

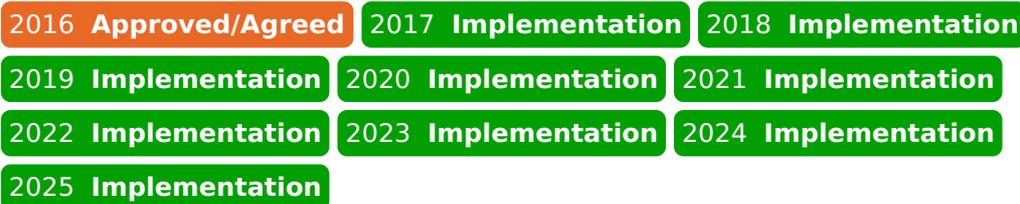
Developing apprenticeship

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 GREECE

Timeline



ID number 28249

Description

The key element of the 2016 strategic framework was the design and implementation of the post-secondary apprenticeship year, which is offered by vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL). For the establishment of its regulatory basis, a demanding legislative process was needed (for example, through regulating the EPAL apprenticeship year, setting the quality framework for apprenticeships, introducing pilot apprenticeship programmes). Law 4610/2019 integrated all the amendments related to apprenticeship. At this point, the legislative framework regulating upper secondary VET and apprenticeship was considered complete.

The EPAL apprenticeship year is a wholly work-based learning programme. its education programme embodies occupation specific courses and is divided into 203 teaching hours of laboratory courses (16.87%) and about 1 000 hours (83,13%) of work-placed learning in companies.

Implementation of the new scheme is steadily scaling up. The pilot phase of the EPAL apprenticeship year was held in in 2016/17 in two specialties (electrological installations and agricultural trade). The first phase of the implementation of the EPAL apprenticeship year covered seven specialties for 1 044 apprentices in 179 schools, while in the second phase (autumn 2017 to February 2019) nine more specialties were added and 3 450 apprentices participated in 406 schools. The third phase of implementation involved 21 specialties and 3 700 apprentices. 48% of the placements were in the private sector.

The apprentices' wage has increased (daily remuneration was raised from EUR 17 to EUR 21.50).

The National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) designed and initiated a programme for the formal certification of VET graduates at EQF level 5. The accreditation of the graduates from the first phase took place in July 2018 with 400 graduates participating.

A National apprenticeship coordination body (ESOM) was established in February 2018. ESOM is an advisory body on apprenticeship issues. In each public employment service centre a regional apprenticeship support team was established to assist the search for

training places; the support teams are composed of teachers and trainers.

The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth has created an apprenticeship curriculum for in post-secondary vocational training programmes in vocational training institutes (IEK).

In 2015-17, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour cooperated with Cedefop on a joint comprehensive review of the apprenticeship system in Greece. The objective of the review was to pave the way for future reforms of the apprenticeship system in line with EU policies. The review focused on the following areas:

- (a) governance structures;
- (b) training content and learning outcomes in relation to the requirements for teachers and trainers;
- (c) supporting companies;
- (d) labour market responsiveness.

The review included in-depth interviews with all partners involved (e.g. apprentices, VET providers and companies offering apprenticeship placements) and workshops/forums to present and discuss findings. The final findings and suggestions were published in 2018. The main challenges identified were the respective roles and cooperation and coordination of stakeholders, and the responsiveness of training content to labour market needs.

Following a 2012 memorandum signed by Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia, a memorandum of bilateral cooperation in VET (focusing on apprenticeship) was signed with Germany in early 2017.

2016 Approved/Agreed

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

On 17 February 2019, the second cycle of the certification of apprenticeship was conducted. In total, 1 700 graduates from the 16 specialties that operated in the 2017/18 school year and from the three pilot programmes, participated in these examinations.

2020 Implementation

Law 4763/2020 described the traineeship/apprenticeship programme for post-secondary VET students in Vocational training institutes (IEK) after the completion of the fourth semester. According to the provisions of the law a traineeship/apprenticeship may be considered completed after 120 working days. Traineeship/apprenticeship can take place in the public or private sector and the responsible administrative office is the careers office of the relevant IEK under the responsibility of the director.

