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VDE Sees Recovery in the Job Market for Electrical Engineers

The VDE Committee on Education, Career, and Society has observed a turnaround in the demand for electrical engineers. Experts are warning of an impending shortage of skilled workers. This is good news for current students and professionals.

(Frankfurt am Main, July 14, 2026) The chances for electrical engineering graduates to quickly land a good job after graduation are increasing; for companies, on the other hand, it is becoming more difficult again to find qualified electrical engineers. This is pointed out by the VDE Committee on Education, Career, and Society (VDE SBG).

The experts base their assessment on the so-called “shortage ratio” as defined by the IW Cologne. According to this measure, the ratio for electrical engineers was at a low point at the beginning of the year—but still above the threshold for so-called “shortage occupations.” Since then, it has risen by about one-third by mid-year. At the same time, the number of job openings in the electrical industry also increased significantly. “The long-awaited turnaround in the job market appears to have finally happened; it seems we’ve passed the lowest point,” says Dr. Michael Schanz, the VDE staff member responsible for the committee. “Studying electrical and information technology is and remains a recommended path with good prospects.”

Exacerbation of Existing Problems

These growing difficulties are evident in various areas. For example, the professors represented on the committee are already reporting difficulties in filling their doctoral positions and positions for research assistants. This hinders research output and will also have an impact on teaching and technology transfer. “The low number of graduates is becoming increasingly noticeable on the job market, as well as at the universities themselves. This is bad for economic development and also has a negative impact on innovation and technology transfer,” says Prof. Dr. Kira

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Kastell, President of Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences and Chair of the VDE SBG.

In addition, the shortage of personnel could exacerbate certain problems in the medium term that the VDE has already highlighted in the past. For one thing, some universities are cutting back on electrical engineering programs despite their importance for the future development of the economy; for another, recent VDE studies have shown that nearly 60 percent of bachelor's students fail to complete their degree. "These high dropout rates and longer study times—a bachelor's program today takes about as long on average as a diploma program used to—further exacerbate the situation from the perspective of hiring companies," says Thomas Hegger, HR consultant and vice chair of the VDE SBG.

VDE Is Taking Long-Term Action

According to the committee's experts, the situation is likely to intensify in the foreseeable future. In addition to the rising dropout rate, VDE's research also shows that as early as 2027, for the first time, more than twice as many electrical engineers will be retiring as will be graduating from universities.

To at least counteract this trend in the long term, the VDE is taking a number of steps to recruit the next generation of talent. These range from offerings for students and young professionals through the association's own YoungNet, to action days and competitions like "INVENT a CHIP" for middle and high school students, all the way to programs for very young children. For elementary school-aged children, for example, the VDE SBG has published seven books in the series "…and the Female Electrical Engineer Can." "The goal here is to present, in a child-friendly way, the fascinating possibilities that electrical and information technology holds for young talents," explains Michael Schanz, a spokesperson for the VDE SBG. "For example, it can detect the future, count raindrops, send messages around the corner, or even help with hearing." Two new books were released this month: "…Seeing Through Steel" and "…Building with Light."

Those interested can find more information about the book series at this link (in German).

About VDE:
VDE, one of the largest technology organizations in Europe, has been regarded as a synonym for innovation and technological progress for more than 130 years. VDE is the only organization in the world that combines science, standardization, testing, certification, and application consulting under one umbrella. The VDE mark has been synonymous with the highest safety standards and consumer protection for more than 100 years.

Our passion is the advancement of technology, the next generation of engineers and technologists, and lifelong learning and career development “on the job”. Within the VDE network more than 2,000 employees at over 60 locations worldwide, more than 100,000 honorary experts, and around 1,500 companies are dedicated to ensuring a future worth living: networked, digital, electrical. Shaping the e-dialistic future.

The VDE (VDE Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies) is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main. For more information, visit www.vde.com

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