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ON THE LATEST ANALYSIS FROM THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AND ENTERPRISE RESEARCH

- » Employment of career starters
- » Recruitment strategies
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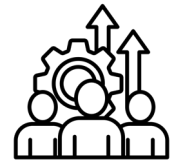
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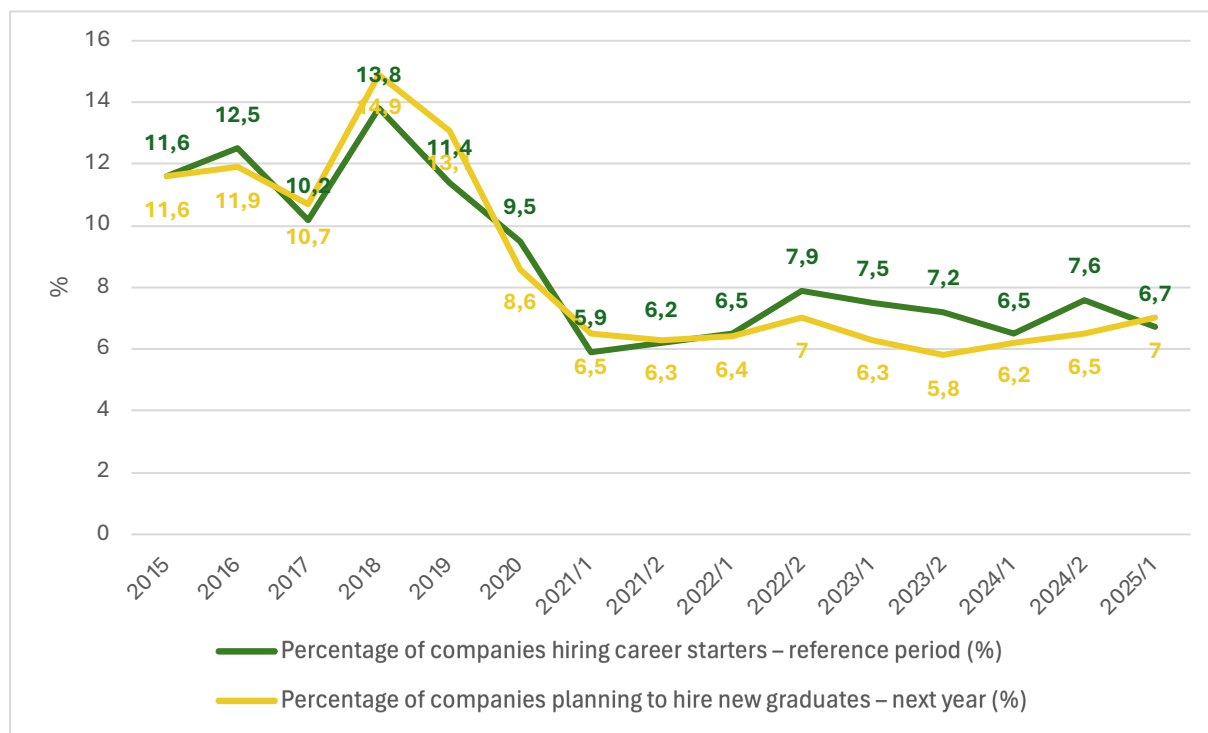
EMPLOYMENT OF CAREER STARTERS



2025. SEPTEMBER

In the first half of 2025
7%
of domestic companies
employed career starters.

According to GVI's forecast, the employment of career starters in Hungary shows a fluctuating trend: after a decline in 2018, a slight increase can be observed again by 2025, but the rate remains low (approx. 7%). Most career starters are absorbed by industry and services, especially in trainable physical, commercial, and hospitality jobs such as shop assistant, cook, or welder, but there are also increasing opportunities in office and technology positions.



