



EFQEA IMPLEMENTATION: A CEDEFOP ANALYSIS AND MAIN FINDINGS

How schemes in Cedefop's European database on apprenticeship schemes compare with EFQEA criteria

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Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop (2021). *EFQEA implementation: a Cedefop analysis and main findings. How schemes in Cedefop's European database on apprenticeship schemes compare with EFQEA criteria*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/563247>

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Luxembourg:
Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

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PDF

ISBN: 978-92-896-3228-7

doi:10.2801/563247

TI-03-21-090-EN-N

Designed by Missing Element Prague

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications. We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.

Cedefop was originally established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75. This decision was repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 establishing Cedefop as a Union Agency with a renewed mandate.

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Foreword

Apprenticeships have been constantly a policy priority in VET at the European level, from the Bruges communiqué (2010) to the Osnabrück declaration (2020), leading almost all EU Member States to engage in actions of reforming existing apprenticeship schemes or introducing new ones. Different purposes have been associated with this policy tool: to provide full vocational training, to address short-term skills development, to promote social inclusion, and to create a safety net for VET dropouts.

Amid this mix of policy developments, and due to concerns raised by social partners and experts that not all apprenticeships ensured high-quality training or even any training at all, attention turned to quality and effectiveness. In this context, the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships (EFQEA) represents a key point of reference, offering Member States a well-defined set of criteria for their apprenticeships to provide benefits to both employers and apprentices.

Committed to safeguarding the educational value of apprenticeship, and its link to employability and lifelong learning rather than short-term employment goals, Cedefop has supported the policy processes at the EU level and in several EU Member States, providing EU-wide and country specific data and analyses and supporting policy learning among relevant stakeholders from different countries. Three years after the adoption of the Council recommendation on EFQEA, Cedefop brings this contribution to the EU debates on apprenticeship quality by capitalising on its European database on apprenticeship schemes and its Community of apprenticeship experts.

By looking at 27 apprenticeship schemes in 19 EU Member States, this paper echoes previous Cedefop analyses on the topic and argues for further crystallising the identity of ‘apprenticeship’ within the national contexts. This should include clarifying its link to occupations, the type of contractual relationship between the learner and the training company, and the status of the learner in apprenticeship training. The paper strongly underlines the importance of the role of employer and employee representatives in apprenticeship governance.

The recent coronavirus pandemic showed how important it is for apprenticeships to be well-functioning and resilient to external pressures to protect learners from labour market fluctuations and keep companies engaged. A shift is needed from understanding apprenticeship mainly as training delivery, addressing short-term skill needs, to a structured approach to training to ensure individuals' employability and participation in lifelong learning and a highly qualified workforce for businesses in the medium to long term.

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Acknowledgements

This publication was produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Department for learning and employability (DLE), under the supervision of Antonio Ranieri.

Cedefop experts Ramona David, Vlasios Korovilos and Lisa Rustico (DLE) are responsible for this publication and the analysis conducted.

Cedefop would like to thank the members of Cedefop Community of apprenticeship experts for providing data for the [Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes](#).

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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

This report is Cedefop's contribution to the continuing discussion on the implementation of the [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#) (EFQEA) ⁽¹⁾, three years after the adoption of the Council recommendation.

The recommendation invites Member States to ensure that their apprenticeship schemes are responsive to labour market needs and provide benefits to employers and apprentices, by building on a well-defined set of criteria for learning and working conditions, as well as framework conditions. This report analyses the apprenticeship schemes included in the 2019-20 version ⁽²⁾ of the [Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes](#) against several of these quality criteria that mostly refer to aspects of apprenticeship design. Its 2019-20 version is updated by the members of [Cedefop community of apprenticeship experts](#), based on national legal/regulatory frameworks and national official statistics, where applicable. The database is structured around stable, system-level features of mainstream apprenticeship schemes as set in regulations (legal basis), and thus excludes pilot schemes or policy developments that are not (fully) embedded into national legislation and/or system features.

The analysis covers 27 apprenticeship schemes, all mainstream and underpinned by regulatory frameworks, operating in 19 EU Member States plus Iceland (Annex 1); it aims at identifying points of strengths and weaknesses across countries and not at providing an account of country progress towards the implementation of the EFQEA. The analysis also identifies several points of concern not directly addressed by the EFQEA but with relevance for quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships.

The schemes were analysed against the EFQEA criteria presented in Table 1. Not all corresponding criteria were covered by the analysis and

⁽¹⁾ See Council of the European Union (2018).

