

Apprenticeship contract

Contrat d'apprentissage



Reference Year 2016

1 TARGET GROUP

Q7. What is the target group of this scheme?

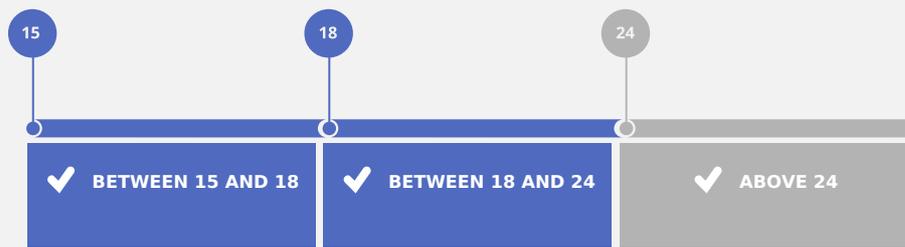


The objective of the 'contrat d'apprentissage' is to enable young people aged **16 to 25 years old** to follow a general education curriculum, both theoretical and practical, in order to acquire a professional qualification based on a diploma or a professional credential. This contract alternates periods of learning in training centres (centres de formation par apprentissage - CFA) and periods of work to develop 'know-how'.

Under specific derogations, the contrat d'apprentissage is also open to the following target groups:

- younger people (aged 15 years old) who have completed lower secondary education. These are called 'dispositif d'initiation aux métiers en alternance' (DIMA);
- young adults above 26 years old;
- disabled learners;
- self-/prospective entrepreneurs.

Q8. What is the age of learners?



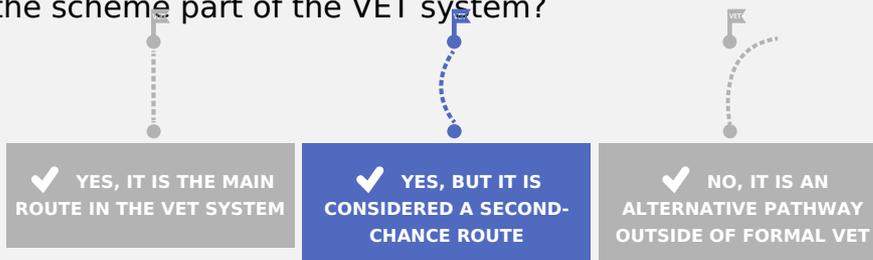
2 OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

Q9. Is the scheme included in the ISCED 2011 mapping?



The scheme is not explicitly referred to in the ISCED 2011 mapping but reference is made transversally across several qualifications (e.g. VET secondary education pathways leading to CAP (Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle) qualifications, short higher programmes leading to BTS (Brevet de technicien supérieur) qualifications, etc.).

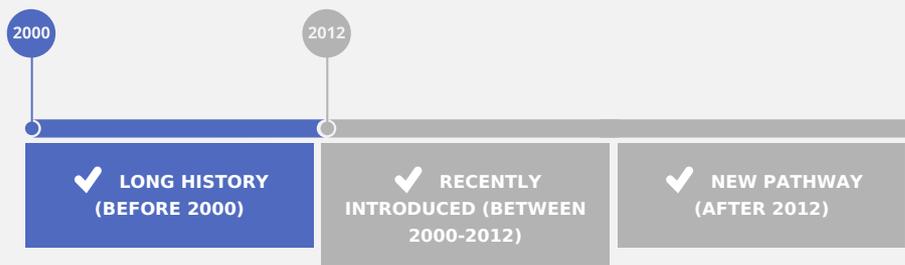
Q10. Is the scheme part of the VET system?



Offered alongside school-based education, the apprenticeship scheme is not strictly speaking the main route across the whole VET system. IVET qualifications are in practice accessible via studies in a vocational lycée, or as apprentices in an Apprentice Training Centre (CFA).

The 'contrat d'apprentissage' is accessible from a range of VET programmes such as those leading to the 'Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle' (CAP - Professional skills Certificate); Professional baccalaureate (Bac Pro), professional or technical brevets (Brevet Professionnel (BP) or Brevet Technique des Métiers (BTM), etc).

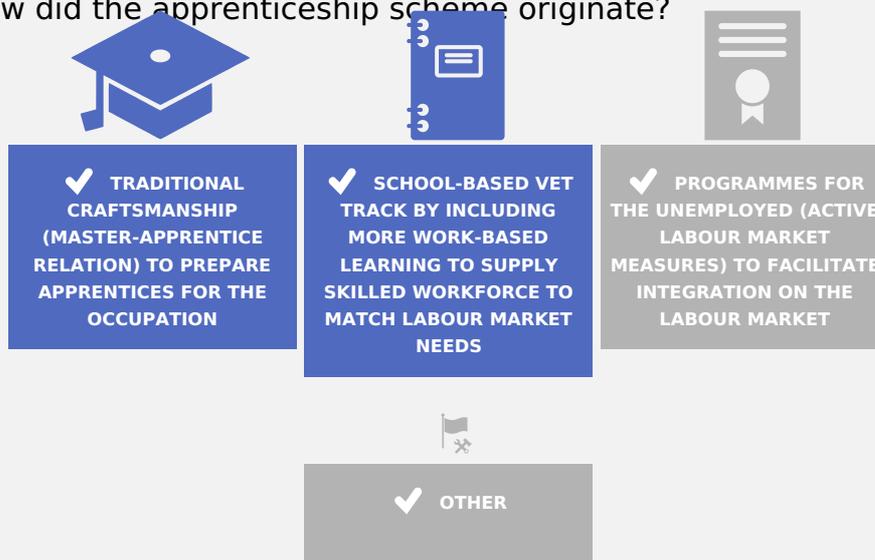
Q11. When was the scheme introduced?



