

# Dual training

## Formation en alternance

 Belgium-FR

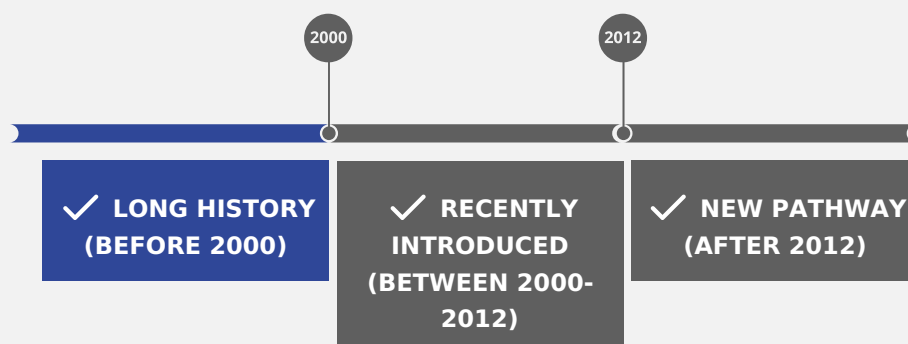
## Reference year 2023

### Content updates and contributors

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## ① SCHEME HISTORY

### Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



Vocational training: SMEs training has a long-lasting tradition in apprenticeships and target the skills needs of the SMEs labour market. In 1907 the first apprenticeship secretariat in Wallonia was created. The IFAPME network can be considered as the heir of this first historic institution. Education is provided by educational authorities through CEFA centers (Centres d'Education et de Formation en Alternance). "Formation en alternance" was introduced in 1985.

### Q2. How did the apprenticeship scheme originate?



✓ **TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP (MASTER-APPRENTICE RELATION) TO PREPARE APPRENTICES FOR THE OCCUPATION**



✓ **SCHOOL-BASED VET TRACK BY INCLUDING MORE WORK-BASED LEARNING TO SUPPLY SKILLED WORKFORCE TO MATCH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS**



✓ **EX-NOVO**



✓ **OTHER**

Formation en alternance provided by IFAPME has its roots in traditional craftsmanship, i.e. training in SMEs.

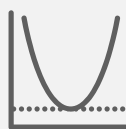
Formation en alternance provided by CEFA was originally introduced as part of compulsory schooling in 1985 at the time of extending the compulsory schooling age from 15 to 18, with the implicit purpose of providing education to all young people who were at risk of early leaving.

