

2.4 Developing occupational profiles and curricula – Occupational profile – Carpentry in Austria



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Index

Occupational profile for carpentry (technology)	4
General job description.....	5
Requirements profile	7
Training process.....	8
Qualifications/learning outcomes	9
Future trends.....	11
Appendix.....	13
Laws:.....	13
Sources:.....	13

Occupational profile for carpentry (technology)

Section 2.4 of the Quality Apprenticeship Training Programme outlines the importance of occupational profiles and the curriculum. The section also contains guidance designed to help companies draw up their own occupational profiles, for cases where no such profiles exist.

This document has been created to provide a practical example of what an occupational profile might look like. It sets out an occupational profile for carpentry, based on existing information in Austria. The occupational profile is structured as outlined in the Quality Apprenticeship Programme, comprising the five key factors:

- General job description
- Requirement profile
- Training process
- Qualification/learning outcomes
- Future trends

The content is largely based on material published by the AMS; links to both sources are provided at the end of the document.

General job description

Carpenters manufacture, erect and repair building components and entire structures made of wood. These wooden structures are mainly roof trusses, wall cladding, formwork in concrete construction, floors, wooden ceilings, stairs, prefabricated houses and roofed and clad storage buildings (like carports).

They also carry out thermal and sound insulation measures with rock or mineral wool as well as wood preservation work to make the wood more resistant to water and weathering (constructive wood preservation).

Carpenters work according to specified plans (floor plans, sections) and construction sketches. They select suitable timber (e.g. beams, boards, battens) for the respective purpose, cut the required pieces of wood with a hand or electric saw and then join the parts together using specific joining techniques (e.g. mortise and tenon joints). Together with other employees, they assemble the wooden parts using pneumatic hand tools for nailing or screwing. Mechanical lifting and conveying equipment are used for lifting the wooden structures.

In addition to wood, carpenters also work with other materials such as plasterboard, insulating materials and plastics. For example, they use gypsum plasterboard to finish an attic with timber frame walls. The use of this lightweight construction method is becoming increasingly important.

In the construction industry, carpenters specialise in formwork and scaffolding work and the industrial production of prefabricated timber parts and structures. In prefabricated construction, they join components together by gluing. In concrete construction, they produce formwork for ceilings, walls, columns, and stairs as well as formwork-supporting scaffolding. (Public Employment Service Austria – AMS, 2025a)

General job description for carpentry technicians

Carpentry technicians have largely the same main tasks and activities as carpenters, namely the construction and renovation of buildings and building components made of wood. However, they have one year longer training than carpenters and therefore acquire additional and more in-depth knowledge and skills.

This includes the planning and production of individual parts/assemblies for timber constructions according to their own ideas or specifications, the creation of the corresponding plans (joinery,

production, and assembly plans) and the performance of the necessary calculations (e.g. calculation of material consumption).

Another important task is the entire order processing. This includes work preparation, organisation/execution/supervision of the order, coordination of the other trades/professions involved as well as organisation of operational logistics like material procurement or transport.

Carpentry technicians must also document the work processes, working hours and material consumption (keeping specifications, handover logs, and construction diaries; preparing measurement accounts and measurement tables). Finally, they are responsible for advising customers on all aspects of timber construction (maintenance, servicing, etc.). (Public Employment Service Austria – AMS, 2025b)

Related (teaching) professions according to Public Employment Service Austria - AMS (2025a) are:

- Boat builder
- Concrete builder/concrete construction specialist
- Joiner/joinery technician
- Prefabricated house builder
- Structural engineer/structural engineering specialist
- Wood technician

Requirements profile

To be allowed to start the apprenticeship, the 9-year compulsory schooling period must be completed. (Public Employment Service Austria – AMS, 2025a)

Anyone wishing to do a carpentry apprenticeship should meet the following requirements:

- Good physical condition for carrying heavy wooden parts
- Physical agility for assembly work on the roof and on scaffolding
- Sense of balance for assembly work on the roof
- Manual dexterity for making wooden joints
- Insensitivity of the skin for processing insulation materials without problems
- Spatial imagination for working according to working drawings
- Mathematical and computational skills for calculating material requirements
- Ability to work together for assembly work in a team

Anyone wishing to do a carpentry technology apprenticeship should additionally have the following skills: (Public Employment Service Austria – AMS, 2025b)

- Organisational talent for order processing
- Work preparation
- Organisation/execution/supervision of the order
- Coordination of other trades/professions involved
- Organisation of operational logistics, e.g. material procurement, transport)
- Organisational talent for work planning
- Independent working for order processing, construction site management, and supervision

Training process

The carpentry apprenticeship usually lasts 3 years, the carpentry technician apprenticeship 4 years.

The apprenticeship consists of 80% training in the company and 20% training in vocational schools. Apprentices work in the company and learn the practical skills described in the next section. At the vocational school, the apprentices learn theoretical knowledge and also deepen their practical skills.

Each semester, apprentices receive a certificate from the vocational school with the grades for the individual subjects, and at the end of the apprenticeship there is a (voluntary) final examination. Grading is regulated by law.