As noted above, the 'contrat d'apprentissage' has a long history as it was introduced in 1919.

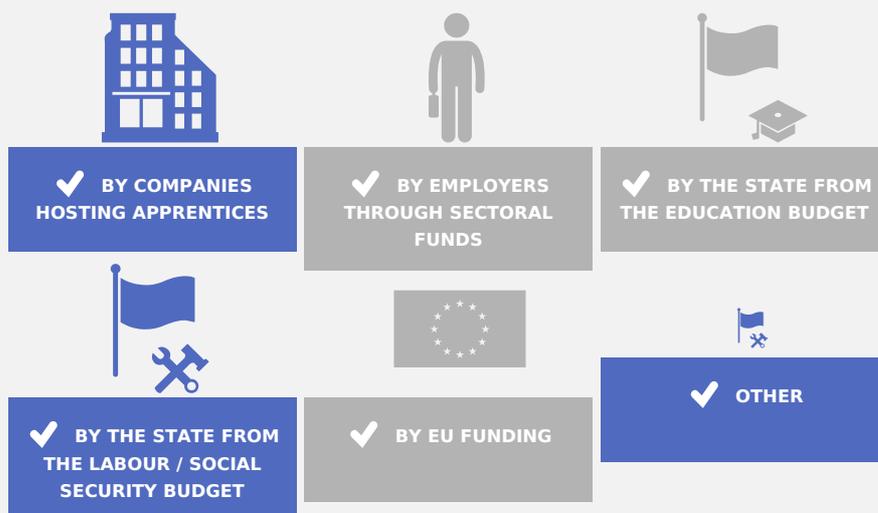
Originally developed in line with traditional craftsmanship (master-apprentice relation) to prepare apprentices for the occupation, the scheme has progressively expanded over the years to be now present in most fields and occupational sectors (ranging from agriculture to industry and services). Initially centred on the VET sector, the 'contrat d'apprentissage' can be now accessed from a range of higher education programmes, too (ranging from short professional-oriented cycles to longer academic-oriented ones such as Master programmes in engineering or business fields for instance).

Q12. How did the apprenticeship scheme originate?



See above.

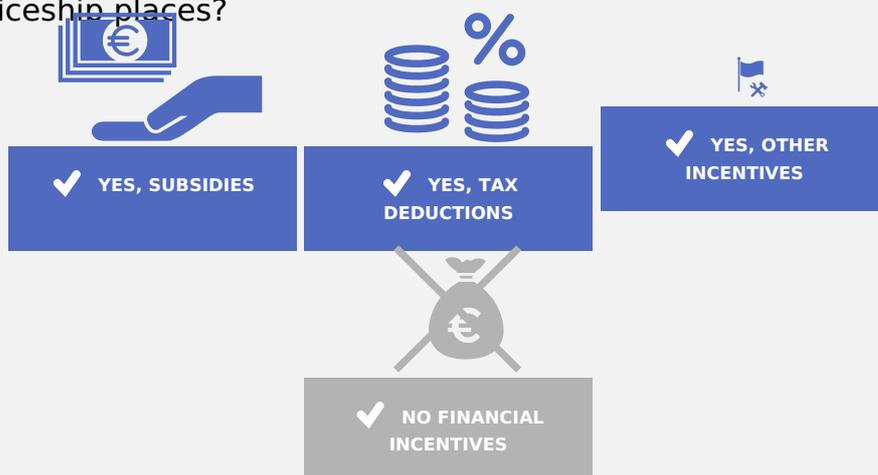
Q13. What are the major sources of financing of the in-company training part of the apprenticeship scheme?



Funding for apprenticeship comes mainly from:

- companies, which, in addition to the salary, pay the apprentice, participate directly by paying the lifelong learning tax;
- the Regions, which provide funding for the CFAs, on top of the lifelong learning tax they collect, by paying a balancing subsidy;
- the State (e.g. partial or full coverage of apprentices' social security fees).

Q14. Are there any financial incentives for companies that offer apprenticeship places?



