

Dual pathway

Beroepsbegeleidende Leerweg

 Netherlands

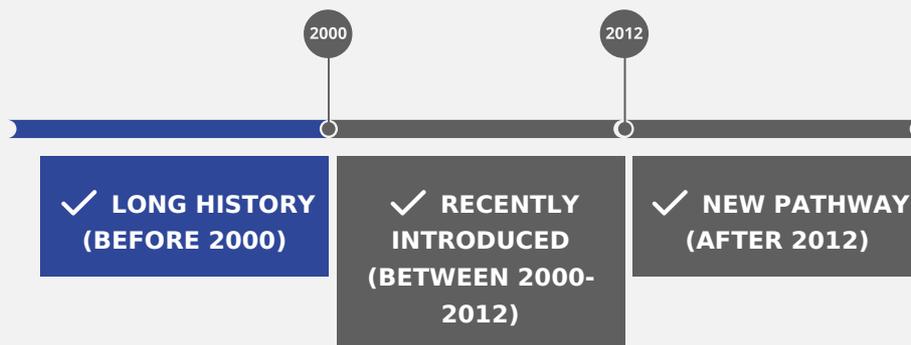
Reference year 2023

Content updates and contributors

Version 2023 - Drafted by Robert van Wezel, Senior policy advisor, SBB, Netherlands - Member of [Cedefop Community of apprenticeship experts](#) for the Netherlands

① SCHEME HISTORY

Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



Before its renaming in 1997, the BBL was known as leerlingwezen.

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**

The traditional dual sectors with apprenticeships (BBL), where employers traditionally have a preference for work-based VET education are healthcare, construction, installation technicians, hairdressers, etc.

The preference for BBL vis-a-vis school-based VET (BOL) is thus sector specific.

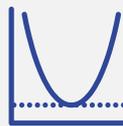
With the expansion of VET across a wider range of sectors and levels over time, the BBL became a smaller track among all VET programmes.

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**

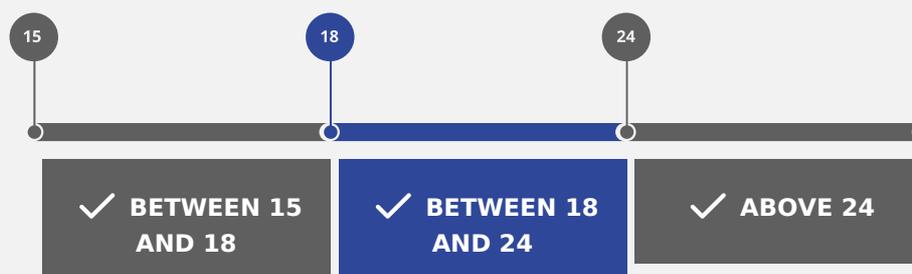
The minimum age for apprenticeship is 16 years.

In the past, both the apprenticeship (BBL) and the school-based (BOL) pathway were designed for youngsters. Nowadays, the system is being used more and more for adult learning (as there is no formal age limit).

Recently, MBO certificates (upper-secondary VET) have been introduced as part of a training course, to train or retrain employees or job seekers.

This is facilitated by the fact that the qualification structure offers “Electives”, which can be also labelled as Certificate (approved by the Ministry of Education) in case they offer a value for the labour market (LLL). (Every training course should include an Elective (240 hours for a year training programme). These Electives can be specific for the region, personal interest, preparing for higher education).

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



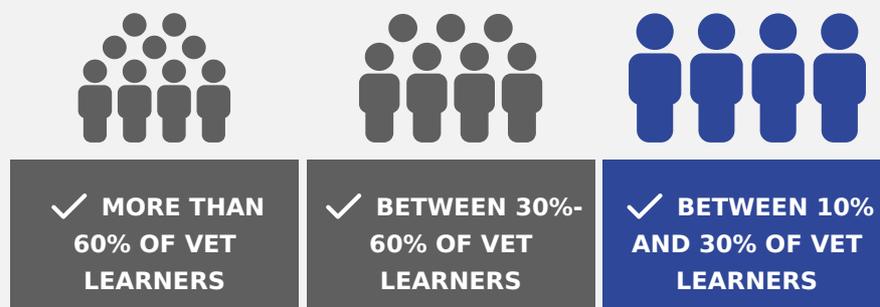
Overall, most apprenticeship (bbl) students are between 18 and 22 years old. In the largest apprenticeship (bbl) sector, that of Care, welfare and sports, most students are 27 years and older.