Companies can issue interim reports during the course of the apprenticeship.

The following performance criteria may play a role in performance assessment:

- Professional competences such as quality of work, specialist knowledge, etc.
- Practical skills such as dexterity, accuracy, etc.
- Social skills such as teamwork, communication, etc.
- Personal qualities such as punctuality, reliability, etc.
- Willingness to learn and improve

Qualifications/learning outcomes

According to the carpentry training regulations (BGBl. II Nr. 129/2015), the apprentice learns the necessary skills to be able to carry out the following activities professionally and independently:

- Storing, maintaining & selecting wood as well as other building and construction materials
- Setting up & securing construction sites as well as workplaces and erecting work, protective & supporting scaffolding
- Manual & mechanical processing of wood and making wooden joints
- Making a wide variety of wooden structures such as roof structures, walls, ceilings, stairs, doors, gates, towers, and bridges
- Processing and the structural and chemical protection of timber structures
- Installing wooden structures such as roof structures, walls & ceilings as well as prefabricated components such as doors & windows, stairs, wall & ceiling cladding and wooden floors using various fastening and assembly methods
- Carrying out maintenance and repair work on wooden structures
- Carrying out dry construction work and producing formwork, battens, and roofing
- Installing insulating materials for heat, cold, fire and sound insulation
- Carrying out the work in accordance with the relevant safety regulations, norms, and environmental standards

Additional for carpentry technicians according to carpentry technology training regulations (BGBl. II Nr. 130/2015):

- Planning and manufacturing products, individual parts, or assemblies for timber constructions according to their own ideas or specifications as well as creating the necessary plans (joinery, production, and assembly plans) and carrying out calculations (e.g. calculating material consumption)
- Carrying out calculations in connection with the design of products, individual parts, or assemblies for timber constructions
- Selecting and compiling materials and auxiliary materials as well as assisting with calculations
- Assisting with order processing such as work preparation, organising, executing, and monitoring as well as coordinating with other trades and organising operational logistics
- Creating documentation on work processes and on working hours & material consumption (such as specifications, handover protocols, measurement accounting, measurement tables, construction diaries), also using computer-aided systems,

- Advising customers in the field of timber construction (maintenance, servicing, execution, etc.)

After successfully passing the exam, the qualification is classified as:

- NQF Level IV (National Qualifications Framework)
- ISCED Level 3 (International Standard Classification of Education)

Future trends

Carpenters are employed in the master carpenter trade, the building trade, and the construction industry. Carpentry technicians are also employed in prefabricated house construction.

The demand for skilled construction workers will increase slightly over the next few years. Carpenters can expect an increase in demand. As experts in building with wood, carpenters benefit from the rethinking process towards sustainable and ecological construction. Good knowledge in the areas of building ecology and design can improve employment prospects.

Carpentry technicians can expect an increase in demand. The training and employment prospects in the timber construction sector are favourable due to the good order situation, especially for specialists with construction and planning skills.

As in many other professions in the construction industry, employment opportunities are seasonal. While the number of jobs decreases in winter, there is often a shortage of workers in the warmer months of the year.

Carpenters can progress to become foremen (Vorarbeiter/in), timber construction foremen (Polier/in, Werkmeister/in), and master carpenter (Zimmerermeister/in)

Carpenters and carpentry technicians have the option of practicing their profession independently (as a business owner, tenant or managing director) in the following regulated trades (proof of qualification required):

- Carpenter
- Master woodworker
- Master builder

Carpenters and carpentry technicians can also work in the following independent trades:

- Operation of a sawmill
- Assembly of furniture kits
- Production of wooden shingles and their installation as façade cladding for decorative purposes

An independent trade does not require a certificate of competence, only registration with the trade authority. (Public Employment Service Austria – AMS, 2025a, 2025b)

Further training opportunities are offered by job-specific courses at the Vocational Training Institute Austria (bfi) and the Economic Development Institute of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WIFI Austria)

Further education opportunities for apprentices to achieve higher educational qualifications or to obtain higher qualifications are above all the

- Master Craftsman School (Werkmeisterschule für Berufstätige) with the specialisations “Bauwesen” and “Holztechnik” (2 years, evening classes)
- Building Trades School (Bauhandwerkerschule für Zimmerer (3 winter semesters))
- Schools leading to the A-levels (Reife- und Diplomprüfung):
 - Advanced course in construction technology, colour and design (2 years)
 - Higher Technical School for professionals (HTL für Berufstätige) for construction technology, training focus on “building construction” or “construction industry” (4 years).
- Additional possibilities to qualify for university admission
 - Vocational school leaving exam (A-levels, Lehre mit Matura)
 - University entrance examination (limited for usually only one university, no general access to universities)

Appendix

Laws:

Carpentry Training Regulation (Zimmerei-Ausbildungsordnung), BGBl. II Nr. 129/2015.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20009172&FassungVom=2025-11-27>

Carpentry Technology Training Regulation (Zimmereitechnik-Ausbildungsordnung), BGBl. II Nr. 130/2015.

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20009173>

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