⁽²⁾ For the countries that did not participate in the 2019-20 update, Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes provides fiches that include information collected in the first half of 2016 (2018 database version).

some criteria were analysed together due to their complementarity. This grouping, and the order followed in this report (Table 1), is different from the one set out in the EFQEA, to allow better focus and sequence of the analysis, highlighting the internal links between several criteria and the possible impact of certain criteria on others. For example, the analysis shows that the type of written agreement may have an impact on apprentice social protection and work conditions, therefore EFQEA criteria 1, 6 and 7 are explored in tandem.

Table 1. **EFQEA criteria and sub-criteria under analysis**

Quality criteria	Sub-criteria
Quality criteria: 2: Learning outcomes 11: Flexible pathways and mobility	Link to the NQFs
	(Direct) access to higher education
	Delivery of a set of comprehensive learning outcomes
	Balance between job-specific skills, knowledge and key competences for lifelong learning
Quality criterion 8: Regulatory framework	Clear and consistent regulatory framework
	Accreditation procedures for companies and workplaces that offer apprenticeships
	Fair and equitable partnership approach, including a structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders
Quality criterion 9: Involvement of social partners	Role of the social partners in design (qualifications and curricula)
	Role of the social partners at the implementation level
Quality criterion 4: Workplace component	At least half of the apprenticeship duration should be carried out in the workplace
Quality criterion 3: Pedagogical support	In-company trainers should be designated
Quality criteria: 1: Written contract 6: Social protection 7: Work, health and safety conditions	Written agreement defining rights and obligations
	Apprentices' entitlement to social protection
	Workplace compliance with relevant rules and regulations on work, in particular health and safety legislation
Quality criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation	Apprentices should be paid or otherwise compensated
	Compensation is in line with national or sectoral requirements or collective agreements
Quality criterion 10: Support for companies	Financial support

Source: Cedefop.

CHAPTER 2.

Summary of main findings

2.1. Criteria for learning and working conditions

Cedefop's analysis covered all the criteria for learning and working conditions: written agreement, learning outcomes, pedagogical support, work-place component, pay and/or compensation, social protection, work, and health and safety conditions.

A written agreement between the learner and the employer is foreseen for almost all the schemes covered by the analysis. The agreement defines rights and obligations of both parties and sometimes also involves the vocational education and training (VET) provider. However, it is the nature of the agreement rather than simply its presence that seems to make a difference in terms of quality and therefore deserves more attention. Linked to the nature of the written agreement, attention needs to be paid to the status of the learner undergoing apprenticeship training. Is the learner a regular worker, a regular student or both at the same time? Is there a formal acknowledgement that learners undergoing apprenticeship training are a category per se? Together with apprentice status, the nature of the agreement/contract has implications for the entitlement to social protection and the nature of the compensation. Apprentices tend to be largely covered by social protection in countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as employment contracts or specific types of contract subject to employment law. In countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as other non-contractual types of formal agreement, apprentices tend not to benefit from social protection or employment protection legislation.

Being part of the formal system, linked to formal qualifications (referenced to the national qualifications frameworks (NQFs)) and therefore underpinned by comprehensive standards, all the apprenticeship schemes under analysis normally ensure the delivery of a set of comprehensive learning outcomes, either at school or at the workplace, including a balance between job-specific skills, knowledge and key competences for lifelong learning. However, attention needs to be focused on whether apprenticeships use a structured approach to training for both learning components (school-based and

workplace) and do not merely offer a context for gaining work experience. Most of the apprenticeship schemes analysed lead to the same qualifications as the school-based VET tracks. They are not linked to curricula or training standards specifically designed for apprenticeships but are usually based on general VET standards or curricula – or even programmes – that are primarily designed for school-based training. In many cases, concerns remain about the content of the workplace component which accounts for more than half of total apprenticeship duration, as the analysis shows; these concerns are related to whether and how the workplace component is structured and guarantees parity of opportunities for employers and learners, how it is expressed, on what basis, and by whom.

In all schemes analysed, employers that participate in apprenticeship provision are required to appoint a member of their staff to provide apprentices with pedagogical support. Regulation of appointment of in-company trainers, however, does not always sufficiently address the complexity of the in-company trainer role. There are numerous examples where they are called to perform other tasks, such as providing support and guiding apprentices, introducing and integrating them to the work environment, cooperating with schools, coordinating training in the two venues, and participating in training planning. These findings point to a need to better reflect on the variety of roles and persons involved at the workplace learning during apprenticeship training.

