

GOOD PRACTICE

AMS Qualification Barometer



Title
<p>AMS qualification barometer</p> <p>The AMS qualification barometer is the first comprehensive online information system on qualification trends in Austria. Apart from detailed information, it offers a quick overview of the trends in the individual occupational fields.</p>
Location / geographic coverage
<p>The AMS qualification barometer (AMS-QB) covers all of Austria. Access to the AMS-QB's information is granted from each hierarchically higher level to the level immediately below, i.e. going deeper from the Austrian national level to the level of the individual federal states. In doing so, regional particularities are taken into consideration, and for the first time ever, evaluations are carried out on a micro-level (here: professions).</p>
Summary
<p>The AMS-QB is an online system, which offers a structured and therefore quick overview of central aspects of the qualification requirements in Austria. The contents apply not only to the macro-level of an industry, as is so often the case in current labour market studies, but also actually provide clear statements regarding the need for certain qualifications at the level of the different occupational fields.</p> <p>The objective of the AMS qualification barometer is to collect and structure evidence of the current and foreseeable qualification requirements and to make this information accessible to the broader public via the Internet.</p>
Type of the good practice
<p>The AMS-QB is a labour market policy instrument for the presentation of qualification and occupation-related developments on the Austrian labour market. The objective of the instrument is to collect and structure evidence of the current and foreseeable qualification requirements and to make this information accessible to the broader public via the Internet by creating an information system.</p>
Stakeholders and partners
<p>The qualification barometer is targeted not only at AMS employees, journalists and responsible persons in politics and business, but also at persons facing a decision regarding their professional future.</p> <p>With its abundance of data, its topicality, its forecast function and not least the clearly arranged presentation, it is an indispensable instrument for anybody who – for private or professional reasons – is interested in the developments on the labour market as well as the qualification needs.</p> <p>The AMS qualification barometer was created and is continuously maintained by 3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH and the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (ibw) on behalf of the Department for Labour Market Research and Vocational Information (ABI) of the Austrian Public Employment Service.</p>

Issue / challenge and goals / assumptions

In Austria, there previously was no system offering the possibility of providing a structured and therefore quick **overview of central aspects of the qualification needs** and thus offerings clear and reliably **statements regarding the need for correspondingly qualified persons**. With the AMS qualification barometer, such an instrument has now been available **since March 2003**.

The most important aspects of the **further development** of the AMS-QB were:

- Adjustments on the medial level as well as regarding the contents
- Continued carrying out of expert interviews and surveys for quality assurance purposes (creation of a “reference system”)
- Analyses of employment ads which support the concrete measurement of qualification needs
- Stronger connection to the micro level in qualification requirement studies, as well as creation of minimum standards for content, in order to ensure the usefulness of the studies for an early recognition of required qualifications

This resulted in the **establishment of the AMS-QB** as a well-functioning system for the monitoring of qualification requirements.

How does it work?

Information on current and foreseeable qualification requirements as well as corresponding job offers and additional information on the labour market and the current employment situation are provided. The three categories include:

- **24 primary occupational fields** (with subordinate vocational fields and associated occupations)
- **Federal states**
- **Qualifications** (after classification into technical qualifications and interdisciplinary qualifications, as well as sub-categorisation into areas of qualification, to each of which several qualifications have been assigned)

Labour market trends are presented elaborately on the levels of “Occupational area” and “Vocational field”. In doing so, regional particularities are taken into consideration, and for the first time ever, evaluations are carried out on a micro level (professions).

On each of the three levels, **employment data** is shown, offering an indication of the labour market requirements during the past two years. For the first time ever, this data, which previously was not available to a broader audience, is being made available online in a detailed and clearly structured manner.

Comprehensive lists of references and concrete explanations on more than **230 qualifications** (with a total of approximately 5,500 subtopics) and **approximately 560 detailed occupational profiles** complete the comprehensive and clearly structured presentation.

Results

From May through June 2010, a **user survey** regarding the AMS qualification barometer was conducted on behalf of the Austrian Public Employment Service. The **results of the online**

survey (approximately 700 questionnaires) show that the AMS qualification barometer is predominantly used for the purpose of **professional reorientation** (54 %), as well as for **searches for open job opportunities** (42 %). Most users find their way to the AMS qualification barometer via the AMS website (60 %).

Regular users (23 %) on the other hand use the AMS qualification barometer to research labour market policy information, as well as for vocational counselling, and therefore mainly use it in a professional context. It is interesting to note that despite the different approaches, both groups are very satisfied with the individual pages. This confirms the success in presenting **information for different target groups in an appropriate manner**.

Evaluation

From May through June 2010, a **user survey** regarding the AMS qualification barometer was conducted on behalf of the Austrian Public Employment Service. In addition to the online survey, **quantitative user behaviour data** – provided by T-Systems and Google Analytics – was analysed. This data provides information on the access to the website for the AMS qualification barometer during the investigation period, offering details on time spent on the pages, the origins and the individual pages visited.

All in all, 682 fully completed questionnaires were available for evaluation. In terms of **user friendliness**, the topics of informational content, presentation of the search results, presentation of the page, search function, structure and navigation received **consistently positive** evaluations (82-93 % very satisfied or satisfied).

The following **suggestions for improvement** were derived from this survey:

- Lack of clarity of the page (84 %)
- Limited topicality of the texts (76 %)
- Search options (45 %) (it is not clear if this refers to the search function regarding contents of the AMS-QB or to a search for open jobs)
- Structure and navigation (35 %)
- Informational content of the texts (26 %).

These aspects are being continually improved.

Lessons learned

The core message of the AMS-QB is that the labour market as well as the workforce (employees and persons seeking work) need to **react** to coming **changes and requirements** in due time. Through early anticipation (e.g. development of concepts for new or modified further education offerings, assurance of the next generation of specialists, creation of networks, etc.) it is thereby possible to keep pace with the qualifications and opportunities of the future.

And this is exactly where the AMS qualification barometer comes in as a useful instrument. In the ideal case, this will result in a **balance of supply and demand on the labour market**.

Sustainability and transferability

The AMS qualification barometer is well underway to become a **long-term instrument** for Austrian labour market policy. A major condition for its continuation is certainly the **long-term financing** of the instrument. As this can be considered stable at this time, the work

currently carried out focuses mainly on a **continued improvement of the user friendliness**, as well as the **contents and information sources**.

As the instrument has already **proven itself for more than 10 years**, a high **portability** regarding concept, preparation and provision of data as well as the preparation of forecasts is given. The AMS-QB can most definitely be highlighted as a **best practice instrument**.

Contact details

3s Unternehmensberatung
1040 Vienna, Wiedner Hauptstr. 18
office@3s.co.at, www.3s.co.at

ibw – Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy
1050 Vienna, Rainergasse 38
info@ibw.at, www.ibw.at

Sources

- Public Employment Service Austria: www.ams.at
- Public Employment Service Austria (ed.): AMS qualification barometer: www.ams.at/qualifikationsbarometer