## ② BENEFICIARIES

**Q3. Does the legal basis define the minimum and maximum age limits for enrolment of the target group of this scheme?**



✓ **MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM AGE LIMITS DEFINED**



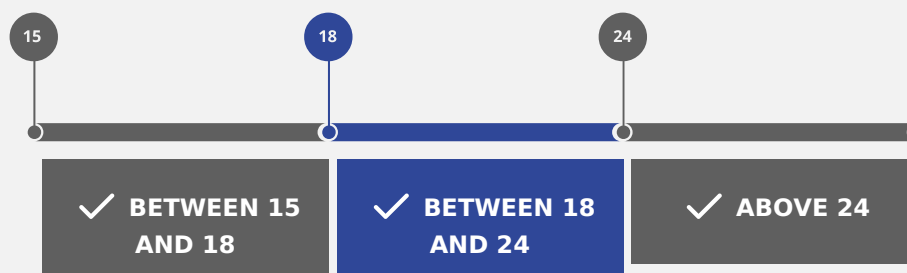
✓ **MINIMUM AGE LIMITS DEFINED ONLY**



✓ **OTHER**

15 to 25

#### Q4. What is the average age of learners in practice?

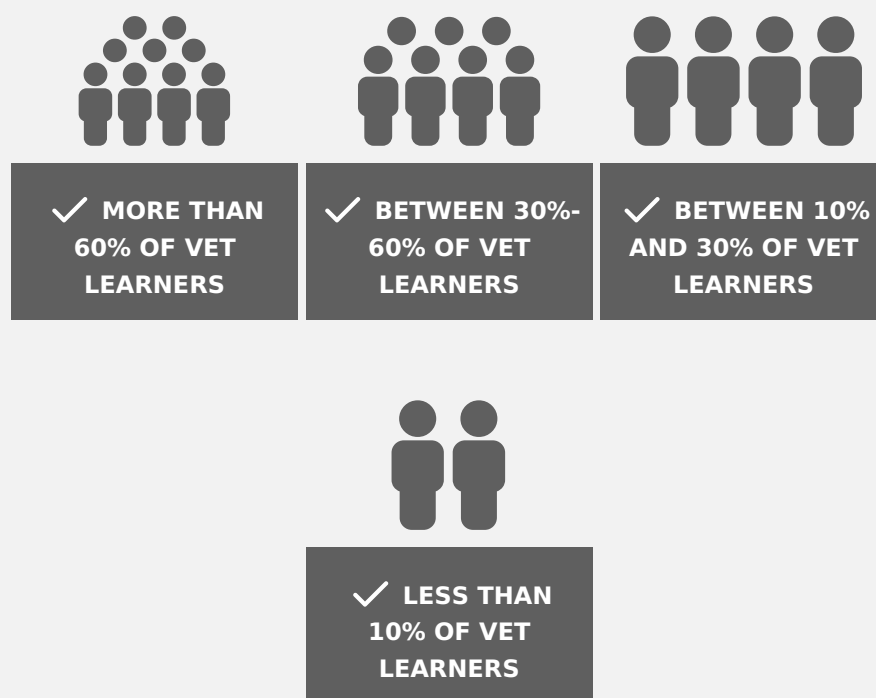


The majority of learners are aged 18+. This scheme attracts potential early leavers or learners who accumulated 'school failure'.

#### Q5. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

In 2018-19, 15,380 apprentices were enrolled in dual upper secondary education and training in total of the programmes offered by CEFA, IFAPME and SFPME.

#### Q6. What is the share of apprentices enrolled in this scheme in relation to all VET students for the corresponding educational level(s)?



In 2018-19, 15,380 apprentices were enrolled in dual upper secondary education and training in total of the programmes offered by CEFA, IFAPME and SFPME. Their share of apprentices in all upper secondary VET students (H/F below) is approximately 15%.

Evolution of figures for upper secondary education in French-speaking Belgium, school years 2017- 18 and 2018-19 (1)

	2017-18	2018-19	Difference
A. General education and transition stream (Enseignement général et technique de transition)	127,123	127,710	587
B. Qualification stream education and vocational (Enseignement technique de qualification +professionnel)	97, 217	95,718	-1,499
C. Dual vocational education (Enseignement en alternance) - NB included in B	9,289	9,396	107
D. IFAPME Dual training (Formation en alternance IFAPME (Wallonie)(2)	5,607	5,086	-521
E. SFPME Dual training (Formation en alternance SFPME (Bruxelles) (3)	923	898	-25
F. Total secondary technical and vocational education including IFAPME/SFPME (B+D+E)	103,747	101,702	-2,045
G. Total upper secondary education including IFAPME/SFPME (A+B+D+E)	230,870	229,412	-1,458
H. Total apprentices enrolled in dual upper secondary education and training (C+D+E)	15,819	15,380	-439
Percentage of apprentices in total upper secondary technical and vocational education (H/F)	15.25%	15.12%	
Percentage of apprentices in all upper secondary education (H/G)	6.85%	6.70%	

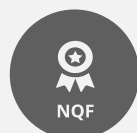
(1) Enseignement.be, <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=0&navi=2264>, indicateurs de l'enseignement année scolaire 2017-2018 et 2018-2019. Accédé le 26/10/2021

