

## 3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

- 

**previous page**

[< 3.4 Career guidance and counselling](#)

- [Up](#)
- [3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market >](#)

### On this page

1. [Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships](#)
2. [Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships](#)
3. [Recognition of learning outcomes](#)
4. [Funding](#)
5. [Quality assurance](#)

---

## Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

### Apprenticeship

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship is the decree of [8 January 2009](#) approving the cooperation agreement related to the apprenticeship, concluded in Brussels on 24th October 2008 between the French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Community Commission (Décret portant assentiment à l'accord de coopération cadre relative à la formation en alternance, conclu à Bruxelles le 24 octobre 2008 entre la Communauté Française, la Région Wallonne et la Commission communautaire française).

In Brussels and Wallonia, apprenticeships are organised by 3 types of training operators. They are supervised by the French-speaking Office of Vocational Training (Office Francophone de la Formation en Alternance):

- Alternating Education and Training Centres (Centre d'Education et de Formation en Alternance - CEFA)

CEFA is secondary school alternating education and training. It offers an alternative to regular education. The [Decree](#) of 3 July 1991 organising secondary school alternating education and training is the regulatory framework to refer to.

- Walloon Institute of Vocational Training and Self-employed workers and Small and Medium Enterprises ([Institut Wallon de Formation en Alternance et des Indépendants et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises](#) - IFAPME)

IFAPME is a public body created by the Walloon Region. The Institute coordinates the training centres situated in Wallonia. All together, the centres constitute the “IFAPME network”. They organise apprenticeships, lifelong learning for everybody from the age of 15 years old. In the framework of the ESF Plan of 2014-2020, 2 projects target young people aged under 25 years old not in education, employment or training. These projects address either activities ahead the training (job discovery, key competences and soft skills, vocational guidance) or school attendance (remediation).

- Training Service of Small and Medium Enterprises ([Service Formation Petites et Moyennes Entreprises](#) - SFPME)

SFPME is the equivalent of IFAPME for the Region of Brussels.

**Apprenticeships contracts** used to be different according to the institution responsible for it.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2015, a **new common contract** for young people has been created: the **apprenticeship agreement**. This new contract is the result of a [cooperative agreement](#) concluded in 2008 between the Walloon Region, the French-Speaking Community of Belgium and the French Community of Brussels.

According to the French-speaking Community [Gouvernement's order of 17 July 2015](#) related to the apprenticeship contract (arrêté du Gouvernement de la Communauté Française du 17 juillet 2015 relatif au contrat d'alternance), this new contract offers:

- Regulatory framework for apprenticeships
- Standardisation of apprenticeship status in the French-speaking Community
- A unique status for the young apprentice.

The new apprenticeship agreement is a contract which identifies clearly the responsibilities of each party involved:

- the company commits to offer a practical training to the young apprentice
- the apprentice commits to learn under the authority of a supervisor, with a retribution of practical skills in the company
- the apprentice commits to follow the required training with a training operator.

- A third party involved in the contract is the training operator (IFAPME, CEFA, SFPME)
- The basis of the contract is a jointly agreed training plan
- This contract addresses young people from 15 years old up to the age of 25
- The company must be approved by the training operator
- The time of the contract must be fixed, depending of the training plan and for a time of 6 years at most
- The apprentice is paid.

A specific apprenticeship contract exists. It enables a youngster between 15 and 18 years old to learn a profession in the field of industry.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2015, all young people in apprenticeships receive the same social status regarding social security. Apprentices are assimilated to regular workers according to the legislation related to apprenticeships.

- Apprentices are partially subject to social security until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday's year. They contribute to the following sectors of social security: accident at work, occupational disease and annual holidays.
- Apprentices become completely subject to social security from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday's year. They contribute to all sectors of social security.

Apprentices receive a pay which equals a percentage of the Social Integration Income.

## **Traineeship**

A [royal decree](#) of 21 September 2004 related to intern's protection defines an intern as "a pupil or a student who, in the framework of a learning programme organised by an educational institution, works for an employer, in similar conditions as regular workers, in order to gain practical and professional experience". The internship is ruled by a contract signed between the student, the school and the employer. In general, this kind of internship is not paid. Most of the education programmes require an internship.

In addition, the legislator has developed a legal framework for young graduated people who want to undertake a traineeship in order to gain professional experience:

1. The professional immersion convention
  2. The traineeship convention for middle-classes.
- The "professional immersion convention" is defined by the Programme Act of 2 August 2002 ([loi programme du 2 aout 2002](#)). It offers a regulatory framework to young people who want to gain professional experience after their graduation. A contract must be signed between the trainee and the employer. The purpose of the convention is the practical training of the youngster.

The convention can be signed in the framework of an apprenticeship or in the framework of a traineeship not depending of an educative programme.

As this is not a work contract, the youngster doesn't receive any salary. However, the youngster receives a compensation (615.80 euros at 18 years old; 751 euros from 21). The convention system is supervised by Actiris, the employment public service of Brussels. To be eligible for the convention, the young job seeker must require an exemption from the Federal public body in charge of social security (ONSS).

- The purpose of the “traineeship convention for middle-classes” is to ensure a practical training in the field of entrepreneurial or freelance activity to young people who are not at school anymore.

## **Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships**

### **Apprenticeship**

The Office of apprenticeship training is asked by [decree](#) to organise the global promotion of the apprenticeship training, including towards enterprises and, if necessary, towards professionals Federations. This is complementary to the promotion's activities of apprenticeships operators (IFAPME, SPFME, CEFA). The Office is currently launching an interactive platform for apprenticeship. This tool aims, among others things, at informing and promoting apprenticeship according to the 2016 activity report of the Office. The Office of apprenticeship training was created in 2015 according to the 2016 activity report of the Office.

Operators in charge of apprenticeships such as IFAPME, CEFA or SFPME are responsible for the promotion of their own apprenticeship programmes.

General information about apprenticeships and traineeships can be found on different websites:

- Website of the Employment public Agency (Actiris in Brussels and Forem in Wallonia)
- Website of Youth Information Centres, Youth Centres, Youth Organisations, etc.
- International Youth Office for traineeships conducted abroad.

## **Recognition of learning outcomes**

### **Apprenticeship**

Skills acquired through apprenticeships are formally recognised in Belgium.

IFAPME and SFPME deliver a “certificate of apprenticeship” approved by the French-Speaking Community.

CEFA deliver a “certificate of secondary school” which mentions the apprenticeship option.

### **Traineeship**

There is no official recognition.

## **Funding**

### **Apprenticeship**

IFAPME is a public body created by the Walloon Region. Therefore, the body receives public funds to

implement its missions.

CEFA and SPFME are formally recognised as training operators by the French-speaking Community. They receive subsidies to fulfil their missions.

## **Quality assurance**

The French-speaking Office for apprenticeship is charged of the steering of the apprenticeship training.

Among its missions, defined by the [decree of 8 January 2009](#), the Office is charged to:

- To proceed to a permanent quantitative and qualitative exam of apprenticeship training situation in the French-speaking Community and the bilingual region of Brussels-Capital in collaboration with the vocational training operators and with the support of the services and administrations of the Government or other actors involved in the sector. This permanent exam provides the sector with a system of indicators to evaluate ;
- To address each year to the Government an activity report which includes an evaluation of the way the decree is implemented. Training operators provide the Office with statistical information.

The Office was created in 2015. It is launching an interactive platform for apprenticeship. This tool aims, among others things, at monitoring apprenticeship training according to the 2016 activity report of the Office.

A working group on statistics and apprenticeship overview has been also created.

The recognition of CEFA and SPFME as training operators is also a quality assurance.