

# Securing apprenticeship placements during the COVID-19 crisis

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

## Timeline

2020 Implementation

2021 Implementation

2022 Implementation

2023 Discontinued

ID number 37962

## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic should not become a crisis for the vocational careers of young people but for securing skilled labour. As many young people as possible should be able to start and successfully complete an apprenticeship. The Federal Government is, therefore, supporting companies that provide apprenticeships through premiums and bonuses.

## Objectives

With the federal programme *Securing apprenticeship placements*, the Federal Government [Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi)] wants to support training companies in all sectors of the economy and training institutions in the health and social professions in the current difficult economic situation. It aims to motivate them to maintain their apprenticeship placements and enable young people to continue and successfully complete their training.

Specifically, training capacities are to be maintained and expanded, short-time work for apprentices is to be avoided, contractual and joint training is to be promoted, and incentives for taking over apprentices in the event of insolvency are to be created.

## Description

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government (BMBF, BMAS, BMWi) decided on key measures to support apprenticeship and to secure skilled labour in June 2020 with a total funding budget of up to EUR 500 million. The first funding phase started in August 2020 (with retroactive improvements in December 2020) followed by the second funding phase from November 2020. The funding support covers the apprenticeship year 2020/21. The grants are paid via the employment agencies (BA).

The funding programme *Securing apprenticeship placements*, supports training companies with the following measures:

- (a) training premium (continue training offer): SMEs providing training that maintain their training performance despite the pandemic burden compared to the 3 previous years

- will be supported with a training premium. They will receive a one-time payment of EUR 2 000 for each apprenticeship contract concluded for the 2020 training year (after completion of the probationary period);
- (b) training premium plus (increase training offer): SMEs that increase their training performance, despite the pandemic, compared to the 3 previous years will receive a one-time payment of EUR 3 000 for each additional apprenticeship contract concluded for the 2020 training year (after completion of the probationary period);
  - (c) avoidance of short-time work: SMEs that continue their training activities despite a considerable loss of work (at least 50%) will be subsidised with 75% of the gross training remuneration for each month in which this is the case;
  - (d) contract and collaborative training: if SMEs are temporarily unable to continue training due to the pandemic, other SMEs, inter-company vocational training centres or other established training service providers can take over the training for a limited period and receive a bonus of EUR 4 000 per apprentice. This applies if the business operations of the SME originally providing the training are affected in whole or in substantial parts by closures or considerable constraints due to the pandemic, which significantly impede the continuation of business operations;
  - (e) take-over bonus: companies that take over trainees from pandemic-induced insolvent companies of any size until they complete their training can receive a bonus of EUR 3 000 per trainee, regardless of the size of the company.

### 2020 Implementation

Following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government (BMBF, BMAS, BMWi) decided in June 2020 on key measures to support apprenticeship and to secure skilled labour. The first funding phase (for all measures except for contract and collaborative training) started in August 2020, followed by the second funding phase (for contract and collaborative training) from November 2020.

### 2021 Implementation

The aim of the second funding guideline, officially published in April 2021, is to increase the use of collaborative or contract training in 2020/21 and 2021/22 for the benefit of apprentices in companies with up to 499 employees, who are temporarily unable to start or continue their training in their own company because the latter is affected in whole or in substantial part by closures or significant restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also makes the programme available to a wider range of businesses and increases the funding.

### 2022 Implementation

The funding regulation expired on 31 January 2022. The Federal Employment Agency published the results of the federal programme *Securing Training Places* in October 2022. By then, 47 200 companies have applied for at least one premium. Two-thirds received only the training premium plus, a good 9% received a training premium and 22% received both types of premium. An analysis of the payments according to training premium and training premium plus leads to the result of a very similar utilisation in the two training years.

### 2023 Discontinued

In 2023, the programme discontinued; an evaluation report on the programme was published by the Federal Audit Office in October 2023.

## Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (until 2025)

- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) (until December 2021)

## Target group

### Entities providing VET

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### 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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Information on Federal Government website \(English\)](#)

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[Evaluation report by the Federal Audit Office in October 2023](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### Perfect match programme for SMEs

The *Perfect match* programme (2015-20; funding volume per year: EUR 6 million including ESF funding) is designed to counteract matching problems on the training market.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

### Alliance for initial and further training

The 2015-18 Alliance for initial and further training was agreed between the Federal Government, Federal States, business and industry, the unions and the Federal Employment Agency at the end of 2014.

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2021 Completed**

## Pact for vocational training

The Pact for VET (*Der Berufsbildungspakt*) includes the following measures, partly addressing work-based learning:

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Securing apprenticeship placements during the COVID-19 crisis: Germany. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/37962>