

# WORK-BASED LEARNING IN ALBANIA – AN ASSESSMENT PER EU QUALITY STANDARDS

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# PREFACE

The study 'Work-based learning in Albania – an assessment per EU quality standards' has been produced by the European Training Foundation (ETF). The study was carried out between March and September 2024 by Ilir Aliko, who also drafted this report. The report was quality checked by QA Expert Patrick Werquin and Project Director Michal Kowal (GREATVISORY).

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The employment rate and labour force participation statistics for Albania show a consistent upward trend. However, they remain below the EU27 average, primarily due to significantly lower female and youth participation rates. While there has been a notable decline in the rate of young people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEET), from 32.8% in 2015 to 27.9% in 2020, the NEET rate remains persistently high, standing at 24.6% in 2023. NEET statistics reflect gender disparities, with a higher prevalence of NEETs among women. Secondary school graduates are the group with the highest number of NEETs (39.2%), followed by those with a primary education (33.7%) and a tertiary education (27.3%) (ETF, 2024). This situation highlights the need for a specific approach to policy measures, which address the unique expectations and employability levels of each NEET subgroup.

The youth employment policy is therefore a high priority in Albania. The European Commission is supporting Albania's efforts through the Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continuing education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

Apprenticeships and traineeships are two forms of work-based learning (WBL)<sup>1</sup>. Apprenticeships are designed to develop occupational skills and lead to recognised qualifications. They combine school-based learning with workplace learning, with the latter typically accounting for a significant proportion of the duration of the programme. Apprenticeships usually have a longer duration, for example two-four years. Traineeships are periods of workplace training that complement formal or non-formal education and training programmes. Traineeships may be a compulsory and integrated, or an optional and supplementary, component of a vocational training programme. They may last from a few days or weeks to several months but are generally shorter than apprenticeships. Both traineeships and apprenticeships may be offered as active labour market programmes, if they are organised and funded by public employment services.

Because of their particular importance for youth employment, the European Commission has developed quality standards for both schemes. The European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (Council of the European Union, 2018) was developed in 2018 on the initiative of the European social partners, and includes 14 criteria divided into two categories: learning and working conditions; and framework conditions. The 2014 Quality Framework for Traineeships (Council of the European Union, 2014) contains a set of quality criteria relating to traineeships as part of active labour market policy (ALMP). However, the framework can also be used to guide the development and review of traineeships in other contexts, e.g. continuing vocational education and training.

This study provides a brief and clearly structured analysis of the main vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Albania against the criteria of the two EU frameworks. The three main chapters take a look at WBL in initial vocational education and training (IVET), WBL in continuing vocational education and training (CVET), and WBL in active labour market policies (ALMPs). The most important strengths and challenges are summarised at the end of the chapters.

Through these main chapters, the report addresses the key elements of WBL, specifically: types of programmes with a WBL component, contractual agreements, definitions of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, provision of pedagogical support to participants, social protection measures for learners, health and safety regulations in work-based settings, funding sources and cost-sharing arrangements for WBL initiatives, quality assurance and learner tracking.

In addition, the report includes a brief clarification of the most important concepts used, an outline of the methodology applied, an overview of the country employment profile, as well as a short description of the strategic, legal and governance framework of VET. Moreover, details of interviewees, a list of

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on work-based learning see: Work-based learning: an introduction to key concepts. Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning (Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank Group) <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/work-based-learning-introduction-key-concepts>

acronyms and references, and the quality criteria from the two EU frameworks are included at the end of the report.

Considering the structure and content outlined above, the report was conceived to inform policymakers, educators, employers and relevant stakeholders about the current state of WBL in Albania and to contribute to the debate on WBL in the national and international sphere.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Work-based learning (WBL) refers to all forms of learning that take place in a real work environment. It provides individuals with the skills needed to successfully obtain and keep jobs and to progress in their professional development (IAG-TVET, 2024). In Albania it also refers to the learning processes and results that occur when someone performs a job in a real work environment (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020).

The dominant form of WBL in IVET, CVET and in one of the active labour market policies (ALMP) programmes in Albania is the so-called ‘company-based vocational practice’ (*praktika profesionale ne biznes* in Albanian), organised by public VET providers. When company-based vocational practice is organised for learners by public VET schools in upper-secondary and post-secondary education and training (IVET and CVET) the term internship will be used for the work-based learning component (this is not to be confused with the name of one of the ALMP programmes mentioned below: ‘Internship programme’).

When company-based vocational practice is organised by public training centres for adults, as the work-based learning component of the specific ALMP programme known as ‘Vocational training programmes for unqualified and/or unemployed jobseekers’ ([see section 8.1](#)), it is referred to as a **traineeship**. ‘Company-based vocational practice’ makes it possible to learn through working in a real work environment and contributes to achieving the learning outcomes of the corresponding vocational qualification.

**Dual programme**, literally ‘dual form’ (*forma e dyfishte* in Albanian), is the term used in Albania for apprenticeship programmes. In this type of VET provision, learning takes place at two different venues. It combines learning at a VET provider and work and practical training at a company, which is the main environment where the qualification is obtained, based on an agreement between the employer, the employee (learner) and the VET provider (Law 15, 2017). In fact, the dual programme in Albania has still not been implemented, as the necessary by-laws to put it into operation are being prepared.

**Internship programme**, literally ‘vocational practice programme’ (*programi i praktikave profesionale* in Albanian), is another form of WBL implemented in the framework of ALMP, organised by the national employment services in cooperation with employers to help unemployed jobseekers recently graduated to commence employment quickly after finishing their studies. It consists of a six-month period of paid (by the State) work for beneficiaries, not complemented with any form of classroom learning (Council of Ministers, 2020b).

**On-the-job training programme** (*programi i formimit nepermjet punes* in Albanian) is a form of WBL that takes place at work and is implemented in the framework of ALMP. It is organised by the national employment services in cooperation with employers to help unemployed jobseekers without qualifications and consists of a four-month period of paid (by the State) on-the-job-training for beneficiaries, not complemented with any form of classroom learning (Council of Ministers, 2020b).

**VET provider** refers to any VET institution, be it a public VET school where IVET and CVET programmes are provided, or a public training centre, where one of the ALMP programmes, i.e. ‘Vocational training programmes for unqualified and/or unemployed jobseekers’, is provided.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

To prepare this assessment, desk research was combined with field interviews and additional phone interviews with decision-makers and experts of the National Agency of VET and Qualifications (NAVETQ), the National Employment and Skills Agency (NESA) and Swisscontact Albania.

The desk research served mostly for the preparation of the country overview and framework for WBL in Albania chapters, and partly also for the chapters on WBL in IVET, CVET and ALMP.

The field interviews served mainly to collect data for the chapters on WBL in IVET, CVET and ALMP and partly to confirm statements in the framework for WBL in Albania chapter.

The questions asked during the interviews were based on the Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (2018/C 153/01) and the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (2014/C 88/01). The European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships was used to analyse the IVET and CVET programmes. The ALMPs were analysed using the quality framework for traineeships.

## 4. COUNTRY OVERVIEW

According to the 2023 census published by the Albanian Institute of Statistics, the resident population of Albania in 2023 was 2 402 113 (INSTAT, 2024a).

In the 4th quarter of 2023, the official employment rate in Albania for the population aged 15-64 was 66.7% (males 72.5%, females 61.1%), while for the population aged 15-29 it was 43.1% (males 46.3%, females 40.0%). The unemployment rate for the population aged 15-64 was 11.2% (males 11.4%, females 11.0%), while for the population aged 15-29 it was 22.0% (males 24.3%, females 19.3%). The labour force participation rate for the population aged 15-64 was 75.1% (males 81.8%, females 68.6%), while for the population aged 15-29 it was 55.3% (males 61.2%, females 49.6%) (INSTAT, 2024d).

In 2023, the percentage of NEETs aged 15-29 was 24.6% (males 23.5%, females 25.6%) (INSTAT, 2024c). The educational attainment of the total population aged 15 and over who completed at least their upper secondary education was 33.7% (INSTAT, 2024b). The participation rate in formal and non-formal education or training for the population aged 25-64 was 0.7% (ETF, 2024).

The 2022 PISA score for young Albanians aged 15 (see Table 1) was below the OECD average and below the 2018 score in all three disciplines: mathematics, reading and science (OECD, Education GPS).

**Table 1: PISA results in Albania and OECD in 2022**

	Mathematics	Reading	Science
OECD average mean score PISA 2022	472	476	485
Albania average mean score PISA 2022	368	358	376

## 5. THE FRAMEWORK FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING IN ALBANIA

WBL is an important component in upper-secondary and post-secondary VET. It encompasses the Albanian Qualification Framework (AQF) levels 2-5 and vocational training programmes under ALMP.

The National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2030, and particularly the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, approved by the Council of Ministers, are the two important guiding documents on which development of the VET system is based (Council of Ministers, 2023a and 2023b).

According to the Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), public spending on education in 2022 amounted to 2.94% of GDP (INSTAT, 2023).

The total number of learners in upper-secondary VET (IVET + CVET) for the academic year 2022-2023 was 15 042, that is 15.7% of the total number of learners in upper-secondary education; around 17.5% of these were female (Council of Ministers, 2023b).

The institutions listed below are some of the stakeholders in the VET system.

