2019

Federal Act on the Establishment of a Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in the Austrian School Sector (IQS)

Regulations and legislative documents

**Status:** Legislation issued, IQS will be established on 1st July 2020

**Sources:** [legislation](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice) [1], [press release](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice) [2]

**Objectives:**

- Strengthening evidence-based quality development in the education sector
- Integration of BIFIE into the Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in Austrian Education (IQS)

**Description:**

Evidence-based quality assurance and quality development in the school system require highly specialised expertise and a complex infrastructure for the development, implementation and evaluation of standardised performance measurements and school quality surveys. In order to increase the effectiveness of such quality assurance instruments for evidence-based school management and location-based quality development in schools, systematic and structural interlinking between the relevant service providers and the school administration is necessary.

By July 1, 2020, the expertise and infrastructure required for evidence-based school development of the Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (BIFIE) will be transferred to a subordinate agency of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF).

The transformation of the BIFIE into the IQS provides the basis for an even more effective and practice-oriented use of the collected data and evidence for quality assurance processes in the Austrian school system. National and international surveys ensure the quality of the school system. This includes the following important milestones for the Austrian school system: In the coming years, the focus will be on the further development of standardised assessments of the learning status of pupils ("Individual Competence and Potential Measurement“, iKPM) planned by the Federal Government. The iKPM will place a new emphasis on the identification of individual learning needs.
The aim is to support pupils effectively in acquiring basic and regular competences in the subjects of German and mathematics, in secondary level 1 also in English, and to compensate for learning disabilities in a targeted manner.

The establishment of the IQS will also ensure the essential know-how and infrastructure to enable Austria to continue to participate regularly and with high quality in international comparative student studies (e.g. PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS).

**Funding:** part of the Ministry's budget

**Involved bodies:**

- [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](3)

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**Ban on Concealment**

**Regulations and legislative documents**

**Status:** Legislation issued

**Sources:** [legislation](4) (federal act), [decree](5)

**Description:**

- In order to ensure the best possible development of all pupils, they shall be prohibited from wearing ideologically or religiously influenced clothing with which a veiling of the head is connected until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 10. This serves the social integration of children, the safeguarding of the basic constitutional values and the equality of men and women.

- In the event of a violation of the prohibition, the principal must immediately inform the school board. The latter must invite the parents or guardians to an obligatory discussion without delay, at least within 4 school days. The reasons for the violation must be discussed during the interview. In order to avoid further violations, the legal guardians must be informed of their responsibility; this must be recorded in writing and brought to the attention of the head teacher.

- If another violation of the prohibition takes place the legal guardians are is to be punished by the district administrative authority with a fine up to 440 €.

**Funding:** not applicable

**Involved bodies:**

- [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](3)
- [Boards of Education](6)
- Schools

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**Creation of Nationwide Autumn Holidays**

**Regulations and legislative documents**
Status: draft legislation; first nationwide autumn holidays are to take place between 26 October and 2 November in the school year 2020/21

Sources:

- legislation [7]
- press release [8]

Description:

Currently, the school year begins with a long, uninterrupted teaching period from the end of the summer holidays to the beginning of the Christmas holidays. Also with regard to the special challenges of the beginning of the school year, this long period is a stressful situation for both pupils and teachers. For this reason, attempts are already being made in some cases to avoid this stress situation by means of consecutive, school-autonomous days in the autumn, depending on the schools and the provinces.

The number of school-free days remains unchanged. With the introduction of autumn holidays, the free Tuesdays after Pentecost and Easter will disappear and the number of school-autonomous days will decrease.

In the future, families with children in different schools will have to ensure care on fewer days, since the days off will be standardized.

Main objectives and measures:

- Optimized temporal structure of the teaching year
- Improved care conditions for parents and legal guardians in times when no lessons are given

Funding: no extra funding

Monitoring and involved bodies:

- Boards of Education [6]

Introduction of Ethics as Mandatory Object

Regulations and legislative documents

Status: Presentation to the council of ministers. Roll out starting 2020/2021

Sources:

- presentation to the council of ministers [9]
- press release (20.02.2019) [10]

Description:

Since the 1990s, the Federal Ministry of Education has made it possible to test ethics teaching as an alternative compulsory subject.
Following audits the Court of Audit stated in its report that pilot projects should as quickly as possible be transferred to regular schooling.

The federal government will now implement ethics as a mandatory object in upper secondary level II for all those pupils who do not follow a denominational religious education.

The high number of locations requires a gradual roll-out, starting with the academic secondary schools and the prevocational schools in the school year 2020/21.