The proportion of companies employing career starters showed a downward trend between 2018 and the first half of 2021, then stagnated between 2021 and the first half of 2022. It rose slightly in the second half of 2022, then began to decline again in the first half of 2023, before rising again in the fall of 2024, only to fall back to the level of a year ago by the spring of 2025: 6.7%. The proportion of companies planning to hire career starters has declined since 2018, stagnating at around 6.5% between the first half of 2021 and the first half of 2022, then rising to 7% in the second half of 2022. However, this proportion decreased again in 2023, with 5.8% of companies reporting such plans in the second half of the year, but from then on, this indicator is growing slowly but steadily, reaching 7% in the spring of 2025.

When examined by economic sector, the employment of career starters is highest in industry (9 percent), slightly lower in services (8 percent), and lowest in construction (5 percent). The proportion of employers hiring career starters increases with company size: 4% of companies with fewer than 10 employees hire career starters, while more than half (59%) of companies with more than 250 employees do so. In terms of geographical distribution, the East-West divide is clearly visible: 6%

of companies in the former and 8% in the latter employ career starters. This proportion is highest in Zala County (15%) and exceptionally high in Heves County (13%).

The companies that plan to employ career starters or currently employ such workers would most often employ skilled career starters, with or without a high school diploma.

Fig. 1
Indicators describing the
employment of career starters

Source: GVI 2025

Those who would employ career starters most often mentioned the following job positions (number of companies mentioning the given job position):

- Simple industrial occupation (84)
- Shop salesperson (76)
- Vehicle and engine maintenance technician (44)
- Cook (44)
- Welder, flame cutter (41)
- Waiter (41)
- Machinist (35)
- Locksmith (35)
- Pastry chef (31)
- General office administrator (25)

The results of the survey clearly show which jobs Hungarian companies are most willing to hire career starters for. According to the responses, companies are primarily open to young people in simple industrial occupations (e.g., semi-skilled manual labor), followed by shop assistants, vehicle and motorcycle mechanics, cooks, and welders. These jobs can typically be learned relatively quickly through practical experience, there is high turnover in the labor market, and in many places there is a constant labor shortage, which explains the openness to career starters. There are also a number of positions in the service sector—such as waiters, pastry chefs, kitchen assistants, and receptionists—where companies are happy to hire young, inexperienced employees. In these jobs, personal aptitude and motivation are more important than previous professional experience.

Interestingly, there is also a certain openness in administrative and office positions, especially in the case of general office administrators, data entry clerks, and commercial clerks. For these jobs, basic qualifications and routine use of IT tools may be sufficient to get the job. In addition, some positions requiring higher qualifications, such as software developer, mechanical engineer, or electrical engineer, also appeared on the list, suggesting that there is a demand for recent graduates in certain intellectual occupations, especially in the fields of technology and IT.

Overall, it can be said that companies are most open to hiring career starters in jobs

that can be learned quickly and where there is a high demand for labor, such as physical, commercial, and hospitality positions. At the same time, there are signs of openness in office and administrative positions, as well as in certain intellectual occupations, especially in the technology sector.

Based on the responses from companies, we have compiled a list showing the types of jobs currently held by career starters, the types of jobs companies plan to hire career starters for, and the total number of employees. The top 5 jobs based on this are:

- Shop assistant
- General office administrator
- Pastry chef
- Furniture maker
- Packaging, bottling, and labeling machine operator.

The responses show that companies primarily expect career starters to fill positions in sales, physical labor, manufacturing, and services. Among these, the position of "shop assistant" stands out, appearing by far the most frequently in companies' plans. A significant number of positions are also available in the field of office administration (e.g., general office administrator, data manager). A large number of career starters are also employed in technical and professional positions, such as electricians, welders, machinists, mechanical technicians, and electrical equipment assemblers. These are typically jobs that require professional qualifications but can be quickly learned with practical experience, and where there is a constant demand for labor. The list shows that in many cases, companies are willing to hire beginners even for more complex technician or engineer positions, especially where they are struggling with recruitment problems. In addition, the hospitality and food industries are also stable markets: there is high demand for confectioners, cooks, meat processors, and bakers.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES OF COMPANIES



2025. SEPTEMBER

7,7 %-a
of businesses genuinely
benefit from retrained
workers.