- The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (formerly the Ministry of Finance and Economy) oversees VET and has direct responsibility for developing strategic policies and the legal framework, and for ensuring coordination and institutional cooperation between the main institutions in the VET system<sup>2</sup>.
- The National Employment and Skills Agency (NESA), under the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, is responsible for the implementation of public employment and VET policies through its regional and local employment service offices and public VET providers<sup>3</sup>.
- The National Agency for Vocational Education, Training and Qualifications (NAVETQ), under the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, is responsible for the development and implementation of the Albanian Qualifications Framework and quality assurance in VET<sup>4</sup>.
- The National Chamber of Crafts is a non-government organisation, established by a special law, with governance and management functions, which participates in the development of legal acts concerning crafts and vocational qualifications in crafts, coordinates the acquisition of qualifications in craftsmanship and supervises implementation of this in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation. It also organises and supervises examinations for obtaining diplomas and issues the qualifications in cooperation with the NAVETQ (Law 70, 2016)<sup>5</sup>.
- VET is provided in public and private institutions. Currently, the public VET system is composed of 35 public VET schools for young people and 10 regional public training centres for adults. Current data on non-public institutions and their learners is not available but according to mapping carried out by the Ministry of Finance and Economy in 2019-20, their number was 845 (ETF, 2020).

Public VET schools deliver VET using the framework curricula developed by the NAVETQ in 26 occupational areas, with 88 profiles in upper-secondary VET and eight occupational areas in post-secondary VET. Public training centres deliver 89 programmes, using the curricula developed by the NAVETQ for 'unified vocational training courses', and other training courses with curricula developed internally by training centres to meet local needs<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://meki.gov.al/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.puna.gov.al/home>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.akaft.gov.al/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dhkf.org.al/index.php/sq/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.akaft.gov.al/dokumenta-kurrikulare/>

The Albanian legal framework relevant for VET, and specifically for WBL, consists of specific laws created by the Albanian Parliament, decisions of the Council of Ministers, and orders and instructions issued at the level of the Minister responsible for VET.

The totality of this legislation regulates the VET system at upper-secondary and post-secondary VET level, in terms of ALMP for adults offered by employment services and VET offered on the open market by private providers.

## 5.1 Vocational education and training strategies

VET is an important part of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, including the chapter on the challenges to the future development of the country and the EU accession process.

The overall goal of the Strategy is to develop skills and improve alignment between supply and demand in the labour market, leading to increased employment. The specific objectives under this goal are to reduce the imbalance between supply and demand for skills in all occupations, increase the skill level of women and men of working age, and bring about a better functioning labour market for all.

The priority measures for strategic areas relevant to VET development are:

- Developing a more relevant, flexible, inclusive, evidence-based and sustainable VET provision. Under this heading, particular attention will be paid to WBL in all VET programmes at all levels.
- Strengthening quality assurance and mechanisms to develop the VET system, including the development of vocational qualifications based on learning outcomes and contributions from the private sector; full implementation of the accreditation process for all public VET providers; accreditation of private providers offering vocational qualifications AQF levels 2-5; and accreditation of centres for recognition of prior learning (RPL).
- The systematic and systemic involvement of the private sector in the governance, development and provision of VET at two levels.
- The first level includes strengthening the decision-making role of private sector representatives on the governing boards of public VET providers, formalising cooperation structures with businesses for the provision of WBL, increasing the capacities of businesses to implement WBL, exposing VET teachers to business and on-the-job training, and strengthening development units at VET providers in order to improve cooperation with businesses.
- The second level includes the involvement of the private sector in the development of VET provision through sectoral committees, where input from businesses will be used to adapt the content of the VET programmes. This will include developing and validating occupational standards in priority sectors, and creating new communication channels with the private sector to support the promotion of the VET system and companies' commitment to WBL through the implementation of internships and traineeships for young people and adults.
- Promotion of inclusive lifelong learning opportunities. Lifelong learning provision will be reformed by diversifying public provision of VET and life skills, and supporting the development of a private lifelong learning provision.
- RPL: institutions will establish a system for RPL based on the VET legal framework and the AQF.
- A supported and inclusive school-to-work transition for NEETs through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee scheme. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2023 – 2024 was approved as an annex of this Strategy (Council of Ministers, 2023b).

## 5.2 Policy dialogue and the role of actors at national level

VET policy dialogue in Albania is carried out through different consultative bodies, which are established and structured through special laws.

The **National VET Council** is a consultative body chaired by the Minister responsible for VET, with the participation of representatives from the relevant ministries, local authorities, employers' and trade union organisations and non-public VET providers. The National VET Council meets at least once every three months to provide advice on VET policy, strategy and legislation, including WBL policies (Council of Ministers, 2018).

The **Employment Advisory Council** is a consultative body chaired by the relevant Minister, with the participation of representatives from the relevant ministries, the State Inspectorate responsible for work, the Directorate General for Taxes, the Social Security Institute, and trade unions and employers' organisations. The Employment Advisory Council meets at least once every four months to provide advice on ALMPs and other matters (Law 15, 2019; Council of Ministers, 2019b).

The **sectoral committees** are technical working groups in which representatives from the relevant ministries, trade unions and employers' organisations, VET providers, relevant HR businesses and independent senior AQF experts take part. They meet at least once every three months, mainly to support the NAVETQ in developing occupational and qualification standards (Council of Ministers, 2019a). There are only two established and functioning committees: one for ICT and one for hospitality and tourism.

The **governing boards of public VET providers** are collegial bodies with seven members, two of whom are business representatives and one who acts as chair of the board. The governing boards analyse VET providers' activities and make decisions on the overall strategic direction, the annual and mid-term plan of activities and the budget (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2018b).

In addition, **VET project donors** are also considered important contributors to VET development and policy dialogue regarding VET, either at central or provider level, and specifically for WBL in Albania. The main donor VET projects are those implemented by GIZ<sup>7</sup>, OaED<sup>8</sup>, Swisscontact<sup>9</sup> and the UNDP<sup>10</sup>.

## 5.3 Legal framework

The Albanian legal framework for VET and WBL consists of numerous laws, decisions of the Council of Ministers, and orders and instructions of the Minister responsible for VET (NAVETQ, *Database of laws*; NESA, *Database of laws*).

The VET Law (Law 15, 2017) and in particular the 'Regulation on implementation of company-based vocational practice in public VET providers' (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020) (hereinafter, 'the Internship/Traineeship Regulation') are the main legal acts relating to WBL in IVET and CVET. However, the Internship/Traineeship Regulation is also applicable to WBL in one of the ALMPs, i.e. the 'vocational training programme' ([see section 8.1](#)).

The 'Procedures and criteria for and rules on implementation of ALMPs through employment on the job training and internship' (Council of Ministers, 2020b) is the main legal act on WBL in two other ALMP programmes, i.e. the 'on-the-job training programme' and the 'internship programme'.

The Crafts Law (Law 70, 2016), the 'Approval of the occupational qualifications contract template between apprentices and craftsmen' (Council of Ministers, 2019c) and the 'Necessary duration of apprenticeships' (Council of Ministers, 2020a) are the main legal acts concerning the dual programme. A workforce with increasing numbers of emigrants, along with the growing partnership between public VET providers and businesses in WBL over the last two to three years, have had a big impact on

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/294.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://oead.at/en/cooperations/educational-cooperation-with-eastern-and-south-eastern-europe/educational-cooperation-partner-countries/albania>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/countries/albania>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.undp.org/albania>

raising businesses' awareness of the necessity and the potential of this system. However, it is not yet operational as the necessary by-laws for its implementation are still being prepared.

## 6. WORK-BASED LEARNING IN INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 6.1 Typology of programmes with embedded work-based learning elements

Practical training is an integral part of all public IVET programmes. It takes place at VET providers' workshops, laboratories, farms, training firms and/or in companies.

**Figure 1: Available IVET curricula of public upper-secondary VET, registered AQF levels and maximum percentage of total curriculum time in internships**

PARTNER COMPANIES FOR INTERNSHIP											2-YEAR POST-SECONDARY CVET PROGRAMS		5	2	0&21%	PARTNER COMPANIES FOR INTERNSHIP
	0-54%	1	5	1-YEAR POST-SECONDARY CVET PROGRAMS								1	0&21%			
	10-11%	1	4	1-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS		2-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS		4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS		4	4	6-15%				
20-25%	1	3	1-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS				3			18-20%						
20-26%	2	2	2-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS				2			18%						
5-6%	1	REGISTERED AQF LEVEL											1	5%		
Internship max % of total curriculum time	SCHOOL YEAR		COMPULSORY EDUCATION										REGISTERED AQF LEVEL	Internship max % of total curriculum time		

Source: Prepared by the author, based on information from multiple sources (NAVETQ, Table of the framework curriculum structure 2024-2025; Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020; Law 15, 2017)

As shown in Figure 1, public VET providers offer IVET programmes structured in two or four-year blocks. The two-year IVET programmes have exit points with qualifications registered at AQF level 2, and the four-year blocks offer qualifications registered at AQF level 4.

All IVET curricula consist of general and occupational theory and also have 'vocational practice' modules. The yearly time allocation for the latter depends on the occupational profile and the year of delivery. It is recommended that vocational practice modules take place partly in companies. They have become increasingly common in recent years, especially after the introduction of the Internship/Traineeship Regulation.

However, this kind of WBL is not mandatory and its duration cannot be more than 50% of the total time allocated for vocational practice modules. The structure and duration are flexible, varying from one school to another. Even within the same school, this may vary depending on the academic year, occupational areas and profile.