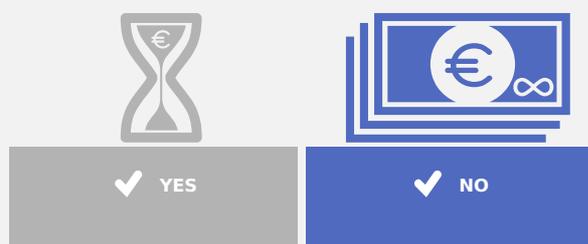
There are various regional or government subsidies to encourage apprenticeship contracts. The main ones are:

- a one-off lump sum payment made by the region, under certain conditions, to employers who take on an apprentice;
- the Bonus alternance (in the form of 1,000 EUR/year or more allocated to SMEs of less than 11 employees until the apprentice graduates or 1,000 EUR to all enterprises of less

than 250 employees that sign an apprenticeship contract) offered since 2005 to companies that employ apprentices.

In addition to these subsidies, apprenticeship contracts are fully or partially exempt from social security charges, the costs of training apprentice supervisors are included in the legal training costs, and specific subsidies are granted for the recruitment of apprentices with disabilities. There is also a special financial support (aide TPE jeunes apprentis) addressed to small enterprises that enrol young apprentices under the age of 18.

Q15. Is the scheme temporary, meaning that it is financed for a limited period of time?



Q16. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme?

385,000

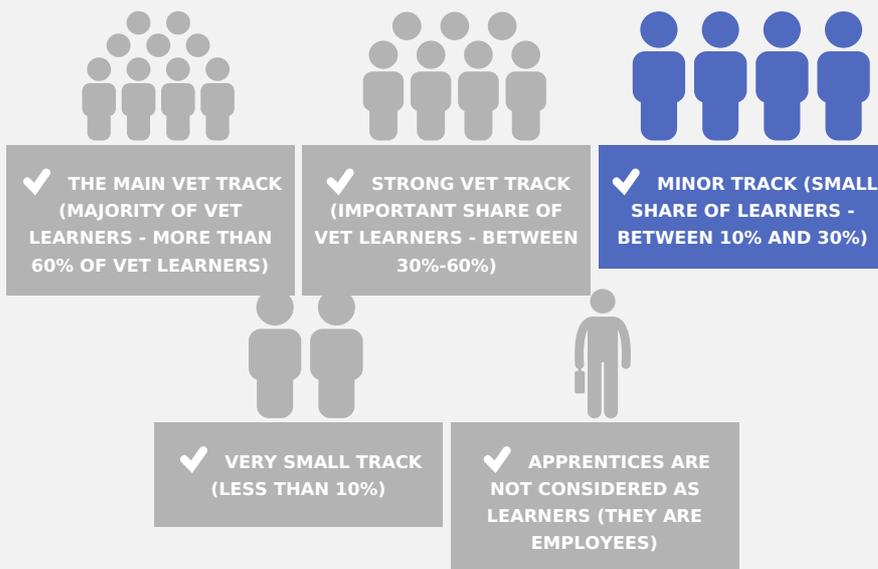
According to latest data available[1], there were 385,000 learners enrolled in this scheme. It can be noted that there are major regional differences in the numbers of apprentices in France. Data from 2011 revealed that there were more than 20,000 apprentices in regions attached to the following cities (regional division of the French national education): Créteil, Lille, Lyon, Paris, Versailles and less than 10,000 apprentices in Auvergne (Clermont Ferrand), Corsica, Champagne-Ardenne (Reims), Limousin (Limoges)[2].

[1] Cedefop, REFERNET country report France, 2014.

[2] European Parliament, Dual education: a bridge over troubled waters?, 2014.

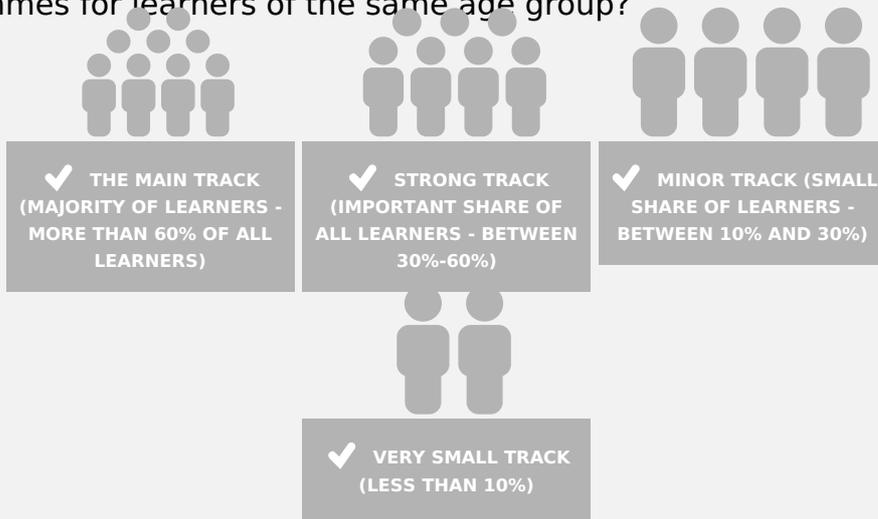
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Q17. How many learners are enrolled in this scheme in relation to all VET students?



