# What perspectives do German apprenticeship regulations represent, and how are they changed?

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Fafo Breakfast:
As the world of work changes – how should vocational education adapt?
Oslo, 15.04.2026, 8:30 – 10:00

Skills2Capabilities
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# Content

01

What is the relationship is between the regulations and the education and training practices in companies and schools

02

What are the processes of changing regulations.

03

Examples: Industrial Mechanics/ Logistics

Change and functions beyond the surface

# Training Regulations in the German Dual System

**Legal foundation** of initial vocational education and training (VET) in 327 occupations

Define **occupational profiles**, **training duration**, and **examinations**

Ensure **nationwide standards** across companies

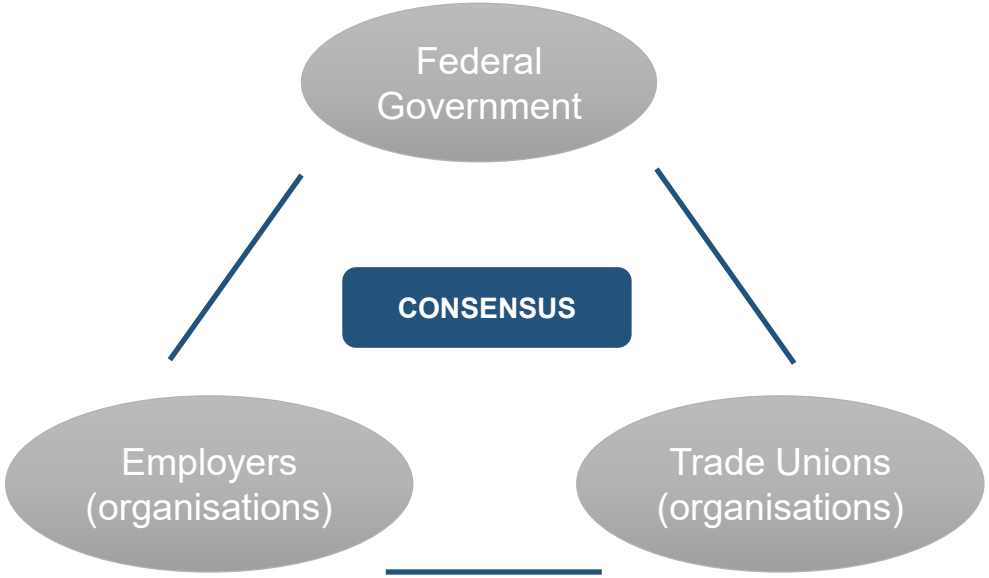
Issued as **federal legal ordinances**


**For each occupation there is a federal framework curriculum for the school-based learning**

Standardised and labour-market relevant qualifications

# Actors and Governance

- **Employers' organisations** represent company needs
- **Trade unions** represent employee interests
- **Federal Government** enacts regulations
- **BIBB** coordinates and moderates the process
- **Länder** design school-based curricula
- Key concept: **Principle of consensus**




Joint negotiation → high acceptance

# Multiple functions and understandings

Minimum standard

Work-Process-Description

Competence profile

Quality Reference

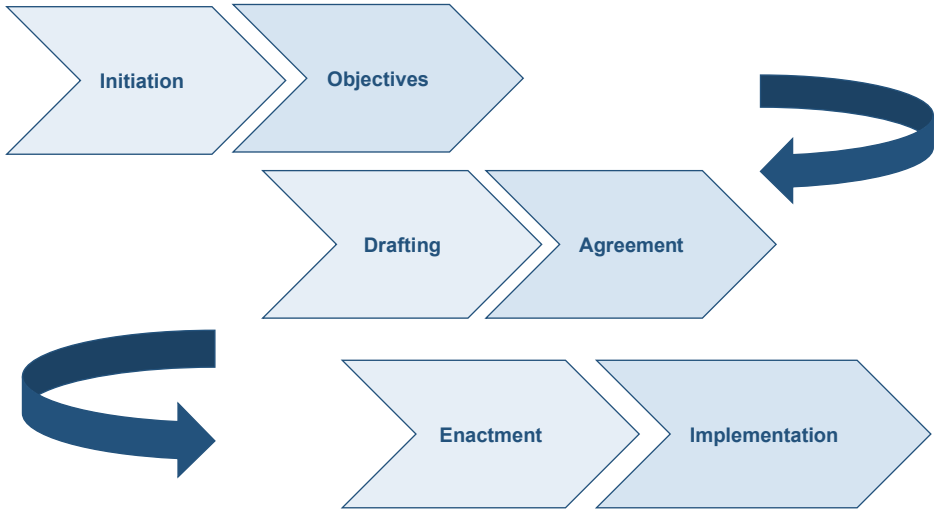
Curriculum Structure

Compromise

e.g. depending on interests and role…

# Development Process

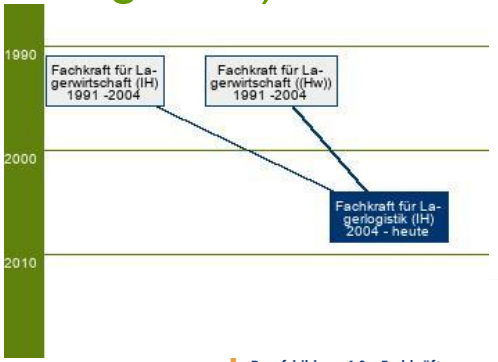
- **Initiation**: need for change identified
- **Objectives** and occupational structure defined
- **Drafting** by experts (companies, unions, BIBB)
- Coordination and **agreement** among partners
- Legal **enactment** and **implementation** in companies and schools