The approximate maximum proportion of internships as a percentage of the total curriculum time is shown on both sides of Figure 1, in light grey, for each school year and for all IVET-type programmes.

**Table 2: Proportion of vocational practice and respective maximum optional internships according to the IVET programme and school year (data is provided only for programmes attended in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, not for all available curricula)**

Type of programme	Modules of vocational practice % of total curriculum time				Internships maximum % of total curriculum time			
	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year
<b>IVET 2-year programmes</b>								
Hospitality & Tourism	10	51,56			5	25,8		
Automotive services	10	45,2			5	22,6		
ICT	11	52			5,5	26		
ICT (Pilot)	55	52			~6% mandatory			
Electrotechnics	10	38,7			5	19,35		
Business Economy	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Thermo-Hydraulics	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Mechanics	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Social and Health Services	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Agriculture	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Food Technology	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Textile	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Construction	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Woodworking	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Forestry	10	51,2			5	25,6		
Oil, Gas and water drilling and extraction	10	45,2			5	22,6		
Seafaring	12	45			6	22,5		
Geology and Mining	10	45,2			5	22,6		
<b>IVET 4-year programmes</b>								
Computer Software Engineering	34,4	37,6	33,44	33,44	~6% mandatory			
Veterinary	10	36,6	38	26,6	5	18,3	19	13,3
Geodesy	10	36,6	38	30	5	18,3	19	15

Source: Prepared by the author, based on information from multiple sources (NAVETQ, Table of the *framework curriculum structure 2024-2025*; Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020)



There is no real market for internships whereby companies can advertise their offers and potential learners can apply. Matching between learner and company is organised by the vocational school.

The placement of learners in companies is the responsibility of the VET provider, in close cooperation with each partner company. Based on the schedule agreed between the VET provider and the company, learners are informed about their placement at a company and prepare to be introduced to that company. Each company then gets to know the incoming learners. The business relations coordinator at the school's development unit prepares the individual internship contract for each learner, agrees it with the head of the school's development unit, and it is then signed by the learner, the school director and the representative of the company.

Responsibilities concerning internship organisation are shared between the business relations coordinator at the school's development unit (who is responsible for developing the timetable, coordinating the internship and preparing the internship-type contract for each learner, etc.) and the vocational practice teacher (who is responsible for planning, organising, monitoring and evaluating the internship, in close collaboration with the in-company trainer).

In terms of curriculum structure, internships are mainly carried out in the second and third school years of programmes (IVET + CVET). This is more evident in schools that are better equipped with workshops. In the 2023-2024 school year, about 53% of learners in these years, or about 35% of the total of all years, completed an internship (NESA, Statistical Bulletin 2023, Secondary VET, Internships). When VET providers are not able to find suitable places in companies<sup>11</sup>, vocational practice takes place in the schools' own workshops and laboratories. There is no data available on the real duration of internships.

Almost every public VET provider cooperates with companies that offer opportunities for WBL<sup>12</sup>. Participation in internships is lower for IVET than for CVET programmes.

All public IVET programmes are based on occupational competence<sup>13</sup> and are registered in the AQF. Upon successful completion of such a programme, a certificate of qualification is issued, along with a supplementary document describing the AQF level, learning outcomes, range of occupations accessible to the holder of the qualification and access to the next level of education/training.

**Table 3: Number of learners in initial upper-secondary VET (programmes attended) disaggregated by type of programmes and trends, in 2022-2024**

Type of programme	Number of learners	
	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>IVET 2-year programmes</b>		
Hospitality & Tourism	1635	1673
Automotive Services	1434	1338
ICT	1116	1305
Electrotechnics	755	764
Business Economy	576	702
Thermo-Hydraulics	554	597
Mechanics	564	473
Social and Health Services	296	299

<sup>11</sup> This may happen for various reasons, e.g. there not being a sufficient number of cooperating businesses in the area, an insufficient match between the skills needed and the work at the company, or businesses wanting only students with high grades, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Source: OeAD.

<sup>13</sup> An occupational competence defines the ability to perform a task in a workplace with a certain level of previously-acquired proficiency.

Type of programme	Number of learners	
Agriculture	223	252
Food Technology	230	180
Textile	114	112
Construction	84	66
Woodworking	59	60
Forestry	34	33
Oil, Gas & Water Drilling and Extraction	24	28
Seafaring	43	27
Geology & Mining	32	24
<b>IVET 4-year programmes</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
Computer Software Engineering	319	297
Veterinary	225	247
Elderly Care Services	109	70
Geodesy	48	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>8474</b>	<b>8596</b>

Source: Data provided by NESA representative at an interview

Noteworthy developments are taking place in relation to the dual programmes, as three new three-year IVET programmes have been developed and are beginning to be implemented. These programmes are registered at AQF level 2 and 3, and a considerable part – nearly 37% of total curriculum time – of the programme must be implemented as an internship at a company providing cooking, hospitality, and food and beverage services. The framework curricula are developed with the assistance of EHL Hospitality Business School Switzerland, with the support of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) project implemented by Swisscontact<sup>14</sup>.

Three by-laws are expected to be approved to enable the implementation of the new programmes: a decision of the Council of Ministers on the apprenticeship employment contract and the minimum wage level, an amendment to the decision of the Council of Ministers on mandatory contributions and benefits from the social security system and healthcare insurance, and an instruction of the Minister responsible for VET on the procedures for planning and implementing VET in dual form<sup>15</sup>.

As can be seen from Table 2, internships account for a significant proportion of the total curriculum duration in some programmes and years.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, Swisscontact, NESA and NAVETQ.

<sup>15</sup> The regulatory framework was approved in November–December 2024 – Source: Swisscontact.

Although these IVET programmes are not apprenticeship programmes, **the analysis below was guided by the 14 criteria of the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships (EFQEA).**

## 6.2 Written agreement (Criterion 1)

When part of the vocational practice takes place in a company in the form of an internship, public VET providers are obliged to organise it according to the mandatory contract template included in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation.

The contract has to be agreed between the employer, the learner and the public VET provider.

Each of the signatories may withdraw from the contract within 15 days of the day on which they gave written notice to the other parties, if the obligations between them are not respected.

The company is obliged to provide one in-company trainer per five learners, to supply uniforms and tools, to assign tasks aligned with the individual training plan, to follow child labour laws, and to issue documentation attesting to the internship's duration and the tasks and skills acquired. Learners have obligations such as diligently performing their tasks as per the training plan, following instructions, respecting workplace rules, caring for equipment, and justifying any absences with the appropriate notifications and medical reports if needed. The VET provider is responsible for creating the training plan together with the company, monitoring skills acquisition, supporting the in-company trainer, and developing and implementing evaluation tools to ensure effective internship outcomes.

The contract template does not state the daily working hours at the company, but does specify the start and end date of the internship.

There are no rules or recommendations on the number of contracts agreed between parties during the whole cycle of studies. This is a decision made by the VET provider. The common practice is to sign one contract for each school year in order to give learners the opportunity to be exposed to different job positions that cover as many learning outcomes as possible. When the job at certain companies covers only a small part of the learning outcomes, the duration of contracts is limited to a shorter period in order to rotate learners between different businesses. There are also cases when contracts have a duration of two years.

Contracts stipulate that the learner will not be paid for the work carried out during the internship.

Working hours comply with the regulation on the protection of children at work and cannot exceed 30 hours per week and six hours per day.

## 6.3 Learning outcomes (Criterion 2)

Learning outcomes are the core part of all IVET programmes developed by the NAVETQ, which applies a streamlined DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) methodology that makes use of focus groups comprising relevant companies and concerned VET teachers and instructors, moderated by NAVETQ experts.

Learning outcomes, which describe what a learner should know, understand and be able to do after completing a learning process, are also used to draw up the individual training plan based on the format recommended in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation.

Recently, the involvement of interested stakeholders has been strengthened by the creation of sectoral committees, based on a decision by the Council of Ministers ([see section 5.2](#)).

Future occupational skills needs at sectoral level are taken into account by the sectoral committees.

## 6.4 Pedagogical support (Criterion 3)

The position of in-company trainer is included in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation, which takes the existence of this category of specialists for granted. However, in practice, the position does not exist formally. To date, there are no certified in-company trainers recognised at system level. Moreover, despite increasing interest from companies, no training or continuous professional development (CPD) offer of any kind is in place in the system for in-company trainers. Donor projects have specific components to encourage training for a limited number of in-company trainers, but their attendance certificate is not recognised within the system<sup>16</sup>.

In 2023, a cycle of training courses was organised by Swisscontact for in-company trainers, with a curriculum based on the Training of Trainers (ToT) curriculum and in collaboration with a Swiss organisation. Out of 800 participants, about 250 in-company trainers received an attendance certificate from Swisscontact. The training modules are validated by the NAVETQ and are also available online for school staff. The training content structure for in-company trainers is also agreed with the NAVETQ. Although these training certificates are not formally recognised within the system, they are getting increased recognition in the labour market.

Under the Internship/Traineeship Regulation, in-company trainers are not required to have any formal qualifications. They must be selected jointly by representatives of the VET provider and the company through interviews with the candidates, and must meet the following professional and personal criteria:

- have at least three years of work experience in a profession or professions directly related to the internship;
- have good organisational and planning skills;
- Be able to guide and supervise the learner's progress and ensure that occupational competences are acquired during the internship;
- be able to evaluate the progress and results obtained by the learner during the internship;
- have good communication skills.

