

# Work based learning (dual system of training)

Обучение чрез работа (дуална система на обучение)

 Bulgaria

## Reference year 2023

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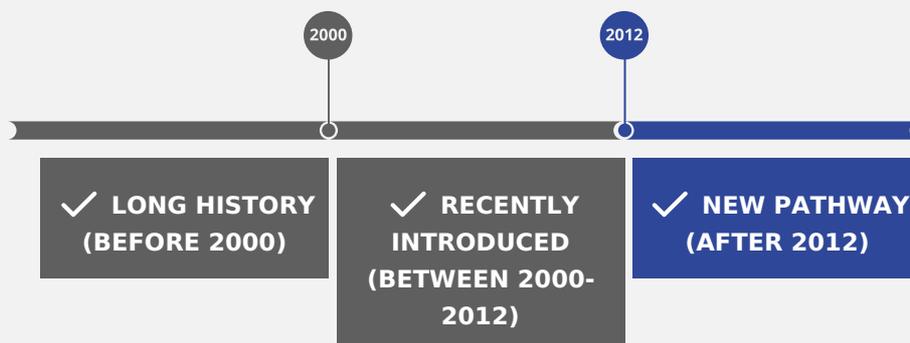
### Content updates and contributors

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## ① SCHEME HISTORY

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### Q1. When was the scheme introduced?



In 2014 for the first time, dual education has been introduced in the legislation (See Q4 of the country fiche).

### 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



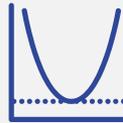
✓ OTHER

## 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



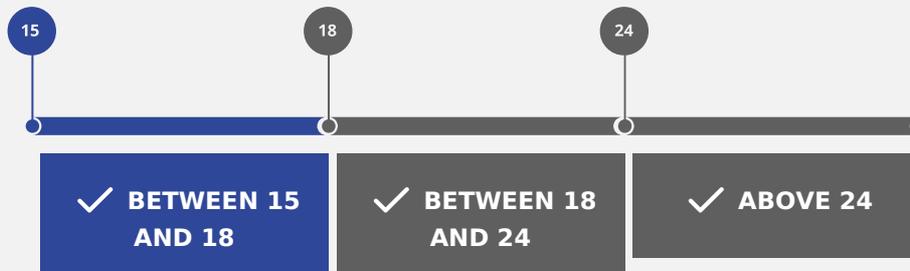
✓ MINIMUM AGE LIMITS DEFINED ONLY



✓ OTHER

The minimum age limit for enrolment is 16. The age limit is defined in the Labour Code and in the VET Act.

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

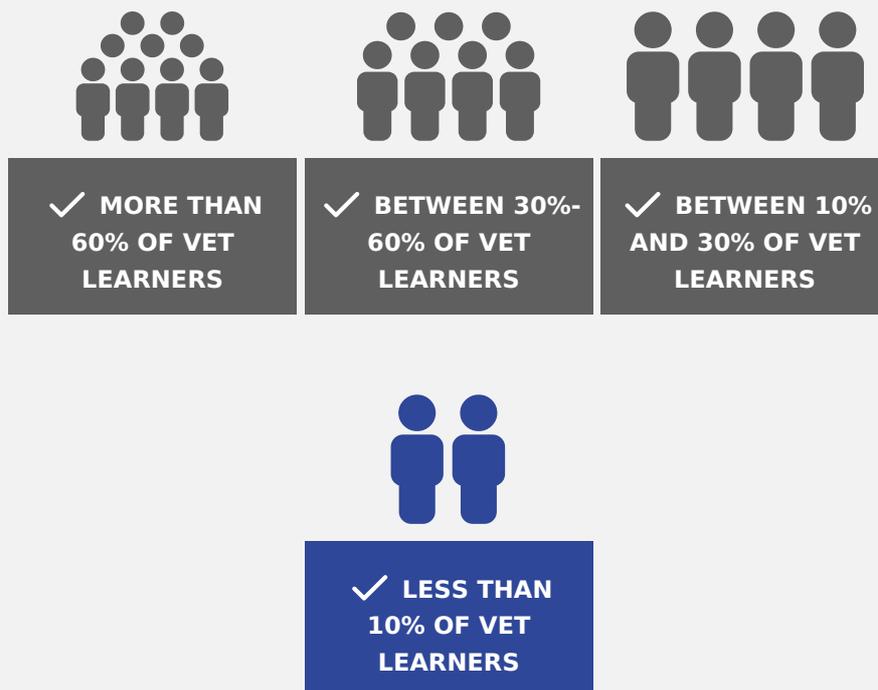


Most of the dual education students are between 16 and 19 years of age (VET Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science). This is due to the fact that dual education is better developed in vocational schools than in training centres.

