

REFERENCE YEAR 2023

UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Content updates and contributors

Version 2023 - Drafted by João Barbosa, Senior advisor, Directorate-General for Employment and Industrial Relations (DGERT), Portugal - Member of [Cedefop Community of apprenticeship experts](#) for Portugal

Q1. Is there a stable legal basis for apprenticeships in your country?

		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN DEVELOPMENT

In Portugal apprenticeship is regulated by [Portaria \(Ordinance\) nº 70/2022, de 2 de fevereiro](#), and includes both apprenticeship programmes (cursos de aprendizagem) and apprenticeship+ programmes (cursos de aprendizagem+) (see Q3 below). Other forms of work-based learning (WBL) are not considered as apprenticeship ones under Cedefop's definition.

Q2. Is there an official definition of 'apprenticeship' or 'apprentice' in your country?

	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

The legislation defines:
Apprenticeship (aprendizagem) as a training modality with double certification

developed according to the references/standards of competences and training associated with the qualifications included in the National Qualifications Catalogue ([Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações - CNQ](#)), whose main objectives are:

- a) To Reinforce the qualification levels of young people and adults for improving employability and (re)integration into the labour market, as well as allowing the pursuit of studies.
- b) To value the training potential in a work context through the active participation of companies and other employers in the training process.
- c) To develop and consolidate quality learning for young people and adults based on in an alternating training regime.
- d) To gradually bring young people and adults closer to the labour market and the real context of work through the practical experience of training in a work context (work-related training - formação em contexto de trabalho).

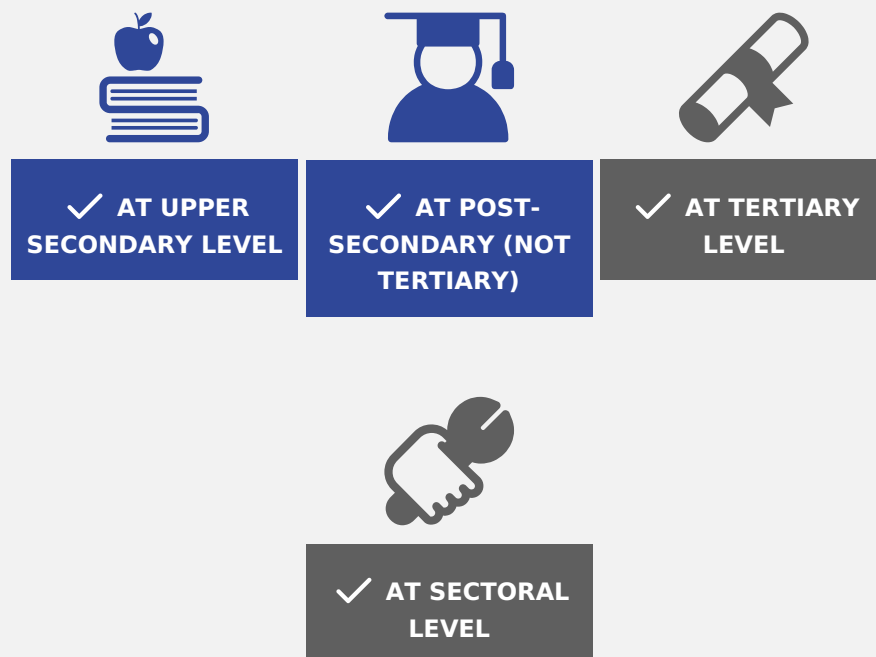
By alternation training regime is meant the interaction between theoretical and practical training and the contexts in which they take place: VET providers, for theoretical training; companies and other employers, named “alternation support entities” (ASE), for work-related training.

Work-related training (formação em contexto de trabalho) is the development and acquisition of technical, relational and organisational knowledge and skills relevant to the responsible performance of a professional activity, based on quality standards and in compliance with safety and health rules (1).

