German Armed Forces
Vocational Advancement Service
Der Berufsförderungsdienst der Bundeswehr
The Vocational Advancement Service

The Vocational Advancement Service (Berufsförderungsdienst) was established in 1960 after the Military Pensions Act (Soldatenversorgungsgesetz) was amended to entitle soldiers to vocational advancement. Today it offers modern and customer-focussed services to ensure that soldiers have a smooth, flexible, and individual transition to new employment after completing their military service.

With its approximately 263,000 military and civilian personnel, the Bundeswehr is currently one of Germany’s largest employers. Of the approximately 177,000 soldiers, the vast majority have chosen to serve for a limited period and will embark on a civilian career when their term of enlistment is over.

As the armed forces must fill a large number of positions every year, the Bundeswehr seeks to offer potential applicants an attractive compensation and benefits package. This includes appropriate pay, a challenging job, and the opportunity to acquire vocational and educational qualifications.

The Vocational Advancement Service offers a wide range of services to help personnel transition to civilian employment. It has some 900 people working in several regional organisational units with more than 80 advisory teams. Together, they provide advice and help to soldiers regarding careers, qualifications, financial matters, and the transition to civilian employment. Wherever possible, the advisory teams are located close to military units and often within the barracks themselves.

The main target group of the Vocational Advancement Service is temporary-career volunteers (TCV), who have enlisted for terms of 4 to 25 years. It also provides assistance to a smaller number of military service volunteers, flying officers with a special retirement age (41 years) and, in a few individual cases, career service members.

The Vocational Advancement Service starts to provide support soon after soldier’s recruitment, throughout their military service and, if required, continues to lend assistance for up to seven years after they have completed military service. In this way, it continues to be a point of contact for many years regarding issues of career choice and advancement.

The goal of the Vocational Advancement Service is to prepare soldiers in the best possible way for the transition to civilian employment after they have completed their military service and to help them to develop their professional careers. To achieve this goal, it helps prepare a personalised vocational advancement plan that presents career goals and the steps necessary to accomplish them.
The information, personalised advisory services, and qualification measures offered by the Vocational Advancement Service are comprehensive and have steadily grown in recent years. They are continuously adapted and enhanced to meet labour market demands.

The Vocational Advancement Service is also involved in military vocational training that is recognised in the civilian market and in the vocational rehabilitation of wounded, injured and sick soldiers.

**Advising service members**

For the Vocational Advancement Service to succeed in its mission, it must provide service members with comprehensive advice at an early stage about choosing an occupation, opportunities for educational and vocational qualification, and the transition to the civilian labour market.

Advice and guidance must be based first of all on a joint clarification of the soldier’s career goals and an assessment of the chances and possibilities of reaching these goals in the job market. The first advisory session involves a discussion of personal concerns, the chances and possibility of achieving career goals, and steps to be taken.

Ensembling sessions will be used to concretise and update vocational considerations and prospects and to determine the need for further education and the necessity of educational and transitional measures. A successful transition to civilian working life is guaranteed by a regular exchange between soldiers and the Vocational Advancement Service about new developments and any changes in the goals of soldiers. Long-term personalised support and flexible adaptation to changing private or vocational factors are key features of the Vocational Advancement Service.

**Support for educational and transitional measures during active service**

It is important for service members to maintain or build on the educational and vocational skills and knowledge they acquired before joining the Bundeswehr. The Vocational Advancement Service therefore offers them the opportunity to participate in educational measures during their term of service in order to update and improve their skills and knowledge and to adapt them to current developments and requirements. The foundations for pursuing a new career path can also be laid.

**Recognition of completed examinations**

The educational options offered by the Vocational Advancement Service enable a large number of soldiers to take examinations recognised in the civilian market before their military service ends. If service members have acquired skills and knowledge in military assignments which justify admission to final examinations for recognised occupations, the Vocational Advancement Service can issue certificates for them in accordance with the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) or the Trade and Crafts Code (Handwerksordnung).

**Educational and vocational training**

As the end of military service approaches, service members ought to fully concentrate on preparing for this transition. The length of the period for which they will receive support depends on their term of enlistment. For all current service members, vocational advancement assistance begins immediately after they leave military service.

Entitlement to educational and vocational measures also depends on training received during military service. This entitlement is reduced if a service member has gained qualifications as part of military specialist training, for example:

- if he or she has passed a final examination for a recognised apprenticeship,
- if he or she has undergone master craftsman training or
- if he or she has studied at a university.
1. School education at Bundeswehr schools of general vocational education

Generally school education is provided at one of the ten Bundeswehr schools of general vocational education. These schools provide effective adult education in homogenous groups organised according to the age, status and personal history of participants. In this way, they are able to offer soldiers the best opportunities for acquiring school-leaving certificates (intermediate school-leaving certificate for technical colleges) that will give them access to higher vocational qualifications. Some Bundeswehr schools of general vocational education offer vocational courses (e.g. pre-school teacher training).