(For comparison, in the school-based pathway (BOL) mostly 16-20yo, in the third pathway (see Q3 of the country fiche), mostly above 27).

Q5. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

In 2022-2023 there were 135,826 in the dual pathway (bbl). As a comparison, in 2018-19 their number was 120,734 (increase of 12.5%).

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





✓ LESS THAN
10% OF VET
LEARNERS

In the 2022-23 school year, learners in the dual pathway (BBL, 134,236) accounted for 29.8% of all VET students at upper secondary level (450,073)

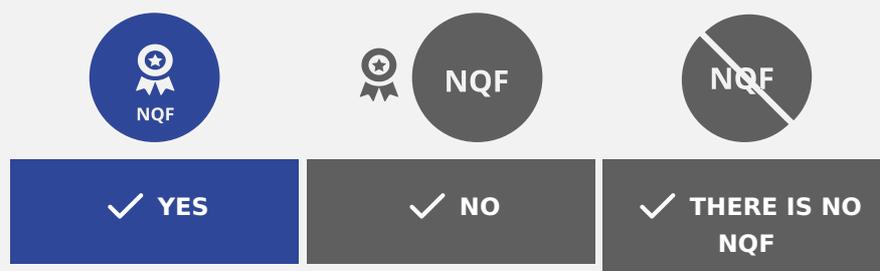
VET-students in 2022-2023 (level and pathway)

Level	BBL (dual pathway)	BOL (school-based pathway)	Total
1	3,175	8,347	11,522
2	30,626	43,694	74,320
3	54,354	50,059	104,413
4	46,081	213,737	259,818
Total	134,236	315,837	450,073

Source: <https://www.s-bb.nl/feiten-en-cijfers>

3 QUALIFICATIONS

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



In principle, any upper secondary VET qualification (MBO) can also be offered through the dual pathway (bbl).

- Entry level programmes (1-1.5 years, ISCED 254, EQF1).
- Basic vocational programmes (2 years, ISCED 353, EQF2).
- Professional education programmes (3 years, ISCED 353, EQF3).
- Middle-management VET programmes (3-4 years, ISCED 354, EQF4).

Specialisation programmes (on top of professional education programmes) (1-2 years, ISCED 453, EQF4). [1]

[1] Cedefop (2016), Spotlight on VET: The Netherlands.

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



- Entry level programmes (1-1.5 years, ISCED 254, EQF1).
- Basic vocational programmes (2 years, ISCED 353, EQF2).
- Professional education programmes (3 years, ISCED 353, EQF3).
- Middle-management VET programmes (3-4 years, ISCED 354, EQF4).

