of crafts were clearly created as a symbol of freedom and as an alternative to state compulsion.

Every company is a member of a chamber. It is also obliged to be so by law. It is only on the basis of this compulsory membership that it is possible for the chambers to fulfil their duties in the best possible way and specifically to safeguard the interests of small and medium-sized enterprises. The principle of compulsory membership ensures that it is not a specific group with its individual interests that is formed but that all those belonging to the craft sector of the economy are brought together according to objective criteria which lie in their interest. Thus it is ensured that the articulation of the interests through the chamber is representative of the opinion of all of the members. In addition, through the craft ordinance, a special situation exists in the craft sector whereby not just entrepreneurs but also the employees as well as the apprentices working in this trade belong, as members, to the chamber of crafts. Through compulsory membership there is also a guarantee within the craft that the interests of the employees are looked after and, accordingly, there is democratic cooperation between employees and employers.

Economic self-government is the best way to the efficient, economical and non-bureaucratic fulfilment of public duties entrusted to them. This finds expression, in particular, in the broad catalogue of duties which the legislature has entrusted to the chambers of crafts. The chambers of crafts must attend to numerous sovereign duties. Worth mentioning in connection with the dual training system are, for example, the role in the management of apprentices, the supervision of training, the setting up of committees for the examination of apprentices who have completed their training or giving the guild the power to set up examination committees as well as pass examination ordinances in relation to the examinations for those apprentices who have completed their training. The transfer of sovereign duties is coupled with compulsory membership in order to be able to act in an even-handed manner in relation to all of the members.

3. Initial Dual Training: The Learning Locations: Company and Professional School

The vocational training is described as dual (bipartite) as it takes place at two learning locations: in the company and in the professional school. Within the company it is the practical contents which predominate and in the professional school the theoretical contents. However, not all craft companies have all of the techniques and technologies available which form part of the spectrum of practical tasks of vocational training. Nevertheless, in order that all of the vocationally necessary skills and competences can be learned, the joint, supra-company instruction for apprentices (ÜLU), carried out in training centres belonging to the craft trade, supports the practical side of training.

The basis of the contents of company training is the training ordinance. There is such a training ordinance for all 349 nationally recognised training professions. Set down in the training ordinances, which apply throughout the federal republic, are, in each case, the official designation of the training profession, the duration of training, the aim of the vocational training, a description of the vocational profile, the regulations concerning the intermediate and journeyman examination, or the examination taken at the end of the apprenticeship training, and the framework plan for training along with the competences and knowledge to be learned.

The Länder (federal states) bear responsibility for ensuring that the professional school is fulfilling its pedagogical mission in the best possible way.

The framework teaching plan, in coordination with the training ordinance, represents the basis for vocationally-related teaching in the professional schools in all 16 federal states. The latter contains details with regard to the training mission of the professional school, the didactic principles of the teaching, the aims of the teaching and the contents to be imparted. Teaching takes place on a part-time basis, as a



rule on one or two eight-hour teaching days a week in each case or at one stretch, i.e. weekly in one block. The basic rule that applies with regard to the organisation of the teaching is that the needs of the training companies must be taken into account.

Important legal foundations of dual vocational training are the BBiG (Vocational Training Act) and the HwO (Crafts Ordinance). These prescribe binding training regulations for all training professions which are developed by the social partners and, accordingly, by mutual agreement with the employers and employees directly con-

cerned. The BIBB (Federal Institute of Vocational Training) coordinates the drawing up of the training regulations which are, in the end, passed by the federal legislature. Of course, experts drawn from practice in the field are involved in this process at federal level.

Within the context of the dual training system the training company and the professional school are, accordingly, partners who, together, create the preconditions and bear responsibility for ensuring that the training proceeds successfully.

The rules of the game passed by the legislature are not sufficient on their own to fill dual vocational training with “life” and to establish it on a permanent basis. For this function the chambers of crafts as self-governing bodies are indispensable.

They perform fundamental work at many points in order to win over new companies to training every year, to support companies with training and to ensure the quality of the training.

