

# Promote vocational training in the form of apprenticeship

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 LITHUANIA

## Timeline



ID number 28328

## Background

The main obstacles to the development of apprenticeships have, in the past, been a lack of clarity in the relevant legislation, a reluctance among small and medium-sized enterprises (99.8% of companies) to bear the cost of apprenticeships, and the absence of support mechanisms. Companies often do not benefit from employees taking time out to participate in apprenticeship training schemes, and it is pointless to accept apprentices who are legally required to be paid if they are insufficiently qualified to create the added value sought. A lack of qualification among apprentices can affect labour productivity and increase production defects, ultimately leading to losses for the employer.

## Objectives

The objective of strengthening work-based learning, with a particular focus on apprenticeships, is outlined in national VET policy documents, with the aim of expanding the scope of such schemes and involving more companies in them. For apprenticeships, on-the-job training is particularly important because learning in the specific work environment makes it easier and faster to acquire the skills needed to serve that role. This form of training is especially beneficial for those who want to improve their qualifications or retrain quickly, and is in demand among companies seeking specialist workers they need for specific jobs.

The general objective of policy in this area is to ensure a match between the supply of specialists trained by VET institutions and demand for qualified staff in the labour market.

At training-system level, the goal is to make the process for training professionals as effective as possible by ensuring that most or all of those who have acquired a particular professional qualification find employment in a job that matches it.

At individual level, the aim is to help people acquire professional skills or qualifications in the shortest possible time to meet the demand for such specialists in the labour market and ensure their employment as soon as possible.

At company level, the goal is to ensure the supply of employees with the qualifications desired by employers.

## Description

Legislation in 2015 introduced provisions for the implementation of apprenticeships. It stipulated that apprenticeships can be organised by a VET institution together with employers, with practice and theory to be provided in alternating periods at the company and VET provider. The measures stated that a teacher should be appointed by the VET school to manage apprenticeship training in the workplace, while company staff appointed by the employer are put in charge of organising and coordinating the apprentice's work and practical training. Assessment remained the responsibility of the teacher and VET institution.

The 2016 Labour Code (approved in September 2016) and accompanying legislation, which entered into force on 1 July 2017, introduced two types of apprenticeship contract (*pameistrystes darbo sutartis*): those with and those without learning agreements. For apprenticeships that are part of formal VET, the regulation stipulated that it was the employer's responsibility to ensure apprentices achieved the learning outcomes defined in programmes. An overall framework specified that:

- (a) combined work and learning time should not exceed 48 hours per week;
- (b) salaries for apprentices should not be less than the minimum wage;
- (c) learning time spent in VET institutions would not be paid by the employer and should not exceed a third of the contract duration.

Significant adjustments were made in late 2018 and early 2019 to the new Labour Code approved at the end of 2016. Article 83 of the Code provides that, when concluding an apprenticeship contract, the relevant parties may make an agreement for the reimbursement of training costs incurred by the employer. Such an agreement should specify the value of these costs (services, materials, etc.), which may be reimbursed at a level of up to 20% of the apprentice's monthly salary and should be spread evenly over the contract duration. If the employment relationship ends before conclusion of the apprenticeship contract, the employer is not entitled to claim any subsequent reimbursement of training costs. Article 84 of the Code states that the apprentice should be paid the salary specified in the apprenticeship contract for the time actually worked; this salary may not be lower than the minimum monthly or hourly wage approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Time spent in an education institution is not included in working time and the employer is therefore not obliged to pay a salary for it. This period should not exceed 30% of the duration of an apprenticeship contract.

The VET Law, adopted in 2017, emphasised the importance of workplace-based learning and apprenticeships, further clarifying the provisions on apprenticeships and stating that sectoral professional committees should participate in planning apprentice intake. The same year, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Association of Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, and the Lithuanian National Road Carriers Association; by 2017, eight such cooperation agreements had been signed. One of the areas for collaboration defined in these was work-based training for VET learners in companies belonging to partner businesses.