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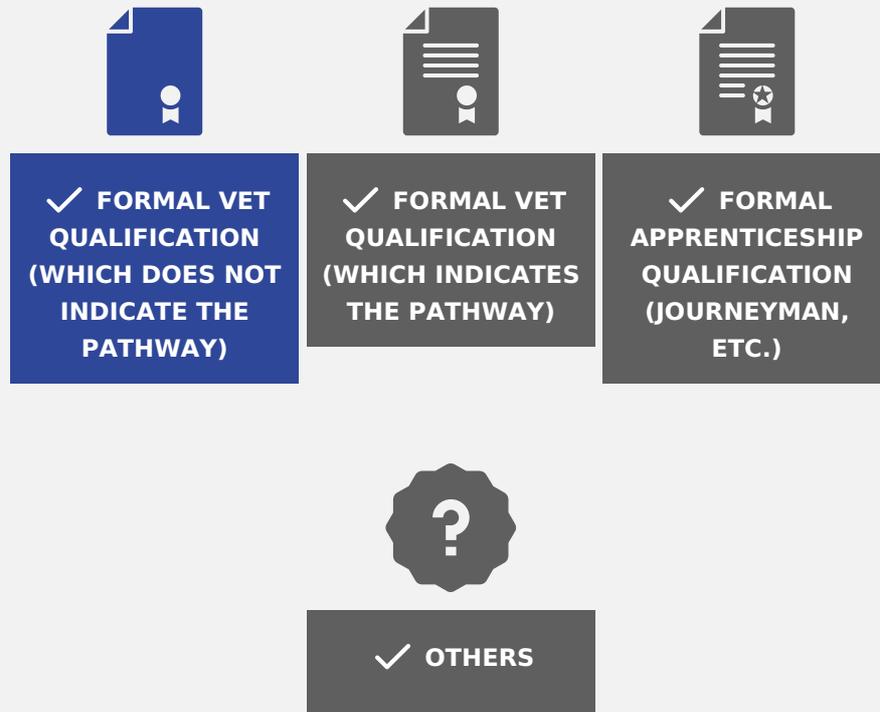
[1] Cedefop (2016), Spotlight on VET: The Netherlands.

Q9. Are the qualifications offered only through apprenticeships?



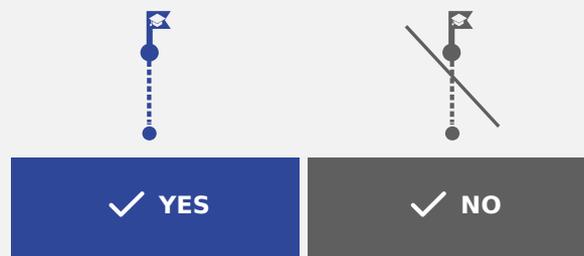
Both upper-secondary pathways (bol, bbl) and the third pathway have the same learning outcomes which lead to the same qualifications.

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



Regardless the pathways, VET education leads to the same diploma (at level 1-4). The diploma certifies that the holder has successfully completed the education for a certain qualification.

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



Irrespective of the pathway (BBL or BOL), only level-4 programmes provide access to Higher vocational education (HBO). These are the Middle-management VET programmes (ISCED 354, EQF4) and the Specialising programmes (ISCED 453, EQF4).[1]

[1] Cedefop (2016), Spotlight on VET: The Netherlands.

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

The duration of apprenticeship (BBL) coincides with the duration of the programmes it applies to.

- Entry level programmes (1-1.5 years, ISCED 254, EQF1).
- Basic vocational programmes (2 years, ISCED 353, EQF2).
- Professional education programmes (3 years, ISCED 353, EQF3).
- Middle-management VET programmes (3-4 years, ISCED 354, EQF4).

4 GOVERNANCE

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

YES NO

The Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market (Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven - SBB) has a coordinating role. As required by the Dutch Act on Adult and Vocational Education, the SBB works together with VET schools and the labour market to:

- advise, accredit and coach work placement companies
- develop and maintain the qualification structure
- provide research and information on the labour market, work placement and efficiency of VET-programmes
- advise the minister of Education, Culture and Science on linking vocational education with the job market.

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

Employer and employee representatives are extensively involved at the design level, including through their participation in the board of SBB and its sectoral committees

(tripartite representation, together with VET providers).

At the design level, social partners participate in the following SBB tasks, stipulated by Article 1.5.1. of the Education law:

- development and maintenance of a national qualification structure, envisaging the coordination between VET provision and society, labour market and young people needs - taking into account relevant international developments;
- proposing which VET programmes should be eligible for public funding, thus contributing to the purposeful use of government resources;
- development of the quality of apprenticeships;
- carrying out research in support of tasks named in this article;

Design of the curricula is carried out by the education institutions.

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



At the implementation level, social partners participate in the following SBB tasks, stipulated by Article 1.5.1. of the Education law:

- development and measurement of quality criteria for apprenticeships and the evaluation of companies and organisations which offer apprenticeships at least every four years according to these criteria, including publishing an overview of companies and organisations which satisfy these criteria;
- ensuring the supply of a sufficient number of companies and organisations which provide apprenticeships;
- carrying out additional activities which foster the coordination between education and training and the labour market.

