

## Material 4.3.3m

### Group work 2

## Counselling provider “chambers of industry and commerce respectively handicrafts” in Germany

### Abstract

The text gives a short overview on the main tasks of chambers of industry and commerce respectively chambers of handicrafts in Germany and shows different examples of counselling activities to demonstrate the variety activities of these public institutions.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Chambers of industry and commerce respectively chambers of handicrafts in Germany are professional corporations under public law. They offer to their members a large range of professional counselling offers in the fields of vocational education and training, further training, human resource management and actual corresponding topics like e. g. digitalization or the demands of the covid pandemic. The text gives a short overview on these topics and points out three examples of counselling offers taken from the homepage of a chamber of handicrafts to demonstrate the variety of counselling activities.

#### 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHAMBERS IN GERMANY

Chambers are professional corporations under public law and in Germany usually organized under federal state law and take over tasks of professional self-government. Commonly used are names like public corporation, chamber or union/ association. They are responsible of a particular chamber district. They fulfill national assigned tasks and are representatives of the interests of their members. The government has the control over the chambers. Mostly there is a legal obligation of membership for persons within the respective group of profession.

Chambers supply different services. They award admissions of professions and can also withdraw admissions by wrongdoing (occupational ban) and hand out punishments. They exert influence on vocational education and training and rules of examinations. In addition, they define entrance requirements for certain positions (e. g. kind of further qualification for specialization). Chambers can establish scales of fees.

#### 3. COUNSELLING OFFERS OF CHAMBERS OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND OF HANDICRAFTS

In Germany exist 79 Chambers of industry and commerce. They are represented by the umbrella organization of the Federation of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce on a national and international level in policy and administration (Resource: <https://www.dihk.de/de/ueber-uns/die-ihk-organisation>). In Germany also 53 chambers of handicrafts exist. They have the common initiative “Chamber of handicrafts.de” (handwerkskammer.de) as their umbrella organization (<https://www.handwerkskammer.de/>).

Chambers of industry and commerce and chambers of handicrafts offer a large range of counselling services for their members. These services include qualification of promotion and adaption, courses for trainers of dual training, authorization of dual training (including business examination), extern examination degrees, additional and supplement trainings for trainees, subsidies e. g. in federal programs and in the implementation of branch specific, technically and economically further trainings in chamber-specific centers of learning. The chambers are also responsible for the organization of cooperation networks to support the recruitment of staff for training and for the leadership of courses, the organization of regional networks of enterprises to support exchange of experiences and for the development of common solutions (BA 2020, p. 18).

These topics partly include further subjects like e. g. trainee projects (training ambassador, boundary transgressing mobility of trainees, support of gifted trainees, integration of foreign young people etc.), support programs, digitalization, recognition of profession and further more (see <https://www.hwk-pfalz.de> and <https://www.ulm.ihk24.de/>).

#### 4. EXAMPLES OF COUNSELLING OFFERS

In the following three examples of counselling offers are presented. The examples have been taken from the homepage of a chamber of handicrafts (see <https://www.hwk-pfalz.de>).

##### 4.1. Example 1: Assistance of dual training to avoid drop out of dual training

This project was sponsored by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Health and Demography of the federal state of Rheinland-Pfalz and by the European Social Fund (project duration 1/2021-12/2021, in the target region Pfalz).

Training periods include good and bad days. There are conflicts between young trainees among each other, but also with trainers and companies. Once there are conflicts de-escalation is crucial before trainings break up. There is a lot at stake for all people involved in this process. Therefore, it is even more important to find common solutions and avoid drop-outs.

The target group of this project comprises trainees and graduates from entry qualification courses who have serious problems in their training company, in the vocational school and their social environment. Drop-out or break-up motivation among these young people is the result of these

problems. The situation is similar for young people whose training companies are no longer able to continue with the training due to economic problems (e. g. insolvency).

Partners of the cooperation are training firms, vocational schools, labor agencies, job centers, guilds, counselling agencies, other institutions or administrative bodies and persons in the social environment of young people.

Key aspects of the cooperation are the avoidance of drop-out in dual training /or cancellations of training contracts, conflict counselling for companies and trainees and coordination of necessary support.

Project tasks are:

- Prevention: An early offer for support for risk groups is made at an early stage.
- Conflict and crisis management: Once problems arise immediate support is required by including all parties of the conflict.
- General approach to counselling: There is an offer beyond the scope of the conflict for trainees and companies alike with respect to the training in general.
- Long-term and individual counselling: If required training counsellors are available for the whole training period.
- Mobile counselling: Counselling happens at the location of the conflict.
- Support for training and career planning: Young people get competences for the self-organization of their vocational careers.
- Case management with intensive counselling: Looking for the origins of conflicts once problems arise and working out of options for solving the problems as a prophylactic measure.
- Coordination of the support needed: Initiating individual support measures and backup for their realization.

