The Austrian apprenticeship training system is seen as IVET provision that meets the requirements of the labour market and aids smooth transition from training to employment.

Although Austria has low youth unemployment, many challenges still have to be overcome, such as the high number of apprenticeship dropouts and of candidates who fail in the final exam.

In response to these challenges, the economy and the labour ministries jointly initiated a coaching scheme for apprentices and training companies with the goal of increasing the completion rate and improving the quality of training. It was piloted in four Austrian provinces in 2012 and 2013. Based on evaluation results, the programme was extended nationwide from October 2015, and financed from the insolvency remuneration fund (major contribution from employers).

Professional coaches provide individual coaching/counselling to apprentices who are interested. An initial interview helps to set the goals and cooperation plan. The coach supports the apprentice in improving professional and personal life, providing support on choosing a qualification or training, on final exam preparation, and even on issues such as dispute resolution if needed. The apprentice can apply to the apprenticeship office or to other institutions (such as the Chamber of Labour, public employment service) or via the web portal or hotline. Target group-appropriate information and media, along with flexible and needs-oriented approaches (such as the hotline and online counselling), ensure the measure can be easily used.

Advice for training companies addresses general challenges related to apprenticeship training in the context of the specific company. It can cover many issues, from training design, quality management, attracting apprentices, to subsidies or legal issues and dispute resolution between apprentices and companies. Training companies submit their applications to the apprenticeship office.

Several improvements were introduced after the pilot period. A coordination office was set up with the task of implementing the scheme, involving all stakeholders and connecting existing structures (such as youth work, youth coaching, public employment service, non-school education establishments) in operating the scheme. Regular follow-up after completion of coaching was introduced. Target groups were also better defined and priority given to apprentices with a migration background, young women in non-typical apprenticeship occupations, and SMEs.

Further reading and information
Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy: http://www.bmwfw.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung/Seiten/CoachingundBeratung%C3%BChlehrlingeundLehrbetreibe.aspx

Coordination office: http://www.koordinationsstelle.at/


Austria - coaching and counselling for apprentices and training companies