(2) Figures of IFAPME

(3) Figures of SFPME

### 3 QUALIFICATIONS

**Q7. Are the qualifications included in the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?**



NQF



NQF

✓ YES

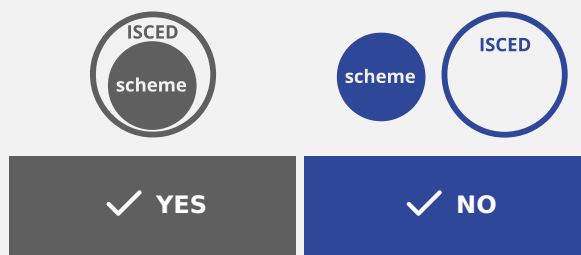
✓ NO

✓ THERE IS NO NQF

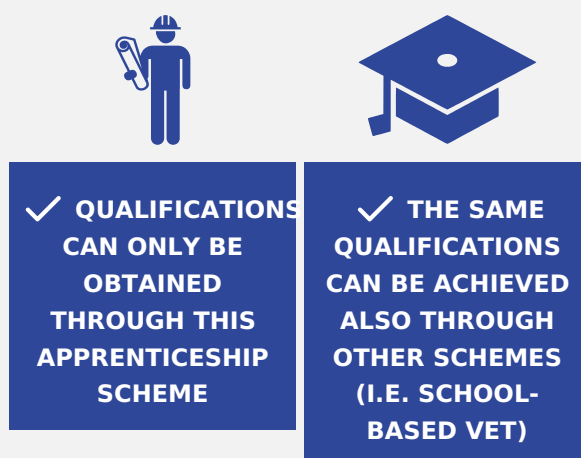
No NQF is fully operational yet, but according to the draft NQF the scheme would

correspond to qualifications at Level 3 and 4 of the EQF.

**Q8. Is the scheme included in the ISCED 2011 mapping?**



**Q9. Are the qualifications offered only through apprenticeships?**

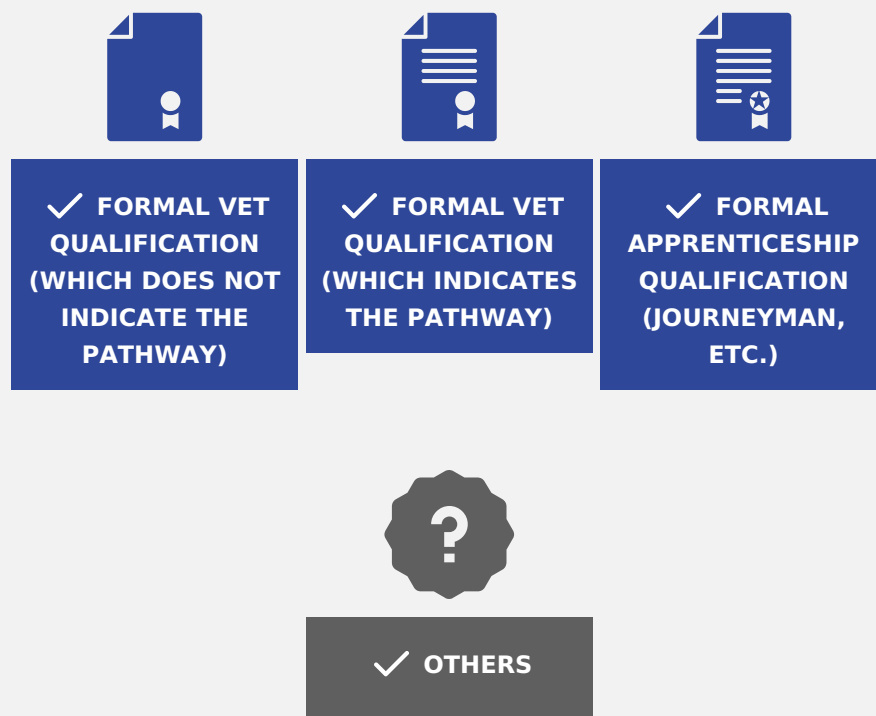


When provided by CEFA, the scheme is implemented based on the VET standards (valid generally for all VET schemes).

Qualifications and certificates only in the CEFA sub-system (called “article 49”) are equivalent to those of full-time education: Certificate of sixth year of studies of vocational secondary education (CE6P, Certificat d'études de sixième année de l'enseignement secondaire professionnel), Certificate of upper-secondary education (CESS, Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur) , Qualification certificate for the sixth/seventh year of study (Certificat de qualification de sixième/septième année)

When provided by IFAPME or SFPME, the scheme is implemented via specific apprenticeship programmes. Such programmes and related Vocational qualifications are developed with the support of the sectoral social partner representatives.

**Q10. Which is the type of qualification obtained through the apprenticeship scheme?**



Article 49 qualifications in the CEFA sub-system are formal VET qualifications that do not indicate the pathway.

Article 45 qualifications, in the vocational training sub-system, are formal VET qualification, which indicate the pathway.

IFAPME and SFPME issue both formal apprenticeship qualifications and formal VET qualifications which indicate the pathway.

See also Q9

#### Q11. Does the scheme provide direct access to higher education?



Not always, only those awarded a Certificate of upper-secondary education (CESS, Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur) may directly access higher education.

#### Q12. What is the typical duration of the apprenticeship programme?

In the case of formation en alternance provided by CEFA, programmes usually last for the three years of upper secondary education.

