



CARE EDUCATION FORUM

Basic Information on Care Education in Austria

In Austria, there are numerous opportunities to pursue education in the nursing field. These include:

- Training programs for various medical-clinical assistance professions and social care professions.
- Training courses for nursing assistants and schools for nursing as well as
- advanced continuing education programs and academic specialization courses.

A general overview of education at the Secondary Level II for Health Professions, including education and training for healthcare professions, is provided by this publication from OeAD (Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation): [Health Professions, Education and Training for Healthcare Professions](#)

1. Health and nursing professions

1.1. Diploma-registered nurse

The training to become a diploma-registered nurse (Diplomierte oder diplomierter Gesundheits- und Krankenpfleger:in) is offered through a three-year Bachelor's degree program at universities of applied sciences or through health and nursing schools (until the end of 2023). These programs are completed with a diploma or the academic degree of Bachelor of Science in Health Studies (BSc).

The trainees acquire the essential practical and scientific skills needed for the professional care of people across all age groups, populations, and social groups. Upon completion of their training, they are qualified to independently and responsibly perform tasks and measures assigned by physicians in medical diagnostics and therapy. Their scope of duties includes not only the care and support of ill individuals of all ages but also prevention, health promotion, and health counseling within the framework of nursing.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/gesundheitsleistungen/berufe/gesundheitsberufe-a-z/krankenpflege-und-sanitaetsberufe/krankenpfleger.html>

Certified healthcare and nursing professionals are required to participate in continuing education; moreover, they can deepen the knowledge they have already acquired through a wide range of further training opportunities or gain additional competencies in specialized areas.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/gesundheitsleistungen/berufe/gesundheitsberufe-a-z/krankenpflege-und-sanitaetsberufe/zusatzausbildung-krankenpflege.html>



1.2. Nursing assistant professions

The training to become a nursing assistant (Pflegeassistent:in) is conducted at a school for healthcare and nursing or through a nursing assistant course. It lasts one year full-time but can also be completed part-time, among other options. The program concludes with a final exam by a commission and a certificate.

Professional nursing assistants (Pflegefachassistent:innen) are trained at a school for healthcare and nursing as well. Various time models are also available for this training. In full-time, it lasts two years. Trained nursing assistants can start directly in the second year of training. This program also concludes with a final exam by a commission and a diploma.

Both professions have a minimum age requirement of 17 years.

Members of the nursing assistant professions support certified nursing staff as well as doctors in caring for individuals in need of care. They are responsible for providing assistance in nursing care and assisting in therapy and diagnosis. They are required to regularly participate in continuing education. Additionally, there are further training opportunities to expand and deepen the knowledge and skills acquired during their training.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/gesundheitsleistungen/berufe/gesundheitsberufe-a-z/krankenpflege-und-sanitaetsberufe/pflegehelfer.html>

2. Medical Assistant Professions

The portfolio of medical assistant professions covers a wide range of tasks: In Upper Austria, training programs are currently available for disinfection assistants, plaster assistants, surgical assistants, administrative medical assistants, and radiology assistants. What they all have in common is that they are short medical-nursing training programs with a strong practical component. All qualifications allow direct work with patients. After completing the training, graduates work in interdisciplinary teams in the healthcare sector.

The minimum age to start the training is 17 years; depending on the educational institution, the training can be started, for example, after completing a nursing assistant program or after completing compulsory school followed by vocational training. This makes it an attractive option for graduates of compulsory education as well as for those returning to or changing careers. The training programs are completed with a commission-based exam and a certificate.

After completing the training, further qualification as a medical specialist assistant is possible; qualified surgical assistants can enter directly into the second year of training to become a surgical technologist.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.ooeg.at/bildung/ausbildung-pflegeberufe/medizinische-assistenzberufe>

<https://www.ooeg.at/bildung/ausbildung-pflegeberufe/operationstechnische-assistenz>



3. Social Care Professions

3.1. Specialist Social Care

Specialized social care workers (Fach-Sozialbetreuer:innen) are employed in elderly care, disability care, or disability support.

Social care workers specializing in elderly care are responsible for the comprehensive and individualized social care of older adults. Their work involves implementing measures to maintain or improve the quality of life of elderly individuals.

Those specializing in disability care are involved in the care and support of people with disabilities, as well as in carrying out nursing measures.

Social care workers focusing on disability support assist, advise, and accompany people with disabilities in all areas of their lives, such as living arrangements, work, education, and leisure. The training includes the module "Support in Basic Care" (UBV), where trainees receive basic nursing knowledge.

The training is a combination of theory and practice and lasts 2 to 2.5 years full-time. For nursing assistants, the training to become a specialized social care worker in elderly or disability care is shortened to about one year. Both programs can also be completed part-time.

The minimum age to start the training is 17 years. In Upper Austria, however, there is a program called "Young Care" ("Junge Pflege"), which allows young people aged 16 to start their specialized social care training in elderly care directly after completing compulsory education. This program lasts three years, with practical work beginning in the second year of training.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.altenbetreuungsschule.at/bildungsangebot/ausbildungen/fach-sozialbetreuung>

4. Further Training Opportunities for Young People

4.1. Career Orientation Internship for Healthcare and Social Professions

If you are unsure whether a career in healthcare is right for you, the nine-month career orientation internship (Berufsfindungspraktikum) is the perfect opportunity to gain clarity. This option is available after completing nine years of compulsory schooling (typically at the age of 15 or 16).

The internship is a combination of theory and practice and serves as a guide, offering insights into various healthcare and social professions, as well as short- and long-term care. It also provides a chance to develop social skills and foster personal growth.

Trainees are supported through monthly reflection meetings and a final orientation discussion at the end of the internship. After completing the program, they can move on to formal training in the healthcare or social sector.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.ooeg.at/bildung/ausbildung-pflegeberufe/berufsfindungspraktikum-fuer-gesundheits-und-sozialberufe>



4.2. Nursing Starters

In Upper Austria, Care Starters (Pflegerstarter*innen) can begin their nursing training at the age of 15 (immediately after completing compulsory schooling)! The "Care Starters" program lasts three years, offering diverse career opportunities and combining both theoretical and practical content (from the age of 17).

In the first year, the focus is on general and personal education, as well as the theoretical aspects of home care assistance. In the second year, the emphasis shifts to training as a nursing assistant, which can optionally be formally completed at the end of the year. In the third year, trainees can specialize according to their interests, with options including professional nursing assistance, social care with a focus on elderly care, or medical assistant professions.

For more information (available in German only):

<https://www.ooeg.at/bildung/ausbildung-pflegeberufe/pflegerstarter-innen>

Detailed information on all nursing professions can be found in this German-language brochure from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection:

https://broschuerenservice.sozialministerium.at/Home/Download?publicationId=256&attachmentName=Gesundheitsberufe_in_Oesterreich_2023_pdfUA.pdf