No clear data was found on the share of this scheme in relation to all VET students. However, it can be fairly estimated that this represents a minor track (between 10% and 30%). Data set out in the 2013 ReferNet country report for France e.g. shows that in 2011, the two main apprenticeship schemes represented around 23% of pupils and students.

Q18. How many learners are enrolled in the scheme in relation to all programmes for learners of the same age group?

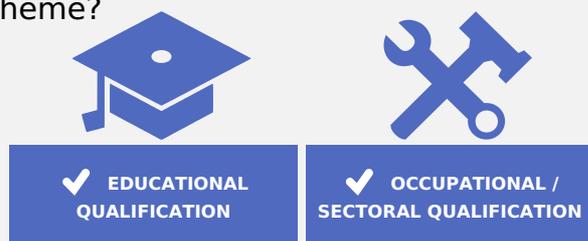


No data could be found on this.

Q19. Does the apprenticeship scheme result in a qualification?



Q20. Which is the type of qualification obtained through the apprenticeship scheme?



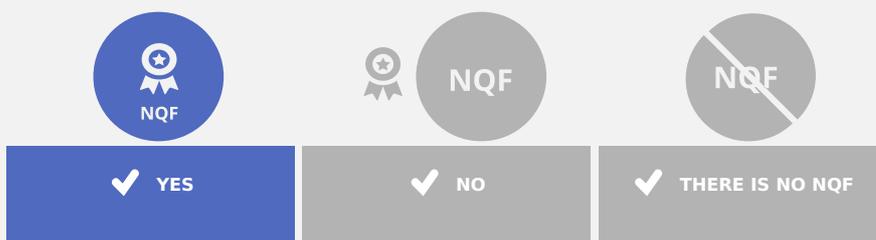
The 'contrat d'apprentissage' leads to qualifications formally recognised by the States (in the [Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles \(RNCP\)](#)).

Among the qualifications that are accessible via the scheme three main categories can be outlined:

- **VET secondary qualifications (CAP, CAPA, BEP, Bac Pro, BP, BTM)**
- **Higher education qualifications (Brevet de Maîtrise (BM), Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS), Diplôme (DUT, Bachelor's and Master's degrees)**
- **Professional certifications (*titre professionnel inscrit au RNCP*) recognised by the State in given occupational sectors such as hotel and catering, tourism, building, trade, etc.**

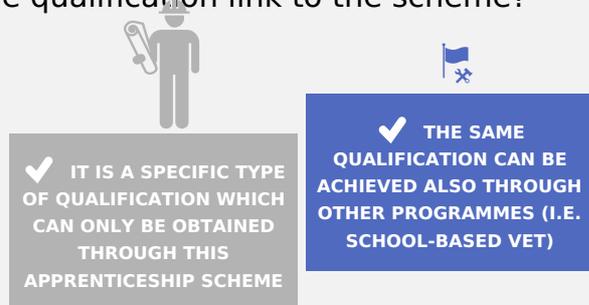
Overall, the qualifications obtained through this scheme are very diverse in scope as well as in regard to the profile of the learners they attract. Further information available at: <http://www.alternance.fr/alternance/diplomes-apprenti-707.php>.

Q21. Is the qualification included in the National Qualification Framework (NQF)?



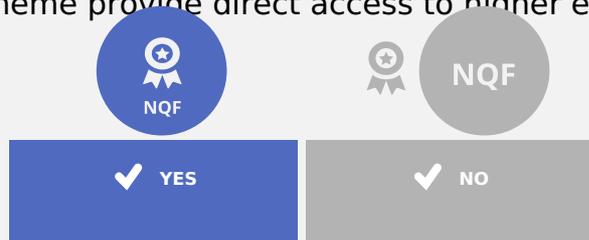
The qualifications obtained through the scheme are included in the NQF. They range from level V (CAP, BEP) to level I (Master and Engineering degrees ('titres d'ingénieurs')).

Q22. How does the qualification link to the scheme?



See above.

Q23. Does the scheme provide direct access to higher education?



Considering the formally recognised qualifications that can be obtained via the scheme, apprentices may (based on the qualification obtained) access higher education. According to research^[1], a small share of apprentices progress to higher education in France. Besides, apprenticeships are also offered at higher education levels. The latter is a relatively recent phenomenon and it shows that the potential of apprenticeships to develop higher level skills is being recognised.

[1] European Parliament, Dual education: a bridge over troubled waters?, 2014.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/529072/IPOL_STU\(2014\)529072_FR.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/529072/IPOL_STU(2014)529072_FR.pdf)

