

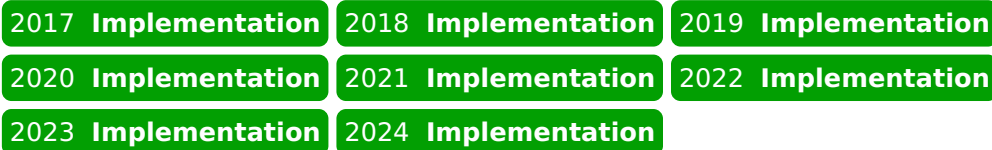
Professional scholarships for the low-skilled employed or unemployed

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 AUSTRIA

Timeline



ID number 27982

Background

Workers without qualifications face multiple disadvantages in the labour market, such as low income and a higher risk of unemployment. Low-skilled workers are unable to meet the increasing demands of the labour market. This disadvantaged group is therefore the central target group of active labour market policy.

Objectives

The objectives of the professional scholarships for the low-skilled employed or unemployed, are to:

- (a) upgrade skill levels for employed or unemployed skilled workers with qualifications below the level of universities of applied sciences to reduce the risk of unemployment;
- (b) enable employed or unemployed people who have not finished their education and training in the past to obtain labour market relevant qualifications;
- (c) cover the need for a skilled workforce in specific fields of the Austrian economy.

Description

Since January 2017 the professional scholarship has enabled unemployed and employed low-skilled individuals (through taking educational leave) to obtain labour market relevant qualifications to secure their employability and to cover companies' needs for a skilled workforce. At the start of the programme a list of relevant qualifications (in the form of training possibilities) was defined by the Public Employment Service. This list is continuously updated. During the training period, the participants are also covered by health, accident and pension insurance. The scholarship is thus intended to provide a livelihood for the period of training and is granted for a maximum of three years.

The minimum duration of the training must be three months, with at least 20 hours per week over the entire training period.

Academic training at universities of applied sciences and universities is not supported.

The programme is implemented by the Public Employment Service (AMS) with the participation and support of social partner organisations and key stakeholders. In 2018 (the last available data), around 4 300 people took part in training courses within the framework of the professional scholarship.

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the programme was extended until the end of 2020. From 2019, five new apprenticeship occupations and social care occupations were added to the list of eligible training courses.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, the programme was extended until the end of 2022. A new list of eligible training courses came into force on 1 August 2020. The general regulations for funding remain unchanged. Since 2020 the scholarship covers training (mainly post-secondary VET programmes and apprenticeship training) in the following areas (sectors):

- (a) mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology (STEM);
- (b) health, care and social professions.

The amount of the scholarship depends on the participants' level of unemployment benefit and amounts to at least EUR 30.60 per day (as of September 2020).

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the programme was extended until the end of 2023. The amount of the scholarship was increased to a minimum of EUR 31.70 per day (as of 1 January 2021).

2022 Implementation

A new list of eligible training courses came into force on 1 January 2022. The amount of the scholarship was again increased to a minimum of EUR 32.60 per day (as of 1 January 2022).

2023 Implementation

The list of eligible training opportunities was updated as of 1 January 2023. The minimum daily rate was raised to EUR 35.20 per day (as of 1 January 2023).

This list is a detailed enumeration of which training courses are covered by the funding. The annual update of the list includes, on the one hand, the adaptation of changed designations for school types and apprenticeship occupations and, on the other hand, the inclusion of new school types and apprenticeship occupations that have only recently emerged or for which the shortage of skilled workers is increasing. The main change as of January 2023 concerns the training programmes for nursing and social care professions, which were removed from the list because a separate funding programme (nursing scholarship) was developed for them.

2024 Implementation

As of 1. January 2024, the list of eligible training opportunities was updated and the minimum daily rate was raised to EUR 38.60 per day.

The main changes as of January 2024 concern the introduction of full-time and dual training courses in the field of glass technology, painter and coating technician, plastics process engineer and business logistics clerk, as well as full-time training in the field of social pedagogy.

Bodies responsible

- Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS)
- Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)
- Chamber of Labour (AK)
- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)
- Association Industry 4.0 Austria

Target group

Learners

Unemployed and jobseekers
Low-skilled/qualified persons

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Optimising VET funding

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies
Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[News on the professional scholarship](#)

[Guidelines for the professional scholarship as of 1 January 2024](#)

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Professional scholarships for the low-skilled employed or unemployed: Austria. 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/27982>