2021 Implementation

For the school year 2021/22, the organisational structure for teaching and apprenticeship foreseen in the Law 4763/2020 was implemented in IEK. A Regulation for the Operation of IEK that belong to the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth (GGEKDBM & N) of the Ministry of Education was published. It regulates issues of teaching and learning, staff recruitment, admission and graduation of students and the operation of the apprenticeship programme. Article 13 of the regulation provides for the potential for exemption from the apprenticeship programme for IEK students who work and have completed at least 120 internship days in a job related to their specialty. The Joint Ministerial Decision K5/97484 of 27 August 2021, introduced a paid internship for IEK students under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

2022 Implementation

As indicated in the 2022-24 Strategic plan for vocational education and training, Lifelong Learning and Youth and according to the Greek National implementation plan (NIP) for VET Recommendation and Osnabrück Declaration specific measures were approved for co-funding under the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework (ESPA).

The main actions that were approved for co-funding were:

- (a) reinforcing by 2025 apprenticeship schemes for Post-secondary year - Apprenticeship Class (the nine month apprenticeship programme for EPAL graduates) and
- (b) reinforcing by 2025 IEK internship schemes by Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)

More specifically for the project of reinforcing apprenticeship schemes for Post-secondary year - Apprenticeship Class, a plan of apprenticeships started being applied. This included:

- (a) apprenticeship with on-the-job training for at least 50% of the total duration of the programme;
- (b) laboratory specialty courses taking place in a school laboratory. For the workplace component the apprenticeship reimbursement is set at 95% of the minimum wage of an unskilled worker.

Regarding IEK internship schemes the paid internship introduced in 2021 continued in 2022, with the intern receiving compensation equal to the 80% of the legal wage of an unskilled worker. The Ministerial Decree 109153/K5/2022 foresees the reinforcement of internship by 2025 under two co-funding schemes the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-20 ESF ESP and the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2021-27 ESF+ until 2029.

2023 Implementation

EPAL Apprenticeship programme

For the first time, the EPAL apprenticeship programme was implemented as an extra-curricular activity, meaning that EPAL staff were compensated for conducting the programme outside regular school hours.

Apprenticeship vacancies offered by public sector bodies and private enterprises increased by 46%, reaching 6 567 placements, compared to 4 497 in the previous academic year. Apprenticeship starts - EPAL graduates placed in available apprenticeship positions - rose by 35% to 3 897, up from 2 872 in the previous year (2022). Of these, 3 202 apprentices were under the age of 30 as of 1 January 2022.

By 31 October 2023, a total of 3 441 apprentices had successfully completed the programme. Of these, 2 061 had undertaken their apprenticeship in private enterprises and 1 380 in the public sector. According to updated data (17 November 2023), 41% of apprentices who completed their placement in the private sector were employed after the programme, while the employment rate among public sector apprentices was 22%.

Public Vocational Training Institutes (SAEK)

In 2023, under the initial vocational training programmes offered by public Vocational Training Institutes (SAEK), a total of 5 487 trainees successfully completed their mandatory internship, which is a prerequisite for the completion of their studies.

2024 Implementation

EPAL Apprenticeship programme

Academic year 2023/24 – Implementation phase

Apprenticeship opportunities continued to expand, with the number of vacancies rising by 45% compared to the previous academic year, reaching 9 550 placements. Apprenticeship starts also increased significantly. A total of 5 770 EPAL graduates were placed in apprenticeship positions, marking a 48% rise compared to the previous year (2023). Among them, 4 885 apprentices were under the age of 30 as of 1 January 2023.

By 31 October 2024, 5 219 apprentices had successfully completed the programme. Of these, 3 359 completed their apprenticeship in private enterprises, while 1 860 did so in public sector placements.

As of 11 November 2024, 32% of apprentices who completed their placement in private enterprises were employed, while the corresponding percentage for public-sector apprentices was 18%.

Academic year 2024/25 – Implementation phase

Growth in apprenticeship provision continued. Apprenticeship vacancies increased by 16%, reaching 11 103 placements, with 70% offered by private-sector employers. The number of apprenticeship starts rose by 20%, totalling 6 955 EPAL graduates placed in apprenticeship positions. Of these, 5 987 were under 30 years old as of 1 January 2025.

