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Chapter 1: Austria

1.1. Legal Framework

What is the legal framework for WBL in Austria (laws and regulations, regulatory body and policies)?

Education is a federal matter in Austria, so dual programmes are consistently regulated across the country. Nevertheless, curricula organisation may be different. Dual education programmes are still very rare at universities. However, technical universities and vocational academies offer a wide range of dual courses of study.

The dual study programme in Austria is provided through four different pathways:

1. **Dual study programme that includes training:** dual programmes were developed in cooperation with usually medium to large-sized businesses that provide alternating practical contents at the workplace, and theoretical contents which take place at the higher education institution. At the moment, only applied sciences universities provide dual programmes. The dual programme that includes training is a combination of training and study. Graduates have both a recognised bachelor's degree and a recognised vocational training qualification (apprenticeship qualification).
2. **Practice-integrated dual programme:** The practice-integrated dual option is a combination of internship and study, whereby the internship takes place over a longer period of time. Upon completion, graduates obtain a bachelor's degree. An in-depth practical stage at a company is included in the practice-integrated course. This requires an internship contract with the company.
3. **On-the-job programme of study:** This form is of interest to employed people who are looking for further vocational training after completing their initial vocational training. The course takes place during the working week, so the employer must agree to it. As a rule, part-time employment is then agreed.
4. **Work-study-programmes:** work-study-programmes usually provide lectures on weekends and a blended learning system, so it is possible also for students in full-time jobs to study while they are working. Usually, work-study-programmes are provided by applied sciences universities and curricula are connected to students' prior learning and practical experience.

1.2. Contract

What are the issues related to the contract between the student, companies and educational institutions? (type of contact, international students, specific duration)

A student's eligibility to take up a course of study that includes training and practice depends on each university. Students must have a general university entrance qualification or have passed the registration and diploma examination at a vocational college. When candidates have professional qualifications, i.e. a recognised completed apprenticeship and several years of professional experience, they may take up a course of study that is technically suitable for their training.

Training contracts regulated the following terms: duration, probationary period, working hours, work performance/obligation to achieve the training goal, place of work, remuneration/collective agreement type, training obligation of the employer, leave of absence, training costs/expense allowances, vacation, employee inventions, information exchange, non-disclosure obligation - data holiday, cooperation with the relevant applied sciences university, termination of the employment contract, forfeiture of claims, supplementary provisions to the employment contract/exceptions to the employment contract, collective agreement and the Salaried Employees Act.

There are 2 routes to apply for a dual programme: (i) applying to the company and then enrolling with the university; and (ii) applying to the university and then submitting an application to the company.

The dual course of study usually ends with a bachelor's degree and lasts 3-5 years, depending on the course, place of study and type of course. The practice-integrated course is one of the shorter programmes, since it is not associated with any professional training. In the case of dual programmes that include training, there are 6-8 semesters of strictly study time, i.e. 3-4 years. This includes 1-2 practical semesters, which are used as training time. There are many different forms of changing the duration of the training and studying stages.

1.3. Funding

How does funding and payment work in Austria? (student, hosting companies and VET institutions / Universities)

The main difference between a dual and a normal degree is the link between theory and practice. While full-time students are in a purely theoretical form of education, dual students become acquainted with everyday practical work during their studies. Since participants in a dual programme already work for a company, they will receive a salary. The amount can be decided by the relevant company and will be recorded in the training contract. Depending on the company, salaries range between 400 euros and over 1000 euros a month. Companies may also cover the tuition fees/costs or expenses for teaching materials or books.

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There are 2 routes to apply for a dual programme: (i) applying to the company and then enrolling with the university (more common); and (ii) applying to the university and then applying to the company.

1.4. Supporting WBL

How is WBL supported in Austria? (specific regulation, HEI, company facilitator/academic facilitator)

Whereas in Germany you can now choose from over 1,500 dual programmes, in Austria the dual model is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, the number of possible dual courses of study is growing steadily every year. There is a particularly broad range of courses in technology, engineering and economics. The number of courses offered in the social and natural science subjects is also increasing. Hardly any dual courses of study have been offered in artistic subjects and humanities to date.