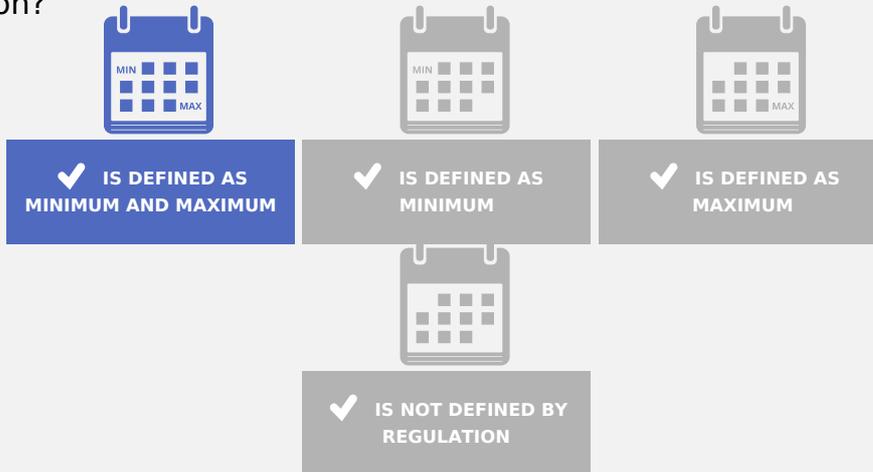
4

DURATION

Q24. What is the duration of the VET pathway? (please refer to the typical duration)

Typically addressed to young people aged between 15 and 18 years old.

Q25. How is the length of stay in apprenticeships defined in the regulation?



The length of the 'contrat d'apprentissage' generally varies from **one to three years** depending on the qualification aimed at.

In given circumstances this may vary from six months to one year. This applies in cases when the scheme is used for enabling the apprentices to obtain a qualification (or a certification):

- at the same or lower level than another qualification previously obtained by the latter in the same remit;
- whose part has been already validated through recognition of non-formal and informal learning processes (*validation des acquis de l'expérience (VAE)*);
- whose has been started in another remit than 'contrat d'apprentissage'.

The duration of the contract can be extended to up to four years for disabled apprentices.

Q26. Is there a distinction between the training and working period for the time spent at workplace, as per regulation?



The legal framework stipulates that the time spent at workplace should account for at

least **400 hours/year**. This is to be considered as a basis as for apprenticeships at upper level, this is much higher. For apprenticeships leading to Bac Pro or BTS qualifications for instance, the minimum number of hours/year increases to **750**.

Then, a further distinction (between the training and working period at workplace) is agreed between the Region and individual CFAs. This is the subject of a formal agreement ('convention') between both parties in accordance with the labour code (article R. 6233-54 of the labour code).

Further details about the alternation and time spent more specifically at the CFA and in the enterprise are determined by the individual CFA.

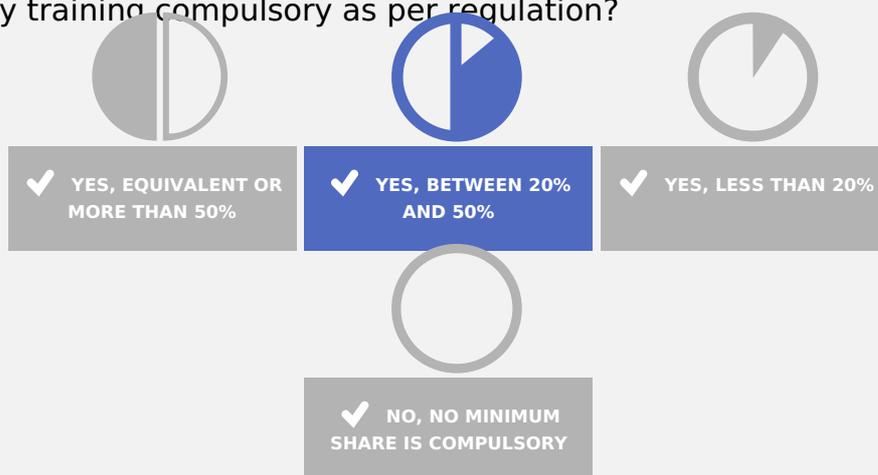
5 ALTERNATION OF WORK-BASED (IN-COMPANY) TRAINING AND SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING

Q27. Is in-company training a compulsory part of the scheme, as per regulation?



YES NO

Q28. Is there a minimum share of time of the apprenticeship spent in in-company training compulsory as per regulation?