From the 2021/22 school year onwards, the subject will be rolled out in all other upper secondary schools.

**Main objectives and measures:**

- sound discussion of the basic questions of life-orientation (values, norms, non-violent coexistence in societies of high diversity, overcoming gender stereotypes, etc.)
- discussion of different philosophical, ideological, cultural and religious traditions and images of mankind
- independent reflection
- contribution to individual personality development

**Implementation steps:**

- drafting of curriculum (based on an existing draft curriculum)
- courses offered at University Colleges of Teacher Education (60 ECTS) from 2019/20
- according to current calculations, it is assumed that approx. 1,300 teachers will have to be further qualified.
- textbook production (05/2019-05/2021)

**Funding:**

The measure will be implemented in ascending order and in accordance with the budget coverage.

**Monitoring and involved bodies:**

- Boards of Education [6]
- Schools

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**Educational Package - Promoting Successful School Careers**

**National action plan**

**Status:** First legislation issued

**Sources:** [11]

- presentation [11]
- press release (2.5.2018) [12]
- press release (1.10.2018) [13]
- legislation (22.12.2018) [14]
**Description:**

**New regulation starting with school year 2019/20:**

Now primary schools generally will grade both with marks and verbally. From the end of the second school year, it is obligatory to award numerical marks, but in addition there is the verbal evaluation.

Regular discussions take place between class teacher, legal guardian and pupil. The aim is to discuss the level of performance and any support measures together.

Students of the 1st and 2nd grade are entitled to move up to the next grade. However, if the annual report at the 2nd grade contains the mark "Not sufficient" in two or more compulsory subjects, the student is only entitled to move up to the 3rd grade with the agreement of the school conference.

At the 3rd grade, advancement is possible if the annual report does not contain more than one "Not sufficient" in a compulsory subject, if the same compulsory subject has not already been assessed as "Not sufficient" in the previous year's report and if the class conference agrees to advancement.

The **educational package** concentrates on different targets

Access to primary school will depend on **standardised testing of school readiness**, with a particular focus on German: if pupils fail, they get German lessons in separate classes before they can enter the regular school system.

**Standardised testing**, previously undertaken in fourth and eighth grades, is brought forward to third and seventh grades. To supplement the central standardised school leaving examination (Matura), standardised regular testing based on curricula to document progress is also envisaged. The **New Secondary School** will be reformed. The reform will reintroduce a ‘performance group’ approach within classes.

All **curricula** will be reviewed and updated.

**Main Objectives:**

1. Clarification of **school-entry criteria** for a child-friendly decision on school readiness
2. Optimized decision-making basis for the individually fitting **choice of school career**
3. Improve performance appraisal - towards **accurate and clear school marks**
4. Further development and strengthening of the **New Secondary School** [15]
5. **Curriculum reform**

**Measures** (Description):

1. Kindergarten / primary school - Clear **school entrance criteria**:

   A binding catalog of school-entry criteria will be developed. These are to be used in the course of the admission interview at primary schools. The aim of this catalog is to standardize school enrollment throughout Austria. A specification of the grading system based on the numerical evaluation will be introduced.

2. **Uniform talent checks, optimized foundations for further education and career choices:**

   At the end of primary and lower secondary education major educational decisions are required. These educational decisions are to be supported by the increased use of standardized test procedures.
The existing instruments should be further developed into a "talent check" (mandatory at least in the 3rd and the 7th grade). They are the basis of a parent-teacher conversation. The choice of the individually fitting educational and professional path should be objectified by the tests and thus supported.

3. Further development of the **performance assessment**, especially in primary school:

   The aim is to create a clearer formulation of teaching and educational goals and more objectivity in grading through "learning goals grid".

4. Further development of the **new secondary schools** [15]:

   The New secondary School has brought positive innovations, such as the increased focus on methodology, increased individualization, more teamwork, increased reflection on the performance assessment or an improved school climate. Intensive efforts in the development of the quality of instruction show partial successes in the field of mathematics, but are in no relation to the increased use of resources. The process will involve school partners, experts and academia. The performance evaluation will be made transparent and easy to understand on the basis of two requirement levels from the 6th grade ("Standard" and "Standard AHS") and two corresponding five-part evaluation scales.

5. Voluntary 10th school year at **pre-vocational schools** [16]:

   By reintroducing the possibility of a voluntary 10th school year a contribution is made to improving permeability in the Austrian education system. This means that cases of hardship which, in retrospect, had only limited opportunities to continue their education or training after a wrong choice of school in the 9th school year, no longer occur.