The action plan for implementation of the government programme approved in March 2017 included measures to encourage the participation of enterprises in apprenticeships: employers who hire people under an apprenticeship contract receive 40% wage compensation, not exceeding 1.5 of the minimum monthly salary approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. A regular mechanism for compensating company expenditure on apprenticeships was also set up. Item 15 of the *Description of the procedure for the application of active labour market policy measures to employers*, approved by the Director of the Employment Service in 2017, stipulates that employers providing apprenticeship training may apply for partial reimbursement of costs incurred after employing a person under an apprenticeship contract. Pursuant to item 18 of this description, partial grants are available for the salary paid to the apprentice and the costs

of organising and coordinating the apprentice's work activities and practical training. The amount of the subsidy is determined by evaluating the information and documents provided by the employer and applying the formula indicated in the description for each of the two cases. Recruitment under apprenticeship contracts increased in 2018, with 361 people taken on under these. At the end of 2019, almost 700 such contracts had been counted since the beginning of the procedure.

#### **2015 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2016 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2017 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2018 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2019 Approved/Agreed**

A draft procedure for the organisation of VET in the form of apprenticeship training was prepared in early 2019. After discussion and coordination at various levels, it was then approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 23 September 2019.

This procedure stipulates that when VET is organised in the form of an apprenticeship, no more than 30% of the training time involved in a formal or non-formal VET programme or its modules should be provided by a VET entity; the rest should be offered by the company, institution, organisation, farm or freelance teacher accepting the apprenticeship. Providers and employers are required to cooperate in the planning and implementation of VET and are encouraged to sign an agreement that can include details such as the duration of cooperation, contract terms and non-governmental commitments.

Under the procedure, providers, companies, students and employees are able to initiate apprenticeships in formal and non-formal VET programmes. It also stipulates that the employer can either participate in the selection of apprentices from students using the apprenticeship scheme or independently select apprentices from those who have not yet attended VET programmes. After selecting appropriate candidates, the employer must apply to the training service provider for training under the relevant VET programme, at the time desired and in accordance with the schedule specified in the contract concluded between itself and the provider.

In line with the procedure, a trainee can change the form of learning from school-based to apprenticeship-based and vice versa throughout the learning period, with such changes recorded in the VET contract concluded with the person.

The procedure also provides financial incentives for employers to organise apprenticeship training. In cases where formal VET is carried out in the form of an apprenticeship, VET funds allocated to the training service provider will rise by 25%.

#### **2020 Implementation**

A call for proposals was launched in early 2020 after the Minister of Education, Science and Sport approved the measure Support and promotion of the acquisition of practical skills (No 09.4.1-ESFA-T-736-01). The aim of this funding plan is to increase the relevance and attractiveness of VET and adult training to the labour market by supporting and promoting the acquisition of practical skills in the workplace and sectoral practical training centres.

Supported activities under this plan involve practical training of VET learners in the workplace, with potential applicants comprising VET institutions and associations and potential partners including public legal entities operating in education, private legal entities, and State and municipal enterprises. Partnership in the project is mandatory for companies at which on-the-job training of VET students will take place. Eligibility for funding with respect to training under the modules of formal VET programmes only covers students who have been admitted to the full formal VET programme. The measures of the funding plan provide for compensation to companies for hours worked

by employees supervising apprentices (as well as costs of training for employees, training material and supplies). However, one of the most important measures is the intention to finance 40% of the apprentice's salary specified in apprenticeship employment contracts (with the amount not able to exceed the minimum monthly salary approved by the government). The proposals also include the financing of the compulsory State social insurance contributions calculated by employer.

### 2021 Implementation

In 2021, the website dedicated to the development of the apprenticeship system (pameistryste.lt) became accessible to all. It provides information about the benefits of apprenticeships for learners, employers and education institutions, as well as success stories. Online training on apprenticeship development has been offered for VET providers, company representatives and staff.