Social partners do not have a role in the final assessment through the SBB. The (final) assessment is a responsibility of the training centre. It is up to the training centre to decide where and how the assessment is organised. Normally training centres have a role for companies in the assessment of apprentices.

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

- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture: issued the Law on Education and Vocational Education and Training. Approves the qualifications designed by the SBB. Inspection - Quality Assurance & control
- Public Employment Services: cooperation in the 3rd pathway
- Training Centres (schools): offer Regional Training
- SBB: Qualifications, accreditation companies and fact & figures

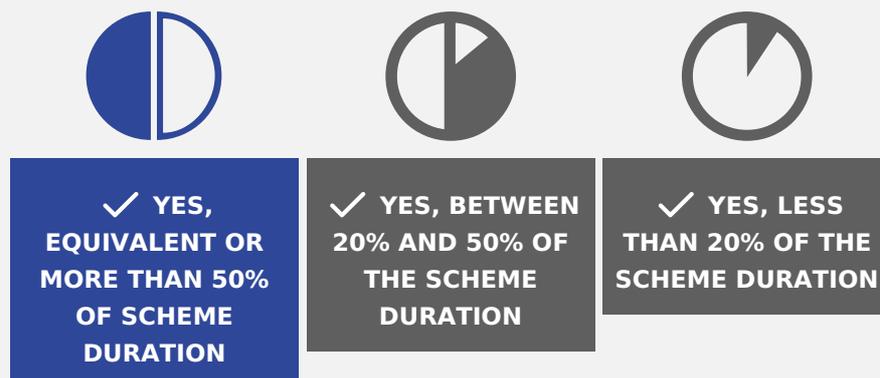
5 TRAINING AT THE WORKPLACE

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



According to the law, Article 7.2.7 apprenticeships programmes must comprise at least 850 hours of education per year, of which at least 200 hours must be school-based instruction (begeleide onderwijsuren) and of which at least 610 hours must be work placement (beroepspraktijkvorming, bpv).

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





✓ NO, NO
MINIMUM SHARE IS
COMPULSORY

An important part of vocational education and training consists of learning in practice, known as work placement (beroepspraktijkvorming, bpv).

The dual pathway (BBL) has at least 60% of work placement (BPV) or more. For comparison, the school-based pathway (BOL) has between 20% and 60% BPV.

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



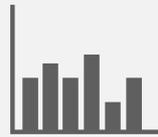
✓ ONE OR MORE
WEEKS (LESS THAN
1 MONTH) SPENT
AT SCHOOL
FOLLOWED BY ONE
OR MORE WEEKS
AT WORKPLACE



✓ 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

In practice, apprentices usually spent 1 day per week in the education institution and 4 days per week in the company.

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

Both upper-secondary pathways (bol, bbl) and the third pathway have the same learning outcomes which lead to the same qualifications.

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

Article 7.2.8 of the Education law states that there is a contract between the apprentice, the school and company focussed on the training (praktijkovereenkomst - agreement/contract with education institution). This is focussed on training (different from the labour contract, see Q28). The employer ensures that the apprentice-employee is trained in accordance with the programme.

Most importantly, the company or organisation providing the apprenticeship needs to be accredited by the SBB (see also Q23). This accreditation process includes checking whether the company provides a learning environment and supervisors. Obligations of the employer: the employer provides the apprentice-employee an apprenticeship and will take any measures necessary to achieve the goals of this agreement, including the quality of the apprenticeship.

<https://www.s-bb.nl/bedrijven/praktijkopleider/ik-als-praktijkopleider/>

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

The Dutch Act on Adult and Vocational Education requires VET students to carry out part of their education or training at accredited work placement companies.

Article 7.2.8 of the Education Law stipulates that the company or organisation providing the apprenticeship must ensure the supervision of the apprentice.

An accredited work placement company must meet the following conditions:

1. offer students a safe workplace that corresponds with their education or training. The student will carry out the profession for which he/she is training with the corresponding tasks and requirements.