A. Winning Over of Training Companies

No business has to carry out training. It is a decision for the company to train skilled employees itself. Chambers of crafts provide the motivation to do this.

Businesses do not become training companies on their own. They need to be appealed to, motivated, and given models, support and advice.

It is the chambers of crafts which continually appeal specifically to new companies and companies that are not carrying out training through information material, letters, hotlines, canvassing and offering advice, report on companies that are particularly successful at training, and discuss the issue of training in their own committees. Thus, the potential for training companies is extended afresh every year from this economically self-governing body whilst, at the same time, companies unavoidably close or decide, for the most widely varying reasons, not to carry out training any more.

The training advisory service informs and advises companies as to whether, how and in what professions they can give training, gives help with in-house training and explains all the rules of the game concerning the dual training system. Part of this are the training regulations, the framework teaching plan, the issue of vocational instruction, the supra-company instruction of apprentices, the rights and obligations of the training company and trainees as well as questions regarding leave, rates of remuneration, the keeping of report cards and everything to do with the examination.

B. Support for Companies in the Search for Apprentices – Measures aimed at Ensuring a Supply of new Trainees

If companies wish to carry out training they alone are responsible for finding a apprentices. Chambers of crafts help with this.

On the one hand, many young people do not know what they are to do after school. Therefore, it is necessary to talk and give information to school pupils as well as school leavers about the options and prospects associated with dual training. Young people must be motivated to start professional training.

On the other hand, many companies cannot find any apprentices or have problems choosing between apprentices. The chambers as self-governing bodies support the training companies through very many measures, such as through

- the provision of apprenticeship exchanges and work experience exchanges, also on the internet, on which the training companies can enter their vacant apprenticeships,
- a list of training companies, also as an app (“apprenticeship radar”) in which or through which young people can find suitable companies for training in the area,
- information and advertising material for training professions, training and career paths in the trades as well as for dual training as a whole,

- the passing on of contacts between companies and schools offering general training,
- information on multipliers such as teachers and parents for the purpose of providing better vocational guidance to school pupils,
- visits to schools and attendance at training fairs in order to inform school pupils of dual training and the vocational spectrum.

In addition, it is of special significance that chambers of crafts also look after interested young people on an individual basis who are looking for a training place within a company and pass them on to companies where they are an exact fit.

C. Design and Approval of Legally secure Training Contracts between Companies and Apprentices

A training contract must be concluded between the training company and the apprentices, which the chamber of crafts must check.

If the company and the young person conclude a vocational training contract, the young person is entitled to be taught in a specialist class of the dual system, i.e. at the dual partner school.

In order to ease the work for companies as well as to design the contract in a way that is legally secure for both parties to the contract the chamber has specimen contracts in printed or digital form which it makes available to companies. The specimen contracts are regularly adjusted so that they are in line with the applicable legal position in each case.

The chambers of crafts receive the vocational training contracts from the companies and check whether the contents recorded in these, e.g. with regard to the level of remuneration, number of days off, duration of training and the training specified are in line with the applicable law.

D. Ensuring Quality of Training

The chambers of crafts have the task of supervising the training and passing regulations with regard to the vocational training.

The chambers of crafts have engaged their own advisers for the supervision of the training who stay in constant touch with training companies and apprentices.

As a non-partisan authority it gives advice not only prior to the conclusion of the training contract but also thereafter in the event of difficulties and problems. Here the support in relation to advice on training stretches from general legal information to conflict management. Companies are visited and given advice just like apprentices for whom consultation hours of their own are set up, for example. Within the context of the supervision of training individual companies are also given an award for achieving a particularly good training performance. However, the entitlement to give training is also withdrawn from others in the event of the sustained breach of their obligations as a trainer.

In order to ensure the highest possible standard of company training, the chambers of crafts pay attention not only to the observance of regulations. They also see to it that the optimum teaching and learning is made possible within the training and also check the outcomes and successes in the case of the journeyman and final examinations on a regular basis in order to ensure the maintenance of uniform standards.