In the case of IFAPME and SFPME, apprenticeship programmes last from 18 months to 3 years.

## 4 GOVERNANCE

**Q13. Is there any organization at the national level with roles in co-ordinating the scheme?**





☒ YES

☐ NO

OFFA (Office francophone de la Formation en Alternance) is the institution whose mission is the coordination of “formation en alternance” in French-speaking Belgium. Composition of the board (18 people):

- 5 members appointed by the French Community Government of which
  - o 4 members appointed by the compulsory Education
  - o 1 member appointed by “l’Enseignement de Promotion sociale”
- 7 members appointed by Walloon Region of which
  - o 3 representatives of IFAPME
  - o 2 representatives of trades unions
  - o 2 representatives of employers
- 6 members appointed by the college of the COCOF (French communautary commission of Brussel) of which
  - o 2 representatives of SFPME
  - o 2 representatives of trades unions
  - o 2 representatives of employers

**Q14. What is the role of chambers, employers’ and employees’ representatives, sectoral councils (if existent), in shaping apprenticeship content, as per regulation?**







☒ ROLE IN DESIGNING QUALIFICATION

☒ ROLE IN DESIGNING CURRICULA

☐ OTHER



✓ NO ROLE

### Coordination of Formation en Alternance

Social partners are part of the board of OFFA (see Q13) as well as part of the Accreditation and mediation committee and are part of most of the working groups set up by OFFA.

OFFA signs collaboration agreements with the sector representatives (social partners) involved in alternance training and education.

### Designing qualifications and profiles

Vocational qualifications in the French-speaking part of Belgium are developed by the Service francophone des métiers et des qualifications (SFMQ) (French-speaking service for trades and qualifications). The SFMQ brings together the main VET stakeholders: the public employment services (PES), the social partners, all VET providers, the operators for socio-professional integration, the Skills Validation Consortium (Consortium de validation des compétences, CVDC) for Belgium-FR. The SFMQ is in charge to create occupational profiles (basis for all vocational education and vocational training provision) that reflect the reality of occupations. Both types of VET providers en Alternance (SFPME/IFAPME and CEFA) implement some of the occupation profiles developed by the SFMQ.

- IFAPME uses some of the occupation profiles developed by the SFMQ for the curricula it offers. The remaining profiles of qualifications and curricula are developed via specific apprenticeship programmes with the support of the sectors.
- SFPME: information not available.
- CEFAs: implement uses some of the occupation profiles developed by the SFMQ for the curricula they offer. The remaining profiles of qualifications and curricula are developed within Education authorities.

Moreover, social partners are part of the board of IFAMPE and its local IFAPME training centers, and are part of the board of the local training center of SFPME (EFP).

All three providers (CEFA, IFAPME, SFPME) sign collaboration agreements with social partners at sectoral level involved in alternance training.

### Q15. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives in implementing the apprenticeship scheme, as per regulation?



✓ ROLE IN FINAL  
ASSESSMENT OF  
APPRENTICES



✓ ROLE IN  
ACCREDITATION OF  
COMPANIES



✓ ROLE IN  
MONITORING OF  
THE IN-COMPANY  
TRAINING





✓ OTHER

✓ NO ROLE

Social partners sitting in OFFA board are involved in the accreditation process of enterprises that wish to hire apprentices.

Professionals or representatives of sectorial branches are part of the qualification jury in schools and training centers (IFAPME/SFPME/CEFA).

A considerable part of the apprenticeship training is offered by SME training centers set up by the SFPME (Espace Formation PME- training service for small and medium-sized enterprises) in Brussels and the IFAPME (Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et PME - Walloon Institute for dual training and self-employment in small and medium-sized enterprises) in Wallonia.

In the case of IFAPME/SFPME, training is delivered by active professionals.  
IFAPME: In the case of certain training courses (a few), the employers formally assess the trainees on the modules learnt in the company.

#### **Q16. What are the main roles of key state actors?**

Ministries:

- the ministries coordinate the education and training bodies which depend on their supervision
- provide guidance on public education and training policies
- participate in the alternance training steering body (OFFA)

PES:

- Act as a support or expert in various groups of analyses and guidance of vocational training (planning, creation of training profiles, analysis of labour market data, etc.)

