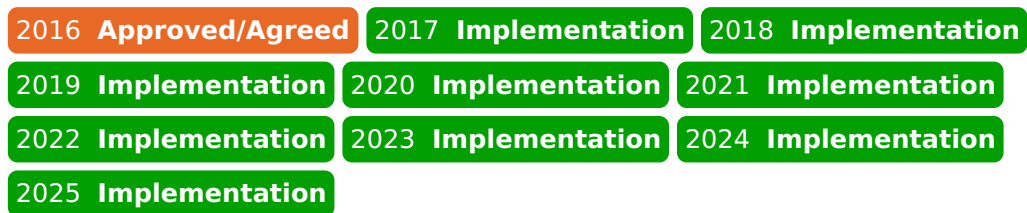


Legislation for higher dual education

POLICY DEVELOPMENT **REGULATION/LEGISLATION**  BELGIUM-FR

Timeline



ID number 28016

Background

Higher dual education enables learners to acquire the general education needed to obtain a degree, while at the same time being immersed in the reality of the business world.

Objectives

To set a framework for the cooperation agreement between the French Community and the Walloon region for the development of common higher education structures dedicated to continuing training and lifelong learning activities.

Description

The decrees from the Government of the French Community dated 30 June 2016 and February 2017 approve the framework agreements on dual programmes in higher education. They regulate dual programmes at bachelor and master levels and sets requirements for concluding framework agreements on higher dual vocational education programmes. The special feature of higher dual education is that part of it takes place in a company and part in a higher education institution.

The decree of 30 June 2016 defines the specific organisational framework of dual higher education programmes, such as the percentage of required work-based learning in a programme (between 40 and 60%), the rules governing the timetable for teaching activities and holidays, the rules governing the assessments grading, etc.

Dual higher education offers an opportunity to:

- (a) discover the world of business and acquire the social, technical and professional skills expected on the job market;
- (b) acquire a higher education qualification through a practice-based methodology, while receiving an allowance.

The practical arrangements are defined by an agreement between the higher education institution, the company and the learner (template as established by the Decree of February 2017). This agreement sets out the learners' status, the timetable for teaching and assessment activities, school holidays, as well as commitments in terms of safety, work accident cover, work regulations and professional ethics.

A Steering Committee for dual programmes in higher education was put in place (Decree of 30 June 2016, Article 13). It is responsible for:

- (a) defining the framework model for dual-learning agreements and submitting it for approval to the Government;
- (b) proposing to the Government the updated minimum allowances;
- (c) evaluating the processes;
- (d) encouraging the sharing of best practices among higher education institutions.

2016 Approved/Agreed

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the legislation from 2016 and 2017 were in place and applied. Dual programmes in higher education continued to expand, with collaboration with the labour market proving crucial to their success. This success involved supporting the creation of platforms that facilitate networking, providing assistance in programme development, analysing market needs and programme opportunities in the French Community and sharing useful legal resources with dual learning programme providers and companies.

Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Government of the French Community, Alter4sup supports dual education development by providing tools and frameworks to ensure quality, sustainability, and identity in higher education. In 2019, Alter4sup began working closely with the Steering Committee in organising dual learning higher education programmes with a view to contributing to discussion on challenges and priorities for developing this form of education. They also sought to identify effective approaches for supporting companies in improving training quality, including compensation issues and enhanced educational collaboration between partners, while examining potential changes to the legal framework.

In parallel with Alter4sup support, the work was carried out in collaboration with the various stakeholders, including representatives of concerned institutions and inter-professional organisations of employers and employees, who are also members of the Steering Committee.

2020 Implementation

On 10 September 2020, the Government of the French Community approved the Decree establishing minimum allowances for professional immersion agreements in alternance higher education programmes. Starting in 2020, an annual circular specifies the minimum allowances for the current academic year, in line with the decree.

Allowances adjust according to the health index for August of the relevant academic year. The prior year's amount is indexed, with changes effective from 14th September of each academic year.

Illustrative gross monthly allowances for 2020-21 academic year:

- (a) Bachelor's degree: EUR 550,
- (b) Master's degree: EUR 766.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, implementation continued despite COVID-related and financial constraints. Steering Committee evaluations recommended clarifying the framework, strengthening partnerships, and increasing resources and visibility.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, diversification of education programmes advanced alongside Steering Committee meetings and evaluations.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, diversification of programmes advanced, focusing on planned expansion and structuring:

- (a) planned 22 dual programmes for the following year, with higher education institutions aligning provision to sectoral needs;
- (b) geographical and sectoral disparities persist;
- (c) Steering Committee conducted meetings and evaluations.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the 22 dual programmes were rolled out and consolidation and the Steering Committee continued to conduct meetings and evaluations.

Following the 2024 regional elections, the 2024-29 Community and regional policy declarations confirmed strong commitment to expanding dual learning across all educational levels. The Steering Committee on Dual Learning in Higher Education, collaborating closely with the Alter4sup project, prepared a new legislative framework for dual learning, planned to be implemented by the 2026-27 academic year.

In 2024, the missions and role of Alter4Sup were defined by a multidisciplinary team with expertise in pedagogy, legal affairs, research, and communication. Alter4Sup's three core missions are to:

- (a) strengthen stakeholder autonomy through the development of tools and frameworks;
- (b) support high-quality, integrated, and inclusive dual higher education; and
- (c) to contribute to defining the identity of dual programmes within higher education.

The Alter4sup project was co-funded by ESF+ and the French Community through the FormAlter ESF+ portfolio designed to boost dual education programmes in higher education institutions and universities in the French Community.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, Alter4sup conducted an analysis through thematic days and surveys, producing a report that Steering Committee members reviewed. A decree is being prepared for the forthcoming new legal framework.

Evaluations, recommendations and proposed actions:

In 2025, the Steering Committee reviewed evaluations of two bachelor's programmes and an audit of a master's programme. Key findings highlighted strong graduate employability and company satisfaction with student skills, but also administrative complexity, insufficient student support (status and rights), and the need for better alignment of dual schedules.

Recommendations:

- (a) streamline and clarify the administrative framework to reduce complexity;

- (b) strengthen partnerships with companies to improve placements and collaboration.
- (c) adjust dual rhythms and modalities for greater flexibility and accessibility.

Proposed broader actions include simplifying programme authorisation, harmonising immersion standards, increasing funding and creating dedicated roles for company coordinators, enhancing pedagogical collaboration (co-construction of curricula, tutor training), consolidating evaluations under the single body AQES (Agency for the Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education), launching communication campaigns, providing legal support for stakeholders, and enacting the new legislative framework for 2026-27.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of the French Community

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Decree organising higher education \(alternance\)](#)

[Order of the Government of the French Community setting the minimum allowances applicable to professional immersion agreements concluded within the framework of higher education in work-based learning programmes \(10/09/2020\)](#)

Decree of the Government of the French Community approving the framework agreement on dual education programmes in higher education

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Legislation for higher dual education: Belgium-FR. 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/28016>