The following website provides an overview of dual education in Austria: <https://www.dualstudieren.at/>

As of September 2022, seven higher education institutions in Austria offer dual programmes, all of which are applied sciences universities (<https://www.dualstudieren.at/hochschulen/>). In other words, there are no ‘universities’ offering dual programmes in Austria. However, the number of (Austrian) companies collaborating with higher-education dual programmes in Austria is much greater (<https://www.dualstudieren.at/unternehmen/>).

Chapter 2: Spain

2.1. Legal Framework

What is the legal framework for WBL in Spain (laws and regulations, regulatory body and policies)?

Regulations:

Applicable law:

Article 11 of Royal Decree 32/2021, of 28 December, on urgent measures for labour reform, guaranteed employment stability and labour market transformation ([Real Decreto-ley 32/2021, de 28 de diciembre, de medidas urgentes para la reforma laboral, la garantía de la estabilidad en el empleo y la transformación del mercado de trabajo \(Artículo 11\)](#)).

Legislative framework:

The final implementation depends on each individual Autonomous Region.

The Central Government sets the principles that govern Dual Training legal provisions. However, in the Basque Country, the Autonomous Government has implemented extraordinary measures aimed at improving economic incentives for companies. This has had the practical effect of improving the financial support that companies receive for each student.

Regulatory Body:

[Ministry of Education and VET](#) and [Ministry of Employment and Social Economy](#)

Autonomous Communities

Laws and regulations:

National law: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2012/BOE-A-2012-13846-consolidado.pdf>

2.2. Contract

What are the issues related to the contract between the student, companies and educational institutions? (type of contract, international students, specific duration)

Type of contract:

The work conditions and the salary that a dual vocational training student will receive is stipulated by the law that governs the training contract under an alternating training scheme. The salary in dual vocational training may never be less than the minimum wage (known as *salario mínimo interprofesional*) in proportion to the number of hours of actual work carried out.

In order for the student to be able to strike a balance between work and theoretical training, under the new labour reform, working hours may not exceed 65% of a full working day (40 hours per week) in the first year, nor 85% in the second year.

This contract covers any contingencies and benefits related to employees, including unemployment.

The Departments of Education of each Autonomous Region have powers over education matters, so they can supplement the provisions established by the Government in the Official Gazette (*BOE*) where Dual Vocational Training regulations are published. Therefore there may be significant differences between the different Autonomous Regions with regard to the working conditions of dual vocational training students.

There is no contract between the parties in cases where scholarships are used. Instead, an agreement is signed between the company, the training institution and the student, with the student receiving a monthly scholarship payment.

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Specific duration:

Minimum 3 months, maximum 2 years (as established in the new labour reform)

Upon expiry of the training and apprenticeship contract, the worker may not be employed under this scheme by the same or a different company to perform the same role (there is unemployment protection).

Regarding the working day, the time devoted to actual work may not exceed 65% of a full working day (pursuant to the new labour reform) in the first year; and it may not exceed 85% in the second and third years. The worker will receive training in an educational institution or in a professional training centre certified by the Ministry of Education.

Overtime is not permitted. The training activity specified in the training and learning contract shall be in line with the professional qualification of the workers under an alternating work scheme paid by the company (never less than the minimum wage), and employees will be required to be in possession of the necessary professional certificates included in the training itinerary.

A training and learning agreement must be entered into prior to the start of the employment relationship. The work to be performed will be related to the training content provided.

The professional skills acquired will result in participants obtaining the relevant professional certificate of professionalism included in the training scheme.

This training scheme is included in Article 16 and following of Royal Decree 1529/2012 and Order ESS/2518/2013 modified by Order ESS/41/2015.