2. assign a workplace trainer, who has good insight in the profession and is able to coach and manage students on the work-floor. Make time and resources available for the workplace trainer to carry out these tasks.

3. Be willing to cooperate with VET schools and the SBB, and provide the appropriate and necessary information.

4. Agree to the publication of its business details on Stagemarkt.nl: the website that students use to find a practice placement opening or apprenticeship.

The Ministry of Education has assigned SBB the task to accredit companies for providing apprenticeships. This accreditation process includes checking whether the company provides a learning environment and supervisors. The SBB helps to improve the quality of workplace learning in the company via online and face-to-face services.

[1] Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven
<https://www.s-bb.nl/en/companies/becoming-accredited-work-placement-com...>

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

A profile for a trainer is included in the regulations for accreditation of work placement companies. In this profile the role of the trainer and core tasks are described. The trainer trains the student and is responsible for the organization of the learning activities in the best possible learning environment.

Overview of core tasks and work processes

1. Organizes the student's learning process in practice

- 1.1 Conducts the selection interview with the student
- 1.2 Develops an onboarding program
- 1.3 Determines the learning needs of the student
- 1.4 Determines the learning activities
- 1.5 Prepares a practical curriculum
- 1.6 Maintains contact with the school's teacher and SBB's adviser

2. Trains the student in practice

- 2.1 Educates the student in the workplace
- 2.2 Monitors and directs the student's learning process
- 2.3 Conducts supervision or progress interviews with the student
- 2.4 Assesses the student's progress in the learning process
- 2.5 Evaluates the learning process

SBB offers training and interactive learning modules for in-company trainers, they are on voluntary basis.

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



✓ YES

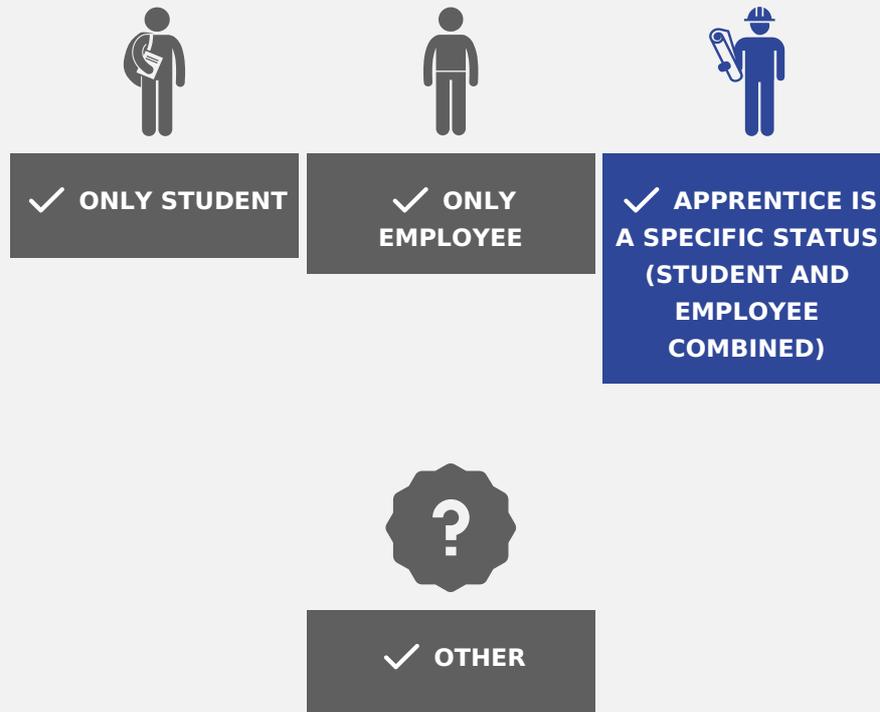
✓ NO

It is up to the company to decide if they want to offer apprenticeship opportunities for student VET. Participation is not mandatory, but if the company wants to be involved, they have to fulfill the criteria mentioned above.

If the company provides insufficient training and guidance, the accreditation can be withdrawn, and the company can no longer offer BBL.

