

REFERENCE YEAR 2023

UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Content updates and contributors

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



Spain has adopted a new VET Law in 2022, which includes regulation of apprenticeships. This law is a major change in the whole Vocational training system. In this regard, companies and educational institutions share responsibility for training students within the vocational training system.

This shared responsibility is laid down in the dual nature of all VET. All initial VET (and parts of what we can consider as CVET/lifelong learning) will have a dual character, including, of course, apprenticeships.

This general dual nature takes the form of two pathways: the so-called General VET pathway, and the Intensive VET pathway. The two pathways have some common points and some differences.

One of these pathways (Intensive VET - *Formación profesional intensiva*) is essentially an apprenticeship pathway.

Its main features are:

- In-company training must be more than 35% of the total training duration.
- A minimum of 30% of learning outcomes must be acquired in the company.
- The student is linked to the company is through a labour training contract.

In comparison to that, the general VET pathway does not require remuneration, and foresees a smaller share of workplace training that what is indicated in the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. Therefore, although it is a form of dual VET in the national context, the general VET pathway is not examined in this database as an apprenticeship scheme.

Regions decide the implementation features in their territory for either the general or the intensive pathway.

The Law includes different transition periods for different modifications. In March 2024, the regulatory development of the law has not finished.

In 2022, the Spanish government modified the labour training contract, which is the basis of apprenticeship programmes offered by both Ministries of Education and Labour (with a transitional period to phase out other types of agreements in the case of Ministry of Education - see scheme fiche Q25, Q26).

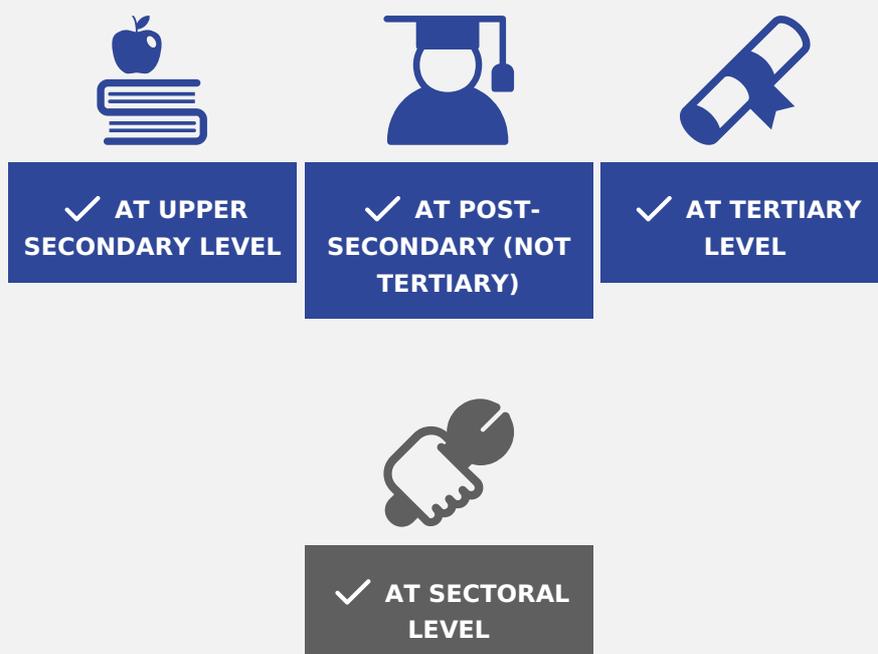
During the last decade and before the adoption of this Law, apprenticeships were known in Spain as Dual VET. Since this nomenclature is consolidated in Spain, it is possible that Intensive VET pathway will continue to be known in Spain as Dual VET.

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



Apprenticeship is a modality of VET defined in the 2022 regulation. The law names this pathway *Formación profesional intensiva* (Intensive VET). This definition includes its main characteristics (see Q1).

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



Apprenticeships can be offered both in programmes managed by the Ministry of Education (formal VET system) and in programmes managed by the Ministry of Labour/employment authorities (see Q5 of the scheme fiche). The 2022 law intends to integrate both options into a single system through a modular supply. Students can accumulate training from a determinate level, and this can be used to facilitate their access to a higher level.