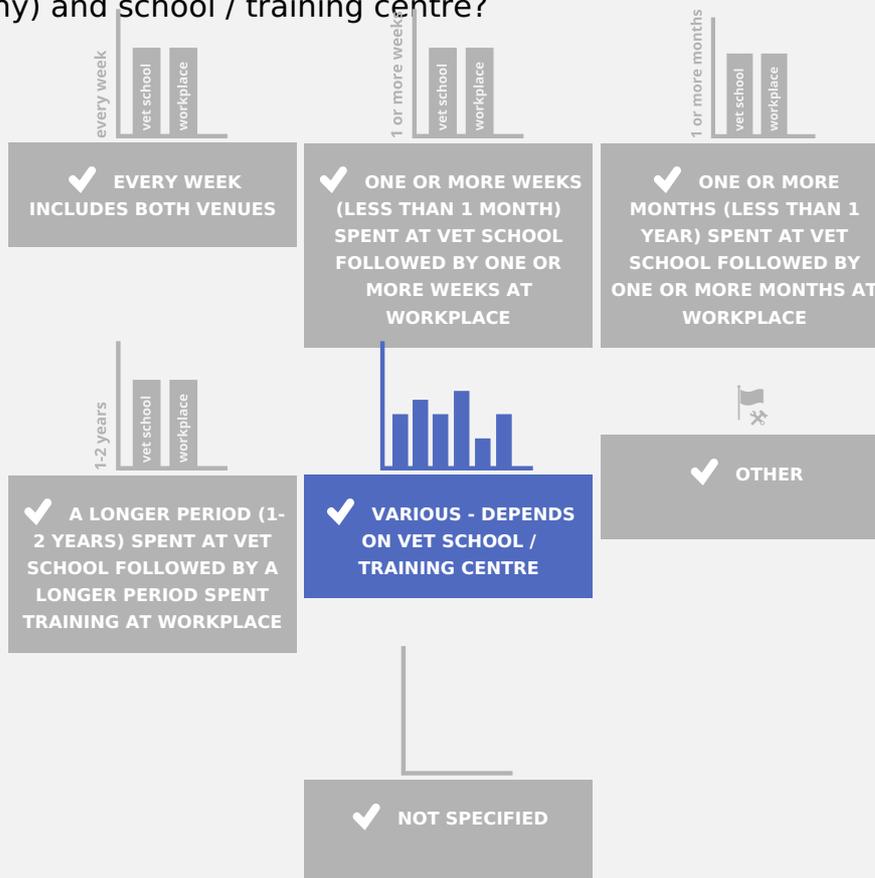
YES, EQUIVALENT OR MORE THAN 50% YES, BETWEEN 20% AND 50% YES, LESS THAN 20% NO, NO MINIMUM SHARE IS COMPULSORY

In France, it is the qualification aimed at that defines the share of learning that is spent in an employer; the share of time spent in company can last from about 20 % to 25 % of the total study time for the certificate of professional skills (CAP) and 22 % for the vocational baccalaureate^[1].

[1] European Parliament, Dual education: a bridge over troubled waters?, 2014.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/529072/IPOL_STU\(2014\)529072_FR.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2014/529072/IPOL_STU(2014)529072_FR.pdf)

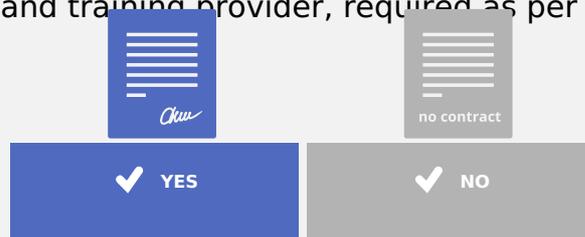
Q29. What is the form of alternation of training between workplace (company) and school / training centre?



As noted above, this is defined by the CFA and the hosting enterprise. This hence varies in practice (from one week in both venues to two weeks or may even go up to every three months in both venues).

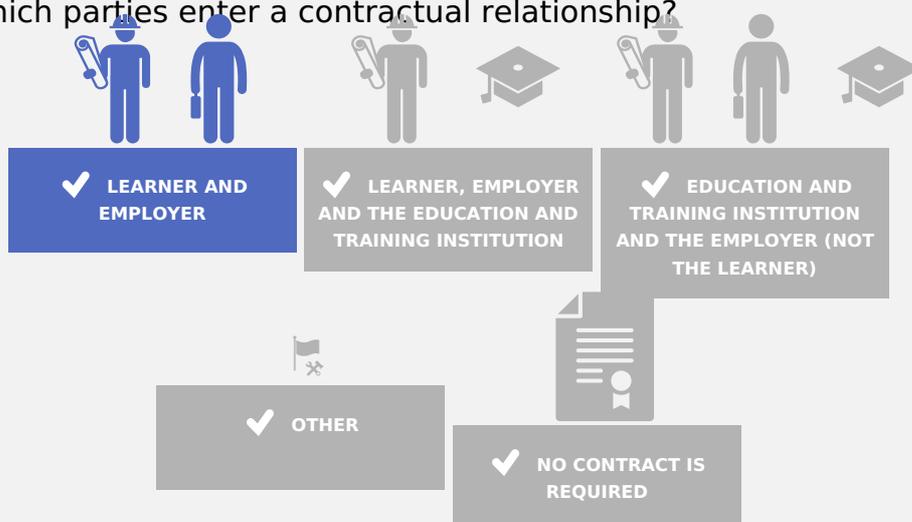
6 FORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMPLOYER

Q30. Is any contractual arrangement between the learner, company and/or education and training provider, required as per regulation?



The contractual arrangement is one of the core principles of the scheme. As noted above, the apprenticeships are the subject of individual labour contracts signed between an apprentice (or legal representative) and an employer. Through this, employers commit themselves to remunerate the apprentices and deliver effective training and tutoring to them during the duration of the contract. Apprenticeships can be held fully or partly (i.e. jointly shared with training centres for apprentices (*centres de formation d'apprentis*, CFAs) at the employers. Through this contract, apprentices commit themselves to effectively work for the signatory employer within the full duration of the contract.

Q31. Which parties enter a contractual relationship?