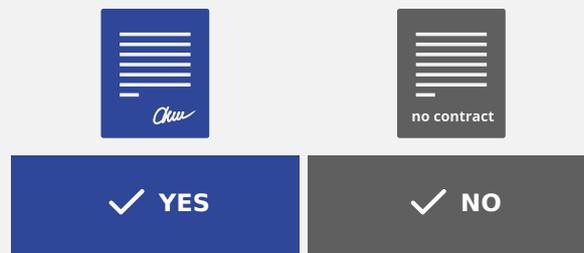
6 CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION

Q26. What is the status of the learner?



Apprentice is a specific status in the sense that their labour contract is temporary (lasting for as long the VET programme lasts) and reflects their specific situation: salary, requirement to offer a permanent contract if the apprentice remains in the company after successful completion of the apprenticeship, etc.

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



Every student in an apprenticeship/dual pathway (BBL) is an employee with an employment contract. Apprenticeship contracts (arbeidsovereenkomst voor studenten) are a specific kind of contract with a duration that is identical to that of the contract between the education institution (praktijkovereenkomst).

The contract complements the requirement of Article 7.2.8 of the Education law for a different contract (praktijkovereenkomst) between the educational institution, the apprentice and the organisation delivering the work-based training. It has the nature of a learning agreement.

In most cases, the two (labour contract and learning agreement) are not combined in a single document.

In addition, the Work Placement Protocol contains (non-contractual) agreements between the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, employers' organisations, and the Netherlands Association of VET Colleges on good quality work placements

Q28. What is the nature of the written arrangement?

		
<input type="checkbox"/> APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS ARE AN ORDINARY EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACTS ARE A SPECIFIC TYPE OF CONTRACT	<input type="checkbox"/> ANOTHER TYPE OF FORMAL AGREEMENT, NOT A CONTRACT

Apprenticeship contracts (arbeidsovereenkomst voor studenten) are a specific kind of contract with a duration that is identical to that of the contract between the education institution (praktijkovereenkomst).

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

		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AT THE SCHOOL	<input type="checkbox"/> AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> AT THE CHAMBERS
		
<input type="checkbox"/> AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER	

The employer is responsible for registering the employment contract with the apprentice.
The school is responsible for the contract between the VET provider, the apprentice and the employer (praktijkovereenkomst)

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

The employer pays a salary. The student in the dual pathway (apprenticeship - BBL) is an employee with an employment contract.

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

The starting salary amounts to at least the legal minimum wage (for youth). Increases beyond that are sector specific, and so are agreements concerning remuneration of the school day. In practice, remuneration is mostly agreed upon in collective labour agreements.

7 FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

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



✓ EMPLOYERS



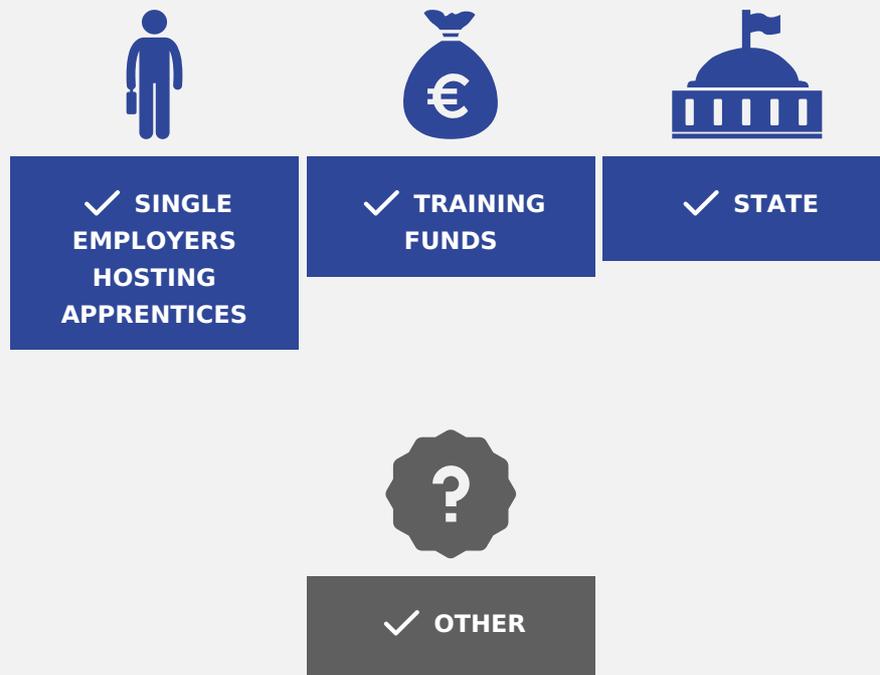
✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