According to the results of GVI's forecast research, the vast majority of businesses (more than 90%) do not consider the retrained workforce provided by government agencies and vocational training centers to be of significant help, as such employees often lack the necessary experience, motivation, or relevant knowledge. Companies tend to rely on their own recruitment channels—personal contacts, job portals, and social media—while many consider official placement systems to be slow, bureaucratic, or ineffective.

In the first question of this topic, we examined whether it would help the situation of domestic businesses if vocational training centers and government agencies were able to provide retrained workers. Only 7.7 percent of the total sample of companies said that this would help. For the rest of the companies (92.3 percent), this would either not help or was not relevant to them (e.g., there are no permanently unfilled positions at the company).

According to their reasons, retrained workers often lack the necessary practical skills, professional experience, and motivation, which is particularly important in jobs that require special or high-level expertise. Many emphasized that they prefer their own recruitment processes and consider personal selection to be more reliable. Another common argument was that retraining courses are not sufficiently targeted, are too short, or are not relevant to the job in question. In some cases, training courses were not available locally, or the company did not have the capacity for further training. Several respondents indicated that they were looking for graduates or experienced professionals who were not eligible for the retraining program.

In terms of regional breakdown, the greatest demand for assistance from vocational training centers and government offices is in Western Hungary (10.1 percent). The demand is slightly lower in Eastern Hungary (8.0 percent) and lowest in Central Hungary (6.4 percent).

We also examined the question by economic sector. The results are illustrated in the diagram below.

Among the economic sectors included in the study, there are three where the demand for labor market assistance from vocational training centers and government offices is above average. These are manufacturing (11.5 percent), transportation and warehousing (9.3 percent), and services (8.5 percent). In the other economic sectors examined, this ratio is below average (<7.7 percent).

In terms of headcount categories, it can be concluded that the more employees a company has, the greater the assistance it can expect to receive from the workforce provided by vocational training centers and government agencies. While this ratio is only 2.9 percent for companies with 2-9 employees, it is 12.0 percent for companies with more than 250 employees.

One of the basic conditions for successful recruitment is the selection of appropriate labor market forums. In our research, we examined the most popular channels through which domestic companies search for employees. The results are summarized in the figure below. More than half of domestic companies recruit through personal contacts (64.0 percent) and/or job portals (63.9 percent). Social media (47.4 percent) and company websites or proprietary career portals (44.6 percent) are nearly as popular. Government offices (employment centers) ranked fifth, with one-third of respondents selecting this option. Vocational training centers, professional organizations and industry associations, as well as retraining programs and non-profit organizations, received less than 10% of the responses.

Analysis of other responses revealed that most respondents are not currently looking for employees or are recruiting through personal connections. The use of formal channels (job portals, advertisements) is much less common and mainly occurs among those who are more open to external applicants. In addition, some respondents mentioned cooperation with institutional or social programs.

By region, personal contacts are the primary channel in Eastern and Western Hungary (73.0% and 68.7%), while job portals (75.8%) are the most popular among companies in Central Hungary.

Among the economic sectors, industry (50.5 percent), agriculture (42.9 percent), and accommodation services (38.7 percent) rely most heavily on the assistance of government agencies (employment centers).

Based on a comparison by company size, we can observe that personal contacts are the most important channel among smaller companies (2-49 employees), while for medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees), personal contacts and job portals are equally popular, and for large enterprises (over 250 employees), job portals (88.4%) are clearly the most common recruitment forum.

Based on the previous question, it was found that nearly two-thirds (62.6 percent) of companies do not seek employees through government agencies and/or vocational training centers. We asked these companies why not. The results are shown in the figure below.

Base: Companies that do not recruit employees

through government agencies and/or vocational training centers, n=3282

The majority of companies that do not recruit employees through government agencies and/or vocational training centers use other channels for recruitment (74.2 percent). A small proportion (15.0 percent) are not aware of this option, an even smaller proportion (5.6 percent) are aware of this option but have had bad experiences, and there are also those who do not trust government agencies and/or vocational training centers (2.1 percent).