The programme is being implemented smoothly during the current academic year, with no major issues reported.

The most popular specialisations in the public sector for the 2024/25 school year are: nursing assistant, administrative and financial services officer, nursery assistant, vehicle technician, and electrical systems, facilities and networks technician.

Public Vocational Training Institutes (SAEK)

In the context of initial vocational training, public vocational training institutes (SAEK) continued to apply mandatory internship schemes. During the reporting period, 6 564 trainees successfully completed their internship, which is a requirement for the completion of their studies.

The Ministerial Decision No 104602/K5/2024 (Official Gazette B' 5310/20 September 2024) introduces a revised regulatory framework for the post-secondary year – apprenticeship class in Greece. It sets out the conditions for access, organisation, and implementation of this apprenticeship-based post-secondary vocational training pathway tailored for graduates of non-compulsory secondary vocational education (such as graduates of EPAL schools). It aims to enhance their professional qualifications, facilitate transition into the labour market, and ensure the structured integration of workplace learning with formal training under clearly defined operational rules.

2025 Implementation

The programme is being implemented smoothly during the current academic year, with no major issues reported.

In this context, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, a decision regulating the implementation of apprenticeship for the 2025/26 academic year. The decision sets the number of vocational upper secondary school (EPAL) graduates to be placed in apprenticeship positions within public bodies at 3 917, providing opportunities for work-based learning in real working environments.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports issued a circular on the preparation for the implementation of the post-secondary year – apprenticeship class for the 2025–2026 period. The circular specifically addresses graduates of the Unified Special Vocational Gymnasium–Lyceum (EN.E.E.GY.L.), focusing on apprentices

with disabilities and/or special educational needs, and provides guidance on related support measures and implementation arrangements.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- General Secretariat for VET, Lifelong Learning and Youth
- Public Employment Service (DYPA)
- Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) (until 2022)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

Companies
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Using EU transparency tools (EQF, Europass, ESCO, ECTS, ECVET principles)
Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Apprenticeship reform successfully expanded](#)

[Apprenticeship reform achieves first results](#)

[Apprenticeships: an essential part of national VET strategy](#)

[Law 4763/2020 on the National system of VET and lifelong learning](#)

[Apprenticeship for EPAL and Intership for IEK are funded by ESF and the related Partnership Agreements \(ESPA\)](#)

[V.T.I. Management Information System Pegasus](#)

[Ministerial Decision: Determination of 3 917 apprenticeship positions for EPAL graduates in public bodies for the 2025/2026 school year](#)

[Circular on the preparation for the implementation of the post-secondary year - apprenticeship class 2025-2026 for graduates of the Unified Special Vocational Gymnasium-Lyceum](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Approved/Agreed

The 2025-2027 Strategic plan for vocational education and training, lifelong learning and youth

The VET & LLL Strategy 2025-2027 was developed through a comprehensive process that combined legal reform, labour-market intelligence, stakeholder consultation, and system-level analysis.

 GREECE

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

The 2022-24 Strategic plan for vocational education and training, lifelong learning and youth

The six strategic objectives of the plan are further analysed into sub-objectives that serve the effective implementation of the strategy.

 GREECE

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2019 Approved/Agreed

Changes in learner assessment in IVET

Law 4610/2019 reduces the number of examinations in upper secondary VET programmes offered by vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL) by more than 50% (Article 117).

 GREECE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2020 Completed

Partnership for apprenticeship: linking VET with the labour market

Following an extended consultation with relevant stakeholders, the ministries of labour and education, in cooperation with the national employment service, decided to launch a partnership for apprenticeship involving employer representative bodies and social partners.

 GREECE

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2024 Completed

Teacher CPD focused on apprenticeship

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is carrying out the project Teachers and trainers training on issues related to apprenticeship.

 GREECE

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2016 Approved/Agreed

National strategic framework for the upgrade of VET and apprenticeship

The framework sets out 10 strategic intervention areas which, in turn, contain certain implementation measures. These 10 areas are to:

 GREECE

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ … ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Developing apprenticeship: Greece. 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/28249>