In the same year, a second call for proposals was launched under the measure Support and promotion of the acquisition of practical skills (No 09.4.1-ESFA-T-736-01). The aim of this funding plan is to increase the relevance and attractiveness of VET and adult training to the labour market by supporting and promoting the acquisition of practical skills in the workplace and sectoral practical training centres. Six applications were selected and received funding in 2021. EUR 917 720.16 have been allocated to this call.

### 2022 Implementation

A call for apprenticeship project plans was announced under the policy measure of the Ministry of Education and science, Creating a vocational training system that responds to the needs of the labour market. This call aims to introduce financial support mechanisms for companies organising VET in the form of apprenticeship and trainees participating in apprenticeship. A total of EUR 19 million is allocated to the call: several apprenticeship schemes were implemented; individuals participated in apprenticeships; those age 15 - 29 received support for apprenticeship; and digital skills were improved or acquired during the apprenticeship (40%).

### 2023 Implementation

A call for joint project proposals was announced in 2023 under the title 'Apprenticeship - A New Opportunity for Me'. The project aims to enhance the quality of vocational training while promoting and expanding apprenticeship-based learning. It is implemented as part of the '2021-2030 Development Programme' under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, specifically within the Education Development Programme (*ŠPP*), under progress measure No. 12-003-03-04-03: Creating a Vocational Education System That Meets Labour Market Needs.

The project seeks to increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) in the form of apprenticeships while reducing the gap between the skills provided by the VET system and labour market demands. Initial results indicate that by 2023, the share of students enrolled in vocational education institutions in Lithuania had risen from 11% in 2018 to nearly 22%.

### 2024 Implementation

The new call for joint project proposals, Apprenticeship - A New Opportunity for Me, is currently open.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMPC)
- Central Project Management Agency (CPVA)

- European Social Fund Agency (ESFA)

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Adult learners  
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

### Education professionals

School leaders

### Entities providing VET

Companies  
VET providers (all kinds)

## Thematic categories

### 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 CVET

## Further reading

[Cedefop ReferNet Lithuania \(2018\): reforming vocational education and training](#)

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[Website of the apprenticeship](#)

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[Labour Code \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

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[A call for proposals for the measure Support and promotion of the acquisition of practical skills \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

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[Employment Law \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

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[Information about the joint project „Apprenticeship - new opportunity for me, \(only in Lithuanian\)](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2024 Implementation**

### Modernising VET legal framework

A new VET Law was adopted on 14 December 2017, with some of its articles coming into force on 1 February 2018 and others on 1 January 2019. The law emphasised the importance of workplace learning and apprenticeship, clarifying the regulation on

apprenticeships.

 LITHUANIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2020 Completed**

## **Increasing the role of stakeholders in the governance of VET institutions**

The network of VET institutions was reformed, with the number of schools reduced to 67 at the start of 2019. In the same year, the model of governance for VET institutions was changed.

 LITHUANIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Completed**

## **Sectoral professional committees (SPCs)**

A joint Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport and the Minister of Economy and Innovation on the Tasks, Functions, Committee, Formation and Financing Procedures of Sectoral Professional Committees was drafted in 2018. It was approved by the ministers in the middle of that year.

 LITHUANIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## **Sectoral practical training centres (SPTCs)**

In May 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport carried out a review of EU investments in the VET system for the 2014-20 period. This analysed results from the previous programming period and new proposals, as well as labour market (regional) trends and forecasts.

 LITHUANIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2021 Completed**

## **Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships**

The Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeships (BAfA) was established on 22 June 2015 in a bid to increase the competitiveness of those in the region's labour force partaking in VET schemes, with a particular emphasis on work-based learning (WBL).

 LITHUANIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**“ ... ” Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Promote vocational training in the form of apprenticeship: Lithuania. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28328>