



CEDEFOP

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Financing adult learning

The role of public funding

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Parallel working group: Training leave and income replacement

The availability of training leave is a fundamental support for participation in adult learning. The [Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts](#) ‘supports the implementation of paid training leave’ as a key component of the ‘enabling framework’¹). ‘Member States are recommended to introduce paid training leave or income replacement provisions or review the adequacy of exiting provisions’.

Challenges involved in aligning education with work schedules constitute a significant impediment to participation in individually initiated adult learning. For more extended learning activities, the pressure of learning tasks alongside full commitments at work and other adult responsibilities can easily become overwhelming. Providing time off from gainful work is therefore a key strategy for promoting participation in adult learning, formal and non-formal alike.

Training leave may be short, covering only a few days, or may result in an extended relief from work duties, spanning several months or even years. For shorter training leaves, employers may either continue wage payment (paid leave) or interrupt it (unpaid leave). In the case of paid leave, employers may receive a contribution to the incurred wage costs from various sources. For longer leaves, employers typically discontinue wage payments; however, individuals may receive wage-replacement payments or contributions to subsistence costs from public sources.

Irrespective of the type of training leave – short or extended, paid or unpaid – it is crucial that employees retain their (accrued) employment rights beyond wages and the right to return to their job. In some countries, requesting training leave is an individual employment right that the employer cannot deny, while in other countries, agreeing to a leave depends on the employer’s discretion.

The workshop will explore the variety of, and often long-standing, traditions of short and extended, paid and unpaid training leave arrangements across the EU-27. Emphasis will be given to recent changes in the policy area across the Member States, including cases of incremental change and wholesale reform. This EU overview will be complemented with Danish example of implementing paid training leave where employers receive a

¹ ‘Enabling framework’ refers to complementary policies (including paid training leave, career guidance and validation opportunities) that ‘promote effective take-up of individual training entitlement’.

partial reimbursement of the incurred wage costs. Alternatively, in case wage payment is disrupted, the employee can claim a wage replacement payment. Moreover, the leave is linked to the Danish approach of public funding for CVET (the so-call AMU system (Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser)).

Workshop participants will be invited to share their insights into the respective arrangements in their country. They will look into the challenges involved, which may limit uptake, cause equity issues, or make scheme costs unsustainable under existing public funding arrangements. The workshop will also explore what is required to make training leave an effective, widely used arrangement.

The participants will discuss the following questions:

- What are the main limitations of existing training leave arrangements in your country (e.g. coverage, duration, income replacement, need of employer agreement etc.)?
- What factors may inhibit the actual take-up of training leave even when the arrangements are relatively generous and how these barriers could be overcome?
- If in place, how do the schemes providing subsidies or wage replacement work for unemployed or inactive people? What challenges are involved in aligning the strands of support for different target groups?
- What are the forms of financial support for longer training programmes (where the wage payment by employer is usually discontinued)?