The different levels are identified by the letters A, B, C, D and E.

The Law allows the apprenticeship modality (Intensive VET) in:

-C Grade (*Certificados de Profesionalidad*)

-D Grade (IVET accessing from 15 years)

-E Grade (Specialization training)

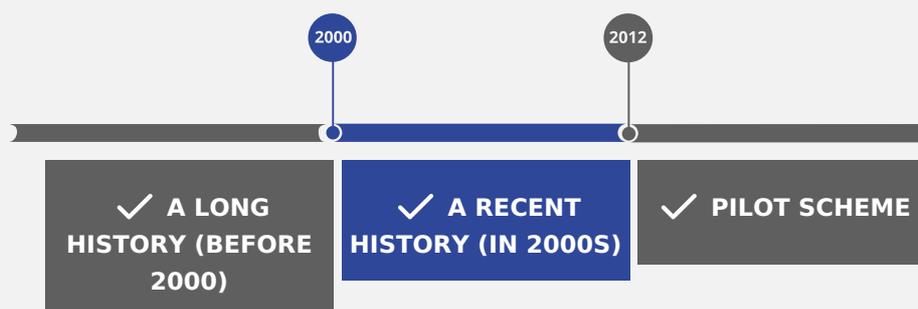
Level C refers to occupational qualifications, i.e. the certificates accredit the set of professional skills that a person must possess for the development of a labour activity identified in the labour market. Level C programmes are managed by Employment authorities and allow obtaining a qualification corresponding to an occupational profile. They can be found in Level 1 (ISCED 254), Level 2 (ISCED 351) and level 3 (ISCED 453). Formal access requirements apply for entering Level 2 and Level 3.

Level D and E refers to education qualifications (diplomas) that are part of initial VET. Level D programmes are managed by Education authorities and lead to upper secondary, post-secondary and higher VET qualifications. Main programmes last two years (2,000 hours) and include work-based learning in a company and at a VET school:

- Basic VET programmes (ISCED 353) are available in the last year of compulsory education, to learners aged 15 or 16
- Intermediate VET programmes can begin at age 16, after the end of compulsory education. These lead to technician qualifications at ISCED 354.
- Higher VET programmes (ISCED 554) at tertiary level lead to an advanced technician qualification.

Level E programmes are managed by Education authorities and offer specialized training accessing from the intermediate or the tertiary VET level. The total duration of this training is quite variable, but significantly shorter than D-level degrees. Spain is still developing this option of specialized training, and the number of total students remains very low. In addition, in this level it is not mandatory to follow a dual pathway (General or Intensive). As a result, the Spanish scheme fiche focuses mainly on apprenticeships at levels C and level D.

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



The Royal Decree 1529/2012 established a new and optional pathway (as mentioned before, referred in Spain as Dual VET) within the VET system, basically increasing the training time in companies to a minimum of 33% of the total duration.

The 2022 VET Law established the dual nature of all the programmes of interest in this fiche (See Q1). Of the two new pathways introduced, the Intensive VET corresponds to an apprenticeship.

The Law set a transitional period until December 2024 for the adaptation from the

current duration of workplace training to the new foreseen one for each pathway.

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

A decade after the Royal Decree of 2012, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- implementation of Dual VET had been limited in quantity. However, it was increasing year by year, apart from the COVID-19 period. The latest data available date indicates that 4% of vocational training students in the education system are enrolled in this modality.

- implementation of Dual VET has been very different (and uneven) across Spanish regions. Regional regulators have clearly implemented their own programmes (in accordance with the national regulation). For example, in some regions the student was linked to the company through an employment contract, and in others it had only the written agreement between the school and the company. The training duration in the company also varied significantly between regions.

-The introduction of the dual modality meant an injection of innovation in the VET system itself, and has greatly activated intermediate bodies, especially business organisations and chambers of commerce, which already play a leading role in dual vocational training in many regions.

In short, before the 2022 VET Law, the country has experimented a great deal with models, projects, etc. in relation to the Dual VET pathway.