

Overview

The German Meister Qualification

The German Meister qualification in the skilled crafts sector is a highly relevant, well-known, and very prestigious qualification. The skilled crafts sector offers Meister-Qualifications in about 90 different professions. The German Meister has its roots in the Middle Ages; however, today's qualification profiles are regularly updated and enacted on a national level. In 2011, the German skilled crafts Meister-Qualification (among others) has been declared on level with the academic bachelor qualification (see <https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf> for details). And since 2019, according to the amended national VET law, the Meister title has been carrying the official supplement "Bachelor Professional".

German Meisters running their own skilled crafts company enjoy a good reputation in society: mostly they are firmly rooted in their region and usually have been for decades; they are highly qualified – hence, they offer premium products and services; often running their own business they provide reliable employment perspectives; otherwise, they are attractive to employees; and they offer high-quality apprenticeship positions for young people – an important contribution to German society.

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General Information

To become a Meister, a candidate usually must have successfully completed an in-company apprenticeship programme of the corresponding profession in Germany (*Duale Ausbildung*), which usually lasts three years. Subsequently, the candidate typically completes a training course offered by a German chamber of skilled crafts or an equivalent VET provider. These courses regularly last one or two years, depending on whether the format is full-time or part-time.

The Master Craftsman's diploma (*Meisterbrief*) is awarded by a chamber of skilled crafts in Germany upon successful completion of the professional examination. The examination must be completed before a sovereign chamber committee (*hoheitlicher Meisterprüfungsausschuss*), whose members are appointed by the local district president.

In 53 professions in Germany, the Master Craftsman's diploma (*Meisterbrief*) – or an equivalent qualification – is required by law for starting up and running one's own business, consequently, also in order to employ people and to train apprentices.

As the required competencies for both, running a company and training young people, are identical across all professions within the skilled crafts sector, two of the four parts of every Meister training course are standardized for all crafts: economics and regulations (section III) and teaching and training skills (section IV – see below). Section IV in particular is equivalent to the Ordinance of Trainer

Aptitude (“Ausbildereignung”), which is the mandatory qualification requirement for all in-company trainers in Germany.

Contents of the Examination

The Master Craftsman's examination comprises the following four sections:

Section I	masterly practical performance
Section II	trade specific theory knowledge
Section III	economics and regulations
Section IV	teaching/training skills

The candidate is deemed to have passed the examination when he or she has attained a grade of at least "sufficient" (*ausreichend*) in each of the four sections.

Legal Basis

There are two national acts, which form the statutory framework for the Meister qualification and examination on a superior level in Germany.

- Skilled Crafts Sector Act – *Handwerksordnung*
- Meister Examination Methods Act – *Meisterprüfungsverfahrensverordnung*

In addition, there is an individual national by-law (*Meisterprüfungsverordnung*) for each Meister qualification profile.

Financial Issues

In principle, every Meister examination candidate him- or herself has to pay for the training course, the required learning material, the loss of earnings during the course, and the examination fee. However, there are some public funding programmes (e. g. *Meister BAföG*) and some scholarship programmes (e. g. [*Weiterbildungsstipendium*](#)).

Statistics

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
23.153	22.428	21.880	21.266	20.495	20.047	20.080	18.259	19.534

