

Pursuing all options to beat the shortage of skilled workers

Interview with the chief executive of the Federal Employment Agency, Frank-Jürgen Weise

Independently of cyclical shortages, model-based calculations of future demand for skilled workers point to the demographic trend as another factor accentuating the mismatch between labour supply and demand for specific skills and in particular regions. At the beginning of the year, the Federal Employment Agency published a position paper setting out the potentials of various measures aimed at establishing a solid data basis for the skilled workforce debate and averting an impending shortage of skilled workers. In this interview Frank-Jürgen Weise explains the steps that need to be taken.

BARBARA HESS, HANS DIETRICH VON LOEFFELHOLZ

Highly qualified migrants

Meeting demand for skilled workers through immigration; integration aspects and the costs of non-integration

The article deals with the preconditions, implications and benefits of controlled immigration in the context of the skilled workforce debate. On the basis of skilled worker forecasts, it maps out the demand for highly qualified migrants and draws attention to the costs of non-integration. It also presents the findings of a survey by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), which shed light on highly qualified migrant workers' motives and their intentions to remain in Germany. In conclusion, the authors make a case for a joined-up migration and integration policy and specify key areas for action.

KRISTINA BEINKE, SANDRA BOHLINGER

Recognition of qualifications gained abroad

Unexploited potential for securing the skilled workforce

People with vocational qualifications acquired abroad represent a pool of potential for securing the skilled workforce. Without recognition of their qualifications in Germany, most of them are either in employment for which they are overqualified or are not employed at all. In response to this problem, a draft bill was approved at the end of March 2011 to improve the assessment and recognition of vocational qualifications and occupational diplomas acquired abroad. The article compares and contrasts the planned innovations with the current position on recognition in Germany, and explores the extent to which the proposals might solve the present recognition problems.

TORSTEN DUNKEL

Forecasts of qualification needs and demand for skilled workers in Europe

In the past, both skilled-worker shortages and "gluts" of academics have been observed time and time again. While the provision of information on expected labour market developments and qualification needs cannot necessarily prevent these kinds of cycles, it can at least smooth them out. The article discusses the significance of qualification forecasts at European level, presents findings from the European qualification forecast up to 2020, and discusses challenges for European education and employment policy.

ANKE BAHL, AGNES DIETZEN, MARLIES DORSCH-SCHWEIZER

Diversity instead of competition and displacement

Diversification of in-company vocational education as a strategy for securing the skilled workforce

The article examines the options open to companies to meet qualifications needs, paying particular attention to company-based initial and continuing vocational education and training. It presents selected findings from an expert survey which show that companies are increasingly concentrating on internal recruitment models and developing various initiatives to combine the benefits of company-based competence development with academic learning.

NORMANN MÜLLER, ULRIKE AZEEZ

In-company continuing vocational education despite employee departures?

Great importance is often attached to in-company continuing vocational education and training as a means of meeting skilled workforce needs. In a survey of companies engaged in initial vocational training, BIBB asked them about their level of engagement in continuing vocational education and training, also looking for any indication that this level of engagement might be diminished by the spectre of employee departures. The article presents the companies' own self-assessments as well as the findings concerning employee departure and engagement in continuing vocational education and training.

CHRISTOPH SCHANK

The influence of company size on apprenticeship-place seeking

The choice of a training occupation is a crucial turning point in the occupational biography and has been researched from many angles. Less research has been addressed to the reasons that attract or deter apprenticeship-place seekers from applying to particular training companies. The findings from empirical studies in the regions of West and Anterior Palatinate, presented in this article, give an insight into young people's attitudinal dimensions and their relevance in the process of seeking an apprenticeship place. Against this background, the article concludes by specifying possible fields of action for the apprentice-recruitment marketing of small and medium-sized companies.

STEFAN KOSCHECK

Four years of the wbmonitor Climate Index: continuing education and training on unstable financial foundations

Since 2007 the Continuing Education and Training Monitor Climate Index (wbmonitor Klimawert) has been tracking the economic situation in the continuing vocational education and training sector. Similar in concept to the Ifo Business Climate Index on which it is based, the indicator's purpose is to provide an empirical basis for market observation of the continuing vocational education landscape, and to lend visibility to the influence of financing structures. With the 2010 survey now complete, a four-year time-series is available – a sufficient basis for conducting a preliminary evaluation of the instrument's performance in relation to its objectives.

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