Insofar as the statutory regulations allow some leeway and there is a need for regulation, the chambers of crafts pass their own regulations for their own catchment area. An example of this are training regulations for disabled people for whom, due to the nature and severity of their disability, training in a regular profession is out of the question.

E. Settling of Conflicts

Conflicts arise where people work together – the chambers of craft also mediate.

The training advisers of the chambers of crafts advise company trainers and apprentices equally and give information on rights and obligations. They help to overcome conflicts, but also whenever the training contract is dissolved, e.g. in the case of insolvency, and the apprentices need a new training company.

The apprentice supervisors also play a significant role in the settling of conflicts. The apprentice supervisor is in an honorary role as the owner of the training experts at the relevant guild, the union of employers belonging to the same craft in the region. The apprentice supervisor has the task of looking after the apprentices trained in the area of his guild. He stands by the trainees to give advice and to act as an intermediary in the event of problems at the school or in the company. In addition, guilds can form committees for the settling of apprentice disputes between trainers and apprentices.

F. Ensuring Supra-Company Apprentice Instruction (Ülu) and Monitoring of its Implementation to a High Standard

Those being trained in companies take part, on average, for two to three weeks per year of training in courses involving joint supra-company apprentice instruction.

The supplementary, supra-company courses ensure that all trainees are able to practise the relevant competences of the profession in which they are being trained to the required depth, and this irrespective of the intake of orders and of the activities which their relevant teaching company focuses on. Not only the trainers offering supra-company apprentice instruction (ÜLU) but also the workshops used for the courses are directly linked to the training companies. These are supported by the chambers of crafts, guilds or local craft associations or professional associations and constitute, as the joint property of the associated craft companies in each

case, the extended workbench of the training companies. The activity-oriented training methods of the supra-company apprentice instruction put the new generation of apprentices in the position of being able to exercise the professional occupation for which they are qualified even in changing working environments. They lay the foundation for self-directed learning and, accordingly, for the ability of the apprentices to be able to further educate themselves throughout their lives as and when the need arises.

The chambers of crafts ensure the implementation of the supra-company apprentice instruction (ÜLU) in their areas, laying down, for example, the exact scope of courses and providing the locations for carrying them out. They supervise them to ensure that they are carried out to a high standard and in a business-oriented way and thus support the training companies in their interest in having the courses carried in line with their needs.

In this way the supra-company apprentice instruction ensures the ability of many training companies to carry out training and, accordingly, the provision of training places.

G. Encouraging Cooperation between Learning Locations

Companies, workshops for supra-company apprentice instruction and professional schools must work hand in hand. Chambers of crafts give them encouragement to do so.

Through the direct contact that the chambers of crafts have with the management of the professional schools, the guilds and associations as well as the training centres which carry out the supra-company courses of instruction, they encourage, again and again, cooperation between the learning locations and boost exchanges between those involved in training with regard to the imparting of additional qualifications, for example. Through projects and overarching agreements with the school

supervisory board and ministries rules in relation to joint communications and coordination are drawn up.

H. Qualification and Inspection of Company Trainers

Each company that would like to carry out training needs a qualified trainer. The chambers of crafts check named trainers.

The chambers of crafts organise a range of qualifications in order to qualify employees as company trainers. The training centres of the craft offer courses so that people can acquire the skills to be a trainer and are able to pass an examination before an examination committee set up by the chamber of crafts. There are further details on this in Section 4. Chambers also offer their member companies a range of further education for those skilled employees who “take an active part” in the training. For it is not just the trainer responsible but specifically those skilled employees within the company who play an active part in the training on a daily basis who have a decisive influence on how people work together and on the quality of the training.

4. Further Vocational Training

Further vocational training comes on top of initial dual training and can be separated into refresher vocational training and advanced further training, assigned to levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the European or German Qualifications Framework.

Putting school and academic training on a par with vocational training requires a system of quality assurance that meets the requirements.

This is achieved by, among other things, ensuring that the contents of the examinations are subject to proper legal supervision involving the Federation, the regions and the chambers of crafts as competent authorities. Social partners and the chambers of crafts are involved in planning, conducting and checking the success of further education courses.

