

# GERMAN INDUSTRY UK

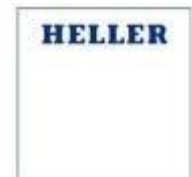
THE VOICE OF GERMAN BUSINESS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



## Major Survey amongst German Business on Vocational Training in the UK

2020

Companies and banks who took part:





**GERMAN INDUSTRY UK (GIUK)** has been at the forefront of German business in the UK, one of Germany's most important markets and locations worldwide for 45 years. We are a private organisation of 100 members of the board of German businesses in the UK. They represent some 250 businesses, employing some 250,000 people.

## Objective of the Survey

GIUK's mission is to support German business in the UK. This includes lobbying the British national and local Governments on matters of concern to German business.

### **Vocational Training is one of German business` main concerns in the UK.**

GIUK has previously conducted two major surveys on vocational training, the first in the summer of 2007, the second in the spring of 2012.

The majority in both these surveys said:

1. The general level of education of young British applicants for technical and commercial positions is at best satisfactory.
2. They have to do a lot of in-house training to get new recruits up to a satisfactory standard.
3. The British colleges` performance is at best satisfactory.
4. They would find the German Dual Vocational Training Scheme useful for their companies.

Since 2007 GIUK has been lobbying Skills Ministers in London: Mr David Lammy MP (Labour) in 2007, Lord Tony Young (Labour) and Mr Kevin Brennan MP (Labour) both in 2009, Mr John Hayes MP (Conservative) in 2010, Mr Matthew Hancock MP (Conservative) in 2013, Mr Nick Bowles MP (Conservative) in 2014, The Rt Hon Anne Milton MP (Conservative) in 2018 and we now hopefully look forward to a meeting with the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, the Secretary of State for Education, whose focus is very much on skills.

**In order to proceed with our lobbying and to prepare for a possible meeting with the Secretary of State,** we again asked for the views of German business in the UK. We had some 40 replies, amongst them major companies and banks such as Arriva, Bayer, BOC, Continental, MAN, Siemens, ThyssenKrupp, VW and Deutsche Bank.

**Better education and skills are of course vital to all businesses in the UK.**



## Summary:

Q1. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means totally unacceptable and 10 excellent, what is your view on the general level of education of young British applicants for technical and commercial positions?

**The majority said the general level of education of young British applicants for technical and commercial position is at best satisfactory.**

Q2. How much in-house training do you have to do to get the new recruits up to a satisfactory level?

**The majority said they have to do a lot of in-house training to get new recruits up to a satisfactory level.**

Q3. In the German Dual System the vocational colleges (Berufsschulen) cover the theoretical side required to practice an occupation as a skilled worker. How do you rate the British colleges' performance in comparison on a scale of 1-10?

**The majority said the British colleges' performance is at best satisfactory.**

Q4.1. Around half of Germany's 1.8 million apprentices are in commercial apprenticeships (Industrie- Buero- Handels- Exportkaufmann etc).

Are there equivalent British training offers available through colleges?

**A small majority said there are.**

Q4.2. If yes, how do they compare with Germanys?

**The majority did not know.**

Q4.3. Do you think commercial apprenticeships are essential for running companies efficiently?

**The vast majority said yes.**

Q5. Do you think it would be useful, in principle, to introduce something similar to the German Dual Vocational Training Scheme in the UK?

**More or less everybody said it would be useful, in principal, to introduce something similar to the German Dual Vocational Training Scheme into the UK.**



## Individual Answers to Questions 1-6 of our Questionnaire - 36 Replies

**Q1.** On a scale of 1-10, where 1 means totally unacceptable and 10 excellent, what is your view on the general level of education of young British applicants for

a. technical positions in your firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Other
b. commercial positions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Other

**Q2.** How much in-house training do you have to do to get the new recruits up to a satisfactory level?

None	Little	A lot
	12	24

**Q3.** In the German Dual System the vocational colleges (Berufsschulen) cover the theoretical side required to practice an occupation as a skilled worker. How do you rate the British colleges' performance in comparison on a scale of 1-10?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Other
1	3	2	2	6	6	6	5	2		3

**Q4.1.** Around half of Germany's 1.8 million apprentices are in commercial apprenticeships (Industrie- Buero- Handels- Exportkaufmann etc).

