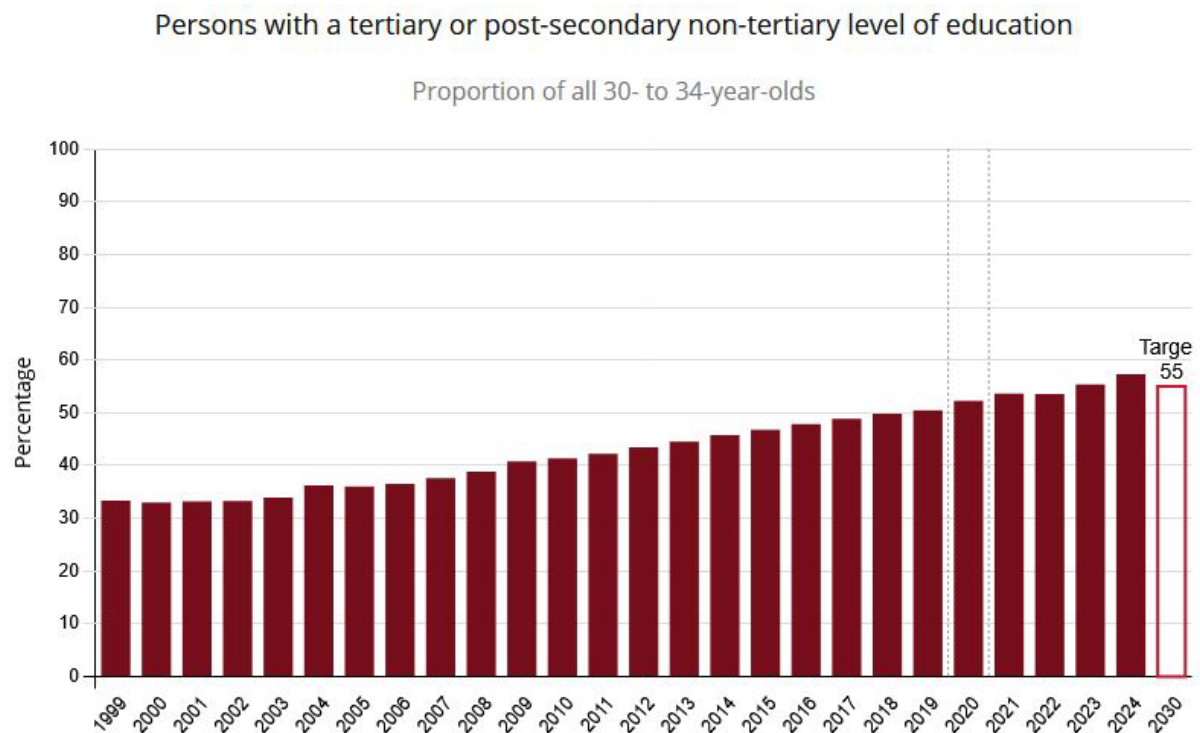




Education – Continuously improving education and vocational training

### 4.1.b Persons with a tertiary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of education



**Note(s):**

Due to a comprehensive redesign of the microcensus, a comparison of the data for the 2020 survey year with previous years is only possible to a limited extent (break in time series). – The data is based on a special evaluation and is not publicly available. – 2021 to 2023 revised data based on 2022 census(break in time series). – 2024 provisional data.

**Data source(s):**

Federal Statistical Office

**Definition**

The indicator shows the proportion of 30 to 34-year-olds (in %) who have a tertiary-level qualification (levels 5 to 8 of the International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED 2011) or a post-secondary non-tertiary qualification (level 4 of ISCED).

**Intention**

A highly developed economy such as Germany's, in which the service sector and the need for knowledge and expertise are increasingly coming to the fore, requires a highly qualified workforce.

**Target**

Increase proportion to 55% by 2030



### Content and progress

The indicator represents the proportion of 30- to 34-year-olds holding an academically qualifying or advanced vocational qualification. The designation of the indicator reflects the tradition of Germany's dual vocational training system. It includes tertiary qualifications obtained at universities, universities of applied sciences, universities of public administration, cooperative education institutions, technical colleges, and specialised academies, as well as master craftsman and technician qualifications. Additionally, the indicator accounts for other qualifications, such as completed vocational training following the Abitur and qualifications in health and social professions, for example, medical technical assistance training.

For the purpose of international comparability of educational attainment, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is applied, assigning equivalent qualifications to harmonised ISCED levels. The indicator covers both tertiary qualifications (ISCED levels 5 to 8) and post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications (ISCED level 4). The data source is the Microcensus – an annual sample survey covering approximately 1% of the German population. Additionally, data from the Higher Education Statistics of the Federal Statistical Office are incorporated.

In 1999, the share of academically or advanced vocationally qualified persons within the 30-34 age cohort stood at 33.4%. By 2024, this figure had increased by 24.0 percentage points to 57.3%. Consequently, the politically defined target value of 55% for 2030 was already exceeded in 2023. The gender distribution has also changed markedly over time: in 1999, the share among men exceeded that among women by 3.8 percentage points. In 2006, both genders reached the same level. Since 2007, the proportion of women with a tertiary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification has consistently exceeded that of men. In 2024, it reached 61.6% for women, clearly surpassing the 55% target value, whereas the share for men stood at 53.3% and is likely to meet the target only in the coming years.

In many other countries, post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications do not exist. Therefore, the internationally comparable indicator – as defined under the EU's Europe 2020 strategy – is more narrowly focused and considers only tertiary qualifications (ISCED levels 5 to 8). In 2024, the corresponding indicator value for EU Member States stood at 44.7%, continuing the upward trend observed since 2005. In Germany, the equivalent value reached 42.3%, 2.4 percentage points below the EU average. A gender-specific difference was also evident here: in 2024, the share for women was 43.6%, while that for men was 41.1%.

Labour market demand for skilled workers cannot be met solely by academically qualified individuals – those with vocational qualifications also play an increasingly important role in addressing skills shortages. However, a downward trend in completed initial vocational training is evident: the share of 30- to 34-year-olds possessing only a completed initial vocational qualification (without any additional academic or advanced vocational attainment) has been declining continuously since 1999. In 2024, it was only 21.9%, compared with around 50% in 1999.

Overall, the potential skilled workforce – defined as the sum of academically qualified individuals, advanced vocationally qualified individuals, and those with completed initial



vocational training – has declined markedly in recent years. Since 2021, the proportion of 30- to 34-year-olds classified as skilled workers has fallen below the 80% threshold for the first time, reaching only 79.2% in 2024.

### **Type of target**

Target with specific target value

### **Assessment**

The proportion of people with tertiary-level and post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications should be increased to at least 55% by 2030.

According to the target formulation, the politically defined target was already achieved ahead of schedule in 2023 and 2024. Indicator 4.1.b is therefore assessed as sun for 2024.

