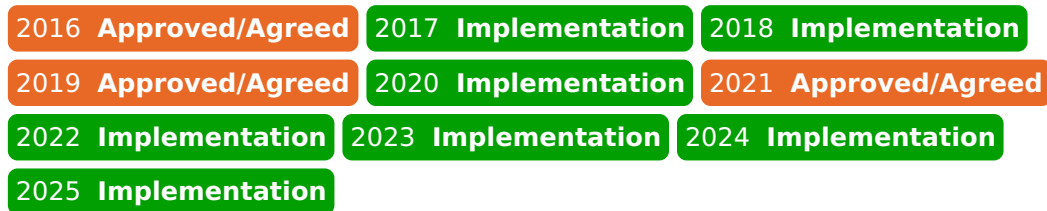


Financial incentives for learners and apprentices

POLICY DEVELOPMENT **PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE**  HUNGARY

Timeline



ID number 28278

Background

In 2015, practical training contracts between students and enterprises had increased as several financial initiatives had been given to companies since 2011. Despite the increase, the offer of training places in some professions was not enough.

Transforming the VET system to respond to the needs of students facing career choices and their parents is a priority. Measures envisaged include financial incentives (remuneration) during the training programme and positive prospects of a professional career and higher income.

Objectives

The main aim is to make VET attractive both for the students and also for their parents.

Description

In September 2016, specific scholarships were introduced for apprenticeship programmes that provide qualifications in high demand on the labour market. Twenty qualifications are covered. In addition, since 2016 financial remuneration and other benefits provided to apprentices have also been available in adult education (monthly payments in evening and correspondence courses have been reduced to 60% and 20% of those provided in full-time education).

From the academic year 2020/21, the *Szabóky Adolf* scholarship was replaced by a general VET *scholarship*, which provides automatic support for each student in a student legal status, studying free of charge in the upper secondary Technicum or vocational school. In the phase of specialised vocational education, the amount of the scholarship varies based on academic achievement. During specialised vocational studies students are entitled to only one type of financial incentive, depending on where they fulfil their practical training. If the practical training is organised in school workshops the student will be entitled to

receive the general VET scholarship. If they fulfil the practical training in a company environment with a vocational employment contract, instead of the general VET scholarship they will receive wages. The level of the monthly sum, based on the vocational employment contract, is at least around one hundred thousand HUF. However, this remuneration may be of a higher amount if the student has good academic results.

To reduce the number of students leaving school without a qualification, learners acquiring successfully the given vocational qualification listed in the register of vocational qualifications for the first time, can get a career starters' allowance in one lump sum, the amount of which depends on the result of their professional exam (EUR 430-865 / HUF 150 000-300 000).

Beside the above, disadvantaged learners with good academic results (so called talents), attending the 9th and 10th grade of technicums and vocational schools in IVET, can apply for the *Apáczai* scholarship.

2016 Approved/Agreed

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Approved/Agreed

The system of qualifications in demand proposed by the County Development and Training Committee (*Megyei Fejlesztési és Képzési Bizottság*) and the related *Szabóky Adolf* scholarship scheme was completed on 1 September 2020, as well as the training quotas.

In the future the vocational training offer will be organised based on the proposals of the sector skills councils.

2020 Implementation

As from 2020/21, new financial incentives in IVET have been introduced. Each learner studying in a VET school, regardless of the maintainer, is entitled to a scholarship. EUR 9 million was financed from the National Employment Fund; in the first semester, more than 67 000 learners were eligible for the scholarship. The monthly amount is calculated based on the minimum wage (EUR 475 in 2021) and different multipliers, depending on the school programme:

- (a) in the orientation year (preparatory programme after lower secondary) and the school workshop (bridging course): 5% (EUR 22/month);
- (b) in Technicums during sectoral foundation studies (grades 9 and 10): 5%;
- (c) in vocational schools during sectoral foundation studies (grade 9): 10% (EUR 44/month);
- (d) during specialised vocational studies (grades 11-13 in Technicums and grades nine and 10 in vocational schools) delivered in school workshops: based on academic performance (5-35%).

From the academic year 2020/21, companies participating in dual training must sign a vocational employment contract with VET learners (instead of an apprenticeship contract). The new type of contract offers advantages to learners (higher wages than the school scholarship and considers both the theoretical and practical vocational subjects taught in companies as part of the employment contract). The amount of the monthly wage must reach at least 60% of the minimum wage (EUR 263 in 2021).

2021 Approved/Agreed

The dual training in its new form started in the academic year 2021/22. Now a student no longer receives an allowance under an apprenticeship contract (EUR 57-94 (HUF 20 000-33 000) a month), but the employer concludes with him/her a vocational employment contract (approximately EUR 250/HUF 100 000) a month. As the former

OKJ training (former Hungarian qualification register) has been phased out, this is the reason why both contracts can still be found in the system.