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

11705 students enrolled in dual education (VET Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science, 2023) (as a comparison, in 2018, 2 873 students were enrolled in the scheme)

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

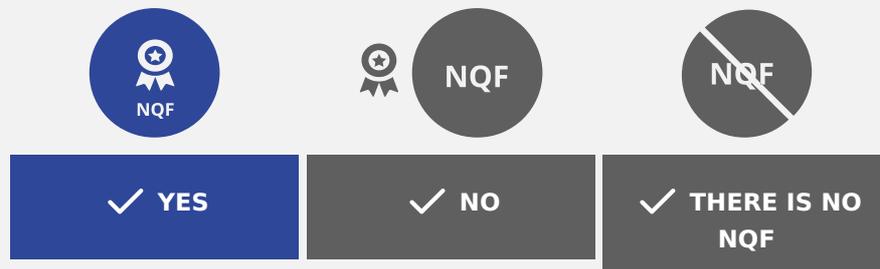


VET Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science (2023)

Although the number of students enrolled in dual VET increased 33 times since the beginning of this type of training in Bulgaria, they are still only 7.79 % of the overall number of VET students in the country.

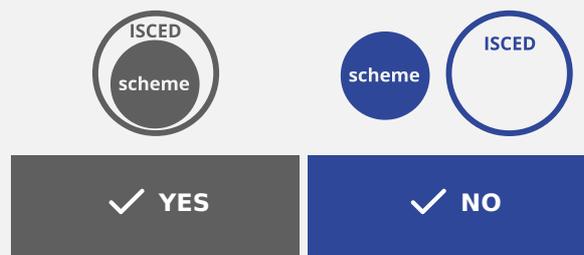
### 3 QUALIFICATIONS

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



EQF 4 for dual education in vocational schools (upper-secondary): NQF 4  
EQF 2-4 for dual training in training centres (post-secondary): NQF 2-4

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



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



The same qualification can be achieved either with dual VET or with school-based VET.

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

		
<input type="checkbox"/> FORMAL VET QUALIFICATION (WHICH DOES NOT INDICATE THE PATHWAY)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FORMAL VET QUALIFICATION (WHICH INDICATES THE PATHWAY)	<input type="checkbox"/> FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP QUALIFICATION (JOURNEYMAN, ETC.)
		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHERS		

It is a formal VET qualification which diploma indicates if it has been achieved through dual VET.

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

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

This is valid to dual education in vocational schools and not for the dual training in training centres (see Q3 in country fiche).

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

The duration of the VET programme is 5 years; however, students spend time at the workplace only in the last 2 years of the programme. In the last two years of the apprenticeship programme when the students actually learn on the job in a company the minimum share of the time spent on the workplace is at least 50 %. This share is set as a minimum in the framework programmes for dual education approved with an Order by the Minister of Education on the basis of the VET Act. Days per week in class: 3 or less in grade 11, 2 or less in grade 12. The exact percentage of time spent at the workplace is defined in the school curricula and can be higher than the minimum.

## 4 GOVERNANCE

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
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The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for organising the dual training in vocational schools.

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ROLE IN DESIGNING QUALIFICATION	<input type="checkbox"/> ROLE IN DESIGNING CURRICULA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER
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✓ NO ROLE

Employers' and employees' organizations representatives participate in national level committees that are responsible for developing, approving and updating the state standards for VET qualifications.

**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

Employers' and employees' organizations representatives participate in the committees for final evaluation of apprentices, which are organised by schools. Sometimes the exams are held in companies where the dual VET training took place.

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

1. The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the overall coordination of the work-based learning (dual system of training) in the country, including the enrolment and certification. The Minister of Education and Science issues the Ordinance on the procedure and requirements for the work-based learning (dual system of training). He approves the State Standards for acquiring professional qualification as well as the List of professions for VET.
2. The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) is a state agency under the Council of Ministers responsible for:
  - a. the elaboration of qualification standards for different professions taught in VET in cooperation with the nationally represented organizations of employers and employees, which then must be approved by Minister of Education and Science;
  - b. the elaboration of the List of professions for VET;
  - c. licencing and monitoring of VET centres and centres for information and vocational orientation.