Both the school business relations coordinator and the vocational practice teacher collaborate with the in-company trainer:

- to plan how to implement the internship according to the agreed programme;
- to determine the number of learners and time period, as well as the duration of the internship (period of the year, week/weeks, day/days) depending on the availability of proper working conditions and suitable places.
- The in-company trainer is responsible for:
  - carrying out the continuous evaluation of the internship in collaboration with the vocational practice teacher; and
  - when doing so, using the instruments agreed with the vocational practice teacher.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the Skills for Jobs project, implemented by Swisscontact Albania, initiated a first ToT with about 20 participants from the VET system, aiming to extend participation at a second stage. The ToT modules were run intermittently in 2018-2019, with the main modules including an introduction to mentoring, WBL legislation, selection of trainees, planning of internships, progress and follow-up, mentoring processes, building a work culture, conflict management, etc.

## 6.5 Workplace component (Criterion 4)

There are general guidelines for coordinating internships and school-based vocational practice included in the framework curriculum developed by the NAVETQ for each IVET programme. However, there is no mandatory time period for internships. This is a subject of negotiation between schools and companies and depends on the availability of proper working conditions and suitable places.

When part of the vocational practice is implemented at a company in the form of an internship, an individual training plan must be developed. It must be drawn up by the VET provider together with the in-company trainer, according to the recommended format in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation.

Learners can expect to rotate in different roles within the company during the internship, but there are no provisions for rotation between different partner companies when a certain company does not cover the whole range of skills required in the programme. In such cases, learners complement their internship with further targeted practical training in school workshops.

## 6.6 Pay and / or compensation (Criterion 5)

The internship contract ([see section 6.2](#)) provides that the learner will not be paid for the work carried out during the internship.

The Internship/Traineeship Regulation provides that the company can make payments related to food, transportation and other services or compensation necessary to complete the internship in accordance with the legal framework in force.

The employment relationship between the learner and the company outside the terms of the internship contract must comply with the relevant labour legislation.

All learners are exempt from paying any kind of tuition fees.

## 6.7 Social protection (Criterion 6)

According to the Internship/Traineeship Regulation and the contract template, all learners are covered by specific social protection regulations that specifically cover learners for accidents at work and occupational diseases. The company is obliged to pay the mandatory contribution for accidents at work and occupational diseases to the tax office, which is equal to 0.3% of the gross minimum wage for the whole internship period (Council of Ministers, 2015; Ministry of Finance, 2014).

There are no provisions to protect learners and allow them to continue the internship should the company fail (bankruptcy, etc.).

## 6.8 Work, health and safety conditions (Criterion 7)

The regular inspection of working, health and safety conditions in the internship workplace is the direct responsibility of the company, in accordance to the relevant legislation on safety and health at work (Law 7961, 1995; Law 10237, 2010; Council of Ministers, 2017; Law 7643, 1992). In addition, the internship contract stipulates that in-company trainers are personally responsible for the instruction and supervision of learners during the internship.

All learners doing internships are insured against accidents at work and occupational diseases.

The Internship/Traineeship Regulation and the contract template have no specific provisions on informing and training learners to apply health and safety regulations correctly in the workplace. However, in accordance with the legislation in force, companies have the responsibility to provide information and training for each newly hired employee.

## 6.9 Regulatory framework (Criterion 8)

A clear legal/regulatory framework is in place at national level. It covers all partners involved in the internship. The main framework is the Internship/Traineeship Regulation and the contract template attached to it.

This framework clearly outlines the mutual rights and responsibilities of the public VET provider, the company and the learner/parent, and sets out a clear and balanced distribution of responsibilities between the VET provider and the company.

There is no accreditation mechanism for training companies in place (and no plans to introduce one either), but the regulatory framework includes the quality criteria listed below for selecting a company to take part in the internship scheme.

- The company is legally registered and carries out its business in compliance with market rules and current legislation.
- It is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or the Chamber of Crafts – a criterion that is difficult to fulfil since it is met only by 9% of partner companies in Tirana<sup>17</sup>.
- It has a reputation<sup>18</sup> in the region/area as a sustainable company (*“gezon reputacion ne rajon / zone si biznes i qendrueshern”*).
- It carries out its activity in a suitable occupational area, corresponding to the indications and profiles offered by the VET provider, where the internship must be carried out.
- It owns and is ready to provide the necessary infrastructure (equipment, workplace. etc.) for implementing the internship.
- It has the possibility to appoint a member of its staff, who has the professional and personal skills suitable for guiding and supervising learners during their internship, in the role of in-company trainer.
- Representatives of the local employment office, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts in the region participate in the selection of a company – a criterion that is difficult to fulfil and is met only in rare cases<sup>19</sup>.

## 6.10 Involvement of social partners (Criterion 9)

There are mechanisms in place to promote structured and transparent dialogue between all social partners, at all levels. However, their involvement specifically in the design, governance and implementation of WBL schemes is very limited. There are no specific provisions in Albanian legislation regarding their involvement in such activities, with the exception of their involvement in learners' final assessment.

Sectoral committees operate at the national level. Their contribution so far has been limited to raising awareness on the benefit of WBL among companies and proposing the development of new curricula or the updating of existing ones.

Working groups for the development and validation of VET curricula, qualifications and occupational standards, with the participation of senior experts representing the business community, operate within the NAVETQ at the national level. They are involved in designing the WBL component of VET framework curricula (Council of Ministers, 2019d).

Employer representatives participate in the final assessment of learners, in compliance with the provisions of the VET Law, the Internship/Traineeship Regulation and the 'Instruction on Organisation and Conduct of Examinations in VET' (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2019).

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Swisscontact.

<sup>18</sup> As worded in the Regulation.

<sup>19</sup> Source: Swisscontact.

## 6.11 Support for companies (Criterion 10)

There is no cost-sharing arrangement in place for internships. The costs of employer representatives participating in the final assessment of learners are borne by the companies themselves. Public authorities do not contribute in any way, financially or non-financially.

## 6.12 Flexible pathways and mobility (Criterion 11)

All learners who have completed a compulsory education and are aged 18 or younger are legally entitled to access IVET programmes. There are no entry options for those who have dropped out of compulsory education. The qualifications acquired through IVET are registered in the AQF and allow access to CVET and higher education and training levels, but the accumulation of learning outcome units is not regulated.

The legal framework for governance, implementation and financing of recognition of prior learning is underway and expected to be completed by 2024 (Council of Ministers, 2023b).

## 6.13 Career guidance and awareness raising (Criterion 12)

The school staff responsible for school-business coordination, members of the school's development unit, are in charge of providing quality information on internship characteristics and opportunities to all (potential) learners and their parents<sup>20</sup>.

School staff responsible for providing career guidance, in collaboration with the business relations coordinator, also provide support to learners before and during the internship, helping them to achieve successful outcomes and providing guidance to learners and their parents on the job market, career opportunities, potential employers and salary levels (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2021).

VET and, specifically, the internship included in VET are promoted regularly as an attractive learning pathway, through national, local and school-based awareness-raising activities such as media campaigns, dedicated TV programmes, distribution of printed material, open days and visits to compulsory education schools organised by VET providers.

## 6.14 Transparency (Criterion 13)

The VET section of the NESA website<sup>21</sup> offers sufficient information about the VET system, all the schools offering IVET, occupational areas, career guidance, ways to register in schools offering IVET and other valuable information. The framework curricula of all IVET programmes are accessible on the NAVETQ website (*NESA, How to apply; NAVETQ, Table of the framework curriculum*).

Learners enrol for the first time in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of IVET online through the e-Albania portal, within five days after the application has been submitted (e-Albania.al, *Enrolment in tenth grade*).

There is no standardised approach to the selection or allocation of internship placements at each VET provider. The schools supported by Swisscontact are at a more advanced stage. They have established procedures on the process of introducing learners and companies in their catchment areas to each other through mutual visits, on learners' applications for internship opportunities by presenting their CVs and letters of interest to preferred companies, and the selection of learners by companies. Learners selected by more than one company have the right to choose where they go. Almost 70% of learners in supported schools find their internship opportunities through this approach. The remaining 30% are assisted by their teachers to reapply and find other opportunities (SDC, 2020).

At most VET providers, there is no transparent approach in place. The placement of learners in companies for the internship takes place in accordance with the provisions of the

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<sup>20</sup> Source: Swisscontact Albania.

<sup>21</sup> aftesi.puna.gov.al



Internship/Traineeship Regulation. This means that the placement is under the responsibility of the VET provider, in collaboration with the partner companies. Usually, the tendency is for the best learners to be placed at the best companies.

Praktika (<https://praktika.al/>) is a platform that was created a few years ago and that aims to provide real-time access to supply and demand in the labour market, including WBL opportunities. The intention of the founders was also to serve potential learners in search of WBL opportunities. Unfortunately, the initiative failed to accomplish this service. Nowadays the platform is used merely as a meeting point for jobseekers and companies, for employment purposes.