Regulations are continuously updated – Number of updates does not necessarily indicate responsiveness

# Why No Reform for a Long Time? (Example Warehouse Logistics)

- No reform ≠ no change
- Stable core tasks and gradual technological change
- Diversity of companies
- High flexibility within training regulations (exists since 2004)
- Heterogeneous employer interests (SMEs vs large firms)
- Low prioritisation in VET policy?
- Introduction of cross occupational standards





Fachkraft für Lagerlogistik (ggf. mit Vorgängen) (51312) Seite 1

Deutschland — Zuständigkeitsbereich: IH/HwEx

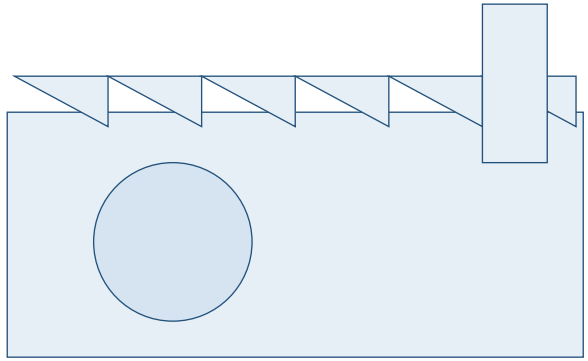
Ausbildungsdauer laut Ausbildungsordnung: 36 Monate — Ausbildungsordnung von: 2004

Bis 2004 Vorgänger siehe: Fachkraft für Lagerwirtschaft

| Berichtsjahr (BJ)[1] | 1998 | 2006 | 2008 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Neuabschlüsse[2]** im BJ | 2.622 | 7.581 | 9.336 | 9.855 | 9.660 | 9.063 |

Adaptation took place within the regulation and with additions, not through reform

# The Industrial Mechanic

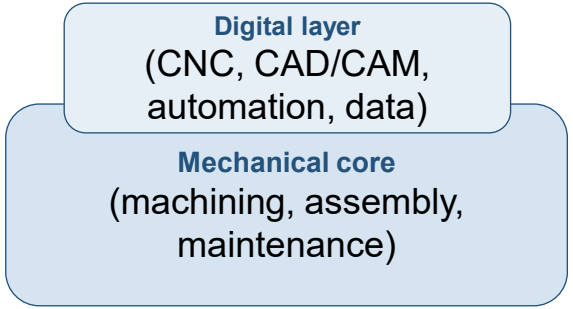


- Core industrial occupation in German VET; among the most popular apprenticeships (≈10,000+ / year)
- Central to the (important) manufacturing sector
- Typical tasks: installation and maintenance of production systems
- Machine construction and repair
- Traditional profile: milling/turning/drilling; welding and assembly

A classical skilled-worker profile rooted in mechanical production

# Transformation of the Occupation

- Increasing importance of automation and robotics
- Growing use of CNC, CAD/CAM and digital systems
- Industry 4.0: smart and connected production
- New requirements: supervising automated systems; troubleshooting digital processes
- Working with software and data
- Continuity: mechanical skills remain central




Digital competences layered onto a stable occupational core

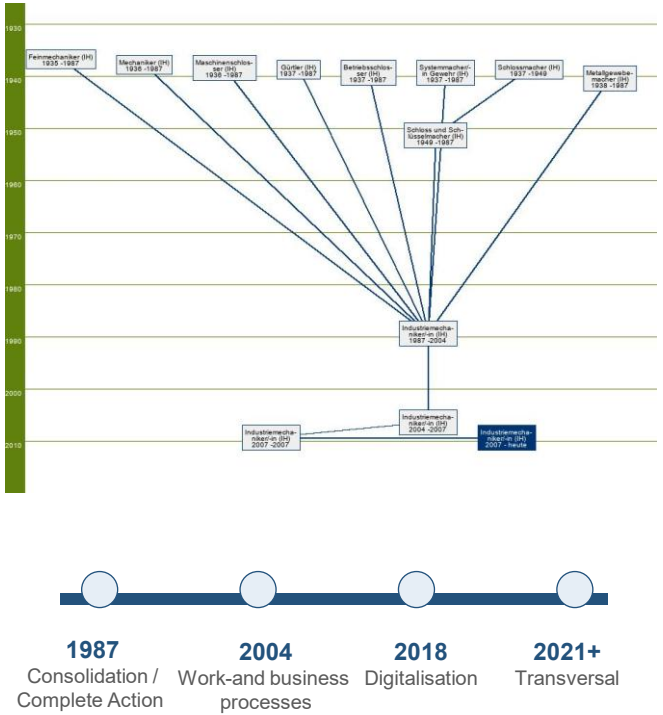
# Evolution of Training Regulations

**1987** reform: consolidation of occupations; broad occupational competence

**2004** reform: work-process orientation; company-specific flexibility

**2018** reform: **digitalisation** and **Industry 4.0**; *additional* qualifications
(system integration, process integration, additive manufacturing, and IT-supported modification of production systems)

Since **2021**: transversal elements (**digitalisation**, **sustainability**, **safety**)




Incremental change combining stability and innovation

# Thank your for your attention!

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