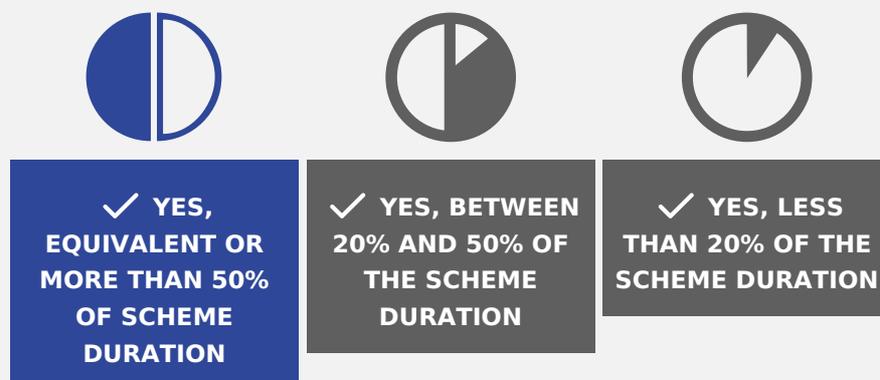
## 5 TRAINING AT THE WORKPLACE

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



It is compulsory as per the Vocational Education and Training Act that students alternate between two learning venues: VET school or training center in the case of adults, and the company.

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





✓ NO, NO  
MINIMUM SHARE IS  
COMPULSORY

Each curriculum for dual training defines at least 50 % for in-company training. In grade 11 student spend 3 days in school and 2 days at the workplace and in grade 12 students spend 2 days in school and 3 days at the workplace.

**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



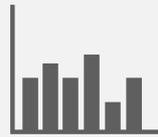
✓ ONE OR MORE  
WEEKS (LESS THAN  
1 MONTH) SPENT  
AT SCHOOL  
FOLLOWED BY ONE  
OR MORE WEEKS  
AT WORKPLACE



✓ 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

Each week includes both venues. In the 11th grade, students spend minimum 2 days a week at the workplace, in the 12th grade students spend minimum 3 days a week at the workplace.

### 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 standards for all VET. Training in the company is based on a curriculum for in-company training developed jointly by the VET school and the partner company.

**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

The employer hosting apprentices is required by legislation to follow a training plan developed jointly between the VET school and the employer.

**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

Besides offering a suitable workplace, each company should have enough mentors/instructors: each company should provide at least 1 instructor for every 5 apprentices.  
Moreover, companies should be registered according to the Trade Act or the Act for NGOs and should not have unpaid liabilities to the state budget.

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

The legislation provides that the mentors at the workplace are employees of the employer who have at least 3 years of professional experience on the job and who have undergone special training for mentors following a training plan approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

The formal roles and duties of the mentors include:

- Participating in the elaboration of the in-company training plan and follows it strictly once approved by the VET school and the company;
- Instructing every apprentice on the safety regulations;
- Helping the apprentice in his/her adaptation to the workplace;
- Taking care of providing the tools and material for the training;
- Giving practical tasks to the apprentice and monitors their execution;
- Participating in the evaluation of the work of the apprentice;
- Keeping regular contacts with teacher-methodologist from the VET school.

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



✓ YES

✓ NO

⑥ **CONTRACT AND COMPENSATION**

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



✓ ONLY STUDENT

✓ ONLY EMPLOYEE

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



✓ OTHER

At the workplace, the student is an employee with a specific status as he/she works under the supervision of an instructor. As such, apprentices are subject to the same rights and obligations as other employees.  
At the school, the student has a normal student status.

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



✓ YES

✓ NO

The Labour Code requires a labour contract for dual training to be signed between the student and the company.

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



✓ APPRENTICESHIP ARE AN ORDINARY EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

✓ APPRENTICESHIP ARE A SPECIFIC TYPE OF CONTRACT

✓ ANOTHER TYPE OF FORMAL AGREEMENT, NOT A CONTRACT

The type of labour contract is specific for the scheme.

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



✓ AT THE SCHOOL



✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT



✓ AT THE CHAMBERS



✓ AT THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



✓ OTHER

The contract should be registered in the National Revenue Agency.

