

# Apprenticeship programmes

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 PORTUGAL

## Timeline

2022 **Approved/Agreed**

2023 **Implementation**

2024 **Implementation**

2025 **Implementation**

ID number 43332

## Background

To improve the qualification levels of the Portuguese population, it is necessary to strengthen the education and training system, which will leverage the economy's productive potential and contribute to reducing socio-economic and geographic inequalities. The VET Agreement foresees the political design of an integrated and consistent strategy to boost VET supply, valuing the role of vocational training as a mechanism to promote social, professional and academic mobility. Considering lifelong learning as a strategic priority for the next decade, Portugal has defined a set of reforms, investments and measures to increase the population's participation in initial and continuing training. Although dual learning has a strong tradition in Portugal, increased requirements for workers' skills and the need to deal with accelerated scientific and technological development led to a new generation of apprenticeship programmes (*Programas de Aprendizagem*).

## Objectives

- (a) Reinforcing the qualification levels of citizens, with a view to improving employability and (re)integration in the labour market, as well as the pursuit of studies, particularly at higher education level.
- (b) Increasing the potential of on-the-job training, through the active participation of companies and other employers in the training process, assuming them as true partners.
- (c) Developing and consolidating quality apprenticeships based on a system of work-linked training, understood as the interaction between theoretical training and practical training and the contexts in which they take place.
- (d) Progressively bringing young people and adults closer to the labour market through practical training experience in a real work setting.

## Description

Apprenticeship courses allow for academic and vocational certification, emphasising inclusion in the job market, boosted by a strong training component undertaken in a work context and pursuing higher-level studies. Although dual learning has a strong tradition in Portugal, increased requirements for workers' skills and the need to deal with accelerated scientific and technological development led to a new generation of apprenticeship

programmes (*Programas de Aprendizagem*).

#### Apprenticeship (*Aprendizagem*)

This is addressed to young people and adults up to and including 29 years of age (including the most vulnerable and job seekers) with a 9th-grade education or legally equivalent qualification. It allows people who follow this training to obtain an EQF level 4 qualification.

The total workload during the three years ranges between 3 000 and 4 000 hours, and the curriculum includes the following training components:

- (a) sociocultural and scientific training (from 700 to 800 hours), which focuses on the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes considered needed to obtain a school qualification, according to the competence framework for those in the CNQ;
- (b) technological training (from 800 to 1 000 hours), which focuses on the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that meet the demands in the professional profile and competences associated with the respective qualification;
- (c) Work-based learning (from 1 100 to 1 500 hours) focuses on consolidating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through in-company activities or other settings.

#### Apprenticeship + (*Aprendizagem +*)

It is addressed to young people and adults up to and including 29 years of age (including the most vulnerable and job seekers) and allows students who follow this training to obtain an EQF level 5.

The total workload is between 1 325 and 1 675 hours, and the curriculum includes the following training components:

- (a) general and scientific training (from 125 to 175 hours), which focuses on the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes considered necessary to complement and support the learning in the technological training component;
- (b) technological training (from 700 to 850 hours), which focuses on the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that respond to the defined professional profile and the competences associated with the respective qualification, based on a technological specialisation of a sectoral nature with a high level of professional qualification;
- (c) Work-based learning (from 500 to 850 hours) is focused on applying and consolidating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through in-company activities or other settings.

The IEFP is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship+ programmes.

#### **2022 Approved/Agreed**

This measure is part of the NIP under the package Skilling and reskilling.

The new generation of apprenticeship programmes, introduced by the Ordinance No 70/2022 of 2 February 2022, has innovative features of the training organisation model: the possibility of remote training and the reinforcement of the role of the companies that ensure the training component in the work context in close consultation with the training providers. They combine sociocultural, scientific and technological school-based training with mandatory WBL. The operationalisation of the measure is also based on the optimisation of synergies and the sharing of experiences between education and training providers, through local agreements, in the sharing of human, material and training rooms.

#### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, 1 814 young adults participated in the Apprenticeship+ programme, while 15

192 new trainees were involved in the Apprenticeship programme.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, 3 903 young adults participated in the Apprenticeship+ programme, while the number of new trainees involved in the Apprenticeship programme was 13 477.

### **2025 Implementation**

By 31 October 2025, 3 758 young adults participated in the Apprenticeship+ programme, while the number of new trainees involved in the Apprenticeship programme was 10 819.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people (15-29 years old)  
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)  
Learners with migrant background, including refugees  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Unemployed and jobseekers

## **Thematic categories**

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses  
Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8  
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

### **Osnabrück Declaration**

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

## **Subsystem**

IVET

## **Further reading**

## Related policy developments

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2025 Implementation

### VET agreement

The VET agreement is to be a common ground of a tripartite understanding, between the government and the social partners, in the following areas of intervention:

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

CVET

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2025 Implementation

### Special competitions to access higher education

Legislation passed in 2020 introduced special conditions for upper secondary VET graduates to access higher education.

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET

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2025 Implementation

### Promoting work-based learning and traineeships

Within the scope of this policy development, several initiatives have been set up by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP).

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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