2.3. Funding

How does funding and payment work in Spain? (student, hosting companies and VET institutions / Universities)

The salary paid to students ranges between 65% and 75% of the statutory minimum wage. This amount is determined by the Collective Agreement of the sector and is based on the percentage of training that is provided in the company.

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The hosting companies benefit from 100% Social Security breaks for common contingencies if they have less than 250 employees; and 75% Social Security breaks for companies with more than 250 employees.

In addition, a 100% reduction of the workers' contributions to Social Security will be applied during the term of the contract.

If the contract is terminated and turned into a permanent contract, the Social Security breaks will be €1,500/year for 3 years (in the case of women it will be €1,800/year).

Lanbide (Basque Employment Service) or the Deputy Ministry of Education of the Basque Government finances the training and apprenticeships carried out by companies in the amount of €2,000 per year of contract and per student. This financial support is not applicable to other Autonomous Regions.

VET institutions / Universities:

The eligible costs of the training will be calculated according to the modules:

- Face-to-face training: Costs per participant/hour will be 8 euros.
- Distance training: Costs per student/hour will be 5 euros.

Additional benefits for tutoring are provided for, which amount to up to 1.5 euros per student/hour of tutoring, up to 40 hours per student/ month.

The maximum benefits that companies are eligible for are based on the number of hours (25% of a full working day in the first year and 15% in the second and third years).

In the case of contracts with students who are included in the Youth Guarantee System, the amount of the above percentages will be 50% in the first year and 25% in the remaining years.

Training institutions are paid monthly for the cost of the training. This is why the Social Security breaks are provided, according to Article 10 of Order ESS 2518/2013.

The training institution will issue a monthly invoice to the company specifying: Name of the institution, name of its representative, details of the participants, training provided, number of hours of training in the relevant month and date of the invoice. The invoice will be used to apply benefits to the contract.

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Either the training institution or the company will report all the above data to the Spanish Public Employment Service through the Electronic Registry; this will be done periodically as it is billed or within the month following the end of the budget year.

2.4. Supporting WBL

How is WBL supported in Spain? (specific regulation, HEI, company facilitator/academic facilitator)

Specific regulation:

Organic Law 3/2022, of 31 March, on the Organisation and Integration of Vocational Training was recently approved ([Ley Orgánica 3/2022, de 31 de marzo, de Ordenación e integración de la Formación Profesional](#)). This new Law provided a significant boost to the sector. It provides that all Vocational Training courses in Spain will be carried out as dual programmes (with a traineeship in a company that must be longer than 25% of the total duration of the degree) from December 2024. Two options are provided for:

- General Dual Training: this establishes that the time spent working in a company will range between 25% and 35% of the total length of the degree. The company must participate in up to 20% of the contents and learning results in the syllabus.
- Intensive Dual Training: training in the company will be at least 35% of the total duration of the degree. In this option, the company will be responsible for training more than 30% of the syllabus content.

Dual training is also being promoted in Universities. For example, in the Basque Country, the Second Basque University + Business Strategy 2022-2026 is already underway ([II Estrategia Vasca Universidad + Empresa 2022-2026](#)). It aims to significantly increase the number of degrees carried out through dual training programmes.

In some Autonomous Regions, some financial support has been given to companies that are involved in developing Dual Vocational Training. For example, in the Basque Country there is a subsidy of €2,000 per student for companies that carry out dual training programmes.

Training institutions in Spain (both vocational training providers and universities) play a key leading role in the planning and implementation of dual training programmes. They are in

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charge of contacting and recruiting companies that participate in the programme, and of any procedures to be carried out (collaboration agreement, training plan...). They are also responsible for coordinating the process of putting students in contact with the companies for recruitment purposes and for the monitoring and evaluating the training plan.

Company facilitator/academic facilitator:

There must be a tutor in the training institution and another one in the company, both in the case of vocational training institutions and in the case of universities. These tutors should liaise and communicate with each other in order to monitor and assess students.