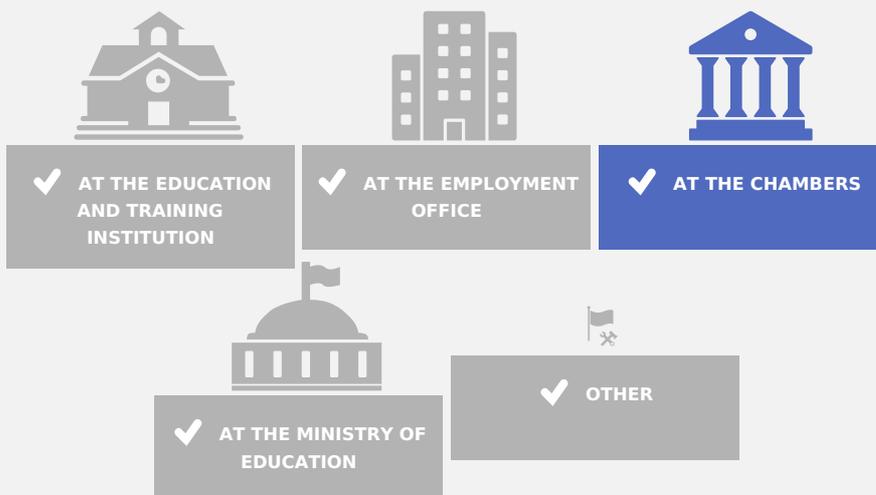


The 'contrat d'apprentissage' is the subject of individual labour contracts signed between an apprentice (or his/her legal representative) and an employer.

Q32. What is the nature of the contract?

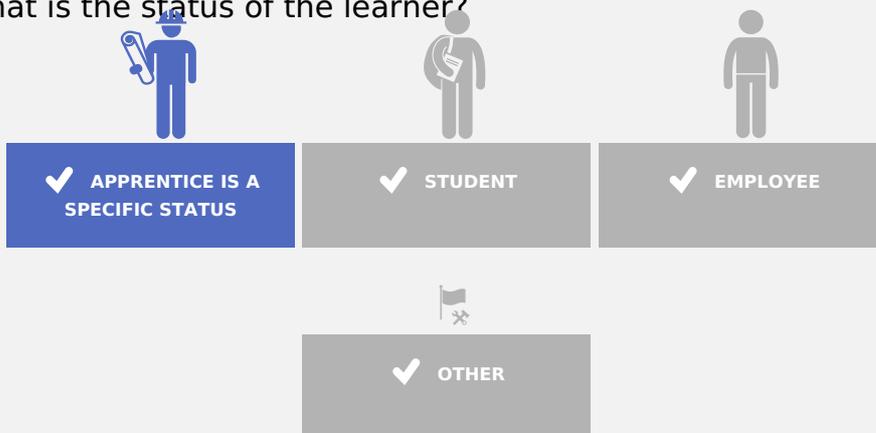


Q33. Where is the contract registered?



The contract is to be registered at the chambers (i.e. Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Crafts of Chamber of Agriculture).

Q34. What is the status of the learner?

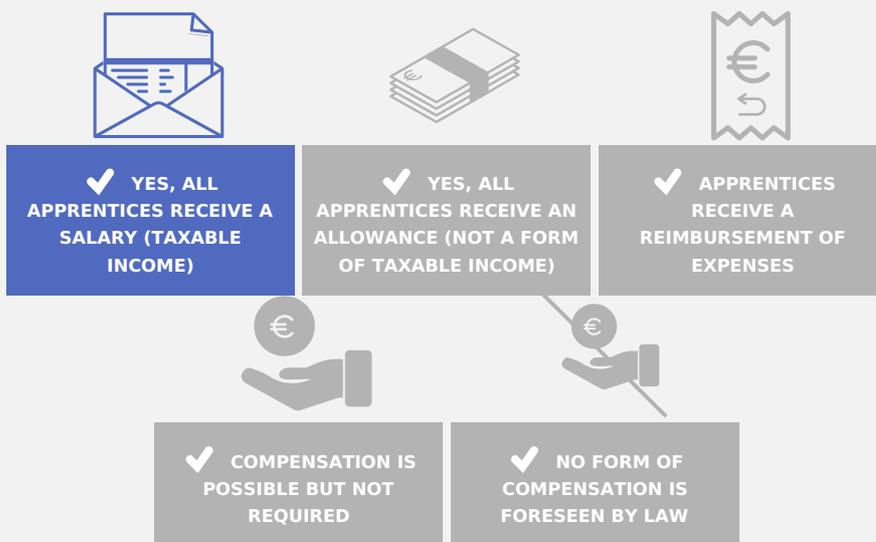


During an apprenticeship contract, the learner has the status of an apprentice, i.e. is both an employee of a company and a student at the CFA.

7

REMUNERATION

Q35. Do apprentices receive a salary, allowance or compensation?