59.3% of the students participating in vocational education are placed with companies, while 49% have a scholarship contract according to the former rule. It means that now more students can be placed with companies than in the former scholarship system (formerly it was 47%).

At the present, students in the technicums and in the vocational schools, can receive a general scholarship.

In the sectoral foundation education, the scholarship ranges between EUR 23-46 (HUF 8 000-16 000). After having completed the sectoral foundation education, the scholarship of an eminent student in the specialised vocational education is about EUR 160 (HUF 56 000). If his/her professional education is a dual placement – based on the agreement with the employer – he/she is entitled to receive salary/wage between EUR 274 - 460 (HUF 96 000-161 000), which is also included in his/her pension fund and is calculated based on his/her seniority. During the 2020/21 school year, 68 000 students received a total EUR 22 171 429 (HUF 7.76 billion) scholarship, approximately EUR 27 (HUF 9 509) a month on average. The implementation of the scholarship system means an approximately EUR 28 571 429 (HUF 10 billion) additional benefit for the students this year, compared to the previous year.

Students are also entitled to a career start allowance in a lump sum on completion of their education and on qualification (by passing the final vocational examination). 2020/21 was the school year when this allowance was paid for the first time for those who passed the vocational exam. Its rate ranges between EUR 366-826 (HUF 128 000-289 000) depending on the result of the professional exam. In the 2020/21 school year, 789 students received a total HUF 183.4 million career start allowance in a lump sum, EUR 669 (HUF 234 000) per person on average.

The new VET system provides greater flexibility and permeability from the labour market to the school system. It is, for example, possible for adults to acquire the first two occupations and the first qualification free of charge. This is only possible when they enter school-based vocational education.

The degree of financial incentives for adults with a vocational employment contract is regulated by the VET Act. Since 1 September 2021 the following incentives are available for those participating in adult education and training:

- (a) if a working adult is involved in adult education in the framework of adult training legal relationship, and he/she has a vocational employment contract concluded with his/her own employer, he/she is entitled to the whole monthly wage provided for students involved in practical training;
- (b) if a working adult is involved in adult education in the framework of adult training legal relationship, and he/she does not have a vocational employment contract with his/her own employer, but with another employer registered at the Chamber as a dual placement, he/she is entitled to 50% of the monthly wage provided for students involved in practical training;
- (c) if an adult attends evening courses in the framework of a study contract concluded with his/her employer, he/she is entitled to 100% of the monthly wage provided for students involved in practical training. If the study contract is concluded with another employer, he/she is entitled to only 50% of the monthly wage provided by the law for students involved in practical training;
- (d) if an unemployed adult studies in the framework of an adult training legal relationship and concludes a vocational employment contract with a business, he/she is entitled to the 100% of the monthly wage provided by the law for students involved in practical training.

Regarding the adult learning status itself, the person participating in adult education is entitled neither to a scholarship, nor to a career start allowance in a lump sum, but, since September 2021, he/she is entitled to a student card with all its financial privileges. Since 31 May 2021 training loans are also available for students in VET and adult education and training. The loans are interest-free or with favourable interest

rates and supported by the state.

2022 Implementation

From the second semester of the 2021/22 school year, the scholarship scheme has been expanded - in order to strengthen the VET system - by a new form of support. Disadvantaged learners with good academic results (so called talents), attending the 9th and 10th grade of technicums and vocational schools in IVET, can apply for the *Apáczai* scholarship. The amount of the allowance - depending on the academic results - can range between EUR 46-97 (HUF 16 000-34 000) per month. Altogether HUF 3 billion is available for this purpose. In addition to the grant, mentoring is provided to help young people to achieve better results. Detailed specifications and documentation are available on the website of the National Office for VET and Adult Learning.

In 2022, the amount of the monthly wage paid under the vocational employment contract is no longer determined on the basis of the current minimum wage, but on the basis of the monthly amount of the cost price of specialised vocational education (HUF 1 200 000), i.e. HUF 100 000, but not more than 168% of the cost, i.e. HUF 168 000. The cost price of the specialised vocational education is determined by the Government Decree No. 814/2021 (28. XII.) on the different rules of the central budget of Hungary for the year 2022 in connection with the emergency situation. The wages are exempt from personal income tax (*SZJA*) and social contribution tax (*SZOCHO*).

According to preliminary data from the Central Statistical Office (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, KSH*), in the 2022/23 school year a total of 428 000 students were enrolled in full-time education in secondary education institutions, of which 166 000 (38.8%) are learning in technicums and vocational grammar schools and 60 000 (14.0%) in VET schools.

In 2022, of all IVET students:

- (a) 19 442 students had a phasing-out apprenticeship contract;
- (b) 62 685 students had a phasing -out cooperation agreement;
- (c) 3 234 students had a vocational employment contract.