Chapter 3: Italy

3.1. Legal Framework

What is the legal framework for WBL in Italy (laws and regulations, regulatory body and policies)?

The legal framework underpinning the Italian system is the State-Regions agreement. Within this framework, the VET regulations are continuously updated. The new system based on the classification of professional profiles according to the new 'Labour Atlas' ('Atlante del Lavoro') was applied in the conference of 27 July 2011. The design of the VET qualification and diploma training pathways were based on this.

Since the matter of vocational training is in the hands of the regions, they are regulated by DGRs of the Veneto region (deliberations of regional governments). These issue notices for vocational training courses on a yearly basis that establish the method of providing internships.

3.2. Contract

What are the issues related to the contract between the student, companies and educational institutions? (types of contract, international students, specific duration)

A curricular internship involves educational institutions providing students over 15 years old with the opportunity to work in local companies. It does not provide for a contract of employment and therefore does not stipulate any salary obligation for the company. An internship agreement is drawn up between the parties (school and company), which works as an actual contract.

As far as the dual pathway is concerned, the same system of unpaid curricular internship is still in force, but this can be transformed into a first-level apprenticeship training contract in the process (by the companies), as set out by national decree law DL 81/2015 (also called the Jobs Act) . This contract allows for companies to offer a real employment contract in which there are three parties: the company, the student (who becomes an apprentice) and the educational institution. This contract is aimed at obtaining a technical diploma or a professional qualification.

3.3. Funding

How does funding and payment work in Italy? (student, hosting companies and VET institutions / universities)

Students who undertake a curricular internship during their studies in Italy (whatever that may be) cannot be paid a salary because there is no employment contract involved.

It is only if an apprenticeship contract is put in place that students can be paid the statutory salary under the CCNL (national collective bargaining agreement) in force; in general, the internship hours (which are referred to as in-company training) are paid at 10% of the statutory salary, while the hours that are worked outside of internship time and school time are paid at 100%.

Companies that engage in curricular internships do not receive social security or tax breaks. However, if they put in place a first-level apprenticeship training contract, they are eligible for social security and tax relief, which depends on the budget law of each area; for the current year 2022, companies obtained 100% social security contribution relief for the first three years of the contract, with gradually increasing percentages in subsequent years.

Funding for vocational training organisations is provided through single DGRs (deliberations of the regional government) to cover students' internship hours.

Chapter 4: France

4.1. Legal Framework

What is the legal framework for WBL in France (laws and regulations, regulatory body and policies)?

Regulations:

This form of training is highly regulated. There are two types: the apprenticeship contract and the professionalisation contract. These contracts are employment contracts concluded between an employer, an employee and a training centre. These courses are available at all training levels.

These contracts are for anyone over 16, but with an age limit of 29 for the apprenticeship contract (except for people with SEN - Special Education Needs / Learning Difficulties), for whom there is no applicable age limit. The duration of the contract ranges between 6 months and 3 years. The minimum wage is calculated as a percentage of the French minimum wage (SMIC).

[Formation en alternance - Ministère du Travail, du Plein emploi et de l'Insertion](#)

Legislative framework:

There is a common legislative framework. It sets, for example, the minimum percentage of training time in the school/company and also gives recommendations on the pace of the dual training programme.

Regulatory body:

The Employment Ministry.

Laws and regulations:

The following labour law: [Code du travail numérique](#)

VET students / university students:

Regulations applicable to VET students are provided by the Employment Ministry, whereas those applicable to University students are provided by the Ministry in charge of Higher Education and Research, under a separate framework.

[Guide des stages étudiants - Informations pratiques | enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr](#)

4.2. Contract

What are the issues related to the contract between the student, companies and educational institutions? (type of contract, international students, specific duration)

Type of contract:

A fixed-term contract ranging between 6 months and 3 years, depending on the duration and the level of the training programme.

However, students may also sign a permanent contract.

