

Reference year 2016

UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Q1. Is there an official definition of 'apprenticeships' in your country?



✓ YES ✗ NO

Workplace-based form of study is an equivalent to 'apprenticeship training' in Estonia.

As defined under Article 28 of the Vocational Education Institutions Act (2013), workplace-based form of study is a form of full-time study where work practice constitutes at least two-thirds of the volume of a curriculum^[1]. The apprenticeship includes:

- a curriculum in the course of which a pupil performs work and study assignments with specific study objectives in the working environment under the supervision of an instructor;
- a tripartite contract between the VET institution, the pupil or his/her legal representative and the company that conducts the work practice regulating their relation and setting out the specific organisation of workplace-based study and the rights and obligations of the parties to the contract;
- the enterprise conducting the practical training pays remuneration for students for fulfilling the job assignments at enterprise, or a salary (in case there is a valid employment contract between enterprise and student).

[1] <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/505022014002/consolide/current>

Q2. Which apprenticeship schemes exist in your country?



✓ **AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL: ONE TYPE OF APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACT THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AT ALL LEVELS OF VET (LEVELS 2-5 OF ESTONIAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK/EQF).**



✓ **AT POST-SECONDARY / HIGHER LEVEL: NONE**



✓ **AT SECTORAL LEVEL: NONE**

There is one type of apprenticeship study form (**Workplace Based Learning (WBL)** *Töökohapõhine õppevorm*) that can be implemented at all levels of VET:

- vocational education without the requirement for basic education (EQF level 2);
- vocational education based on basic education (EQF level 3);
- vocational secondary education or vocational education based on secondary education (EQF level 4);
- specialised vocational training (EQF level 5).

There are two types of implementation plans for VET curricula modules: one for school-based form of study and one for WBL. In the curricula expected learning outcomes are defined for the levels 2-5 of the Estonian Qualification Framework. The school curriculum stipulates:

- duration and aim of curricula;
- content of modules;
- learning outcomes;
- assessment principles.

If necessary, individual curricula are designed on the basis of school curricula in collaboration with the company where practical training takes place. Individual curricula will be added as part of WBL contract signed between the VET school, student and company.

Q3. Is there a legal basis for apprenticeships in your country?



✓ **YES**



✓ **NO**



✓ **IN DEVELOPMENT**

- The apprenticeship training was legalised as a new study form by Vocational Education Institutions Act in 2006.
- In 2007, the regulation on 'Policies and Conditions for Implementing Workplace-Based Learning' was introduced regulating the provision of apprenticeship training[1]. The new regulation established that apprenticeship is integrated into the VET system and is formalised as one of two study forms (apprentices can study at all levels in the VET system), and there is no age limit for participating in VET in Estonia.
- The regulation was then absorbed into the reformed Vocational Education Institutions Act in September 2013 (originally adopted in 2006), as a renewed regulation establishing Article 28, paragraph 7 of the Vocational Education Institutions Act.

Historically, traditional apprenticeships have strong roots in Estonia (since medieval Hansaetic times). The apprenticeship training was not practiced in Soviet times (since 1950s). It was formally regulated in 2006, but remained unpopular. In recent years it became a clear priority to expand apprenticeship training in Estonia (through a special ESF programme).

As apprenticeships have a relatively recent history in Estonia, there are indications of plans to develop the WBL pathway further, for example:

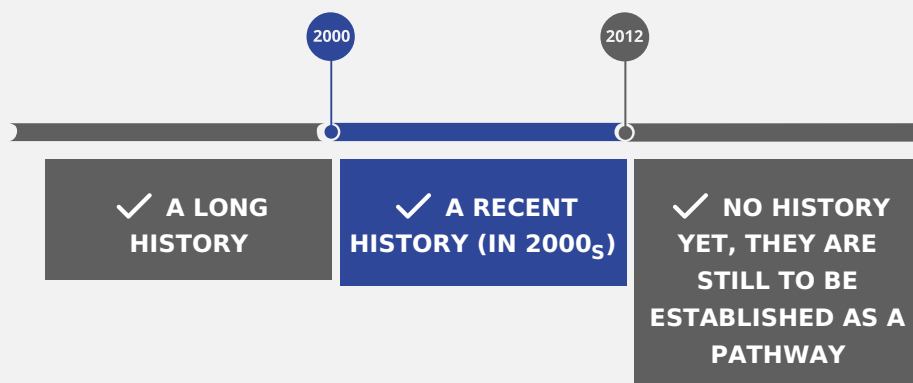
- plans to widen the dialogue to sector organisations;
- organisations offering their support in finding companies for on-the-job training in addition to VET schools;
- expanding cooperation to single enterprises;
- organising work practice at tertiary level.

[1] <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/129122013002>

Q4. If there is no apprenticeship scheme, which VET programme(s) comes closest to an apprenticeship?

Not applicable

Q5. How well-established are apprenticeships in your country?



In 2002, the workplace-based learning as a new and innovative study form was firstly piloted in Estonia during the project named 'Development of Work-Based Learning Programmes and Network in North-East and South Estonia and in Islands Region'. In 2006, the workplace-based learning was legalised as a new study form in addition to school-based study form by Vocational Education Institutions Act.

Q6. Additional information to understand the specificity of apprenticeships in the country

According to the new legislation, both IVET and CVET are used in formal VET. IVET is provided at EQF/NQF levels 2-5, while CVET is offered at levels 4-5.

Reasons for the current low share of apprenticeship training in Estonia:

- VET in Estonia is traditionally school-based;
- enterprises often don't acknowledge themselves as education providers;
- lack of cooperation between different stakeholders;
- the society, including enterprises and potential students, does not have enough information about the study opportunities and consequently the potential to provide work-based learning is reduced;
- the majority of Estonian enterprises are small or micro-sized.

However, it is essential to note that the situation is rapidly changing especially due to the actions taken under ESF programme PRÕM and the Erasmus+ project "National Authorities for Apprenticeships: Implementing Work Based Learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)". The number of companies that are ready to provide training is growing.