2023 Implementation

In the 2022/23 school year, 143 319 IVET students received vocational scholarships. Previously, IVET graduates received their last scholarship payment in April, with eligibility ending in May. Under the Government Decree No 12/2020 (II. 7.) on the implementation of the VET Act, as amended in 2023, scholarship eligibility is extended until the last day of the school year in which the student takes their first final vocational examination.

In line with the 2023 amendment of the VET decree, the monthly scholarship amounts for students in preparatory language or orientation grades during the 2023/24 school year were set at HUF 8 000 (EUR 20) for full-time school-based VET and HUF 16 000 (EUR 40) for students in the Springboard (*Dobbantó*) and School Workshop (*Műhelyiskola*) programmes. These measures aim to make flexible learning pathways more attractive to early school leavers and dropouts, encouraging their reintegration into education.

The *Apáczai* Scholarship Programme was launched under the GINOP-6.2.9 project on 1 April, 2021 with 8 225 applications submitted and 7 903 (96.1%) students awarded scholarships for the 1 April, 2021 – 15 December, 2023 period. Of these, 89.6% were from the four most disadvantaged regions: Northern Great Plain, Northern Hungary, Southern Great Plain, and Southern Transdanubia. A total of 2 216 mentors assisted the students who received the *Apáczai* scholarship during the project's funding period. The general vocational scholarship for talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds receiving support under the *Apáczai* Scholarship Programme was doubled in the ninth and tenth grades of technicum schools.

2024 Implementation

In the 2023/24 school year, 163 131 IVET students received vocational scholarships.

From the second semester of 2023/24, the *Apáczai* Scholarship Programme was relaunched under the GINOP-Plusz-5.3.1-23 priority project for the 2021-2027 programming period, with a total budget of EUR 16.87 million (HUF 6.87 billion). The call for applications for the programme was published on 17 September 2024. For the second semester of 2023/24, 4 808 students were eligible and funded. Among these, 1 042 (22%) were vocational school students, and 3 766 (78%) were technicum school students. Mentorship support was provided by 1 894 mentors, with 89.7% of eligible students coming from the four disadvantaged regions, maintaining the trend from the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Youth Guarantee Programme ensured the reintegration of low-skilled, early school leavers into training from spring 2024. Under the GINOP Plusz-4.1.1 Youth Guarantee Plus project, part of the *Széchenyi* Plan Plus programme, funding of EUR 483 911 121 (HUF 196.94 billion) was allocated, with EUR 250 678 443 (HUF 102.02 billion) from the European Social Fund Plus. Dropouts registered in the *SZIR* (VET Information System) were contacted individually by Government Offices, who used transferred data to reach them.

The programme also supports reintegration into the labour market through various measures, such as individual and group counselling, wage subsidies, housing and travel allowances, job search incentives, and financial support during service periods.

2025 Implementation

VET Scholarship:

School year	Number of students receiving scholarship	Number of students receiving career-start allowance
2020/21	69 679	803
2021/22	112 641	6 686
2022/23	143 319	18 632
2023/24	163 131	21 618
2024/25	173 712	39 167

2nd Monitoring Report of VET Policy Strategy 4.0 *Source:*

Institution type	Number of eligible students	Proportion of eligible students
VET school	1 042	22%
Technicum	3 766	78%
Total	4 808	100%

Distribution of eligible students by institution type in the second semester of the 2023/2024 school year:

The call for applications for the 2025/2026 academic year was published on 3 September 2025.

For the 2024/2025 academic year, a total of 6 003 students submitted applications under the announced call, of which 4 072 applicants were deemed eligible for support. The 4 072 supported students were assisted by 1 873 mentors.

'Apáczai' scholarship - call for applications:

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Culture and Innovation

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Trainers

Entities providing VET

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Government Decision No 1168/2019 \(came into force on 1 January 2020\) on the VET 4.0 strategy](#)

[The VET Act LXXX of 2019 \(entering into force on 1 January 2020\)](#)

[Government Decree No 12/2020 on the implementation of the VET Act \(published on 7](#)

February 2020)

Apaczai Scholarship

Apaczai scholarship programme: the application process

Government Decree 292/2023 (VII. 6.) on the amendments to the Government Decree 12/2020 on the implementation of the VET Act resulting from the ex-post impact assessment of the restructuring in VET, Entry into force: 1 July 2023

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2nd Monitoring Report of VET Policy Strategy 4.0

Related policy developments

2024 Completed

Mid-term VET policy strategy 4.0

The government has accepted, by government Decision No 1168/2019. (III.28.), the new 'Mid-term VET policy strategy for the renewal of VET and adult education (AE), the VET system's answer to the challenges of the fourth Industrial Revolution'.

 HUNGARY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Strengthening WBL and apprenticeship approaches

In 2015, the VET concept for the economy was elaborated and carried out via several legislative amendments, aiming to strengthen apprenticeship. The Act on VET and the Act on General Education were amended to strengthen work-based learning, in particular through:

 HUNGARY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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