International students:

Under both an apprenticeship contract and a professionalisation contract, access to work-study training is possible for foreign candidates, but under close supervision for nationals from outside the European Union. The administrative situation of foreign candidates is obviously decisive in their access to work-study training.

‘Newly arrived’ foreigners not originating from the European area must first provide proof of a first year of initial training completed in French territory to be eligible to sign an apprenticeship contract and obtain a work permit from the Home Office according to their administrative situation. There is an exception for foreigners arriving in order to complete a Master’s degree: they do not need to have studied in France for one year before applying for an apprenticeship contract:

[L'apprentissage pour les étudiants étrangers - Alternance Professionnelle](#)

Specific duration:

A fixed-term contract ranging between 6 months and 3 years depending on the duration and the level of the training programme.

4.3. Funding

How does funding and payment work in France? (student, hosting companies and VET institutions/universities)

The student:

All students have a salary. Depending on the type of contract and their age, they receive a percentage of the minimum wage (known as *SMIC*) every month.

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For apprenticeship contracts (% of minimum wage) :

| Year of execution of the contract | Apprentice under 18 | Apprentice from 18 to 20 years old | Apprentice from 21 to 25 years old | Apprentice aged 26 and over |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1st year | 27 % | 43 % | 53 % | 100 % |
| 2nd year | 39 % | 51 % | 61% | 100 % |
| 3rd year | 55 % | 67 % | 78 % | 100 % |

For professional contracts:

| Age | Lower than baccalaureate | Equal or higher than the baccalaureate |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Under 21 | At least 55 % of minimum wage | At least 65 % of minimum wage |
| 21 to 25 years old | At least 70 % of minimum wage | At least 80% of minimum wage |
| 26 and over | At least the minimum wage or 85 % ordinary minimum remuneration | At least the minimum wage or 85 % ordinary minimum remuneration |

In addition, some support is available for students to settle in. Students on work contracts can benefit from a free rent deposit, a preferential loan and help with the rent deposit, among other advantages. Rent subsidies may also be available for accommodation.

[Formation en alternance -Apprentis : quelles aides au logement ? | Service-public.fr](#)

Hosting companies:

A company can benefit from various rates of relief for employing a person under a professionalisation contract or an apprenticeship contract. This may be in the form of financial support for hiring a disabled person, a jobseeker or a young person under the age of 30. This subsidy ranges from €2,000 to €8,000. There are some eligibility requirements for these subsidies.

VET institutions / universities:

VET institutions and universities receive funding to organise training for students on contract with a company. The amount of funding varies according to the type of contract.

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The funding is set for apprenticeship contracts by a state body called France Competences. This is a fixed amount of funding per learner per year and is specific to each course. The payment is made by a collecting organisation called an OPCO. There are 11 OPCOs, which correspond to business sectors.

The financing for professionalisation contracts is determined by each OPCO according to the training level. A supplement from the company may sometimes be necessary.

[France compétences](#)

[OPCO.fr](#)

4.4. Supporting WBL

How is WBL supported in France? (specific regulation, the HEI, company facilitator/academic facilitator)

Specific regulations:

France has put in place a system of exceptional financial support for employers who recruit apprentices in order to promote these schemes. Support amounts are assessed on an annual basis and vary across years. For example, financial support in 2022 was up to €5000 for an apprentice under 18 and up to €8000 for an adult apprentice.

[Aide exceptionnelle aux employeurs qui recrutent en apprentissage](#)

There are also many governmental structures that support companies in boosting these schemes and facilitate the procedures involved: Pôle Emploi, OPCO, France Compétences, ONISEP.

Higher Education Institution:

Any higher education institution can open an apprenticeship training centre and carry out professionalisation contracts with companies. The State encourages this development, and most universities make use of these training options.

Company facilitator/academic facilitator:

Each young person and adult in a work-based learning situation is accompanied by a company facilitator and an academic facilitator.

Chapter 5: Germany

5.1. Legal Framework

What is the legal framework for WBL in Germany (laws and regulations, regulatory body and policies)?