#### 4.2. Example 2: Balances of Competences

The balance of competences is an offer for company's founders, start-up entrepreneurs, persons with adoption of an enterprise, shareholder and manager of crafts enterprises. The balance of competences is helpful to answer following questions: I am an entrepreneur type? Fits the business idea to me? How can I become (more) successful? Which competences do I have? How can I gain a better compatibility of entrepreneurship and private life? Should I resume the parental enterprise? Is a promotion qualification to the master craftsman profitable?

The balance of competences is a intensive single counselling and works with the certificated methods of Perform Partner ([www.kompetenzenbilanz.de](http://www.kompetenzenbilanz.de)). Until now more than 10,000 persons have been participated. In a survey from the foundation „test of goods“ (Stiftung Warentest) from May 2016 the balance of competences had the best result from all tested methods. The counselling offer helps to get support in situations of professional change and to find accurately fitting ways.

The counselling is free of costs and is supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Technology.

In a lot of circumstances decisions are to be made which relevant influence the further occupational career and the working future. The method of the balance of competences is a helpful tool to support coming to the right decision. The basis lies in the point to gain clarity about the own competences (personal, social, methodic and technical).

Process of the procedure/method:

First step is a conversation with information and an introduction into the folder of competence balance. Subsequent follow three counselling sessions (each two hours) within three weeks. Requirement for the employer is the autonomous handling of the working documents to prepare the counselling settings.

The employer profits from the offer of the balance of competences regarding the following issues: Development of business ideas, setting up business, developing new markets, management of successor establishment, get to know potentials, development of an overall concept, coping of a crisis of the enterprise, consider the work life balance, finding clarity, shaping changes, management of reorientation, elimination of dissatisfaction.

The results lead to a well-arranged profile of life and the own experiences, skills and values become visible. Own competences are conscious and can be presented. Own aims are well-known, and their implementation can be planned (see <https://www.hwk-pfalz.de/artikel/personal-gesundheit-soziales-51,1303,2231.html#Kompetenzenbilanz> and info-brochure on the homepage).

### **4.3. Example 3: Coaching of executive managers in handicraft**

As businessman, owner respectively shareholder of a crafts enterprise one is exposed to a permanent pressure and always growing challenges. Even if crafts work gives pleasure and the collaboration with the customer is successful, a lot of craft employer lament about increasing bureaucratic effort, problems with personnel management und the compatibility of self-employment and private life.

As a head in handicraft, it is difficult to find a contact person to whom one can speak really open about actual problems. Against other craftsmen one does not want to present own weakness. Partly also the understanding of the partner for the challenges of self-employment is missing.

The coaching of executive managers in handicraft supports to get answers to the following questions:

- How does my role in the enterprise look like?
- Which perspectives, self-conception and values are forming my enterprise?

- How can I clarify responsibilities in the enterprise and install efficient structures?
- How can I guide my employees much better, solve conflicts and delegate tasks?
- How can I create resources and maintain pleasure at work?
- Which strategies I could develop and implement in my enterprise?
- How can I manage the change: follow-up in the enterprise, change of business fields, change of staff?
- Which new tools for the management of my enterprise still exist?
- How can I improve the corporate culture and the work climate?
- What can help me to master the crisis?

With the coaching for executive managers in handicraft individual solutions for actual topics are worked out together. The aim is to improve the management of the enterprise, the entrepreneurial success and the valuable collaboration in the enterprise.

The coaching for executive managers in handicraft takes place in the premise of the chamber at a date that is common fixed with a timeline of 1,5-2 hours. Within the first coaching actual topics will be analyzed and possible aims of the coaching of the executive manager will be arranged. Depending on goal and topic up to six further meetings in continuous intervals of 3-4 weeks will be arranged (<https://www.hwk-pfalz.de/artikel/wege-ins-handwerk-51,1228,2314.html#Berufsanerkennung>)

## REFERENCES

1. Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2020): Handbuch der Qualifizierungsberatung für Arbeitgeber. Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Zentrale AM 32, Nürnberg. Verfügbar unter: <https://www.baintranet.de/004/001/Documents/Handbuch-Qualifizierungsberatung.pdf> (19.4.2021)
2. <https://www.hwk-pfalz.de>
3. <https://www.ulm.ihk24.de/>).
4. <https://www.hwk-pfalz.de/artikel/personal-gesundheit-soziales-51,1303,2231.html#Kompetenzenbilanz>) and info-brochure (19.04.2021)