The salary paid to apprentices is determined by their age and the level of progression into the apprenticeship (i.e. yearly augmentation until the end of the contract). It is calculated based on a pre-determined percentage of the minimum salary (*salaire minimum conventionnel de l'emploi occupé* (SMIC[1])) as follows:

- Apprentices aged between 16 and 17 years old: 25% of SMIC in year 1, 37% in year 2, 53% in year 3.
- Apprentices aged between 18 and 20 years old: 41% of SMIC in year 1; 49 % in year 2, 65% in year 3.

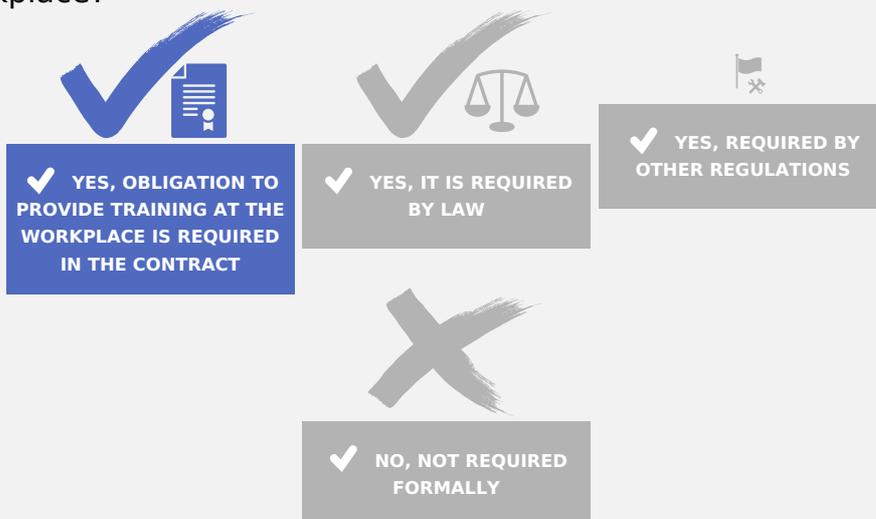
Apprentices over 21 years old: 53 % of SMIC in year 1, 61 % in year 2, 78 % in year 3.

[1] In 2016, monthly gross SMIC corresponds to € 1 466,62 (equivalent to circa € 1 144 net). Further details available at: <http://droit-finances.commentcamarche.net/faq/3567-smic-2016-taux-horaire-et-smic-mensuel-brut-et-net>

Q36. Who pays the salary / allowance of the apprentice?



Q37. Is the company hosting apprentices required to provide training at the workplace?



In substance, the legislation sets that any enterprise (private or public) can hire an apprentice if the employer commits him/herself to effectively organise and support the apprenticeship. For this purpose, the employer must notably ensure that the following conditions (appropriate infrastructure, equipment and techniques used, working conditions, sanitation and security, etc.) are met to allow the apprenticeship to be carried out in a satisfactory manner.

Extract from législation (Article L6221-1 of the Labour code^[1]) '*L'employeur s'engage, outre le versement d'un salaire, à assurer à l'apprenti une formation professionnelle complète, dispensée pour partie en entreprise et pour partie en centre de formation d'apprentis ou section d'apprentissage*'.

[1] <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000006903996&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050>

Q38. What are the requirements on training companies, as per regulation?





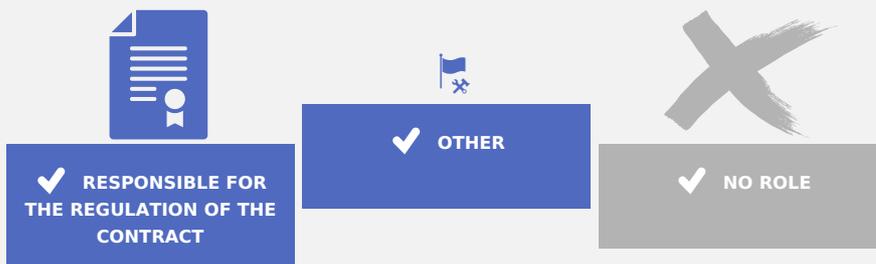
Q39. Are there any sanctions on companies that do not provide training to apprentices at the workplace?



Sanctions exist in case employers do not fulfil their commitment. For instance, in the event the employer or the working conditions/environment offered are considered to endanger the apprentice (e.g. representing a risk for his or her health, physical or moral integrity) a monitoring visit can be carried out by a work Inspector. If this results in a negative evaluation, sanction can take the form of a suspension or termination of the apprenticeship contract. If this leads to a termination of the contract, the CFA has the responsibility to look for another employer where the apprentice can effectively pursue the apprenticeship.

Q40. What is the role of chambers, employers' and employees' representatives (social partners), sectoral councils (if existent), in apprenticeships, as per regulation?





The scheme has been widely promoted by "Apprenticeship Developers" in the Chambers of Commerce, achieving contact with some 140,000 enterprises between 2009 and 2012. In France, the social partners are strongly involved in VET policy-making, and this role is clearly enshrined in the Labour Code.

In the enterprises linked to chambers (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Crafts or Chamber of Agriculture), a mediator can be designated to resolve conflicts between employers and apprentices (or their family) about the implementation or termination of the apprenticeship contract.