Providers:

- provide training for learners
- Create or participate in the drafting of training profiles
- participate in the alternance training steering body (OFFA)
- approve alternance training companies

OFFA :

- management of alternance training (upper secondary education) (see Q13)

The State finances the operation of training centers.

CEFAs are part of the formal educational system and are therefore publicly financed by the State. IFAPME/SFPME centers are financed by public educational authorities up to 75%

## **⑤ TRAINING AT THE WORKPLACE**

#### **Q17. Is it compulsory to alternate training between two learning venues (school and company)?**



✓ YES

✓ NO

The contract (“contrat d’alternance”) must attach a training plan, which mentions the apprentice learning path and skills to be acquired, both through in-company training and in the training institution (see also Q22).

**Q18. Is the in-company training defined as minimum share of the apprenticeship scheme duration?**



✓ YES,  
EQUIVALENT OR  
MORE THAN 50%  
OF SCHEME  
DURATION



✓ YES, BETWEEN  
20% AND 50% OF  
THE SCHEME  
DURATION



✓ YES, LESS  
THAN 20% OF THE  
SCHEME DURATION



✓ NO, NO  
MINIMUM SHARE IS  
COMPULSORY

At least 20 hours per week in the company out of 38 hours per week in total.

**Q19. Is there a distinction between the training time and working time for the period spent at workplace, as per regulation?**



✓ YES, THE  
LEGAL FRAMEWORK  
MAKES THIS  
DISTINCTION

✓ NO, THE LEGAL  
FRAMEWORK  
MAKES NO  
DISTINCTION

**Q20. What is the form of alternation of training between workplace (company) and school?**



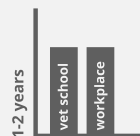
✓ EVERY WEEK  
INCLUDES BOTH  
VENUES



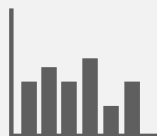
✓ ONE OR MORE  
WEEKS (LESS THAN  
1 MONTH) SPENT  
AT SCHOOL  
FOLLOWED BY ONE  
OR MORE WEEKS  
AT WORKPLACE



✓ ONE OR MORE  
MONTHS (LESS  
THAN 1 YEAR)  
SPENT AT SCHOOL  
FOLLOWED BY ONE  
OR MORE MONTHS  
AT WORKPLACE



✓ A LONGER  
PERIOD (1-2  
YEARS) SPENT AT  
SCHOOL FOLLOWED  
BY A LONGER  
PERIOD SPENT  
TRAINING AT  
WORKPLACE



✓ VARIOUS -  
DEPENDS ON  
AGREEMENTS  
BETWEEN THE  
SCHOOL AND THE  
COMPANY



✓ OTHER

✓ NOT SPECIFIED

Typically, 1-2 days per week in school, 3-4 days in the enterprise. Specific adaptations of this arrangement depend on criteria such as the age of the apprentice.

#### Q21. What is the basis for the training offered?



✓ THE SCHEME IS  
IMPLEMENTED VIA  
A SPECIFIC  
APPRENTICESHIP  
PROGRAMME



✓ THE SCHEME IS  
IMPLEMENTED ON  
THE BASIS OF THE  
SCHOOL-BASED VET  
PROGRAMME



✓ THE SCHEME IS  
IMPLEMENTED  
BASED ON THE VET  
STANDARDS (VALID  
GENERALLY FOR  
ALL VET SCHEMES)



✓ OTHER

The scheme is implemented based on the VET standards (valid generally for all VET schemes) when CEFA is the provider.

The scheme is implemented via a specific apprenticeship programme in the case of IFAPME and SFPME. Such programmes and related Vocational qualifications are developed with the support of the sectoral social partner representatives.

#### Q22. Is the company hosting apprentices required by regulation to follow a training plan at the workplace?



✓ YES, THE  
TRAINING PLAN IS  
BASED ON THE  
NATIONAL/SECTORAL  
REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE IN-  
COMPANY  
TRAINING



✓ YES, THE  
TRAINING PLAN IS  
AGREED AT THE  
LEVEL OF SCHOOL  
AND COMPANY



✓ NO, IS NOT  
REQUIRED  
FORMALLY

A training plan must be attached to the “contrat d’alternance”. It is part of the contract. It is established by the training institution, in consultation with the company and the apprentice. It mentions the apprentice’s learning path and skills to be acquired, both through in-company training and through training organized with the training institution. The training plan is divided in 3 levels of competences (A, B, C).