In addition to refreshing the knowledge they acquired at school, service members have the opportunity to acquire a higher school-leaving certificate, learn a vocation, retrain in another occupation, or progress or specialise in the vocation they have already learnt.

Overview of entitlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration and type of military service</th>
<th>Duration of entitlement</th>
<th>Cost ceiling</th>
<th>Duration of transitional payments</th>
<th>Transitional payment is ( x ) times the last month’s pay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCV 4 &lt; 5</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 5 &lt; 6</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>€ 7,000</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>4.5 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 6 &lt; 7</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>€ 9,000</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>5 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 7 &lt; 8</td>
<td>30 months</td>
<td>€ 11,000</td>
<td>30 months</td>
<td>5.5 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 8 &lt; 9</td>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>€ 13,000</td>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>6 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 9 &lt; 10</td>
<td>42 months</td>
<td>€ 15,000</td>
<td>42 months</td>
<td>6.5 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 10 &lt; 11</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>€ 17,000</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>7 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 11 &lt; 12</td>
<td>54 months</td>
<td>€ 19,000</td>
<td>54 months</td>
<td>7.5 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCV 12+</td>
<td>60 months</td>
<td>€ 21,000</td>
<td>60 months</td>
<td>8 to 12 times**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers with university studies &lt; 12 **</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>€ 5,000</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>depending on service period**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers with university studies 12+ **</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>€ 9,000</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>depending on service period**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers without university studies 4+ ***</td>
<td>7 to 36 months depending on service period</td>
<td>depending on service period</td>
<td>7 to 36 months depending on service period</td>
<td>depending on service period*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO 41 flying officers without university studies ****</td>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>€ 13,000</td>
<td>retirement pay</td>
<td>retirement pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BO 41 flying officers with university studies ****</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>€ 9,000</td>
<td>retirement pay</td>
<td>retirement pay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support periods and amounts may decrease or be inapplicable due to statutory regulations or as a result of special service status periods pursuant to the Act on the Continued Employment of Personnel Injured on Operations (Einsatzweiterverwendungsgesetz).

* Temporary-career volunteers (TCV) 12 receive the 8-fold amount, temporary-career volunteers 20 and more the 12-fold amount (in between, the 0.5-fold amount more per year)

** Temporary-career volunteers (TCV) in officer careers who have acquired a university degree funded by the German government

** Officers who were recruited with a required university degree and NCOs of the military music service

**** Flying officers with a special retirement age 41 years (fighter jet crews)
2. Vocational training

Vocational training is provided at public and private education and training establishments. Together with the Vocational Advancement Service, service members decide what vocational training measures they wish to attend and which provider is most suitable. The objective of vocational advancement is always to enable service members to find gainful employment after discharge.

Transition to civilian working life – Job Service

During and after their period of service, soldiers achieve recognised qualifications in civilian vocations with the help of the Vocational Advancement Service. They become experts who are much in demand among employers. The Vocational Advancement Service also helps service members find specific jobs. The Job Service of the Vocational Advancement Service helps applicants find suitable jobs and helps companies find suitable applicants, both on a nation-wide basis. The Job Service is always available to companies as a professional point of contact in all matters relating to job placement and the integration of service leavers.

Cooperation between Bundeswehr and business sector

Through intensive networking, the Vocational Advancement Service is continually expanding its contacts with employers from the private sector, the public service, and trade and employer associations with the aim of effectively supporting the transition of soldiers to civilian working life. Nationwide, the Vocational Advancement Service has numerous cooperation agreements with chambers of commerce and industry, private and public institutions, and companies.

It cooperates with the Federal Employment Agency to facilitate the transition of temporary-career volunteers leaving the armed forces. The goal is to optimise the use of the placement and advisory skills of the Vocational Advancement Service and the Federal Employment Agency.

Cooperation differs from region to region, but it is always aimed at the optimal and long-term integration of soldiers into the labour market.

Bundeswehr internal labour market

The Bundeswehr internal labour market was created in 2014 to help service members change their status group within the Bundeswehr and thus improve the internal personnel situation. Well-trained and qualified temporary-career volunteers, for example, are offered attractive civilian positions in the Bundeswehr after they have completed their period of service.

Specialists in the Vocational Advancement Service inform and advise soldiers about civilian career opportunities available in the Bundeswehr.

Transition to public service

Temporary-career volunteers with a term of enlistment of at least twelve years can receive what is known as a certificate of integration or admission. With this certificate, they can apply for public service jobs that are reserved for service leavers. The certificates allow service leavers to find employment in the public service at federal, state and municipal levels. Applicants must meet certain legal requirements and successfully complete an aptitude assessment procedure.

Job and educational fairs

Experience has shown that personal contact with potential employers is often the key to finding a job. For this purpose, the Vocational Advancement Service organises job and educational fairs throughout Germany. In addition to general fairs, there are also events dedicated to special vocational sectors or to officers, non-commissioned officers, or junior enlisted personnel. Representatives of chambers, associations and educational institutions are also invited in order to bring together the educational and labour markets under one roof.
Additional assistance

• Internships: As a vocational orientation measure, temporary-career volunteers may be released from duty to take part in an internship lasting up to one month. Such internships give soldiers an opportunity to familiarise themselves with workplace practices and to establish initial contacts with employers.