## 6.15 Quality assurance and graduate tracking (Criterion 14)

Quality assurance exists at different levels:

- The NAVETQ has developed a framework for VET curriculum design based on descriptions of VET qualifications and occupational standards that are adjustable to local needs (ETF, 2020).
- It ensures that IVET programmes reflect the requirements of the labour market, through the participation of business experts in working groups organised by the NAVETQ on developing and validating framework curricula, which are then approved by the responsible ministry for VET.
- The need to update the programmes comes from communication with the business community/market and VET providers, evaluations by sectoral committees, etc. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the NAVETQ to judge and decide on the matter. This usually happens every four years but depends on the technology and market speed evolution. The update of the programmes is preceded by an update of the qualifications and occupational standards.
- Each VET provider collects data on enrolment, drop-outs, completion and transition to the labour market and provides this to the NESA, which is in charge of collecting and processing it, conducting studies and distributing statistical data, including its publication on the NESA home page.
- The ministry responsible for VET has responsibility for defining and updating the criteria for the selection of companies offering internships.
- Partner companies for internships are selected on a yearly basis and based on the quality criteria provided in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation.
- VET providers are encouraged to develop their own school-based curricula and course materials based on national framework curricula and qualification standards (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2021).
- Internship contracts are monitored by the VET providers.
- The ministry responsible for VET approves the final assessment modalities and formats and the evaluation standards, inspects the final examination process and analyses final examination results for all VET providers.
- The NAVETQ is responsible for the development of final assessment modalities and formats, evaluation standards and supervision, supports the final assessment process and collects information on it.
- VET providers are responsible for the organisation and supervision of the final assessment.
- Staff recruitment at VET providers is based on defined criteria and procedures (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2021).
- The continuous professional development (CPD) of VET provider staff is based on defined modalities. These activities are planned and organised by the development unit of the VET provider and are coordinated by the NAVETQ at system level (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2021).



- A self-assessment of VET providers' relationship and collaboration with businesses is one of the self-assessment areas and is ranked according to four standard grades. Relationships and cooperation with businesses are considered one of the most important forms of cooperation. This includes interaction with companies in order to make joint use of business environments and qualified human resources and skills for learners' internships (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2018a).
- Schools' development units prepare annual reports on their collaboration with businesses and submit it to the VET provider management as a self-assessment task. The reports serve the purpose of improving collaboration.
- The internship contract has two annexes: the internship programme that links learning outcomes of curricula with concrete internship activities; and the internship personal notebook or diary, which is consulted afterwards to evaluate learners' performance during and at the end of the internship.

## 6.16 Conclusions

### Strengths

- A written contract following the mandatory template included in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation is signed, defining the rights and obligations of the parties i.e. company, learner and public VET provider. (Criterion 1)
- Internship programmes are based on learning outcomes and working conditions, which are developed in close cooperation with companies. (Criterion 2)
- In-company trainers cooperate with VET providers and teachers to plan and supervise the internship and carry out a continuous evaluation of the internship by using tools agreed with the vocational practice teacher. (Criterion 3)
- The development of the new dual programmes with a significant share of mandatory WBL, implementation of which started in September 2024, indicates an increasing awareness at system level on the importance of WBL. (Criterion 4)
- All learners are covered by specific social protection that includes accidents at work and occupational diseases. Companies pay the mandatory contribution the tax office. (Criterion 6 and 7)
- The Internship/Traineeship Regulation, which is the basis for the internship contract, clearly regulates the rights and obligations of learners, companies and VET providers. The roles of the ministry responsible for VET, the NAVETQ and VET providers concerning the final assessment of learners are clearly defined in the existing regulations. (Criterion 8)
- The creation of sectoral committees has enhanced the involvement of interested stakeholders, namely for ICT and hospitality and tourism. (Criterion 9)
- The school coordinators responsible for career guidance and business relations help learners, before and during the internship, to achieve successful outcomes. They also provide guidance to learners and their parents on the job market, career opportunities, potential employers and information on employment opportunities. VET and, specifically, the internship included in VET are promoted regularly as an attractive learning pathway through awareness-raising activities at national, local and school level, such as media campaigns, dedicated TV programmes, distribution of printed material, open days and visits to compulsory education schools organised by VET providers. (Criterion 12)

- Each VET provider's development unit has a tracking coordinator responsible for data collection and tracking learners' transition into employment. Schools now produce yearly tracking reports<sup>22</sup>. (Criterion 14)

## Challenges / gaps

- Despite the necessity for in-company trainers and companies' growing awareness of internships and other forms of WBL, there are still no system-wide offers for in-company trainer training and professional development. (Criterion 3)
- There is no a minimum mandatory time period for internships included in the framework curriculum developed by the NAVETQ for each IVET programme. (Criterion 4)
- Involvement of social partners in the design, governance and implementation of WBL schemes is very limited, and there are no specific legal provisions regarding their involvement in such activities. (Criterion 9)
- No cost-sharing arrangements are in place for internships, to support in particular micro, small and medium-sized companies. The costs of employer representatives participating in the final assessment of learners are borne by the companies themselves. Public authorities do not contribute in any way, financially or non-financially. (Criterion 10)
- Some quality assurance criteria for selecting partner companies for internships are very difficult to fulfil, especially in less developed areas of Albania. The requirement to be member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry or Chamber of Crafts is met only by 9% of partner companies in Tirana, while the requirement to select partner companies in collaboration with representatives of the local employment office, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Crafts of the region is met only in rare cases. (Criterion 14)

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<sup>22</sup> NESA source

## 7. WORK-BASED LEARNING IN CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 7.1 Types of programmes with a work-based learning component

Practical training is an integral part of all public CVET programmes that take place at VET providers' workshops, laboratories, farms, training firms and/or in companies.

**Figure 3: CVET curricula available for public upper and post-secondary VET, registered AQF levels and maximum percentage of total curriculum time spent in internships**

PARTNER COMPANIES FOR INTERNSHIP	0-54%		1	5	1-YEAR POST-SECONDARY CVET PROGRAMS		2-YEAR POST-SECONDARY CVET PROGRAMS		5	2	0&21%	PARTNER COMPANIES FOR INTERNSHIP
	10-11%		1	4	1-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS	2-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS	4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS		4	4	6-15%	
	20-25%		1	3	1-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS	2-YEAR CVET PROGRAMS	4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS			3	18-20%	
	20-26%		2	2	2-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS		4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS			2	18%	
	5-6%		1		2-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS		4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS			1	5%	
	INTERNSHIP max % of total curriculum time		SCHOOL YEAR	REGISTERED AQF LEVEL	COMPULSORY EDUCATION		4-YEAR IVET PROGRAMS		REGISTERED AQF LEVEL	SCHOOL YEAR	INTERNSHIP max % of total curriculum time	

Source: Prepared by the author, based on information from multiple sources (NAVETQ, *Table of the framework curriculum structure 2024-2025*; Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020; Law 15, 2017)

Public VET providers offer CVET programmes, as shown in Figure 3, structured either in one-year or two-year blocks. The first level of one-year CVET programmes have exit points with qualifications registered at AQF level 3. The second level of one-year CVET programmes have exit points with qualifications registered at AQF level 4. The two-year blocks offer qualifications registered at AQF level 4.

From a general standpoint, it is difficult to distinguish between IVET and CVET programmes in upper-secondary VET, because normally only learners who have completed a IVET programme go on directly to a subsequent CVET programme. CVET access is also open to adults who have completed IVET earlier in the same occupational area and satisfy certain age criteria, i.e. being not older than 21 if registered in the first level of one-year and two-year programmes, and being not older than 22 if registered in the second level of a one-year programme (Law 69, 2012). However, if there are such cases, they are very rare.

Some public VET providers offer, in addition, post-secondary VET with a duration of one-two years with qualifications registered at AQF level 5. Access to these programmes is open not only to learners who have completed the respective IVET and CVET programmes at AQF level 4, but also to other candidates who have completed other VET programmes or have a general upper secondary education at AQF level 4 and have additionally some years of work experience in the occupational area concerned.

As in IVET (see section 6.1), all CVET curricula consist of general and occupational theory and vocational practice modules.

The same rules as in IVET apply concerning the vocational practice modules, recommended to take place partly in companies in the form of an internship.

**Table 4: Proportions of vocational practice and respective maximum optional internships according to CVET programme and school year (data is only provided for programmes attended in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, not for all available curricula).**

Type of programme	Modules of vocational practice % of total curriculum time		Internships maximum % of total curriculum time	
	1st 1-year	2nd 1-year	1st 1-year	2nd 1-year
<b>CVET +1+1 programmes</b>				
Hospitality & Tourism	50	20	25	10
Automotive services	50	20	25	10
Electrotechnics	50	21,2	25	10,6
Thermo-Hydraulics	50	20	25	10
Mechanics	50	20	25	10
Social and Health Services	50	20	25	10
Agriculture	50	20	25	10
Food Technology	50	20	25	10
Textile	50	20	25	10
Construction	50	20	25	10
Woodworking	50	20	25	10
Oil, Gas and water drilling and extraction	50	20	25	10
Seafaring	48,4	20	24,2	10
Geology and Mining	50	20	25	10
	<b>1st year</b>	<b>2nd year</b>	<b>1st year</b>	<b>2nd year</b>
<b>CVET 2-year programmes</b>				
ICT	40	6,6	20	3,3
Business Economy	40	20	20	10
Forestry	36,6	20	18,3	10
<b>CVET post-secondary programmes</b>				
Automotive Diagnostics & Management	100		50 (9% mandatory)	
Fashion Design	88	87	0	4% mandatory
Real Estate Brokerage	95	100	47,5 (21% mandatory)	50 (21% mandatory)

Source: Prepared by the author, based on information from multiple sources (NAVETQ, *Table of the framework curriculum structure 2024-2025*; Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020)

Data on learner participation in internships is combined for IVET and CVET ([see section 6.1](#)). As in IVET, when VET providers are not able to find suitable places in companies, the vocational practice takes place at the schools' own workshops and laboratories.

