

# The Junior apprenticeship scheme

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 DENMARK

## Timeline

2025 Implementation

ID number 49959

## Background

We refer to the scheme as Junior apprenticeship.

The background for introducing the Junior apprenticeship scheme is rooted in the need to support young people who do not thrive in traditional academic pathways but who may excel in more practical, hands-on learning environments. Many students face challenges in the transition from compulsory school (primary and lower secondary, referred in the Danish context as primary education) to upper secondary education, and some risk dropping out if they cannot engage with conventional classroom teaching

## Objectives

The purpose of the *Junior apprenticeship* scheme is to give young people a practical and motivating entry into vocational education and training. It aims to:

- (a) support students who may struggle with traditional, classroom-based learning.
- (b) strengthen their academic, social, and personal skills through a mix of workplace training and tailored school instruction.
- (c) increase motivation, confidence, and a sense of belonging by letting students learn in real work environments.
- (d) ensure a smoother transition into formal vocational programs and reduce dropout rates.

## Description

The *Junior apprenticeship* scheme applies to students at 8th and 9th grade (the last two classes of lower secondary education, primary education as it is called in the Danish context). The content of the *Junior apprenticeship* scheme consists of a combination of school-based learning and practical training in a workplace. Typically, it includes:

- (a) workplace training: students spend a significant part of their time with a company or craftsperson, gaining hands-on experience in real tasks.
- (b) school-based instruction: tailored teaching in basic subjects such as Danish, mathematics, and social studies, adapted to the students' needs and connected to their vocational training.

- (c) individual guidance and mentoring: close follow-up from both teachers and workplace mentors to support personal, social, and professional development.
- (d) transition focus: preparing students to continue into an upper secondary vocational education programme after completing *Junior apprenticeship*

The Junior apprenticeship is voluntary. If the student chooses the scheme, the number of school lessons will be reduced, and the student will instead work in a company for those hours. When passing the final examination, the student has access to ordinary apprenticeship programmes (EUD).

Junior apprenticeship is parallel to the two initiatives "Mandatory work experience" and "Rolemodels in youth guidance" as they all aim to rise students' motivation through "real life" experience.

The Ministry for children and education is responsible for the scheme, working together with schools, communities and companies.

### **2025 Implementation**

The background of the mandatory internship program is to give students practical work experience, helping them understand the workplace, develop professional skills, and make informed choices about future education and career paths. It bridges the gap between school and the labor market, allowing students to see how theoretical knowledge is applied in real work situations.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Children and Education

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)

### **Other**

Young people from 8th and 9th grade (secondary level)

## **Thematic categories**

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **Subsystem**

IVET

## **Further reading**

[Junior Apprenticeship](#)

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[Bekendtgørelse om junior mesterlaere](#)

## **Related policy developments**

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## 2025 Implementation

### Mandatory work experience

The content of a mandatory internship typically includes observing and participating in daily work tasks, learning about the organisation and its operations, understanding workplace rules and routines, developing practical job-related skills, and reflecting on personal strengths, interests, and f

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Role models in youth guidance

The initiative is a prolongation of an existing system for the use of role models in providing guidance on VET. The use of role models, i.e. using young people from VET as ‘counsellors’ in primary schools, has shown good results in this respect.

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