6. **Reform of curricula**:

   Curricula need to be revised and reviewed for timely content. The revised curricula should also create space for new content (eg aspects of digitization). And they should be a well-understandable, practice-oriented and competency-oriented instrument for structuring the content of the lessons.

**Funding:** No detailed data available

**Monitoring and involved bodies:**

**Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research** [3]

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**Master Plan for Digitisation in Education**

**Regulation and legislative documents / national development plan**

**Status:** On 5 September 2018, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research presented a new master plan for digitisation in education that replaces the previous 'School 4.0' strategy. Implementation 2019 onwards.

**Sources:**

- [Website] [17]
- [Presentation to the Council of Ministers “Master Plan Digitization in Education”] [18]

**Description:**
Under the 'School 4.0 strategy' various actions have already been implemented:

- A new subject ‘basic digital education’ was introduced at lower secondary level in 2018/19
- A pilot project started in primary school providing an initial programming experience
- A modular teacher training on digital skills and digital didactics ('digi.folio') was set up combined with peer learning in 400 schools on the use of tablets while the school development network 'eEducation' was expanded
- Teacher training is reinforced through the setting up of 'Education Innovation Centers' as virtual learning areas in teacher training colleges
- Digital text books in secondary school became e-books.

The new Master Plan for Digitisation in education has three areas of intervention.

- Under 'Software –pedagogy, teaching and learning content' digitalisation will be introduced into all subject areas and systematically incorporated into revised curricula
- Second, infrastructure and availability of mobile end devices is brought up to a unified and comparable standard allowing nationwide use in schools
- And, thirdly, under 'Teachers - training and further education', e-content and innovation is systematically introduced into teacher training.

Objectives:

- Improved digital competences of pupils at the end of the 8th grade
- Strengthened digital competences of teachers
- Creation of the best possible infrastructure conditions at schools and quality-assured content for effective digital education

Measures:

- First field of action: 'Software' - pedagogy, teaching and learning content:

  As part of a fundamental revision of the existing curricula, new digital teaching and learning content is to be systematically incorporated into the curricula. The aim is to map a comprehensive basic understanding of how to deal with new content in the curricula. Moreover, Digitisation should be taken into account methodically and didactically in all subjects in the sense of modern teaching.

- Second field of action: 'Hardware' - infrastructure, modern IT management, modern school administration:

  The infrastructural equipment and availability of mobile end devices are to be brought up to a unified and comparable standard. The aim is to create a nationwide basis for the use of digital instruments and tools in schools. School administration is to be simplified by modern applications.

- Third Field of action: 'Teachers' - training and further education:

  New opportunities for the transmission of content coming along with digitisation are to be systematically anchored in the training and further education of teachers.

Monitoring:


Involved bodies:
Educational Reform - Autonomy Package for Schools

Regulations and legislative documents


Sources:

- Information [20]
- Legislation [21]
- Brochure [22]
- Blog [23]

Description:

The legal package aims at increasing schools’ autonomy and improving the task distribution between the federal and the province level.

This will enable to better use competences at the respective location, meet specific requirements in a more targeted manner and reduce bureaucracy.

Main objectives and measures:

1. Enhanced school autonomy

   - Extending autonomy in the organisation of time
   - Adapting the opening times of schools according to the requirements of the parents’ working lives
   - More options to organise lessons into blocks
   - Flexible design of learning groups
   - Option of more project work
   - More flexible breaks
   - Greater flexibility to devise learning groups according to pedagogical targets
   - More opportunities for the flexible formation of classes and groups
   - A massive reduction in the number of school pilots from 2017/18

2. Extending staff autonomy

   - Greater autonomy for human resource management to increase the organizational potential and responsibility of school leadership
   - School principals will be able to have a say in the new appointment of teachers
   - Responsibility for school leadership for staff development and performance evaluations

3. Working together in school development alliances (“Schulcluster”)

   - Development of a comprehensive long-term school concept that entails the school profile, mission statement, etc. by the NEW administrative bodies (school clusters)
4. Evidence-based quality assurance

- As part of school supervision it will ensure schools continue to develop. A national school quality report submitted to Parliament every three years will provide information about the development of Austrian schools.
- Evidence-based quality control and (pedagogical) monitoring of results.
- Production of annual school-specific quality reports by autonomous schools (with the support of the NEW school inspections) in order to ensure ongoing quality control and transparent documentation (for the school partners and the central authorities).
- Regular collection of data (indicators, figures and measurements) on learning progress, school climate, educational pathways and transitions, social composition, the result oriented use of resources etc. through the federal authorities. Availability of these data to schools as well as the quality control body (NEW school inspection) in order to inform further development measures.

