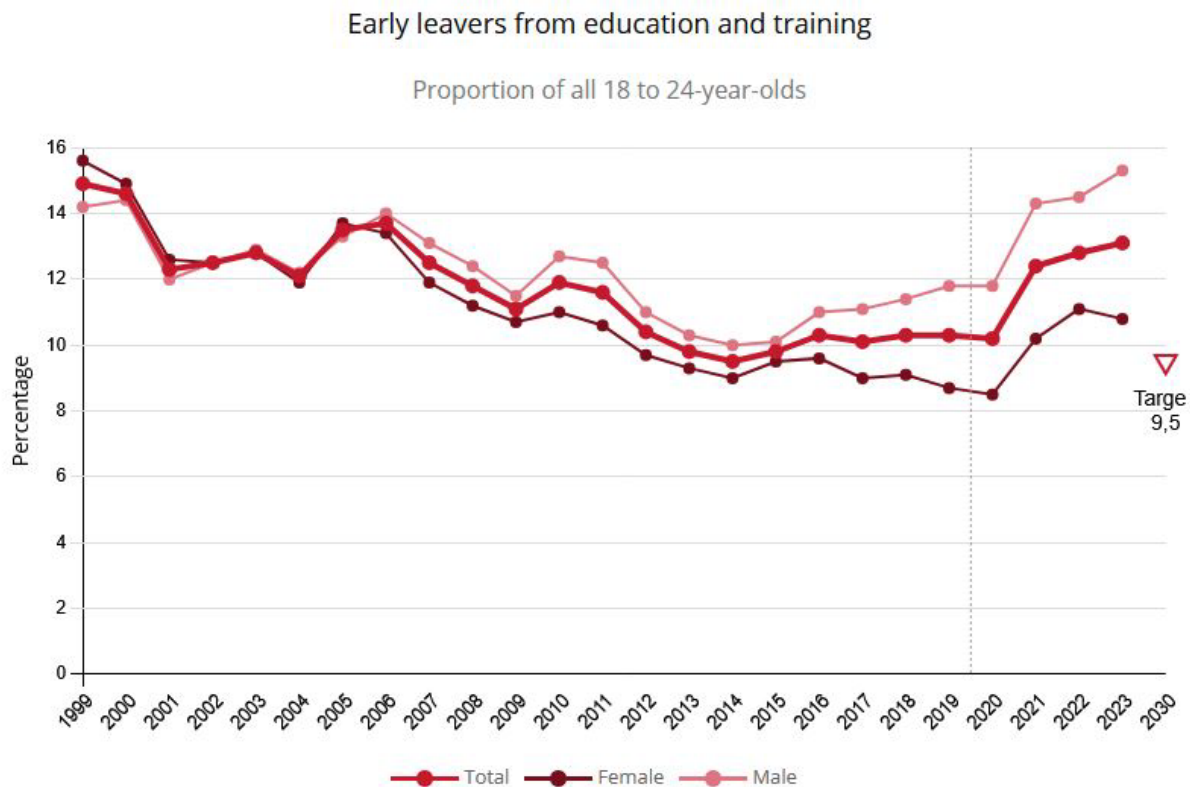




Education – Continuously improving education and vocational training

### 4.1.a Early leavers from education and training



**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). – Data partially revised. – 2023 provisional data.

**Data source(s):**

Federal Statistical Office

**Definition**

The indicator shows the proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds in the same age group (in %) who have neither a higher education entrance qualification, such as the Abitur or Fachhochschulreife, nor completed vocational training and who are not currently participating in education and training measures.

**Intention**

The state education system and the dual system of vocational training are the cornerstones of future-oriented qualifications for young people in Germany. A lack of school and vocational qualifications means an increased risk of poverty and a resulting greater burden on the social security system.

**Target**

Reduce the proportion to 9.5% by 2030



### Content and progress

The term early leavers from education and training does not refer to particularly high-achieving young people, so-called high flyers, who complete their schooling early with a qualification, nor is it synonymous with school dropouts. Rather, it encompasses young people aged 18 to 24 who neither hold a higher education entrance qualification – such as the Abitur or Fachhochschulreife – nor have completed vocational training, and who are currently not participating in any form of education or training. This group also includes individuals who have obtained a lower secondary school qualification (Erster Schulabschluss, roughly equivalent to a general school-leaving certificate) or an intermediate school-leaving qualification (Realschulabschluss), provided they are no longer part of the education system.

The data basis for this indicator is the Mikrozensus, an annual sample survey that captures around 1% of the population in Germany. Due to a comprehensive methodological redesign in 2020, however, results from this reporting year onwards are only partially comparable with those from previous years. This indicator does not provide information on the type of educational institution most recently attended or the timing of attendance. Supplementary insights can be drawn from the school statistics – a coordinated statistical compilation by the Länder, published by the Federal Statistical Office.

In 2023, according to provisional data, the share of early leavers from education and training among all persons in the same age group stood at 13.1% – an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous year. This corresponds to approximately 799,000 young people aged 18 to 24 without an upper secondary qualification who were not (or no longer) engaged in education or training. By 2014, this indicator had fallen to 9.5%, thereby already meeting the politically defined target for the year 2030. Since then, however, the trend has reversed and is moving contrary to the desired direction.

Between 1999 and 2005, there were no systematic differences between the sexes. Since 2006, however, the proportion has consistently been lower for women than for men. In 2023, the rate was 10.8% for women and 15.3% for men. According to the school statistics, a total of 55,708 young people left school in 2023 without obtaining a Erster Schulabschluss – equivalent to 7.2% of the population of the same age group. Here, too, a clear gender-specific difference is evident: the proportion of young women was 5.9%, compared to 8.4% among young men.

In the same year, 17.9% of school leavers (130,322 individuals) attained a Erster Schulabschluss, 46.3% (336,361) obtained an intermediate qualification (Mittlerer Abschluss), 35.7% (259,230) achieved the general higher education entrance qualification (Allgemeine Hochschulreife), and 0.1% (802) acquired the Fachhochschulreife. A longer-term comparison since the year 2000 shows particularly significant changes for two types of qualifications: the share of school leavers with a lower secondary school qualification (Erster Schulabschluss) has declined by 9.7 percentage points, while the share obtaining the general higher education entrance qualification has increased by 8.6 percentage points – in each case relative to the total number of school leavers in the respective reporting year.

### Type of target

Target with specific target value



### **Assessment**

The proportion of early school and apprenticeship leavers should be reduced to a maximum of 9.5% by 2030.

According on the target formulation, indicator 4.1.a is assessed as thunderstorm for 2023, as neither the results for that year nor the six-year average trend are moving in the desired direction.

