



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

Career Orientation for Refugees

The hands-on guide to vocational education and training



Career orientation opens up vocational education and training options for refugees and immigrants

The Career Orientation for Refugees (BOF) programme has been developed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in order to help young refugees and immigrants to find suitable training positions.

BOF courses last up to 26 weeks, during which the participants learn the specialist terminology and knowledge that they need for the training occupation they wish to pursue in combination with individual social and educational support.



Preparation for all recognized training occupations

Any refugees or immigrants with language-based or other immigration-related support needs are eligible to enrol in the BOF courses. The courses will prepare participants for all in-company and school-based training occupations that require a specific vocational qualification.

Workshops and practical experience provide vocational orientation

Following an individually structured general career orientation phase, participants are given the opportunity to spend more time exploring up to three training occupations which they think could be right for them. They spend between nine and eighteen weeks in trainee workshops and practice facilities to test whether the occupations they have chosen really do match their aptitude and interests. During their workshops and practical experience days, participants also find out more about the structure and content of the dual training scheme and are prepared for the requirements of vocational school.

In-company phase to try out preferred occupation

Based on the experiences gained through the workshops and practical experience sessions, the participants then choose one training occupation to explore further in the company-based phase of the programme. During this phase, they spend between four and eight weeks working at a company, putting their new skills into practice. In turn, the company also becomes acquainted with potential trainees. If necessary, the company-based phase can be divided into multiple parts. This not only gives participants the opportunity to get to know a variety of different companies, but also different operational procedures.



“Theory is best taught when directly integrated in work processes.”
Trainer Jürgen Freitag explains how camshafts work to BOF trainees.



“It’s important to meet regularly and be open to questions that aren’t necessarily related to training,” says Monika van Aart, job coach at Innung SHK, Berlin.

In-depth preparation for vocational school

Future trainees should be as well prepared as possible to meet the requirements of vocational training. To ensure this, they not only attend language lessons, but also receive intense career-related subject training, e.g. in mathematics or science. The integrated teaching of job-related specialist knowledge and specific language skills is a core element of the BOF concept. The participants also undergo training to improve their digital literacy.

Individual support

All participants benefit from close, individually tailored support. Mentored by a trained educational support worker, they receive regular verbal feedback and written documentation on their learning progress. Their mentor also helps participants to find a suitable placement in a training programme or introductory course. As part of the initiative “Prevention of Training Dropouts” (VerA), participants can also receive additional coaching from retired professionals through the Senior Expert Service (SES).

Participant selection

An assessment is carried out before starting a BOF course to determine whether the applicant has the potential and skills needed to enter into a training position after completing the course.

Part-time model available

It is also possible to enrol in a BOF course on a part-time basis. This ensures that, for example, both women and men with childcare responsibilities are able to take part in the course. They can also receive help with organizing childcare.

Building networks with local partners

Establishing networks with relevant partners in the local region is crucial to recruiting course participants. This means that more young refugees and immigrants will have the chance to learn about the content and opportunities that the courses offer. Funding is available for up to 50% of a full-time position for the purpose of building such networks.

Programme implementation

The BOF courses are held in inter-company vocational training centres or in equivalent vocational training centres and local partner businesses. Groups are limited to a maximum of twelve participants.

The programme office for vocational orientation at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in Bonn is responsible for managing the content-related and administrative details of the programme.

You can find an overview of current BOF projects as well as information about funding regulations, eligibility requirements, application documents and contact details on the website:

berufsorientierung-fuer-fluechtlinge.de

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