**Q23. What are the requirements on companies to provide placements, as per regulation?**



✓ HAVE TO  
PROVIDE A  
SUITABLE  
LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENT



✓ HAVE TO  
PROVIDE A MENTOR  
/ TUTOR / TRAINER



✓ OTHER

Prior to the conclusion of a contract, the company must have obtained approval (accreditation) from the training institution to deliver “formation en alternance” (on proposal of sectorial coaches when they exist). The company introduces an application for approval to a training institution. Within three months of the application, the training institution (or the sectorial coaches when they exist) visits the company to see if the company meets the requirements for accreditation.

The company authorizes a ‘training contact person from the training institution to visit the workplace in order to check the company meets the obligations to which it subscribed. ‘Training contact persons’ ensure that the training plan is implemented and verify the equipment available to the apprentice.

The company has to provide a tutor (“tutor appointed by the company”), responding to the conditions specified in the contract (see Q24).

**Q24. What are the formal requirements regarding workplace trainers/mentors/tutors? What is their profile?**

By law [framework cooperation agreement signed by the Walloon Region, the French Community (now: Wallonia-Brussels Federation) and French Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region on "Formation en Alternance"], the tutor must meet the following conditions:

- (a) have at least five years of professional experience, proven by any course of law, in the profession learned in whole or in part within the framework of the trade covered by the training plan; when the tutor has obtained a entrepreneurship diploma in the profession learned in whole or in large part within the framework of the trade covered by the training plan, he must have professional experience at least two years;
- (b) hold a diploma or educational certificate or an attestation training in tutoring, provided by an educational or training institution established or approved by the competent Community or Region, proving that it has the pedagogical knowledge necessary to follow the apprentice as a tutor
- c) be the holder of a certificate of qualification as a tutor issued by a competence validation centre approved by the competent federated entity.

The tutor must also prove irreproachable conduct by providing proof of an extract II Belgian criminal record used in the course of an activity related to education, medical and social guidance, youth assistance, child protection, social animation or supervision of minors.

**Q25. Are there any sanctions on companies that do not provide training to apprentices at the workplace?**



Accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn by the training providers. OFFA operates an accreditation and mediation committee which deals with the appeals filed by companies or by providers.

## ⑥ CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION

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**Q26. What is the status of the learner?**



✓ ONLY STUDENT



✓ ONLY  
EMPLOYEE



✓ APPRENTICE IS  
A SPECIFIC STATUS  
(STUDENT AND  
EMPLOYEE  
COMBINED)



✓ OTHER

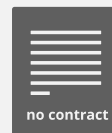
A new definition of “apprentice” was introduced in July 2015 to harmonize the status of young people in “formation en alternance” with regards to social security. They are now treated mostly as ordinary employees.

However, minors (until December 31 of the year in which they reach the age of 18), are only partially subject to social security to cover: “annual vacation, work accident, occupational diseases”.

**Q27. Is there any written arrangement between the learner and company, required as per regulation?**



✓ YES



✓ NO

Contrat d’alternance.

Before 1 September 2015, IFAPME, SFPME and CEFA had their own types of contract. Following the implementation of the cooperation agreement (introduced in 2008, implemented in 2015) aiming to simplify, harmonize and promote the mobility of learners, the “contrat d’alternance” was established in 1 September 2015.

It introduces a common contract for all operators of “formation en alternance”, i.e. the so-called contrat d’alternance.

