Early Childhood Education and Care

The area of early childhood education is not regulated on a nationwide basis in Austria, instead it is within the sphere of responsibility of the provinces [1].

Requirements for Appointment

The professional requirements for the appointment of management staff at childcare establishments are as follows for the different provinces:

- In Upper Austria, Styria and Vienna the professional requirements for the recruitment of managers of a childcare establishment are, as well as a relevant professional qualification (usually successful completion of the qualifying examination for ECEC teachers [2] or the matriculation and diploma examination for ECEC), also proof of at least two years (Upper Austria, Styria) or five years (Vienna) of work as a pedagogical specialist in an equivalent childcare establishment.
- In Carinthia and Salzburg management staff may be employed only if, in addition to the necessary professional qualification, they also have at least two years (Carinthia) or two to three years (Salzburg) of professional experience in a childcare establishment and can prove that they have completed a management course or a kindergarten director course.
- In Burgenland and in Lower Austria management staff at childcare establishments need a relevant specialist qualification. Professional experience as a requirement for a management position is not stipulated in the relevant laws.
- In Tyrol childcare establishments are headed by a pedagogical specialist (matriculation and diploma examination for ECEC or diploma examination in ECEC teacher [2] training, in each case with additional training in early education) who must have at least three years of experience in a corresponding establishment and have attended a course in first aid.
- If several ECEC teachers [2] are employed in a kindergarten in Vorarlberg, one of these has to be appointed as the director. ECEC teachers must be professionally qualified, reliable and have suitable health.

Conditions of Service

The wages of staff in childcare establishments in Austria - except for the minimum wage for private childcare establishments - are not regulated on a nationwide basis and therefore differ depending on the province. Within the provinces the wages for public childcare establishments also differ because different wage tables apply for the province and the respective municipalities and the employees can be either provincial or municipal officials. In addition, there are also many private providers of
childcare facilities which determine their salary scheme autonomously. Generally it may be stated that for management staff at childcare establishments in most provinces there are different bonuses of increasing amounts according to the number of managed groups.

The extent of continuing training measures which have to be completed for staff involved in childcare is also regulated differently depending on the province: while in Vienna and Carinthia, for example, there are no in-service training measures required by law, the extent of compulsory continuing training in the other provinces ranges between two days every three years (Lower Austria) and a maximum of five days per year (Upper Austria and Tyrol). A specific need for continuing training for management staff at childcare establishments is not stipulated by law.

School Education

If at least ten teachers are employed full-time in a school, then a school head has to be appointed.

Requirements for Appointment

A vacant school head position is filled after a public call for applications. The candidates submit their applications to the Board of Education.

A requirement for being appointed as a school head is at least 5 years of practical teaching experience, besides various personal, professional and managerial competencies. In addition, after the appointment it is necessary to complete the higher education course “School Management: Running Professionally – Developing Sustainably”.

Starting in 2023, applicants must have completed the first part (20 ECTS) of a post-graduate programme on school leadership before applying (total of the course: 60 ECTS, part 2 [40 ECTS] is to be completed on the job, after being appointed school leader).

The curriculum of this programme includes topics such as leadership, development, and management of personnel; development of teaching and learning, counselling and guidance of teachers; organisational leadership and development; quality assurance and development; cooperation, communication, and networking (concerning external relations and school partnerships); as well as self-management. The current 12 ECTS programme’s curriculum has similar components.

Alongside this, teachers colleges offer various courses for school leaders. Currently a school leader profile is being developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Research [3], which will serve as the basis for school leader professional development.

The introduction of school clusters since 2019 increases the school leader positions. A cluster leader is appointed in the same process as school leaders. Both school leaders as well as cluster leaders are appointed for a period of five years, and must have at least five years of practical teaching experience, besides various personal, professional and managerial competencies.

Concerning school clusters, the former school leaders – appointed or entrusted – at the cluster’s schools become area managers (Bereichsleiter) in the following year, then these functions will be re-advertised (the school hosting the school cluster does not have an area manager, as this is where the cluster leader operates). Hence, school leader functions and entrustments will not be renewed.
Conditions of Service

School Heads

A school head is initially appointed for a period of five years. When this period expires, the personnel office of the Federal Government or of the province (depending on whose area of responsibility the school type falls in) can reappoint the school head. A reappointment does not require a call for applications and an appointment procedure does not need to be carried out. The reappointment must be announced to the school head at least three months before the expiry of the five-year period. The reappointment is effective for an unlimited period.