When processing the other responses, we came to the conclusion that many simply do not look for new employees because they have no labor needs or unfilled positions. Many solve recruitment through their own network of contacts and internal recruitment (e.g., students graduating from dual training programs, interns). According to some respondents, official channels are slow, bureaucratic, ineffective, or too administratively burdensome. Sometimes, specialised knowledge or language skills are required that official channels cannot adequately provide. Others cited previous bad experiences, poor motivation among job seekers, or inadequate skills among candidates. In some cases, a lack of information (they were unaware of the opportunity), the specific nature of the company (e.g., family business, own vocational training institution), or the requirements of specific positions ruled out the use of official channels.

Looking at regional differences, it can be observed that companies in Eastern and Western Hungary cite a higher than average proportion of bad experiences with government agencies and/or vocational training centers in their previous attempts, as well as a lack of trust in them. In a sectoral comparison, it is worth noting that the proportion of companies in the financial sector (37.4 percent) that are unfamiliar with the labor market services of government agencies and/or vocational training centers is strikingly high. Among industrial companies, previous bad experiences are significantly higher than average (11.3 percent).

In terms of company size, it can be said that smaller companies (2-19 employees) are more likely than average to be unaware of the opportunities offered by government agencies and/or vocational training centers for finding workers. These are the companies that are also

more likely than average to lack the necessary trust in government agencies and/or vocational training centers. Companies with more than 20 employees are more likely than average to have had bad experiences with government agencies and/or vocational training centers in the past, which is probably why they are more likely than average to recruit through other channels. In the last question on this topic, we examined awareness of the training cooperation between government agencies and vocational training centers. The results are illustrated in the diagram below.

Half of the respondents (51.6 percent) had not heard of the cooperation between government agencies and vocational training centers, while nearly 40 percent had heard of it but had not yet taken any action in this regard. The remaining 10% of respondents had heard about the cooperation and had already taken some action in this regard (e.g., submitted a request and/or employed someone).

There are significant regional differences in the responses. The proportion of companies in Central Hungary that have not yet heard about this cooperation is well above average (67.7%). The same proportion in the East and West is only 36.0-36.4 percent. In line with this, the proportion of those who have heard about the cooperation but have not yet taken any action is much higher in the east and west (50.9-52.5%). The same proportion in central Hungary is 25.3%.

Among the economic sectors, finance, trade, transport, warehousing, and construction are the sectors where a higher-than-average proportion of respondents have not heard of the cooperation in question. At the same time, a higher-than-average proportion of companies operating in the accommodation services, agriculture, and industry sectors have heard of the cooperation.

In terms of size, smaller companies (2-9 employees, 10-19 employees) were more likely to be unaware of the training cooperation between government agencies and vocational training centers. In the case of larger companies (20-49 employees, 50-249 employees, over 250 employees), this proportion is lower than average.



INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

2025. SEPTEMBER

		Actual data	Expectations	Previous period
Germany	Unemployment Rate	6,3%	6,3%	6,3%
	Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index	49,5	51	49,8
	IFO Business Climate Index ¹	87,7	89,3	89
France	INSEE Business Climate Index ²	96	96	96
EU	Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) ³	95,5		94,9
USA	Unemployment Rate	4,3%	4,5%	4,3%
	CB Consumer Confidence Index	94,2	96	97,4
	Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index	49,1	51	48,7
China	Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index	49,8	50,6	49,4