The employer pays the salary as well as a contribution to the costs for education and training.

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



The employer pays the salary as well as a contribution to the costs for education and training.

The student in the dual pathway (apprenticeship) is an employee with an employment contract (as a comparison, the student in the school-based pathway (BOL) has no employment contract and usually get an internship wage).

The education and training providers receive funding from the state for accredited programmes (Article 2.1.1 Law on Education and Vocational Education and Training).

Subsidies at sectoral level (e.g. in the metal or electrotechnics sectors) are covered by sectoral training funds and may cover in-company training costs, e.g. related to trainers/supervisors).

For detailed information on financing arrangements regarding the scheme, see also Cedefop's [database on financing apprenticeships in the EU](#).

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





✓ **NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

At the government level, in 2014 a subsidies-based scheme replaced a tax reduction-based system. The subsidies have the following eligibility criteria:

- Subsidies are paid to the accredited company or organisation which provides the apprenticeship.
- All dual pathway programmes (BBL) registered in the central register of VET programmes (Crebo) are eligible.
- There must be a valid contract (praktijkovereenkomst) between the education and training institution, the apprentice and the company.

The subsidy amounts to a maximum of EUR 2700 per year per apprentice. The companies apply for this subsidy. For more information, see the [subsidy fiche](#) on Cedefop's Database on financing apprenticeships in the EU.

There also exist subsidies at sectoral level. For the metal and electrotechnics sector, for example, accredited companies and organisation whose apprentices follow a dual pathway programme registered in the central register of VET programmes are eligible for EUR 2500 per year per apprentice (max. 5 apprentices per company), with an additional EUR 1000 paid as a bonus if the diploma is completed. In addition, companies are eligible for a EUR 1000 contribution to the training costs of their apprenticeship supervisors/mentors (praktijkopleider).

In addition, sector organisations, employer organisations and education and training institutions contribute for support of apprenticeships and activities concerning labour market entry.

Examples of sectoral incentives are presented in Cedefop's database on financing apprenticeships in the EU ([metal sector](#), [healthcare](#)).

For more information on how this scheme is financed, see also Cedefop's Database on financing apprenticeships in the EU: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/financing-apprenticeships/appren...>

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



✓ **YES**



✓ **NO, IT COVERS ONLY THE TIME SPENT IN THE COMPANY**

In most cases, the allowance of the apprentice cover also the time spent at school. This

is often agreed upon in collective labour agreements.

Q36. Are there any incentives for learners?

 ✓ YES, GRANTS PAID TO LEARNERS TO TOP UP THEIR REMUNERATION	 ✓ YES, GRANTS PAID TO LEARNERS RELATED TO OTHER COSTS (TRAVEL, FOOD ETC.)	 ✓ YES, RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING / FAST-TRACK OPPORTUNITIES
 ✓ YES, GUIDANCE OR LEARNER SUPPORT	 ✓ YES, OTHER TYPES OF INCENTIVES	 ✓ NO

In the so called "Work agenda", signed on 14 February 2023 by the Ministry, VET-council, education and employers' organisations, VNG and SBB the following incentives are agreed:

Goal 4: Each student receives appropriate compensation, which is at least deductible from a reimbursement that includes all expenses (including travel expenses if they are not reimbursed in any other way).

The training company pays this allowance for expenses.

This allowance is offered on top of the wages foreseen under an employment contract (in the case of the dual track - BBL), which are at least in accordance with the legally established amounts.