As in IVET, all public CVET programmes are based on vocational competence and registered in the AQF. Successful completion of these programmes ends with the awarding of a qualifications certificate and a supplementary document describing the AQF level, the learning outcomes, the range

of occupations accessible to the holder of the qualification and access to next level of education/training.

Post-secondary VET programmes provided by VET providers are CVET programmes registered and certified at AQF level 5 that build on previous IVET and/or CVET programmes registered at AQF level 4. The successful completion of these programmes also ends with the awarding of a qualifications certificate and a supplementary document describing the AQF level, the learning outcomes, the range of occupations accessible to the holder of the qualification and access to next level of education/training.

**Table 5: The number of learners in continuing upper and post-secondary VET (programmes attended), disaggregated by type of programme and trends in 2022-2024**

Type of programme	Number of learners	
	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>CVET 1st 1-year, 2nd 1-year, and 2-year programmes</b>		
Hospitality & tourism (6 profiles)	1316	1133
Automotive services (7 profiles)	1241	1171
ICT (6 profiles)	734	790
Electrotechnics (8 profiles)	711	628
Business economy (7 profiles)	578	491
Thermo-hydraulics (3 profiles)	469	411
Mechanics (5 profiles)	403	401
Social and health services (3 profiles)	239	247
Agriculture (10 profiles)	257	221
Food technology (5 profiles)	300	213
Textiles (4 profiles)	101	109
Construction (6 profiles)	83	81
Woodworking (2 profiles)	42	40
Forestry (4 profiles)	25	31
Oil, gas, water drilling, extraction (2 profiles)	10	19
Seafaring (2 profiles)	27	28
Geology & mining (3 profiles)	20	17
Chemical technology	12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6568</b>	<b>6031</b>
<b>CVET post-secondary programmes</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>
Estate agent		96
Automotive diagnostics & management		43
Fashion design		10
<b>Total</b>		<b>149</b>

Source: Data provided by NESA representative at an interview

The two one-year and two-year programmes shown are nominally CVET, but are actually IVET, as almost all learners attempt to complete the State Matura. So, all sections from 6.2 to 6.16 apply equally to CVET programmes.

Unlike upper-secondary CVET, where internship participation and duration are optional, an internship at post-secondary CVET is mandatory. However, all sections from 6.2 through 6.16 apply equally to CVET post-secondary programmes.

Noteworthy developments are taking place regarding dual programmes, as four new one-year CVET programmes have been developed and are beginning to be implemented. The programmes are registered at AQF level 3, with nearly 63% of the total curriculum time to be implemented mandatorily as an internship in companies providing reception, cooking and electro-auto services and installation and maintenance of low, medium and high voltage lines. Another new two-year CVET programme, registered at AQF level 4, with 62% (year 1) and 51% (year 2) of the total curriculum time to be implemented mandatorily as an internship in companies with a multimedia profile is being developed and starting to be implemented too. Finally, a new one-year post-secondary CVET programme, registered at AQF level 5, with nearly 72% of the total curriculum time to be implemented mandatorily as an internship in companies providing management of accommodation facilities, is being developed and starting to be implemented. The curricula are developed with the support of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) project implemented by Swisscontact<sup>23</sup>.

Three by-laws are expected to be approved to enable the implementation of the new programmes, as mentioned in [section 6.1](#).

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<sup>23</sup> Source: Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation, Swisscontact, NESA, and NAVET.

## 8. WORK-BASED LEARNING IN ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

Well-functioning forms of WBL ease the transition from ALMPs to work by enhancing the employability of trainees and providing them with the skills needed for the labour market. The European Quality Framework for Traineeships sets out the criteria for quality and effective traineeships. It should be noted that in the Albanian context, terms other than ‘traineeship’ are also used for the WBL component of ALMPs.

### 8.1 Types of programmes with a work-based learning component

All ALMP programmes are supported by public funds and organised by the NESA and its regional institutions. The programmes include:

- employment services;
- employment promotion programmes for registered unemployed jobseekers, subsidised with public funds, including:
  - an employment programme,
  - an on-the-job-training programme,
  - an internship programme;
- vocational training programmes for unqualified and/or unemployed jobseekers (the participation of registered unemployed jobseekers is subsidised with public funds).

WBL is also a component of the following ALMP programmes:

- on-the-job training programmes;
- internship programmes;
- vocational training programmes.

The first two programmes are entirely WBL and are implemented fully at the training companies. The third programme has a WBL component called a traineeship (not mandatory), which takes place at the traineeship providers (companies).

**The on-the-job training programme** (Council of Ministers, 2020b) aims to train unemployed and unqualified jobseekers on the job, for a duration of four months, based on the needs of the job profile required by the jobseekers and adapted to the needs of the training company (employer).

Implementation of the programme begins with the signature of a tripartite agreement between the employer, the jobseeker and the Regional Department of NESA, as well as an individual contract between the employer and the jobseeker. The programme is based on an individual training plan drawn up by the employer and approved by the responsible NESA office.

The employer appoints at least one in-company trainer (literally translated as ‘senior-level employee’) for each group of up to seven beneficiaries included in the programme, who has to supervise the implementation of the programme (Council of Ministers, 2020b). The in-company trainer is responsible for following up on the individual training plan and monitoring progress of the on-the-job training, which is usually combined with individual and/or group counselling sessions for the beneficiaries at certain time intervals, depending on the employer’s approach.

The number of beneficiaries of the on-the-job programme in 2022 was 338 (ETF, 2024).

**The employment promotion programme under the Youth Guarantee scheme** aims to train NEETs through three-to-six-month vocational training courses delivered through on-the-job training at a

training company (employer). During the programme, almost 90% of the time is dedicated to WBL and 10% to occupational theory carried out at a public training centre, followed by a six-month period of employment in the same company. The employer appoints at least one in-company trainer for each group of up to five beneficiaries included in the programme. The training centre is also responsible for supervising WBL, organising tests, and assessing and certifying the acquired qualification (Council of Ministers, 2023c). The instruments for implementing this type of programme are under development, and it is planned to be piloted starting from March 2025 for the first time in three regions: Tirane, Shkoder and Vlore.

**The internship programme** (Council of Ministers, 2020b) aims to help recently graduated unemployed jobseekers to commence employment quickly after finishing their studies. It consists of a six-month period of paid work.

The implementation of the internship programme begins with the signature of a tripartite agreement between the employer, the jobseekers and Regional Department of NESA, as well as an individual contract between the employer and the jobseeker.

The number of beneficiaries of the internship programme in 2022 was 929 (ETF, 2024).

**Vocational training programmes** aim to train registered and non-registered jobseekers without qualifications through short-term courses.

Vocational training programmes organised by the NESA and its institutions include short-term courses imparting 89 types of qualifications, based on the curricula of 'unified vocational training courses' developed by the NAVETQ and on the curricula of other training courses developed internally by VET providers in order to meet local needs.

About 76% of all short-term courses have a duration of 18 weeks (four hours per day, five days per week); about 10% of short-term courses have a duration of 15 weeks; and the rest last from 10 days to 30 weeks (NAVETQ, *Unified Vocational Training Course Programmes*).

It is recommended that 80% of the total time of the courses should be practical training and not more than half of the training can take place in companies (the WBL component is not mandatory), in the form of company-based vocational practice or traineeships, in the same way and with the same rules as internships organised at VET providers for IVET and CVET programmes.

It is estimated that currently about 40% of trainees participate in traineeships<sup>24</sup>. The rest carry out practical training only at VET provider workshops.

The qualifications imparted through short-term courses are not referenced in the AQF, but they all refer to codes found in the National List of Occupations.

The number of participants in short-term courses, disaggregated by type of programme and trends, can be seen in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Number of participants in short-term courses, disaggregated by type of programme and trends in 2022-2023**

Type of short-term course	Number of participants	
	2022	2023
ICT (6 profiles)	1423	3543
Beauty services (4 profiles)	2998	2645
Hospitality & tourism (5 profiles)	2423	2140
Electrotechnics (6 profiles)	1454	1401
Thermo-hydraulics (5 profiles)	1155	974

<sup>24</sup> Source: NESA



Type of short-term course	Number of participants	
	2022	2023
Social and health services (5 profiles)	813	840
Automotive services (5 profiles)	764	717
Business economy (5 profiles)	989	694
Textiles (3 profiles)	631	581
Mechanics (4 profiles)	563	431
Construction (8 profiles)	520	348
Woodworking (2 profiles)	160	141
Food technology (5 profiles)	80	70
Agriculture (2 profiles)	78	55
Craftsmanship (2 profiles)	73	32
Foreign languages and other	793	522
<b>Total</b>	<b>14917</b>	<b>15134</b>

Source: NESA data

All vocational training programmes are based on vocational competence. The VET provider is responsible for organising the final test (with the participation of the business sector), and for assessing and certifying the acquired qualification.

Out of 14 917 registered trainees, 8 715 of them finished their training programme in 2022 and 83.8% of them received a training certificate. The rest continued their training in 2023 (NESA, 2023).

