

Support for inter-company apprenticeship training (ÜLU)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline

2021 Implementation 2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation 2025 Implementation

ID number 41830

Background

Some training companies are too specialised or too small to be able to cover all relevant training content and to ensure the material and personnel training requirements. They can supplement their own training with training measures from outside their own company, such as the inter-company apprenticeship training (*Überbetriebliche Lehrlingsunterweisung, ÜLU*) in crafts. The Federal Government has been promoting the implementation of ÜLU since the early 1950s.

Objectives

Some companies refrain from creating an apprenticeship place. Other companies lack the time in their daily work to deal intensively with their apprentices. The number of training place and quality of the vocational education and training (VET) suffers as a result. Inter-company apprenticeship training (ÜLU) is one solution. The offer complements and supports the training provided by the companies. In this way, the motivation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to offer training places is strengthened and the quality of training is optimised.

Description

The Federal Government provides subsidies of around EUR 50 million annually for the inter-company apprenticeship training (ÜLU), making a contribution to the course and accommodation costs for apprentices from the second year of training onwards. The current funding guidelines allow a subsidy of up to one third of the course costs and up to half of the accommodation costs. The assessment basis for the federal funding lump sums is based on the determined average cost rates of the courses. The Federal States and the skilled crafts sector also contribute to the financing of ÜLU. As a rule, the Federal States are guided by the Federal Government's funding.

In a position paper of the ZDH from 2020, the funding guidelines in place were noted as insufficient. The share of funding by the Federal Government and the Federal States is considered to be far below the possible limit. As a result, the training companies have borne 60% of the costs for the ÜLU courses in the training centres of the craft

organisations.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) was able to extend funding for another 4 years until 2024. Similarly, the funding for ÜLU was increased from a total of around EUR 50 million to around EUR 60 million. This made it possible to increase the flat rate funding for ÜLU in 2021 to take account of cost increases. In 2021, the Federal Government raised the flat rate subsidies for ÜLU to take account of cost increases and extended the funding until the end of 2024. This additional relief for training companies from the costs of ÜLU is a particularly important signal during the COVID-19 crisis to maintain and strengthen the willingness to provide training. This applies all the more as the economy will be permanently dependent on more apprentices and skilled workers after the COVID-19 pandemic and in view of challenges such as digitalisation and climate protection.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia increased its funding for ÜLU by around EUR 7 million as part of the North Rhine-Westphalia Skilled Workers Offensive.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the ÜLU remained an important part of VET in the craft sector. In 2023, 52 350 training programmes with 445 387 participants were funded.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the ÜLU remained an important part of VET in the craft sector, taking place in approximately 600 inter-company vocational training centres. The funding guidelines apply to training courses that are completed by 31 December 2024.

2025 Implementation

A new funding period began in 2025 after the funding guidelines were renewed in December 2024. The regulation applies at most to courses that are completed by December 31, 2028.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) (until December 2021)
- German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH)
- Federal States (Länder)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) (since 2025)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Entities providing VET

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Optimising VET funding

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Information on Betriebliche Lehrlingsunterweisung \(ZDH, 2024\)](#)

[Funding regulations \(2024\)](#)

[Federal government information \(BMWE\)](#)

[NRW information](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Supporting excellent inter-company training (ÜBA) and CoVE centres (ÜBS)

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initiated the programme of promoting digitalisation in competence centres and inter-company training centres in 2016.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Supporting SMEs to provide future-proof VET

Under the umbrella initiative, VET 4.0, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initiated a special funding line (Initial and continuing vocational training in the economy 4.0 – Support structures for SMEs in the adaptation process of in-company training) within the JOBSTARTER plus

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41830>