

The social contract for VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN	 NORWAY
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Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 28461

Background

A social contract for VET was adopted in 2012 for 2011-15, aiming to support cooperation between VET schools and enterprises, increase the number of apprenticeships and encourage completion. One of the strategy objectives was to reach a 20% increase in the number of apprenticeship contracts by 2015; it had been reached in three counties.

Description

The social contract for VET was renewed in 2016 aiming at providing apprenticeship places to all qualified young people who applied, therefore tackling high dropout rates, increasing the number of apprenticeships and the number of adults acquiring a trade or journeyman’s certificate. The social contract was renewed by the following parties: the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Government Affairs and a range of social partners (NHO, LO, Virke, Spekter, Unio, Maskinentreprenørenes Forbund, Norges Rederiforbund, YS og KS).

2015 Implementation
2016 Implementation
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation
<p>Several measures have been initiated within the strategy, such as a pilot dual VET programme in upper secondary schools and other support measures to attract more companies to engage in apprenticeships.</p>
2020 Implementation

The contract ended in 2020. The work will continue. Around one- third of learners is without an apprenticeship contract every year.

2021 Implementation

A new social contract for VET 2022-26 was agreed by the social partners. The main priority in the contract is apprenticeship placements for all qualified pupils. To achieve this, several measures will be initiated in the period:

- (a) strengthen the regional and local work for more apprenticeship placement;
- (b) better match the training in school with the demand from enterprises;
- (c) increase recruitment in vocations with a lack of apprentices;
- (d) counteract discrimination;
- (e) better disseminate apprenticeship placements;
- (f) sharing of experience.

2022 Implementation

The government is following up the priority of apprenticeship placements for all qualified learners with State budget funding. The funding will be used to increase the number of apprenticeship placements, improve the training and strengthen the follow-up of apprentices in companies.

Among other things, funding can be applied to establish early collaboration between schools and companies to obtain relevant internships for students, where the goal is an apprenticeship placement for learners.

In the government's political platform 2021, the government states that it is going to try to ensure an apprenticeship for all young people who are qualified through completing their second year of secondary school, among other things by strengthening the follow-up of young people in the transition from school to apprenticeship. A grant is going to be available to support for local initiatives for apprenticeship guarantees, for example apprenticeship guarantees within an industry or a specific vocational certificate. The funding is earmarked, and it is up to the counties, together with the student and teacher organisations, and the local partners in working life, to find out how these funds may be spent most effectively.

The scheme targets both learners who are looking for apprenticeships, and the companies that need qualified apprentices to later become skilled workers.

2023 Implementation

The scheme's budget increased from NOK 370 million (EUR 31 million) in 2022 to NOK 468 million (EUR 39 million) in 2023. The county municipalities expected to see the effects of initiated measures and projects by the autumn of 2023 and spring of 2024. Social partners, the municipalities, the county municipalities and other stakeholders pointed out that the measures need time to work before results can be measured. Nevertheless, six county municipalities reported increased matching between students and companies, resulting in more signed apprenticeship contracts.

2024 Implementation

The number of signed apprenticeship contracts increased from 78.2 % in 2021 to 80.6 % in 2022, with a slight decrease to 80.5 % in 2023.

The budget for 2024 was NOK 485 million (EUR 41.6 million) to ensure apprenticeship placements for all those who wish to obtain a craft or journeyman certificate. It is the responsibility of each county municipality to determine the appropriate measures to be implemented.

2025 Implementation

Boosting vocational training through stricter public procurement rules

boosting vocational training through stricter public procurement rules

Each year, approximately 6 000 applicants are unable to secure an apprenticeship. In response, the government has strengthened the requirements for engaging apprentices in public sector contracts, aiming to increase the number of apprenticeship placements and ensure a steady supply of skilled workers.

An evaluation conducted in 2020 by Oslo Economics, commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, found that while the existing apprenticeship clause (*lærlingeklausulen*)—which requires public contractors to include apprentices in publicly funded projects—has had some positive impact, it has not been sufficiently effective. Companies have been able to formally meet the requirement by hiring apprentices, but often without ensuring their meaningful participation in the workplace. In some cases, apprentices were reused across multiple contracts with limited actual involvement.

To enhance the effectiveness of the apprenticeship clause, the government has decided to retain the rule requiring companies entering into public contracts to employ at least one apprentice. Starting in August 2025, a new provision mandated that apprentices complete at least 10% of the total work hours specified in their contracts. This provision was expected to apply particularly to larger contracts, involving multiple apprentices, thereby providing more substantial training opportunities and better integration into real work processes.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)
- Ministry of Government Affairs
- Social partners

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Cedefop ReferNet Norway \(2012\), The social contract for VET](#)

[Link to the 2016-20 contract](#)

[Link to the 2022-26 contract](#)

[Link to statistics for apprenticeship contracts](#)

[Link to news item about apprenticeship placements](#)

[News items about stricter requirements for the use of apprentices in public procurement](#)

Related policy developments

2021 Completed

Motivating learners for VET

A 2015 amendment to the Education Act clarified and underlined the importance of continuous assessment as the basis for final assessment in apprenticeship programmes. The measure is expected to increase motivation and commitment of apprentices throughout the programme.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2021 Completed

Financial incentives for training companies

The economic incentives the State provides for companies that take on apprentices were strengthened during 2015-17. The basic funding for companies accepting apprenticeships increased to a total of NOK 14 000 per training contract.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2015 Completed

Recognising training companies

A special emblem distinguishing training companies was set up in 2015. It is intended to signal to customers that the supplier is an approved training establishment.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2021 Completed

Promoting apprenticeships through public procurement

The measure was introduced in 2016. Starting in 2017, companies that participate in public service contracts are required to use apprentices.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2019 Completed

Alternative apprenticeship model (Vekslingsmodellen)

Following the social contract for VET 2011-2015 for more relevant and flexible VET, a new upper secondary dual model (Vekslingsmodellen) has been piloted since 2013 as an alternative pathway for learners experiencing difficulties completing the main (2+2 model) VET pathway.

 NORWAY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

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