• Reimbursement of costs: On request, the Vocational Advancement Service can reimburse the costs of travelling to job interviews, of relocating to a new place of residence, and of transcribing military authorisations into civilian licenses.

• Payment of a familiarisation subsidy: If former temporary-career volunteers have to first be familiarised with their new job before they can begin work, the Vocational Advancement Service can pay a familiarisation subsidy to new employers. In this way, employers receive financial compensation for the time in which service leavers are working to eliminate any deficits they may have and to reach their full vocational potential.

Results

Against the backdrop of an ever-changing labour market, the success of the Vocational Advancement Service must be documented with reliable figures and the already high quality of advisory and placement services must be optimised.

Vocational advancement is successful when service leavers successfully gain a foothold in civilian working life.

Surveys conducted in 2016 showed that well over 90 percent of service leavers were successfully integrated into the civilian labour market. Of these, almost all of them found a new job within the first six months.

Qualification and integration into the civilian labour market are only possible, however, if soldiers use the assistance of the Vocational Advancement Service in good time and pursue their vocational goals with a high level of initiative and determination.

Integration according to vocational sectors in 2016:

- 12.00% commercial and/or administrative sector
- 9.28% technical sector
- 8.43% logistics
- 7.10% protection, safety, security and surveillance
- 6.51% business management and organisation
- 6.32% purchasing, sales and trade
- 5.34% metal working and processing
- 5.24% accounting and data processing
- 5.09% health care
- 4.85% law and administration

Military training recognised in the civilian market

In certain assignments, sergeants acquire vocational qualifications that are recognised in the civilian market as part of their military specialist training. The purpose of these qualifications is to improve the mission performance and effectiveness of soldiers in their duties. Vocational training recognised in the civilian market helps to make service in the armed forces more attractive. In combination with vocational advancement measures, such training helps service leavers to successfully transition to civilian working life.

After successfully analysing the market and searching for suitable educational institutions, the Vocational Advancement Service concludes any necessary contracts and supports training measures in close cooperation with the military agencies responsible for course participants.

Vocational rehabilitation

Soldiers who – as a result of injury or illness during their period of service – are unable to pursue the civilian occupation they used to practise receive special support from the Vocational Advancement Service until they leave the military, regardless of their status.
The Vocational Advancement Service prepares the necessary adaptation, retraining and integration measures while such soldiers are still members of the Bundeswehr, and it ensures that the measures can begin promptly, if the healing process allows it.

The Vocational Advancement Service and the responsible statutory rehabilitation provider coordinate rehabilitation measures for the time when such soldiers have left the Bundeswehr.

Costs of vocational advancement

In 2016 the Vocational Advancement Service spent some €126 million on vocational advancement measures for service members. This sum reflects the importance of vocational advancement for the German government and the great responsibility of the Vocational Advancement Service.

Additional information: Financial benefits

Temporary-career volunteers who have reached the end of their period of service can receive a one-off transitional payment as well as transitional allowances for a certain number of months (see the table on page 6).

The transitional payment is paid at the end of the term of duty to soldiers who have served for more than six months. It is based on the pay received in the final month of service. It is 1.5 times this amount if the period of service was less than 18 months, and up to 12 times this amount if the period of service was 20 years or more. A certificate of integration or admission decreases the amount of transitional payment that is subject to taxation.

In addition, temporary-career volunteers with a term of enlistment of at least four years also receive transitional allowances at the end of their period of service. This allowance is 75% of the pay received in their last month of service. The amount of time for which the allowance is paid is based on their term of service and ranges from 12 months after four years of service to 60 months after 12 years of service or more. The amount of time for which the allowance is paid is shorter for temporary-career volunteers who are officers who have acquired a university degree funded by the German government or who were hired with a university degree as stipulated in the career regulations and for NCOs of the Military Music Service.

In accordance with Section 53 of the Military Pensions Act, income from an assignment in the public service affects transitional allowances.

If and for as long as a recipient of a transitional allowance is taking part in a supported full-time educational measure, transitional allowances will be 100% of the pay received in the last month.

After completing their term of enlistment, holders of a certificate of integration receive – instead of transitional allowances – financial compensation for the duration of ten years which amounts to the difference between their former pay and their new pay.
Impressum

Herausgeber
Bundesministerium der Verteidigung
Referat P I 7
Fontainengraben 150

Stand
März 2018

Satz/ Gestaltung/ Druck
Bundesamt für Infrastruktur, Umweltschutz
und Dienstleistungen der Bundeswehr
Referat DL I 4, Zentraldruckerei BAIUDBw
Fontainengraben 200
53123 Bonn

Brochures of the Vocational Advancement Service
are available as PDF files at:
www.bfd.bundeswehr.de