

# Apprentice Bonus (COVID-19 measure)

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** **AUSTRIA**

## Timeline

**2020 Implementation****2021 Completed****ID number 38674**

## Background

In recent years, numerous measures have been implemented (company apprenticeship funding, apprenticeship with exams giving access to higher education (*Lehre mit Matura*), supra-company apprenticeship training and coaching for apprentices and training companies, the education and training obligation up to the age of 18 and the training guarantee up to the age of 25) to make apprenticeship more attractive for young people and companies and to increase the number of apprenticeships.

The first successes have been evident in recent years: the number of apprenticeships offered has increased, and in some industries and regions the number of apprenticeships offered even exceeded that of applicants. In the course of the COVID-19 crisis and the associated measures (lockdown from 16 March 2020 for large areas of trade, commerce and personal services as well as for all types of schools), it was feared that the companies' willingness to train, not only with regard to already agreed apprentice contracts, would decline, but that the number of newly offered apprenticeship positions would also decrease.

## Objectives

To maintain the willingness of companies to conclude new training contracts, additional funding is being introduced for training contracts concluded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Description

To counteract the expected decline in apprenticeships due to COVID-19, those companies that hired apprentices during the coronavirus crisis from 16 March 2020 until 31 October 2020 are being supported with EUR 2 000. The bonus of EUR 2 000 for each new apprentice is paid out in two instalments: EUR 1 000 when the apprenticeship starts and EUR 1 000 if the apprenticeship relationship is continued after the probationary period.

The decisive criterion is the date on which the apprenticeship contract was concluded. The signature on the apprenticeship contract must have been made between 16 March and 31 October 2020; for apprentices who were taken on from an inter-company training measure, the deadline was extended to 31 March 2021.

All newly admitted apprentices in their first year of apprenticeship, and all newly admitted

apprentices with credits from periods of school training or inter-company apprenticeship training, are considered apprenticeship starters, irrespective of the year of apprenticeship.

Aid or other funding from local authorities or other legal entities for the same funding purpose as a COVID-19-related measure must be offset against the amount to be paid out. This means that funding for the new admission of an apprentice from a third party is also retrospective and will lead to a reduction of the apprentice bonus as well as the micro/small business bonus and thus to the obligation to repay the amount of the reduction.

In addition to the general apprenticeship bonus (*Lehrlingsbonus*), an additional bonus of EUR 1 000 per new apprentice is available for small and micro enterprises (under 9.99 employees). Companies with 10 to 49 employees receive an additional bonus of EUR 500 per new apprentice.

The apprenticeship offices of the regional economic chambers are responsible for processing the funding. Training companies are actively informed about the funding opportunities by the apprenticeship offices.

Together with the possibility of short-time work for apprentices, the apprenticeship bonus is an essential element to cushion the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on apprenticeship training. The apprenticeship bonus complements the already existing subsidies for apprenticeship companies.

## 2020 Implementation

The apprenticeship bonus was introduced as a temporary measure for the period 16 March to 31 October 2020. Applications were possible in the period from 1 July to 31 October 2020.

For the transfer of apprentices from a supra-company training measure to a company-based apprenticeship, the subsidy will continue until 31 March 2021.

## 2021 Completed

As of January 2021, around EUR 40 million in subsidies have been paid out to apprenticeship training companies within the framework of the apprenticeship bonus.

This measure was considered temporary and was discontinued according to the defined time period.

An evaluation of the take-up and effectiveness of this funding measure published in 2021 found, among other things, that the funding was taken up for almost 85% of the apprenticeship contracts agreed in the observation period (16.3. to 31.10.2020). If the non-eligible apprenticeship companies are excluded (e.g. public institutions), the share of non-applications was around 9%.

## Bodies responsible

- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)
- Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) (until 2022)

## Target group

### Entities providing VET

Companies  
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

## Thematic categories

## **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Coordinating VET and other policies

## **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

## **Subsystem**

IVET

## **Further reading**

[Evaluation apprenticeship bonus \[Evaluierung Lehrlingsbonus\]](#):

## **Related policy developments**

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**2023 Completed**

### **Apprenticeship response to the COVID 19 crisis**

To keep the apprenticeship system running, the following two key measures were taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

Apprenticeship bonus

 AUSTRIA

#### **Type of development**

Practical measure/Initiative

#### **Subsystem**

IVET

#### **“ ... ” Cite as**

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