Source: www.zdh-statistik.de

Professions in which the Meister Qualification is compulsory to run a business

German	English	German	English
Augenoptiker	(ophthalmic) optician	Konditor	confectioner
Baecker	baker	Kraftfahrzeugstechniker	motor vehicle mecha- tronics
Behälter- und Appa- ratebauer	apparatus mechanic	Land- und Baumaschi- nenmechatroniker	agricultural and con- struction machine mechatronics
Boots- und Schiffbauer	boat- and shipbuilder	Maler und Lackierer	painter and varnisher
Boettcher	cooper	Maurer und Betonbauer	bricklayer and con- crete worker
Brunnenbauer	well builder	Mechaniker für Reifen- und Vulkanisationstech- nik	tyre and vulcanisation mechanic
Buechsenmacher	gunsmith	Metallbauer	metal engineer
Chirurgiemechaniker	surgery mechanic	Ofen- und Luftheizungs- bauer	oven and air heating builder
Dachdecker	roofer	Orgel- und Harmoni- umbauer	organ and harmonium builder
Drechsler (Elfenbein- schnitzer) und Holzspiel- zeugmacher	woodturner (ivory sculptor)	Orthopaedieschumacher	orthopedic shoe- maker
Elektrotechniker	electronics technician	Orthopaedietechniker	orthopedic technician
Elektromaschinenbauer	electric machine builder	Parkettleger	parquet floor layer
Estrichleger	screed layer	Raumausstatter	interior decorator
Feinwerkmechaniker	precision mechanics	Rollladenbauer	roll top mechanic
Fleischer	butcher	Schilder- und Lichtreklamehersteller	Sign and luminous ad- vertisement producer
Fliesen-, Platten- und Mosaikleger	wall and floor tiler	Schornsteinfeger	chimney sweep
Frisoer	hairstylist	Seiler	ropemaker
Gerüstbauer	scaffolder	Steinmetzen und Stein- bildhauer	stonemason
Glaser	glazier	Straßenbauer	road builder
Glasbläser	glassblower	Stuckateur	plasterer
Glasveredler	glassrefiner	Tischler	joiner

Hörakustiker	hearing aid audiologist	Waerme-/Kaelte-/Schall- schutzisolierer	thermal and acoustic insulation fitter
Informationstechniker	information electronics technician	Werkstein- und Teraz- zohersteller	precast concrete block manufacturer
Installateur und Hei- zungsbauer	installer and heating fit- ter	Zahntechniker	dental technician
Kaelteanlagenbauer	refrigeration mechanic	Zimmerer	carpenter
Karosserie- und Fahr- zeugbauer	motor vehicle body con- struction mechanic	Zweiradmechaniker	motorbike and bicycle mechanic
Klempner	plumber		

Professions in which the Meister Qualification is offered – but not compulsory to run a business

German	English	German	English
Bestatter	funeral service specialist	Kuerschner	furrier
Bogenmacher	bow maker	Maßschneider	bespoke tailor
Brauer und Mälzer	brewer and malsterer	Metall- und Glockengie- ßer	metal and bell moul- der
Buchbinder	bookbinder	Metallbildner	metal wrks creator
Edelsteinschleifer	jewel polisher	Metallblasinstrumenten- macher	metal musical instru- ment maker
Feinoptiker	Fine optics specialist	Modellbauer	model-maker
Fotograf	photografer	Modist	milliner
Galvaniseur	galvanizer	Mueller	miller
Gebaudereiniger	industrial cleaner	Präzisionswerkzeug- mechaniker	precision tools me- chanic
Geigenbauer	violin maker	Print- und Medientechno- logen (Drucker, Sieb- drucker, Flexografen)	print media specialist (printer, silk screen printer, flexograph)
Glas- und Porzellanma- ler	glas and porcelain pain- ter	Sattler und Feintäschner	saddler
Gold- und Silberschmied	gold- and silversmith	Schuhmacher	shoemaker
Graveur	engraver	Segelmacher	sailmaker
Handzuginstrumenten- macher	reed-organ musical in- strument maker	Textilgestalter (Sticker, Weber, Klöppler, Posa- mentierer, Stricker)	Textile designer (em- broiderer, weaver, bobbin lace maker, trimmer, knitter)

Holzbildhauer	wood sculptor	Textilreiniger	textile chastener
Holz- und Bautenschützer	Woodwork and building protection specialist	Uhrmacher	watchmaker
Holzblasinstrumentenmacher	wooden wind musical instrument maker	Vergolder	gilder
Keramiker	ceramist	Wachszieher	candle maker and wax sculptor
Klavier- und Cembalobauer	piano and harpsichord maker	Weinkuefer	cellarman
Korb- und Flechtwerkgestalter	basket maker	Zupfinstrumentenmacher	plucked musical instrument maker
Kosmetiker	beautician		

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The skilled crafts sector in Germany consists of more than one million mainly small and medium-sized enterprises and 5 million employees. It is an economic sector in its own right at the heart of the German economy. The purpose of the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts and Small Businesses (ZDH) is to develop and bring forward a common position on all major policy issues affecting crafts enterprises. It represents the overall interests of the skilled crafts sector vis-à-vis the Bundestag, the Federal Government and other authorities, institutions and organisations at national, European and international level. Find out more: www.zdh.de/english