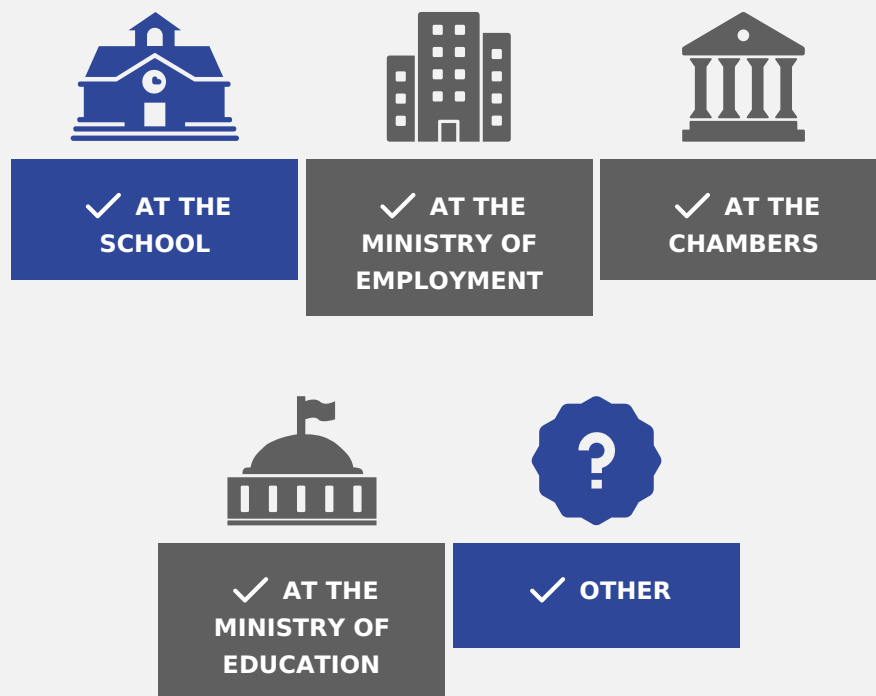
This new contract replaces the formerly existing socio-professional integration agreement (convention d’insertion socioprofessionnelle), the IFAPME apprenticeship contract, and the SFPME apprenticeship contract.

**Q28. What is the nature of the written arrangement?**



Apprenticeships are a specific type of contract.  
In some sectors, it can also be an ordinary employment contract (for example, in care services).

**Q29. Where is the contract or the formal agreement registered?**



Educational authorities through CEFA centers: contracts are registered at the schools (CEFA centers)

IFAPME and SFPME: contracts are registered at the local administrations of IFAPME et SFPME.

For both tracks: as of 4 November 2019, contracts are registered on-line on OPLA\* (the unique and interactive platform of Alternance) under the control of OFFA.

**Q30. Do apprentices receive a wage or allowance?**





✓ **YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE A WAGE (TAXABLE INCOME)**



✓ **YES, ALL APPRENTICES RECEIVE AN ALLOWANCE (NOT A FORM OF TAXABLE INCOME)**



✓ **APPRENTICES RECEIVE A REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**



✓ **NO FORM OF COMPENSATION IS FORESEEN BY LAW**

A minimum remuneration must be paid to the apprentice by the company. It varies for each skill level (included in the training plan, see Q22), and is determined by decree, based on the “guaranteed average minimum monthly income” (€1,501.82), for the duration of the contract:

- Level A: minimum 17% (€270.94)
- Level B: minimum 24% (€382.51)
- Level C: minimum 32% (€510.02)

### **Q31. How is the apprentice wage (taxable income) set?**



✓ **BY LAW (APPLYING FOR ALL)**



✓ **BY CROSS-SECTORAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS AT NATIONAL OR LOCAL LEVEL**



✓ **BY SECTORAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS AT NATIONAL OR LOCAL LEVEL**



✓ BY FIRM-LEVEL  
COLLECTIVE  
AGREEMENTS OR  
INDIVIDUAL  
AGREEMENTS  
BETWEEN  
APPRENTICE AND  
COMPANY

✓ OTHER

Apprentice wage is based on the “guaranteed average minimum monthly income determined by decree.

## 7 FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

**Q32. Who covers the cost of the wage or allowance of the apprentice?**



✓ EMPLOYERS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

A minimum remuneration must be paid to the apprentice by the company.

**Q33. What are the sources of financing of the direct costs for the in-company training part of the apprenticeship scheme?**



✓ SINGLE  
EMPLOYERS  
HOSTING  
APPRENTICES



✓ TRAINING  
FUNDS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

The State finances the operation of training centers. CEFAs are part of the formal educational system and are therefore publicly financed by the State. IFAPME/SFPME centers are financed by public educational authorities up to 75%.

**Q34. Are there any financial incentives for companies that offer apprenticeship places?**



✓ YES, SUBSIDIES



✓ YES, TAX DEDUCTIONS



✓ YES, OTHER INCENTIVES



✓ NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Employers taking on apprentices may benefit from the reduction in social security contributions.

Furthermore, since the last reform of the Belgian Institutions (sixth state reform) in 2012, both Walloon and Brussels Regions are competent to organize their own incentives programmes.