Certificates of vocational training programmes are recognised by the ministry responsible for VET but are not registered in the AQF.

**The analysis below was guided by the criteria of the European Quality Framework for Traineeships (EQFT).**

## 8.2 Conclusion of a written agreement (Criteria 2 and 3)

### On-the-job training and internship programmes

Both on-the-job training and internship programmes are implemented based on a tripartite agreement between the employer, the jobseeker and the Regional Department of NESA, and on an individual contract between the employer and the jobseeker, with clauses on the rights and responsibilities of the parties, working conditions, payment, duration, terms of termination of the contract, etc.

The on-the-job training programme is accompanied by an individual training plan, which is drawn up by the employer and approved by the responsible NESA office. The in-company trainer follows up on the implementation of the programme based on this document. The individual training plan is not drawn up based on any pre-defined template.

### Vocational training programmes

When a 80% share of practical training time of the vocational training programme takes place in companies in the form of a traineeship, this has to be organised by the VET provider through a

traineeship contract between the trainee, the traineeship provider (company) and the VET provider, according to the mandatory contract template included in the Internship/Traineeship Regulation ([see section 6.2](#)).

## 8.3 Learning and training objectives (Criteria 4 and 5)

### On-the-job training programme

The tripartite agreement and the individual contract regarding the on-job-training programme do not set out any training programme or learning objectives.

It is the individual training plan, which is drawn up by the employer and approved by the responsible NESAs office, which contains the training programme and the learning objectives.

On-the-job training providers designate one in-company trainer per up to seven trainees to guide them through the assigned tasks and monitor their progress, based on the individual training plan.

### Internship programme

The tripartite agreement and the individual contract for the internship programme do not set out any training programme or learning objectives.

The internship programme does not include the use of any individual training plan.

### Vocational training programmes

The learning and training objectives are the core part of the curricula of the vocational training programme, implemented at public VET providers. The learning and training objectives serve also as the basis for the development of the traineeship programme, when a part of practical training takes place in companies (traineeship). In this case the traineeship programme is mandatory and has to be drawn up by the VET provider in cooperation and coordination with the in-company trainer, according to a recommended template, exactly as in the case of the internship programme for IVET and CVET learners ([see section 6.3](#)).

Traineeship providers designate one in-company trainer per up to five trainees to guide them through the assigned tasks, and to monitor and assess their progress.

The pedagogical support at the workplace and the roles of the in-company trainer and the VET provider staff responsible for implementing the traineeship are exactly the same as in the case of IVET and CVET internships offered by VET providers ([see section 6.4](#)).

## 8.4 Working conditions applicable to trainees (Criteria 6, 7 and 8)

### On-the-job training programme

Certain rights and working conditions are part of the individual contract for the on-job-training programme. These include the maximum weekly working time and minimum daily and weekly rest, in accordance with the relevant Albanian legislation<sup>25</sup>.

The programme covers 100% of Albania's minimum wage for beneficiaries, the mandatory social and healthcare contributions (part of the employers' contributions), calculated on the basis of the Albanian minimum wage, and payment of ALL 2 000 per participant to the in-company trainer for the four-month duration (Council of Ministers, 2020b).

The programme also covers the mandatory social and healthcare contributions (part of the employers' contributions), calculated on the basis of the Albanian minimum wage, for a period of eight months,

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<sup>25</sup> NESAs source

when after completion of the on-job-training programme, the employer enters into an employment contract with the employee for the period of at least eight months.

### **Internship programme**

As for the on-the-job programme, certain rights and working conditions are part of the individual contract for the internship programme, including limits to the maximum weekly working time and minimum daily and weekly rest, in accordance with the relevant Albanian legislation.

The programme covers 50% of the minimum wage in Albania for beneficiaries, and the contributions for insurance against accidents at work for the six-month period (Council of Ministers, 2020b).

### **Vocational training programmes**

The traineeship contract for the vocational training programme specifies that the traineeship provider must pay the mandatory contribution for accidents at work and occupational diseases to the tax office, which is equal to 0.3% of the gross minimum wage for the whole traineeship period. However, it does not contain any description of working conditions.

No payment is provided to the trainee by the traineeship provider.

The Internship/Traineeship Regulation provides that the company can pay compensation related to food, transportation and other services necessary for the implementation of the traineeship, in accordance with the legal framework in force (Ministry of Finance and Economy, 2020).

## **8.5 Rights and obligations (Criterion 9)**

The individual contracts for the on-the-job training programme and internship programme specify the rights and obligations of the trainee and the training company, as well as the trainee's confidentiality obligation. The same applies for the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme, with the exception of the confidentiality requirement.

## **8.6 Reasonable duration (Criteria 10, 11 and 12)**

The on-the-job training programme has a duration of four months.

The duration of the internship programme is six months.

The potential maximum duration of the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme is no more than 12 weeks for the longest course duration of 30 weeks.

The contract for the on-the-job training programme and the internship programme, and the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme specify that the parties may terminate the contract in writing, providing advance notice of an appropriate duration, when certain contractual provisions are not adhered to.

## 8.7 Proper recognition of traineeships (Criterion 13)

### On-the-job training programme and internship programme

There is no recognition or validation of learning outcomes (e.g. knowledge, skills and competences) acquired during the on-the-job training and internship programmes.

### Vocational training programmes

Recognition of the traineeship is carried out within the general framework for recognition of the entire vocational training programme. There is a continuous evaluation by the in-company trainer in collaboration with the vocational practice teacher during the traineeship. The in-company trainer also takes part in the final examination on the vocational training programme. Successful completion of the vocational training programme ends with the award of the corresponding qualification and with a description of learning outcomes by the responsible VET provider. There is no centralised entity that deals with assessing traineeships.

The qualifications awarded through the vocational training programme are not referenced in the AQF, but they all refer to codes in the National List of Occupations. Certificates of vocational training programmes are recognised at the level of the ministry responsible for VET.

## 8.8 Transparency requirements (Criteria 14 and 15)

### On-the-job training programme and internship programme

The NESA website provides information about the procedure for registration and online expression of interest for on-the-job training and internship programmes.

Despite the progress made in providing information online and expressing interest for on-the-job training and internship programmes, the respective vacancies are not advertised.

### Vocational training programmes

The VET section of the NESA website offers sufficient information about all VET providers offering vocational training programmes in various occupational areas, career guidance, the procedure for registration for training programmes and other valuable information. The detailed programmes of short courses are accessible on the NAVETQ website (NESA, *How to apply*; NAVETQ, *Curriculum documents*).

Trainees register for vocational training programmes online through the e-Albania portal within 14 days after applying – or within 10 days after applying for unemployed jobseekers, who are exempt from paying training fees (e-Albania.al, *Application for enrolment in a vocational training programme*).

## 8.9 Cross-border traineeships (Criteria 16 and 17)

There are no cross-border traineeship rules and activities so far.

## 8.10 Applying the quality framework for traineeships (Criteria 19, 20, 21 and 22)

The main element of the quality framework for traineeships is the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme, which indicates the learning outcomes, rights and obligations, and duration of traineeships, based on exactly the same Internship/Traineeship Regulation as in the case of IVET and CVET offered by VET providers.

## 8.11 Conclusions

### Strengths

- In the case of one of the ALMPs – the vocational training programme – the Internship/Traineeship Regulation is in place, which is the basis for the traineeship contract that comprehensively regulates the rights and obligations of trainees, companies and VET providers. The other two ALMPs – on-the-job training and internship programmes – are regulated through the tripartite agreement between the employer, the jobseekers and the Regional Department of NESAs, and the individual contract between the employer and the jobseeker, with provisions on the rights and responsibilities of the parties, working conditions, payment, duration and the terms for terminating the contract. The on-the-job training programme is accompanied by the individual training plan, which is drawn up by the employer and approved by the responsible NESAs office. (Criteria 2, 3, 6, 8, 9 and 12)
- The learning and training objectives of the vocational training programme serve as the basis for the development (in close cooperation with the traineeship providers) of the traineeship programme and help the trainee to acquire practical experience and relevant skills. (Criterion 4)
- In-company trainers cooperate with VET providers to plan and supervise the implementation of the traineeship part of the vocational training programme, and carry out continuous evaluation of traineeship by using instruments agreed with the VET provider. (Criteria 5)
- Rights and working conditions are included in the respective contracts for the on-the-job training and internship programmes. This includes limits to maximum weekly working time and minimum daily and weekly rest, citing the relevant Albanian legislation. The same applies for the vocational training programme traineeship contract, although working conditions are not mentioned in that. (Criterion 6)
- The on-the-job training programme covers the mandatory social and healthcare contributions (part of the employers' contributions); the internship programme covers contributions for insurance against accidents at work; and the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme covers the mandatory contribution for accidents at work and occupational diseases. (Criterion 7)
- The respective contracts for the on-the-job training and internship programmes, and the traineeship contract for the vocational training programme clarify whether an allowance or compensation is applicable to beneficiaries and, if applicable, the amount. (Criterion 8)
- The maximum duration of the on-the-job training and internship programmes and of the vocational training programme traineeship contract does not exceed six months. (Criterion 10)
- The respective contracts for the on-the-job training and internship programmes, and the vocational training programme traineeship contract specify that the parties may terminate the contracts in writing, providing advance notice of an appropriate duration, when certain contractual provisions are not met. (Criterion 12)
- The knowledge, skills and competences acquired during the traineeship on the vocational training programme are recognised and validated within the general framework for recognition of the entire vocational training programme. (Criterion 13)
- The NESAs website provides information on the registration procedure for the on-the-job training, internship and vocational training programmes and on VET providers offering vocational training programmes in various occupational areas, as well as career guidance and other useful information. (Criterion 15)

