


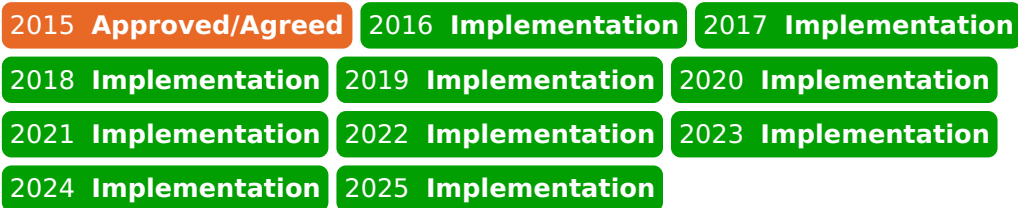
Incentives for IVET learners

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 28563

Background

Introducing apprenticeship in the form of dual VET to large companies and SMEs was a challenge. The Act on VET adopted in 2015 (61/2015) included setting up elements of a 'dual' system that would attract more employers and offer quality training. Incentives were also set up addressing both businesses offering practical training (tax reliefs) and learners enrolled as 'dual trainees'. Learners receive wages from the company, motivation wages from the State when enrolling in programmes for shortage occupations, and remuneration for 'productive work'. Companies are free to find individual learners and sign training contracts with them. However, these individual contracts must be complemented by a contract between the company and the relevant VET school which describes how they cooperate.

Objectives

The policy aims to attract VET students to sign an individual learning contract with a company.

Description

Stimuli based on the 2015 VET Act are more comprehensive and generous than in the past, including:

- performance-based State-funded motivation scholarships for learners trained for shortage occupations. These can equal to 25%, 45% and 65% of the national subsistence minimum;
- company scholarships amounting up to four times the national subsistence minimum;
- remuneration for productive work during training, between 50% and 100% of a minimum wage;
- State scholarships for socially disadvantaged learners to support completion of secondary VET for learners who perform well.

Initial data from the first year of implementation of dual VET (2015-16) showed that supply of training places by companies significantly exceeded demand. Raising the attractiveness of dual VET and improving cooperation between VET schools and training companies was envisaged. The new amendment of the VET Act in 2018 (209/2018) introduces new incentives for VET schools, companies offering training places; as well as for learners by abolishing the learner remuneration ceiling for productive work; only remuneration up to minimum hour-wage is tax deductible. The ESF-funded Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET project launched in 2016 aims to increase the number of dual VET learners to 12 000 by 2020.

2015 Approved/Agreed

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

The 2018 legislation introduced the opportunity to enter dual VET by the end of January of the respective school year, rather than only at the start of the school year, to offer tasters and time for informed decisions to both companies and learners. No substantial effect was visible in the first year of implementation. In the 2019/20 school year, this instrument proved reasonable: 2 668 learners (6.4% of newly enrolled VET students) were in dual VET in January 2020 compared to 2 487 learners at the beginning of the school year.

2020 Implementation

The same incentives are offered but the number of placements offered by companies was negatively influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The share of dual students remains below 7% of VET learners. The first dual graduates earn EUR 1 062 on average two years after entering the labour market. Almost 91% of dual graduates are employed. Both of these are perceived by the education ministry positively and considered as attractive information for young people.

2021 Implementation

Minor changes concerning motivation stipends were introduced, such as the more precise setting of limits for entitlement to receive the respective amount of payment (1.81 average marks, instead of 1.8).

2022 Implementation

The motivation scheme continues but it is apparently not able to revert the trend: a slow increase of dual learners (7.39% of all full-time learners in VET programmes as of 15 September 2022) and insufficient numbers of ISCED 353 learners in dual VET (19% of all dual learners). Receiving a 'maturita' school-leaving certificate is the strongest driver also among dual learners.

2023 Implementation

The initiative continued, but the number of dual learners remains below the originally expected 12 000, as envisaged by the ESF project supporting the development of dual VET. As of 15 September 2023, there were 9 848 contracted learners in dual VET, representing 7.7% of the 127 921 full-time VET programme learners. Of these, only 18.2% (1 790 learners) were enrolled in ISCED 353 programmes leading to a certificate of apprenticeship .

2024 Implementation

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The initiative continued, but the share of dual learners appears to be limited by the structure of Slovakia's dual VET system, making it unlikely to exceed the 10% target without significant policy changes.

As of 15 September 2024, there were 11 327 contracted learners in dual VET, including one part-time learner, accounting for 8.6% of the 131 580 full-time VET programme learners. Of these, only 17.2% (1 947 learners) were enrolled in ISCED 353 programmes leading to a certificate of apprenticeship.

2025 Implementation

An amendment of the Education act (245/2008), adopted on 21 October 2025, introduced a new definition of learners living in poor conditions, which is important for access to state scholarships for socially disadvantaged learners that form part of the incentive scheme for IVET. The former broad definition of learners from a socially disadvantaged environment has been replaced by the precise definition of learners from a socially disadvantaging environment (SDE). Now, fulfilling at least one of six explicitly identified criteria, such as low education level (below ISCED 3) of parents or legal representatives, or living in households qualified for assistance in material need, is sufficient to identify a learner as SDE. This simplifies the identification of the SDE status of a learner and allows for the automatic provision of support measures that are directly incorporated into the school educational programme (school curricula). Thus, there is no need to involve counselling centre specialists for an opinion, which would otherwise lead to the creation of an individual learning programme. An individual learning programme is only needed in the case of SDE learners with an additional disadvantage not only a disadvantage caused by an unstimulating environment. No opinion of a counselling centre specialist is needed for schools to qualify for additional funding from the state budget paid through the establisher of the school. This funding is aimed at enhancing the quality of education of SDE learners (such as by providing additional digital equipment, learning aids, meals, hygienic supplies, and funding for additional activities and additional personal care). The level of funding depends on the number of SDE learners that are administratively identified. This can contribute to learners' better educational performance and fulfilment of performance-based criteria for state scholarships for socially disadvantaged learners.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia (2016). First year of dual VET - is the glass half empty or half full?

Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia (2018). Making dual VET more attractive

ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET website

Act No 209/2018 amending Act No 61/2015 on VET

Act No 61/2015 on VET in force from 1 January 2022

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Incentives for companies to offer dual VET

To encourage enterprise involvement in dual VET, the VET Act (61/2015) had introduced corporate tax reliefs for training companies:

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Incentives for VET schools to provide practical training

In December 2016, a call was launched to invite proposals for the modernisation of the equipment and premises of school-based practical training (VET schools' workshops and specialised facilities, e.g. libraries).

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Introducing dual VET

The Act on VET was amended in March 2015 (61/2015). Its main objectives were to introduce a dual VET scheme and tax incentives for enterprises to provide training. The reform entered into force in September 2015 and made available upper secondary VET delivery in three forms:

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

“ … ” **Cite as**

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