Since 1.1.2019 school heads are appointed by the new boards of education (Bildungsdirektionen) which have been introduced by the 2017 Education Reform Act (Bildungsreformgesetz 2017) The boards of education are joint federal/provincial authorities.

The school head post is a permanent one. Permanent means established teaching posts that are – to all probabilities – permanently linked to a defined school. Holders of permanent posts have a right to be employed at the school and may be transferred from one school to another under the conditions which are set out in the Civil Service Code and the Service Code for Province-employed Teachers.

The school head is the person teachers and other staff (administrative staff, caretakers etc.) at a school directly report to. School heads may inspect instruction being given in the classrooms at any time (cf. 11.1.2 – “Internal Quality Assurance”). He/she is responsible for the running of the school and the liaison between the school, the pupils and the parents, in the case of part-time vocational schools also extramural teachers and the relationship between school and the apprenticeship training company. According to the School Education Act the school head has to advise teachers in their teaching and educational work and to regularly monitor the instruction given and the performance of the pupils. The school head is also responsible for implementing laws and other legal regulations as well as instructions issued by the educational authorities. S/he prepares the meetings of the school partners and is responsible for executing the decisions adopted at these meetings. School heads allocate the annual budget granted to the school and prepare the school's annual financial statements.

School heads also have a say in the recruitment of teachers. They must prepare a plan to project the future demand and development of human resources in their school. Further, they submit an expert opinion with regard to the suitability of teachers who have applied to be assigned to their school.

With the 2017 Education Reform Act staffing autonomy was extended. Please see here.

At a few large schools, the school head is assisted by a permanent deputy, at all others, by a teacher of his/her school (administrator), and not by an officially appointed deputy. There is also a middle management (Abteilungsvorstehung or department management, Fachvorstehung or subject management, Leiterstellvertretung or deputy heads) answerable to the school management at medium-sized and larger schools to relieve the administrative load on teachers and principals. Teachers who work in one of these positions have to teach 50% to 75% less and receive a bonus of between € 300 and € 850 per month.

School heads also have to teach in addition to their capacity as a head teacher. The compulsory teaching load depends on the school size. School heads at a school with at least ten full-time teachers...
are entirely exempt from the obligation to teach. In schools with fewer teachers there are no permanent school head positions, instead teachers are entrusted with the school management and, in part, are exempt from the obligation to teach so they are able to carry out this activity.

Teachers who are appointed as a school head receive a service bonus. The amount of the bonus is based on the school category and the length of work in this capacity and is specified in the 2013 Amendment to the Service Code – Pedagogical Service. It is between € 300 and € 1,650.

As well as the school head there are – especially in larger schools – also other managerial staff whose tasks are described briefly in the following:

**Department heads (Abteilungsleiter/in)**

Department heads are teachers with a special function in technical VET schools and colleges, in VET schools and colleges of agriculture and forestry as well as in teacher and supervisory staff training institutions. They are in charge of a department installed at the school/college. The extent of the teaching load they must complete depends on the size of the department or practice institutions (in both cases on the number of classes).

**Subject heads (Fachvorstand)**

Subject heads are installed at technical VET schools and colleges which are not divided into departments. They are in charge of the theoretical and practical vocational subjects. Like department heads, they must fulfil a residual teaching assignment which depends on the size of the school.

Department and subject heads are subordinate to the school head, but act as immediate superiors for the teaching staff. Since both positions are management-level functions, the same appointment procedures as for school heads apply.

Department heads and also subject heads both receive a service bonus, the amount of which is based on the number of supervised classes and is specified in the 2013 Amendment to the Service Code – Pedagogical Service.

**Construction yard managers/workshop managers (Bauhof- und Werkstättenleiter/innen)**

At VET schools and colleges construction yard and workshop managers are responsible for the direction of construction yards and workshops which give practical vocational training to students. Appointed by the school head, their duties include the running of day-to-day operations, the organisation of workshop training and the procurement of the required materials. They are subordinate to the school head. They do not act as superiors for teachers and do not carry out management-level functions. Workshop and construction yard managers have a residual teaching assignment.