## Challenges / gaps

- The regulatory framework of the internship programme does not provide any tools for planning learning objectives or any form of supervision during its implementation. (Criteria 3, 4 and 5)
- There is no recognition and validation of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) acquired during on-the-job training and internship programmes. (Criterion 13)
- Despite the progress made in providing information online and expressing interest for on-the-job training and internship programmes, the respective vacancies are not advertised. (Criterion 14)

## ANNEX 1: DETAILS OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees	Organisation	Position	Date
Interviewee 1	National Agency for VET and Qualifications	General Director	05.03.2024
Interviewee 2	Swisscontact Albania	Line Manager for Quality in WBL	09.04.2024
Interviewee 3	Swisscontact Albania	Deputy Project Manager	09.04.2024
Interviewee 4	National Agency for VET and Qualifications	Senior Expert	02.04.2024 12.04.2024
Interviewee 5	National Employment and Skills Agency	VET Director	09.04.2024
Interviewee 6	National Employment and Skills Agency	Director of Active and Passive Labour Market Programmes	25-26.09.2024

# ANNEX 2: QUALITY CRITERIA FOR APPRENTICESHIPS, BASED ON THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY AND EFFECTIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

## Criteria for learning and working conditions

### Written agreement

1. Before the start of the apprenticeship a written agreement should be concluded to define the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer, and where appropriate the vocational education and training institution, related to learning and working conditions.

### Learning outcomes

2. The delivery of a set of comprehensive learning outcomes defined in accordance with national legislation should be agreed by the employers and vocational education and training institutions and, where appropriate, trade unions. This should ensure a balance between job-specific skills, knowledge and key competences for lifelong learning supporting both the personal development and lifelong career opportunities of the apprentices with a view to adapt to changing career patterns.

### Pedagogical support

3. In-company trainers should be designated and tasked to cooperate closely with vocational education and training institutions and teachers to provide guidance to apprentices and to ensure mutual and regular feed-back. Teachers, trainers and mentors, specially in micro-, small and medium-sized companies, should be supported to update their skills, knowledge and competences in order to train apprentices according to the latest teaching and training methods and labour market needs.

### Workplace component

4. A substantial part of the apprenticeship, meaning at least half of it, should be carried out in the workplace with, where possible, the opportunity to undertake a part of the workplace experience abroad. Taking into account the diversity of national schemes, the aim is to progress gradually towards that share of the apprenticeship being workplace learning.

### Pay and/or compensation

5. Apprentices should be paid or otherwise compensated, in line with national or sectoral requirements or collective agreements where they exist, and taking into account arrangements on cost-sharing between employers and public authorities.

### Social protection

6. Apprentices should be entitled to social protection, including necessary insurance in line with national legislation.

### Work, health and safety conditions

7. The host workplace should comply with relevant rules and regulations on working conditions, in particular health and safety legislation.



## Criteria for framework conditions

### Regulatory framework

8. A clear and consistent regulatory framework should be in place based on a fair and equitable partnership approach, including a structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders. This may include accreditation procedures for companies and workplaces that offer apprenticeships and/or other quality assurance measures.

### Involvement of social partners

9. Social partners, including, where relevant, at sectoral level and/or intermediary bodies, should be involved in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes, in line with national industrial relations systems and education and training practices.

### Support for companies

10. Financial and/or non-financial support should be envisaged, particularly for micro-, small and medium-sized companies, enabling cost-effective apprenticeships for companies, taking into account, when appropriate, cost-sharing arrangements between employers and public authorities.

### Flexible pathways and mobility

11. To facilitate access, entry requirements for apprenticeships should take into account relevant informal and non-formal learning and/or, if relevant, the accomplishment of preparatory programs. Qualifications acquired through apprenticeships should be included in nationally recognised qualification frameworks referenced to the European Qualifications Framework. Apprenticeships should allow access to other learning opportunities, including at higher education and training levels, career pathways and/or, where relevant, the accumulation of units of learning outcomes. Transnational mobility of apprentices, either at the workplace or education and training institutions, should be progressively promoted as a component of apprenticeship qualifications.

### Career guidance and awareness raising

12. Career guidance, mentoring and learner support should be provided before and during the apprenticeship to ensure successful outcomes, to prevent and reduce drop-outs as well as support those learners to reengage into relevant education and training pathways. Apprenticeships should be promoted as an attractive learning pathway through widely targeted awareness-raising activities.

### Transparency

13. The transparency of, and access to apprenticeship offers within and between Member States should be ensured, including with the support of public and private employment services as well as other relevant bodies, and, when appropriate, by using Union tools such as EURES as provided for in the EURES regulation.

### Quality assurance and tracking of apprentices

14. Quality assurance approaches should be in place taking into account the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), including a process allowing a valid and reliable assessment of the learning outcomes. The tracking of employment and career progression of the apprentices should be pursued, in accordance with national and European legislation on data protection.

## ANNEX 3: QUALITY CRITERIA FOR TRAINEESHIPS, BASED ON THE EUROPEAN QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINEESHIPS

1. Improve the quality of traineeships, in particular as regards learning and training content and working conditions, with the aim of easing the transition from education, unemployment or inactivity to work by putting in practice the following principles for a Quality Framework for Traineeships:

### Conclusion of a written traineeship agreement

2. Require that traineeships are based on a written agreement concluded at the beginning of the traineeship between the trainee and the traineeship provider;
3. Require that traineeship agreements indicate the educational objectives, the working conditions, whether an allowance or compensation is provided to the trainee by the traineeship provider, and the rights and obligations of the parties under applicable EU and national law, as well as the duration of the traineeship, as referred to in recommendations 4-12;

### Learning and training objectives

4. Promote best practices as regards learning and training objectives in order to help trainees acquire practical experience and relevant skills; the tasks assigned to the trainee should enable these objectives to be attained;
5. Encourage traineeship providers to designate a supervisor for trainees guiding the trainee through the assigned tasks, monitoring and assessing his/her progress;

### Working conditions applicable to trainees

6. Ensure that the rights and working conditions of trainees under applicable EU and national law, including limits to maximum weekly working time, minimum daily and weekly rest periods and, where applicable, minimum holiday entitlements, are respected;
7. Encourage traineeship providers to clarify whether they provide coverage in terms of health and accident insurance as well as sick leave;
8. Require that the traineeship agreement clarifies whether an allowance or compensation is applicable, and if applicable, its amount;

### Rights and obligations

9. Encourage the concerned parties to ensure that the traineeship agreement lays down the rights and obligations of the trainee and the traineeship provider, including, where relevant, the traineeship provider's policies on confidentiality and the ownership of intellectual property rights;

### Reasonable duration

10. Ensure a reasonable duration of traineeships that, in principle, does not exceed six months, except in cases where a longer duration is justified, taking into account national practices;
11. Clarify the circumstances and conditions under which a traineeship may be extended or renewed after the initial traineeship agreement expired;
12. Encourage the practice of specifying in the traineeship agreement that either the trainee or the traineeship provider may terminate it by written communication, providing advance notice of an appropriate duration in view of the length of the traineeship and relevant national practice;

### Proper recognition of traineeships

13. Promote the recognition and validation of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired during traineeships and encourage traineeship providers to attest them, on the basis of an assessment, through a certificate;

### **Transparency requirements**

14. Encourage traineeship providers to include in their vacancy notices and advertisements information on the terms and conditions of the traineeship, in particular on whether an allowance and/or compensation and health and accident insurance are applicable; encourage traineeship providers to give information on recruitment policies, including the share of trainees recruited in recent years;
15. Encourage employment services and other providers of career guidance, if providing information on traineeships, to apply transparency requirements;

### **Cross-border traineeships**

16. Facilitate the cross-border mobility of trainees in the European Union inter alia, by clarifying the national legal framework for traineeships and establishing clear rules on hosting trainees from, and the sending of trainees to, other Member States and by reducing administrative formalities;
17. Examine the possibility to make use of the extended EURES network and to exchange information on paid traineeships through the EURES portal;

### **Use of European structural and investment funds**

18. Make use of the European Structural and Investment Funds, namely the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, in the programming period 2014-2020, and the Youth Employment Initiative, where applicable, for increasing the number and quality of traineeships, including through effective partnerships with all relevant stakeholders;

### **Applying the quality framework for traineeships**

19. Take appropriate measures to apply the Quality Framework for Traineeships as soon as possible;
20. Provide information to the Commission by the end of 2015 on the measures taken in accordance with this Recommendation;
21. Promote the active involvement of social partners in applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships;
22. Promote the active involvement of employment services, educational institutions and training providers in applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships;

## ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
AQF	Albanian qualification framework
CPD	Continuous professional development
CVET	Continuous vocational education and training
EFQEA	European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships
EQFT	European Quality Framework for Traineeships
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ICT	Information and communication technology
INSTAT	Albanian Institute of Statistics
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
NAVETQ	National Agency for VET and Qualifications
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NESA	National Employment and Skills Agency
OeAD	Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PES	Public Employment Service
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational education and training
WBL	Work-based learning

## REFERENCES

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