5. Administrative reform

- A joint administration is ensured by establishing new boards of education [6] for the 9 provinces.
- The boards of education [6] will be set up as a joint federal/provincial authority.
- At the head of the board of education [6] is the director of board of education as a federal employee who, on the proposal of the provincial governor, is appointed by the responsible federal minister.
- This authority is responsible for the administration of the federal and provincial teachers. The board of education [6] exercises all powers which are currently held by the board of education [6] or the school departments of the provinces.

Funding:

No extra funding

Monitoring:


Involved bodies:

- Provincial governments [24]
- Boards of Education [6]
- Schools

New Upper Level Scheme

Regulation and legislative documents / large scale programme

Status: Implementation until 2021

Sources:

- Draft law [25]
- Legislation: amendment 2012 [26]
- Information [27]
Description:

Academic secondary schools (AHS), secondary technical and vocational schools (BMS) and colleges for higher vocational education (BHS) are being modernised by introducing a new course system, new upper level scheme (Neue Oberstufe, NOST). Since 2004, a model for the new system for upper secondary level has been tried out at around 50 academic secondary and vocational schools at a medium- and higher-level. The new system has been developed based on practical experience. Starting from the 2013/14 school year, schools were switched over to the new system step-by-step.

The nationwide implementation was originally planned for the school year 2017/18. On the basis of feedback from practical experience, however, the school management was given the opportunity to postpone the start of NOST. On the one hand, this should give teachers and head teachers more time to anchor planned reform measures at their schools in everyday school life. On the other hand, this will make it possible to carry out a broad evaluation of NOST by the end of 2019, involving all target groups affected by NOST, before it is implemented across the board in 2021/22 in an adapted form if necessary.

The semester-based syllabus, divided into competence modules, will increase the intensity of the learning/studying process, and will provide an improved overview of individual learning deficits. It is geared to continuous achievement and improved preparation for higher education.

Key elements of the new system are:

- Assessment on a semester basis
- All positive performances will remain valid, only semesters which pupils have failed must be caught up on
- The structuring into semesters leads to smaller syllabus packages
- Remedial instruction which aims to compensate for deficiencies in specific subjects is being expanded
- Package to promote especially gifted pupils who are entitled to complete syllabus areas before the other pupils by taking end-of-term exams about these areas. It is also possible to take a partial exam of the upper secondary school-leaving exam (Reifeprüfung or Reife- und Diplomprüfung respectively) in these exam areas in advance
- It is also possible to take individual subject exams in advance and therefore the upper secondary school-leaving exam in the respective subject at an earlier time

Expected impact:

- Reduction in the number of school dropouts by up to 50% by specific target-oriented support measures
- Better prepare students for higher education

Funding:

No extra costs

Monitoring:

- The new upper level scheme was successfully tested in a school pilot project at some 50 locations
- Head teachers, staff and pupils report that a new school atmosphere has been created which encourages excellence and noticeably raises the overall level of academic performance

Involved bodies:
Expansion of Daycare at Schools

Regulation and legislative documents / funded programme

**Status:** Between 2019/20 until 2022, a total of 250 million euros will be invested.

**Sources:**
- [Funding Legislation](#)
- [Organisational and educational guidelines for all-day schools](#)
- [Information in German](#)
- [press release](#)

**Description:**

The expansion of day-care at schools is a very important measure to deal with different objectives:

- It is intended to compensate for socioeconomically related educational disadvantages
- Children and youths from migrant backgrounds benefit in particular from the programmes
- Moreover, positive effects have been observed with regard to the compatibility of family and work as well as female employment

The Education Investment Act (BIG) regulates both the maintenance and expansion as well as the quality of afternoon care for 6-14-year-old pupils in Austria. By 2022, around 250 million euros will be available for 40,000 additional childcare places. The funds will be allocated in consultation with the Länder on the basis of numerical targets and indicators. In addition, the BIG regulates the provision of additional funds for holiday care and school social work.

**Measures:**

- Maintaining the expansion target and expansion in line with demand with parental freedom of choice.
- 40,000 additional childcare places: The expansion target of 40% will already be reached in 2022 (incl. existing out-of-school childcare facilities, e.g. day nurseries).
- Ensuring the equivalence of school and extracurricular facilities by establishing quality standards for extracurricular facilities as a condition for the use of funds for all-day schools.
- Simplification of the support mechanism.