### 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

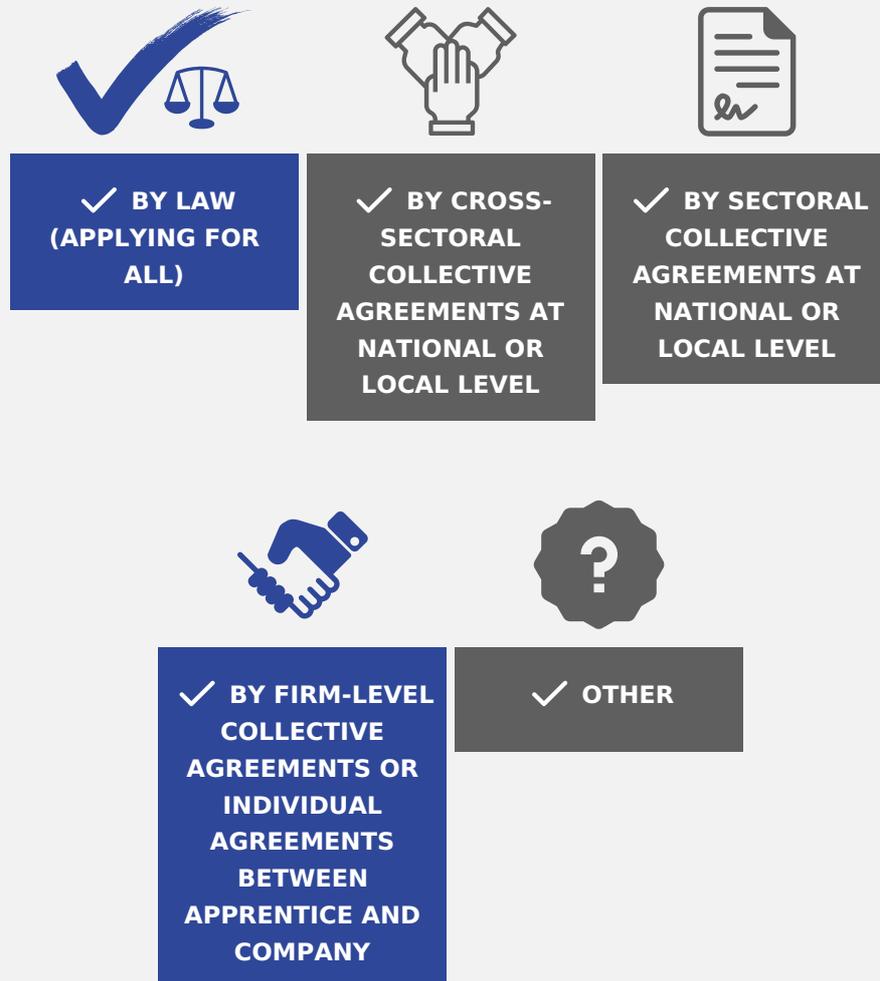


✓ NO FORM OF COMPENSATION IS FORESEEN BY LAW

Apprentices receive a salary. The law defines minimum salaries in the 11th and 12th grade.

In November 2018, a progression mechanism was introduced. Before then, the rate was at least 90% of the national minimum wage. With the changes in the Labour Code of November 2018, in 11th grade apprentices receive a wage which is at least 2 times the maximum student grant defined by the Council of Ministers, and in the 12th grade 3 times the maximum student grant.

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



The law defines the minimum wage, however, in practice many firm collective agreements apply and also individual agreements between apprentice and company, which can only increase the minimum wage.

## ⑦ FINANCING AND INCENTIVES

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



✓ EMPLOYERS



✓ STATE



✓ OTHER

**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

Employers provide the working places for the apprentices, instructors (mentors), materials and pay the salaries.

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



✓ YES, SUBSIDIES



✓ YES, TAX DEDUCTIONS



✓ YES, OTHER INCENTIVES



✓ NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

As of 2018, the apprentices' health insurance is covered by the state budget instead of the employers, as it used to be before. This is a specific policy initiative and has been made possible with an amendment in the Health Insurance Act in 2018, and it is considered as an incentive for the employers participating in the scheme.

As of 2021 part of the salaries of the mentors in the companies are covered from the budget of the EU funded project "Support of the dual system of training".

**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

**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

Students who chose the work-based learning scheme receive a small grant in the first years of VET training (8-10 grade) when they still do not visit company and do not receive salaries. This grant is incentive to choose the work-based learning scheme and aims at enlarging the scheme.

Moreover, students can receive also a special grant for high achievements during the training during the whole 5 years of a VET programme (8-12 grade), i.e. including grades 11-12 when workplace learning takes place.