Are there equivalent British training offers available through colleges?

Yes	No	Not known
15	11	10

**Q4.2.** If yes, how do they compare with Germanys?

Better	Same	Worse	Not known
	4	4	7

**Q4.3.** Do you think commercial apprenticeships are essential for running companies efficiently?

Yes	Does not matter	No
30	2	4

**Q5.** Do you think it would be useful, in principle, to introduce something similar to the German Dual Vocational Training Scheme in the UK?

Yes	No
32	4



## Additional Comments:

- Nobody is interested in what we actually do with our apprentices
- it has been an on/off approach, we need a more long term view. The employees involved are hard to convince about the benefits. For them it feels first as more work!
- Due to the poor quality of college apprentice training we are forced to invest and do it ourselves!!
- The feedback given is based on the apprenticeships we run 'on behalf of' our franchise networks. This does not relate to our Head Office employees.

Q1: We insist on 3 GCSEs in English, Maths and Science for all apprentice positions (technical and commercial) in our networks. 99% of apprentices have these grades and we do not have an issue with the volume of applicants for these roles so I have marked this question highly.

Q2: We overlay the apprenticeship we offer specific content but the majority of the content is generic.

Q3: In terms of just looking at vocational colleges, I can only rank them on the basis of feedback from employers I know who have used them for training. We don't use them and instead use a specific supplier because the quality of the training and the environment where they are trained (our building) is much better.

Q4.1 Self explanatory

Q4.2 Self-explanatory

Q4.3 I have answered "No" because in the franchise networks they have managed without them for years and the commercial roles aren't specifically in a state of low skill availability in the industry. Whereas technical roles do suffer from huge competition and low skill availability so if an employer doesn't have an apprentice then they will find it very difficult to recruit a technician of the right calibre.

Q5. No. The new Apprenticeship Standards give employers the development required to gain skilled individuals. The new Levy and contribution system and enables large and small enterprises to train apprentices. The outputs of the German and UK system seem similar and the financing looks like the major difference.

Other Comments: Apprenticeships in Germany appear to have a higher status than in the UK. In the UK, Apprenticeships are seen as secondary to academic paths.

- in addition to Q3, Q4.1,2,3 the provision for apprentices have improved, but the quality varies significantly between the training providers (certainly for the commercial apprenticeships, we can't judge technical apprenticeships as much). We have started working with a new training provider which promises very good quality. The German system offers a good benchmark and proven quality, but I suggest the key next step would be to ensure consistent good quality between the various training providers
- The UK could greatly benefit from a similar system. What we have at the moment is very limited and there is not enough emphasis placed on vocational training. There are also not enough established industry linked opportunities for those coming out of vocational training courses.

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- We do not offer technical roles as we are in Financial services
- It would be interesting to find out how we can support and maybe influence this.
- We try to copy the dual vocational training locally
- Although key commercial/ business awareness is ignored at schools/colleges the key for businesses to make a success of an apprentices is a 'can do attitude' & strong values
- It is difficult to compare, as we have no experience of the German approach. Whilst we are a German Owned Company, it does not mean that we use Germany as the only comparator on Training etc.
- One size does not necessarily fit all circumstances. Graduates with good training can be more than good enough, as can apprentices
- Improved working relationship between senior schools and businesses, not just at university level, it's important to build that relationship at an early age. Local business should also sponsor schools, these children are our future.
- The UK has opened some excellent Research + Technology Organisations
- Vocational training in the UK is changing. The introduction of the apprentice levy has meant that companies can use the levy against workplace training. Apprenticeships are no longer only for school leavers; more and more industries are attracting apprentices at A level or degree qualified standard. Practical training is combined with academic qualification. Management apprenticeships are also increasing in popularity. It is difficult to compare and contrast the German and UK system when the whole education system is different.
- The UK had 40 years to do something.
- I believe there are already Commercial programmes in Germany
- The UK would benefit greatly from studying the German system of Vocational training and Qualifications

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