

Accompanying evaluation of the 'Vienna Training Initiative for Women in Digitalisation, Sustainability and Technology'

Abstract

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on behalf of waff

Imprint

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Accompanying evaluation of the 'Vienna Training Initiative for Women in Digitalisation, Sustainability and Technology'

The 'Vienna Training Initiative for Women in Digitalisation, Sustainability and Technology' supports women living and working in Vienna to complete a part-time Bachelor's or Master's degree course at one of Vienna's four universities of applied sciences through a scholarship as well as advisory, qualification and support services. Support is provided for part-time degree programmes with a proportion of women below 50% that are classified as technical. The initiative was developed by the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund (waff) of the City of Vienna and has been implemented since 2022.

The aim of the training initiative is to support employed Viennese women in accessing tertiary education in the fields of digitalisation, sustainability and technology and thus increase the proportion of women in these areas. L&R Social Research evaluated the training initiative from May 2023 to July 2024.

By the end of July 2024, 395 women were registered as programme participants, at least temporarily. The analysis of the monitoring data indicates a continuous increase in the number of participants. Given the relatively narrow definition of the target group, the number of participants serves as a strong indicator of the programme's success in reaching the target group to date.

Overview of the key results of the evaluation

The participant structure points to positive successes in terms of promoting social permeability: more than 80% of the participants are over 25 years old when joining the programme and are therefore not 'typical' first-year students. The great diversity of professional backgrounds should also be highlighted: In addition to women being already employed in a subject relevant field who aim to gain higher professional qualifications, more than a half are 'career changers' who previously worked in completely different subject areas.

Financial support through a scholarship is of central importance and contributes crucially to reducing drop-out rates. In the first two years of the programme, 128 scholarships were awarded. Almost 90% of the scholarship holders are studying within the standard period of study or have already successfully completed their studies within the standard period of study.

Programme counselling also provides important support. The diversity and flexibility of this counselling support allows to meet the different needs of the participants. The participant surveys indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the programme counselling. The part-time pre-qualification courses are also rated very positively. In particular, career changers benefit from the diverse support structures. The diverse networking opportunities and workshops offered as part of the training initiative also have an important supportive effect.

In addition to the programme elements that are aimed directly at the participants, the waff training initiative also offers the possibility of financing a study place under precisely defined circumstances in order to prevent suitable women from not having the opportunity to study due to a lack of study places.

Based on the evaluation, the overall package of scholarships, counselling and support, financing of study places and networking to promote tertiary education in the fields of digitalisation, sustainability and technology for employed women can be described as unique and effective in this form.

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