The term apprentice (aprendiz) is no longer used (at least since 2008). Trainee [(formando (2))] is the term generally used by the IEFP applying to any individual who is enrolled and participates in professional training actions promoted or carried out by training entities through a training contract (which includes apprenticeship programmes).

- (1) IEFP, [Apprenticeship Specific regulation 2 022](#)
- (2) [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) nº 242/88 de 7 de julho.](#)

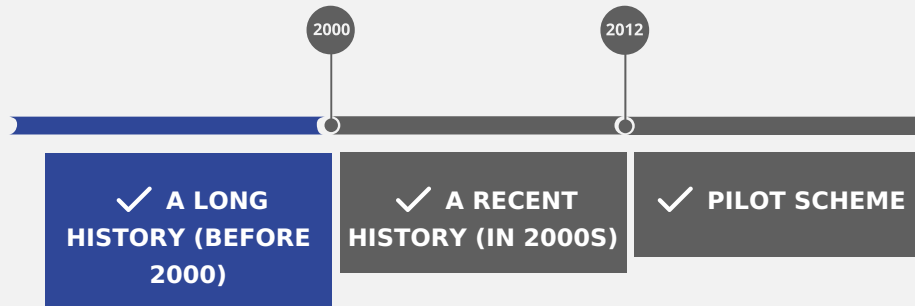
Q3. At which level do apprenticeship schemes exist in your country?



The same apprenticeship scheme exists at two levels:

- Upper secondary level - apprenticeship programmes (cursos de aprendizagem).
 - Post-secondary (not tertiary) - apprenticeship+ programmes (cursos de aprendizagem+).
- (see more on the scheme fiche)

Q4. How well-established are apprenticeship schemes in your country?



The [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 102/84, de 29 de março](#), established the first legal framework for apprenticeship, which was considered a system of vocational training in alternance, for young people.

In 1984, the apprenticeship programmes were created as part of the so-called apprenticeship (dual) system. The system differed from the 'technical-professional teaching' because it recognised the companies as the privileged space for training (still valid nowadays). The emphasis given to the company is mainly justified by the training potential of qualified professionals working there and the fact that learning is largely done at the workplace.

Q5. Relevant information that is essential to understanding the specificity of apprenticeships in the country.

The legal framework for apprenticeship in the 80s and 90s:

- [Decreto-Lei \(Decree Law\) no. 338/85, de 21 de agosto](#) introduced amendments to Decreto-Lei (Decree-Law) n.º. 102/84, de 29 de março, which established the legal subject of vocational training in the apprenticeship system.
- [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 436/88, de 23 de novembro](#) revised the legal regime of apprenticeship, approved by the Decreto-Lei (Decree-Law) n.º. 102/84, de 29 de março.
- [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 383/91, de 9 de outubro](#) established the principles with which pre-apprenticeship programmes must comply
- [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 205/96, de 25 de outubro](#), establishing the legal regime of apprenticeship, set up orientation programmes (level 1), apprenticeship programmes (level 2), apprenticeship programmes (level 3, current level 4 of NQF/EQF) and post-secondary, technological specialization or advanced technological qualification training programmes. Under this Decree-Law, labour and education ministries approved and published the legislation to each professional area of apprenticeship by Portarias (Ordinances), resulting of a broad consensus with the social partners, companies, and professional and sectorial associations.

The legal framework for apprenticeship in the 2000s:

- [Portaria \(Ordinance\) 1497/2008, de 19 de dezembro](#), revoked all the programmes created under Decreto-Lei (Law-Decree) n. 205/96, de 25 de outubro, with the exception of level 3 (current level 4 of QNQ/QEQ) apprenticeship programmes. However, through various legal diplomas, technological specialization programmes (which currently award level 5 of the QNQ/QEQ) were created and consolidated as an autonomous VET modality.
- Apprenticeship+ programmes created by the [Portaria \(Ordinance\) nº 70/2022, de 2 de fevereiro](#), reintroduced the post-secondary VET offer into the apprenticeship programmes, while maintaining technological specialization programmes.