In Germany, WBL is not explicitly regulated but is governed by (national) labour law or by (regional) university law. National labour law governs the work contract between students and business partners, while regional university law governs the relationship between students and universities.

On a national level, a ‘Musterrechtsverordnung’ establishes a national framework for study programmes. However, as university law is governed regionally, this regulation results in regional university laws covering WBL with varying levels of specificity.

The national ‘Akkreditierungsrat’ endeavours to ensure a unified approach to WBL, which is limited by the lack of criteria defining WBL. On a regional level, for example in Bavaria, ‘Hochschule Dual’ functions as a point of contact for legal matters regarding WBL. At the level of universities in Bavaria and per study programme, business placement coordinators (‘Praxisbeauftragte’) informally assess a business partner’s suitability for WBL.

In Bavaria there are three relationships governed by specific laws and policies. First, the university and the business partner may sign a cooperation agreement, where the business partner describes itself, the nature of work conducted at the company, and potentially even appoints company facilitators. There are no regulations governing this contract. Second, the student enrolls at the university in accordance with the regional university law (‘Bayerisches Hochschulgesetz’) and the study programme’s study and examination regulation (‘Studien- und Prüfungsordnung’). Third, the student signs a work contract with the business partner (employer). This contract is regulated by employment law, e.g., employee protection law (‘Arbeitsschutzgesetz’).

In contrast to WBL, VET is regulated by a national legal framework that is part of employment law, the ‘Berufsbildungsgesetz’ (BBiG). Rooted in the BBiG, there are specific

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regulations defining VETs ('Ausbildungsordnung') consistently across Germany in terms of state accreditation, duration, structure, areas of application and examination. An example is the 'Fachinformatikerausbildungsverordnung'.

5.2. Contract

What are the issues related to the contract between the student, companies and educational institutions? (type of contact, international students, specific duration)

Generally, the student signs a work contract with the business partner (employer).

Among international students there are some students who intend to complete their full degree at a given university, who are different from visiting students who study at the university for one semester as part of an exchange programme. In both cases, having obtained the necessary visa/fulfilled the immigration requirements, international students can also sign these contracts. From this perspective, an international student is treated almost identically to a domestic student. The international student will have to undergo the same application process as a domestic student for WBL programmes.

In terms of duration, the most established WBL programmes in Germany, such as those from Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg/Berufsakademie, which has been offering WBL for almost 50 years, usually require 3 to 3.5 year contracts. If international students are seeking to complete a degree, they may join such a programme and sign a contract for such a duration. If an international student goes abroad for an exchange semester, e.g., a one-semester-long internship, the employment contract must include the length of the internship, which is usually between 14-24 weeks, depending upon the examination rule of the hosting university.

5.3. Funding

The salary payable to the student is agreed upon in the general employment contract. If the WBL is a mandatory part of the curriculum (as it usually is), an employer may pay less than the minimum salary. If the WBL is a non-mandatory curriculum requirement, such as a

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voluntary internship encouraged by the HEI but not mandatory from a curriculum perspective, employers are required to pay the minimum salary for the WBL engagement.

There is no further financial support for hosting companies in Germany, as far as we are aware.

The participating universities usually do not receive any special funding for WBL students from the government. However, university budgets for public universities usually depend on the number of enrolled students. Since WBL students are considered to be 'ordinary' students, WBL student enrolment brings with it funding for the university just as enrolment of any other student.

5.4. Supporting WBL

There is no specific regulation to 'boost' WBL apart from specific regulation for VET (see also section 'Legal Framework' above).

In the university sector, each WBL student usually has a company facilitator and an academic facilitator. The degree of academic facilitation varies from university to university and from federal state to federal state. The same applies to company facilitation. Additionally, there is some administrative support, e.g. in Bavaria from 'Hochschule Dual', such as specific personnel at universities that may be considered to be liaisons to 'Hochschule Dual', as the central body for WBL.