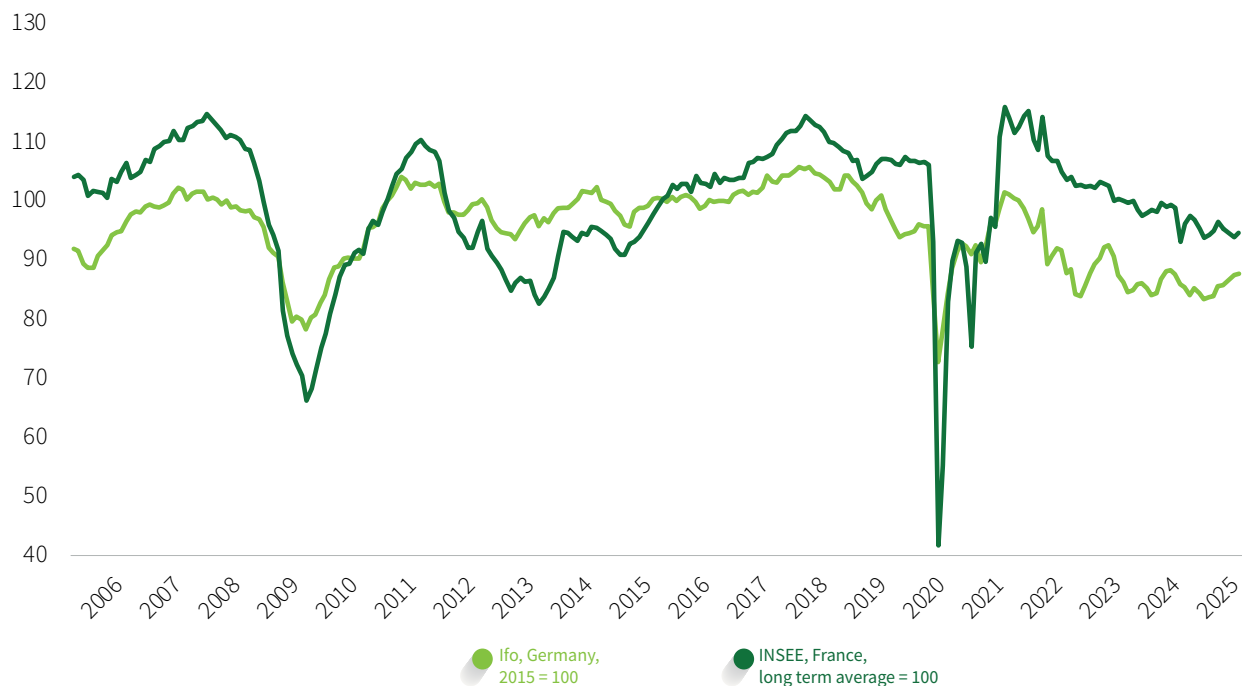
¹ <https://www.ifo.de/en/survey/ifo-business-climate-index-germany>

² <https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques?debut=0&theme=30&conjoncture=23>

³ https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-forecast-and-surveys/business-and-consumer-surveys/latest-business-and-consumer-surveys_en

Source of more data: <https://www.bloomberg.com/markets/economic-calendar>

*Retrospective adjustment



In September 2025, the global economic mood remained mixed: confidence indices and economic indicators in the major advanced economies showed cautious improvement or stagnation, while the manufacturing sector in several countries remained in contraction.

In Germany, the unemployment rate remained at 6.3%, the manufacturing PMI fell slightly to 49.5 points, and the Ifo business confidence index fell to 87.7 points from 89.0 in August, reflecting deteriorating business sentiment.

In France, the INSEE business confidence index remained at 96 points for the fourth consecutive month, below the long-term average.

In the European Union, the Economic Sentiment Index (ESI) rose to 95.5 points (+0.6 points), indicating a moderate improvement, primarily in the services and consumer sectors.

In the United States, the unemployment rate was 4.3%, the Conference Board's consumer confidence index was 94.2 points (-3.6 points), and the ISM manufacturing PMI was 49.1 points, remaining in the contraction zone.

In China, the manufacturing PMI rose to 49.8 points, its highest level in six months, but still remained below the 50-point threshold.

Overall, in September 2025, global economic indicators hovered between stagnation and slow recovery: confidence indices improved cautiously, but industrial activity remained weak.

Fig. 2

Business confidence in Germany and France, based on the Ifo and INSEE business climate survey, January 2005 – September 2025

Source: www.ifo.de,
www.insee.fr



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