In Wallonia, there are two specific incentives for companies:

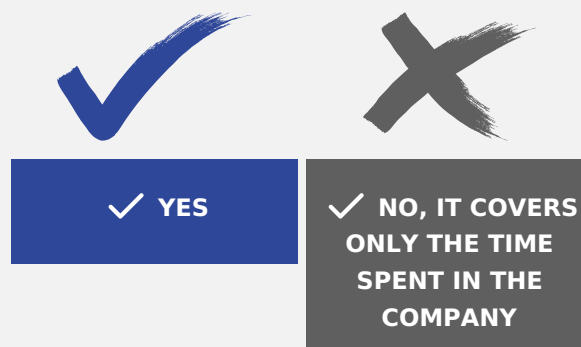
- Incentive to companies that hire their first apprentice: 750€ (paid once)
- Incentive to companies that train apprentices: 750€ for each apprentice who stays in the company at least 9 months and reaches the B level competence while in the company, see Q22).

In Brussels, the employer receives a bonus for each tutor who accompanies 1 to 4 learners simultaneously ('tutor premium'): 1750€ for each tutor (once a year). The apprentice must remain at least 6 months in the company.

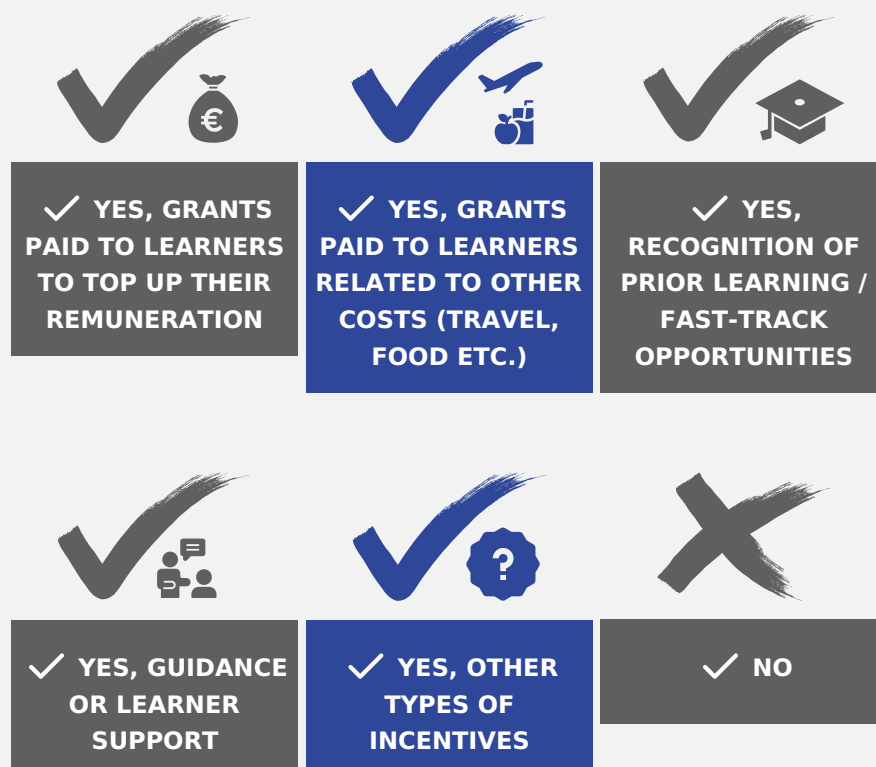
Moreover, employers may also benefit from a tax benefit: 40% of the remuneration paid to the apprentice may be considered as work-related expenses (ReferNet, Apprenticeship-type schemes, Belgium 2014).

For more information on how this scheme is financed, see also Cedefop's Database on

**Q35. Does the wage or allowance of the apprentice cover both the time spent at school and in the company?**



**Q36. Are there any incentives for learners?**



Incentives from regional governments:

- Apprentices in the Walloon region receive 750€ once they have completed their training and if they get their qualification.
- Apprentices in the region of Brussels receive 500€ in the first and second years of training if they completed the year successfully. They also receive 750€ in the third year, once they have completed the training year and get their qualification.

Incentives from sectors: Some branches (i.e construction sector) give apprentices extra incentives.

Support related to other costs is also offered:

- In the Walloon Region, IFAPME reimburses learners for travel expenses by public transport to the training centre.
- By law, in the French-speaking Belgium, the employer is required to reimburse the learner's travel expenses to the company in accordance with the legal provisions applicable to the company