Refresher vocational training serves to maintain and adapt existing vocational skills, knowledge and competences. Advanced further training has as its aim to produce a higher vocational qualification based on existing qualifications and to prepare those taking part in it for tasks involving a larger area of responsibility.



Further lifelong vocational training is the key to operating successfully at work and for making career changes.

A. Creation of a Public Training Infrastructure

The chambers of crafts run business training centres alongside state schools, colleges and universities as well as private, profit-oriented training providers.

The chambers of crafts with their training centres ensure the necessary range of training for many trades and target groups which would not be offered by the private sector. The chambers, but also other craft organisations, have, with the creation of training centres - with political support and partly with public assistance-, taken on the financial risk associated with a training infrastructure. With the centres they promote further vocational training, in particular that of employees and, accordingly, make a contribution towards easing the burden of the state.

B. Qualification of Company Trainers

Chambers of crafts training centres offer trainer skills seminars for the acquisition of evidence of the necessary vocational and work-related pedagogical knowledge.

Employees with the vocational expertise for their profession are not automatically suitable trainers. As a rule, what they lack is the vocational and work-related pedagogical knowledge in order to be able to plan the training and carry it out in an activity-oriented manner. What is involved in the seminars run by the chambers is to familiarise the participants with the pedagogical, methodological and social requirements for working as trainers and to impart the contents of training required by law. These will become even more significant in the future since the conditions in which young people begin training are growing further and further apart from one another - from the pupil at a special-needs school to the student who has passed the Abitur (equivalent to A Levels in Great Britain).

C. Qualification of Entrepreneurs and Executives:

The Master Craftsman School

The classic of advanced further training - the German master craftsman's qualification. Chambers of crafts recruit, inform and deliver qualifications in their training centres.

Apprentice – journeyman – master craftsman: following initial training as a journeyman what comes next is the “master craftsman” stage. This traditional 2-stage qualification in a profession has proved to be successful up until the present day. The master craftsman schools run by the chambers of crafts prepare people for work as an executive or for self-employment. They impart comprehensive vocational operational skills, in particular practical, theoretical, business, commercial, legal as well as vocational and work-related pedagogical skills. As evidence of a qualification for entrepreneurs as well as management executives the master craftsman’s diploma is not just a modern further education examination. Rather it is also the expression of the high level of craftsmanship, a guarantee of quality and consumer protection, but also the indispensable foundation for high performance in training by international comparison.

D. Advanced Further Training

Chambers of crafts centres qualify people for further education certificates following initial training and also beyond the master craftsman's examination for a professional career.

In addition to the traditional master craftsman school there are various, trade-specific qualifications which are part of advanced further training and which stand alongside the master craftsman’s qualification, are offset against the master craftsman’s qualification or have a master craftsman’s qualification as a precondition of access. Building energy adviser, polisher, qualified salesman/saleswoman working in the craft industry, restorer working in the craft, designer working in the craft and a graduate in

business management can be mentioned as examples of forms of advanced further training in accordance with the crafts code.

The chambers give out information on these training certificates, find training providers and offer courses in their training centres in order to qualify journeymen and skilled workers for these further training examinations.

E. Development of a Range of Qualifications

Relevant to the Labour Market

Chambers of crafts offer qualification concepts in order to facilitate entry into training and the take up a job following a spell of unemployment.

For school pupils as well as skilled employees and executives chambers of crafts with their training centres plan a range of qualifications in order to establish a bridge in training or in employment for the individual. According to the motto “By business for business” work-related training is given and then, if need be, a direct placement is found.

F. Advice on Qualifications

Career paths can be planned. There are many qualifications but the question is which ones are purposeful in career terms.

The further education market is not very transparent and due to the many different providers it is only with difficulty that interested parties find a qualification on offer that “suits” them. Therefore, the chambers of crafts have specialised in advising interested parties with regard to the qualifications that they need and informing them of suitable courses on offer. Vocational career path plans are frequently the basis for putting together individual career schedules with routes to qualifications. The chambers, through the advice that they give, are very close to the requirements and thus can create training products in their training centres that are practice-oriented.

