

ITB – UNIVERSITY OF BREMEN



The University of Bremen is a public university established in 1971 and a self-governing institution according to the Higher Education Act of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. The responsibility for the project activities described in the present application rests with one of its research departments, the Institut Technik und Bildung (ITB). The ITB is a central research unit (Zentrale Wissenschaftliche Einrichtung, ZWE) and thus assumes a prominent position within the university structure. It conducts research independent of other departments and institutes of the university but works with them in close cooperation. The ITB was founded in 1986 and has worked with steadily increasing success in the field of vocational education and training research ever since. The original concept of studying the interrelationships between work, technology and education on an interdisciplinary basis continues to shape the ITB's research activities. With the organisation of the first Academic Days of Vocational Training in 1980, the University of Bremen laid the foundations for the establishment of the ITB. In 1983, the first symposium on "Work and Technology" saw the emergence of Bremen's "Work and Technology" expert committee. An expert group was thus established at the university whose successful activities finally led to the establishment of a central research unit.

The expertise of ITB researchers is in high demand. They operate on a global scale, and especially the interest of the emerging Asian countries in the ITB's research work has been growing in the last few years. The ITB advises governments on how to build or redesign their vocational education and training systems. It trains local specialists and cooperates with universities in academic teaching and in the further qualification of young researchers. This is done, for instance, in a PhD programme launched under the commission of the Malaysian government. Doctoral candidates who have been guided jointly by the ITB and the University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) since 2006 are supporting the reconstruction of the Malaysian education and training system as well as the related research in the country. They will also have an influence on the training of vocational school teachers. In China, the ITB cooperates at the national and regional levels in the development and implementation of research and further training programmes.

Today, the ITB is one of the largest and most productive university research institutions in Europe in the field of vocational education and training. It has approximately 70 employees, 55 of whom are researchers from various disciplines like vocational pedagogy, engineering, psychology, economics and the social sciences. For more than 20 years, the ITB has repeatedly set the standards in international vocational training research as well. Following the merger of two former departments for innovation

and regional development on one hand and international VET research on the other, which came into effect in December 2011, the institute is now made up of the following five departments:

- Work processes and vocational education (Head of Department: Professor Georg Spöttl)
- Work-oriented education processes (Head of Department: Professor Falk Howe)
- Transitions to working life, learning careers, diversity (Head of Department: Professor Marc Thielen)
- IN3 – International VET, Innovation and Industrial Culture (Head of Department: Dr Rainer Bremer)
- Learning, teaching and organisation (Head of Department: Professor Michael Gessler).

Apart from numerous national projects, the ITB has participated in over 50 pilot projects and surveys and analysis projects funded by European programmes including ESPRIT, FAST, FORCE, LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES, TSER and EU Framework Programmes. The Institute has also played an active role in forming research networks at the European level, including Euronet Work and Education, EUROPROF (New Forms of Education of Professionals for Vocational Education and Training), FORUM (Forum for European Research and Vocational Education and Training) and WHOLE (Work Process Knowledge in Technological and Organizational Development) and the Network to Support Trainers in Europe, which was funded under the network strand of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

Activities and experience

The area of European comparative VET research figures prominently among the ITB's research activities. The topics covered by studies and projects implemented by the ITB include various macro and micro level aspects of VET in European countries, e.g. the continuing learning and educational mobility of VET graduates (CREDIVOC, CrediCare, From credit systems to permeability in education and training, Partnerships for lifelong learning), the qualification of VET teachers and trainers (EUROTRAINER, Changing roles and competences of VET teachers and trainers, CPD of trainers in enterprises) or the organisation and management of dual VET systems (Governance and financing of apprenticeship). ITB projects involve qualitative as well as quantitative research methods. Recent examples of ITB activities similar to the proposed project are the investigation of models of collaborative training programmes in the Cedefop study "Partnerships for lifelong learning in Europe" (2012-2014), the transnational surveys of European VET students, respectively training practitioners in the Cedefop studies "Teaching and learning methods in initial VET" (2012-2013) and "Continuing professional development of trainers in enterprises" (2013-2014), and the organisation of stakeholder workshops with a view to elaborating policy recommendations in the course of the Cedefop project "Governance and financing of apprenticeship".