**Funding:**

To date, 654 million euros (2011/12 to 2018/19) have already been provided for all-day school forms.
Between 2019/20 until 2022, a total of 250 million euros will be invested.

Involved bodies:

- Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Boards of Education
- Schools

See also "Reform of Teacher Training"

chapter 14.4 (2019)

2018

Education - Training - Higher Education - Adult Education : one Ministry

= Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)

Regulations and legislative documents

Status: Legislation was decided upon in 2018

Sources: Legislation (This act governs the number, designation, establishment and scope of competence of federal ministries)

Description:

By an amendment of the Federal Ministries' Act the tasks of school and VET education and adult education as well as the tasks of higher education have been brought together in one federal ministry.

Main educational responsibilities of the ministry:

- General education
- Technical and vocational education
- Adult education
- University colleges of teacher education
- School maintenance and school management
- Service code and salary law for teachers
- Educational research and quality development

Main responsibilities in higher education:

- The services rendered to students, institutions of higher education and research are complemented by reports on quality assurance, gender and diversity issues, university statistics and analyses in the fields of the higher education
- Altogether, these represent important contributions not only to management of higher
education but also to the development of a strategic framework for Austrian universities and research in the European and the International context

Main objectives and measures:

- Better interaction between the different education and training fields and levels
- Better transitions
- Lifelong learning strategy

Funding: No extra funding

Monitoring: Federal government

Involved bodies:


2017

Educational Reform - School Entry and Primary School Package

National action plan / regulation and legislative documents

Status: First legislative package issued in July 2016 (school entry and primary school package); implementation 2016/17

Sources:

- Presentation of November 2015 [33]
- Legislative package of July 2016 [34]
- First press release [35]
- Second press release [36]

Main objectives:

The educational reform comprises several negotiated packages. Specifically, these are

- The model region package for a joint school
- The elementary education package
- The autonomy package
- The school entry and school organisation package
- The educational innovation package

Measures:

School entry and primary school package:

Here a joint education area between the ages of four and eight is being created to enable a smoother
transition from kindergarten to primary school. This will be achieved, for example, with greater exchange between kindergarten and primary school teachers. In the future the school locations will also be able to decide autonomously whether there are alternative performance assessments (e.g. verbal assessments).

**Monitoring:**

*Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research* [3]

**Involved bodies:**

- Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Federal provinces [37]

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**Education and Training up to 18**

**Regulation and legislative documents / national action plan**

**Status:** Legislation and start of implementation

**Sources:**

- Legislation [38]
- Press release parliament [39]
- Brochure [40]
- Website [41]

**Description:**

General compulsory schooling lasts until the age of 15 in Austria.

Each year about 10,000 young people do not participate in any further education or training. The early school-leaver rate lies at 7.6 %, while the proportion of people aged between 15 and 24 who are “not in education, employment or training” (NEETs) is 6.5 %.

From the 2016/17 school year onward, all youths who have not yet reached the age of 18 are required to engage in education or training after completing general compulsory schooling. This will include attending an academic or vocational upper secondary school, completing a dual education/training programme or attending a recognised vocational or training institution which prepares them for reintegration in continuing education and training offers.

In addition, measures will continue to rely on proven instruments such as youth coaching and production schools to prepare for training and to support in-company vocational training, and on coaching for apprentices as well as businesses that employ apprentices.

Moreover, low-threshold measures and programmes in youth programmes outside of school also serve to support the integration of youth into the labour market, for example through employment by the hour.

Older youths are provided with support in completing their education at later stages, in vocational training and supplementary qualifications.

**Expected impact:**
All under-18-year-olds should as far as possible complete some form of education or training that goes beyond the compulsory school-leaving qualification.

**Measures:**

- Further restrict juvenile menial or unskilled work, come up with incentives for young people to participate in educational and training measures, and introduce with effect from school year 2016/17 an administrative penalty like that for failing to comply with compulsory school education.
- Provide mandatory vocational and educational guidance especially in the context of school education, and evaluate as well as develop youth coaching.
- Provide sufficient low-threshold training opportunities not least in connection with dual vocational training.
- Starting with 2017/18 extra-matricular students – as it is already allowed for ordinary students - may attend a **10th school year** after the end of 9 years of compulsory schooling.

**Funding:**

Estimated € 140 mn (2016 – 2020)

**Monitoring:**

Steering group composed of delegates of the involved ministries

**Involved bodies:**

- [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#)
- [Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection](#)
- [Austrian Federal Minister for Family and Youth at Federal Chancellery](#)
- [Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism](#)

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**See also:** "Bildungskompass"

[chapter 14.1 (2017)](#)