5. Testing in Training and Further Education



The chambers are crucially responsible for the inspection and approval of the examinations at the end of the initial dual training (final examination/journeyman examination) as well as in advanced further training (further training examination/master craftsman's examination).

They set up examination committees, propose examination committee members from the member companies for national examination committees, organise examinations and provide the quality assurance for examination procedures and the course of examinations.

The chambers of crafts can give guilds authority to conduct examinations in relation to examinations for journeymen if the fitness of the craft guild ensures that these examinations are conducted properly.

In that case, these guilds also assume responsibility for some of the activities mentioned below. The constant further development and assurance of the quality of the testing is an important task of the chambers of crafts.

A. Enlisting of Honorary Examiners

Approximately 40,000 examiners from the craft trade alone are involved in an honorary capacity throughout Germany on examination committees relating to vocational and further education. Therefore, the enlisting of a sufficient number of suitable examiners is an important task of the chambers of crafts.

Vocational testing is characterised by the one-third parity representation system, i.e. the examination committees are made up of representatives of the employers, representatives of the employees and teachers. The chambers of crafts acquire examination committee members by talking to employers and employees in a targeted way, by initiating calls and using targeted advertising measures. It is a constant challenge finding thousands of examination committee members with professional expertise who will put in enough time to commit themselves on an honorary basis on behalf of the community. There is not just a need to enlist them once only but also to support them, look after them and “walk with them” in order to inspire them to work on the examination committee as much as possible on a fairly long-term basis.

B. Creation of Practice-Oriented Examination Rules

Public-law or nationally recognised examinations are designed by chambers of crafts and examination regulations created.

The chambers pass general examination regulations for journeyman, final, retraining and further education examinations. In addition, they pass examination regulations for special training and further education courses which are not uniformly laid down centrally at federal level by ordinance. The chambers of crafts cooperate closely on a professional basis for this purpose with guilds, associations and companies in order to also replicate in the examination regulations what corresponds to the actual needs of business.

C. Safeguarding of the Examination Infrastructure

In order to conduct every examination suitable premises, equipment, examination tasks and tools are necessary in addition to examiners.

In order to conduct an examination all framework conditions must be right. The chamber of crafts takes care of that. This includes issuing an invitation to the examination candidates and the examiners in good time, the provision of examination rooms and/or workshops with the required equipment, the tools and the materials required for the work as well as the examination tasks. The honorary examiners are likewise looked after, the correct observance of the examination provisions is ensured, the inspection of the records following the examination is organised and objections concerning admissions to examinations and examination decisions are handled.

D. Training of Examiners

Chambers of crafts offer examiners in training and further education further training courses on examination methodology and examinations.

In order for examiners to be able to exercise their honorary function in the interest of business and society in the best possible way intensive support through the chamber of crafts and, if necessary, its competent partners, and the provision of training courses is required. These must be specifically geared to the examination function. What is involved in this connection is dealing with those taking part in examinations so that they can also actually call on and demonstrate the services available, the legally irreproachable assessment and documentation of the examination, the implementation of changing instruments used for examinations and the creation of activity-oriented tasks.

6. Public Representation of Dual Vocational Training

Economic self-government is understood as representing the interests of the dual system and, in this context, involves playing an active part in all discussions relating to training, business and regulation.

In order to set up and strengthen dual vocational training on a permanent basis, the chambers of crafts inter alia again and again take a stand

- in favour of vocational and school as well as vocational and academic training being regarded as being of equal value,



- against the schoolification of training by public authorities,
- in favour of increasing the attractiveness and improving the image of dual training,
- against the modularisation of training,
- in favour of new professions for which dual training is given,
- against the one-sided career guidance of school pupils at the expense of dual training,
- in favour of the strengthening of the vocational school as a dual partner,
- against national measures which restrict the freedom of companies to train,
- in favour of the extensive recognition of vocational training services.

The chambers of crafts organise professional competitions, honour training companies as well as the best in examinations and create many different formats which are effective as a form of publicity in order to put the vocational training service out into the public domain.

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