The EFQEA envisages that ‘a substantial part of the apprenticeship training, meaning at least half of it, should be carried out in the workplace’. This is the case for all schemes analysed. However, less attention is given to the total duration of the apprenticeship training that the minimum share of 50% applies to. The analysis shows that, in many cases, this duration is not fixed by qualification and based on criteria linked to the complexity of the related occupation and on considerations of the length of time necessary for a novice to become qualified. The minimum share of 50% may be considered ‘substantial’ only in relation to the overall duration of the apprenticeship training which needs to be meaningful; this is to qualify the labour force, for the employers who need to see the benefits from investing in this specific type of training, both at sectoral and individual levels. Within the overall duration, the workplace component needs to allow an apprentice to obtain enough knowledge and develop skills through full immersion in a real work environment. Also, the concept of alternation may be further discussed as part of ensuring quality and effective apprenticeships,

considering a fair and coherent distribution of responsibilities in delivering vocational theory and practice in both venues, and the need to integrate theory and practice in all learning contexts. This goes hand-in-hand with the reflection on the necessity of having a structured approach to apprenticeship training.

A form of compensation is foreseen in almost all schemes. Its nature – wage or allowance – depends on the nature of the apprenticeship contract. In most cases, employers cover apprentices' wages, while the State may offer compensation to employers for such cost. The question arises of the extent to which the State should entirely or partly cover the remuneration of the apprentice (take over the direct cost completely or partly) or other forms of allowance to learners across the board (all employers alike) or foresee targeted financial support.

2.2. Criteria for framework conditions

Cedefop's analysis covered four of the criteria for learning and working conditions: regulatory framework, involvement of social partners, support for companies, and flexible pathways. Career guidance and awareness raising, transparency, quality assurance and tracking of apprentices were not addressed.

By definition, all schemes selected for inclusion in the Cedefop database have a legal basis. Concerns about the regulatory framework, therefore, are not about its presence but its clarity in relation to what 'apprenticeship' is and its specific educational value for society and the labour market compared with other VET tracks. The lack of clarity observed in some countries triggers, or reflects, the difficulty of national stakeholders in reaching a shared understanding of the apprenticeship function, purpose and value. This lack of common understanding translates into difficulties in building a brand of 'apprenticeship', communicating its value, and hence attracting learners and employers.

Qualifications acquired through apprenticeship schemes under analysis are usually included in nationally recognised qualification frameworks referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) ⁽³⁾. However, while these schemes lead to formal qualifications, not all lead

⁽³⁾ Exceptions are the schemes in the French Community of Belgium and in Spain.

to apprenticeship-specific qualifications. Some lead to the same VET qualifications as the school-based VET track; qualifications may or may not indicate the track, whether apprenticeships or full school-based VET. This is the type of situation that Cedefop defines as ‘apprenticeship as a type of VET delivery’ (Cedefop, 2018). One of the advantages of this approach is that apprenticeships are potentially available at all EQF/NQF levels and contribute to increasing the overall flexibility of the VET systems, where both apprenticeships and school-based VET function as communicating vessels leading to the same qualifications. On the downside, the identity issue that emerged from the analysis of the regulatory framework returns as an obstacle on the way to achieving and preserving apprenticeship quality and effectiveness. Where apprenticeships and school-based VET share the same scope and content and are merely distinguished by some formalistic features (such as remuneration and employment status), it is difficult to gauge the intrinsic quality, effectiveness and value of apprenticeship, particularly compared with the school-based tracks with work placements.

The absence of a shared and clear understanding of ‘apprenticeship’ or ‘apprentice’ within the national context, has wider effects at the EU level and the struggle for a plausible estimate of participation in apprenticeships. Leaving aside methodological and technical issues, the coverage of data on ‘apprenticeships’ requires a common definition of what an ‘apprenticeship’ or an ‘apprentice’ is. Because of this gap, official systematic data collection at EU level is still not available. This has negative implications for policy design and for the evaluation of apprenticeship ‘effectiveness’, which is the other key dimension of the EFQEA, alongside quality. A priority in apprenticeship European and national level policy-making, therefore, is clarifying the function, purpose and understanding of apprenticeship for all stakeholders involved, which in turn would improve measurement of its outcomes, effectiveness and value.

The role of social partners is pivotal to stakeholder involvement. Cedefop work has extensively and strongly underlined the importance of the role of employer and employee representatives in apprenticeship governance. While regulations in place provide at least a minimum basis for fair and equitable partnership approaches, the analysis shows that further work is necessary at all levels (strategic all the way through to implementation) for the social partners to be more directly and decisively involved specifically in apprenticeship governance.

2.3. Summary: learning, working and framework conditions

Most if not all issues and gaps identified in relation to the criteria under analysis are caused by a difficulty, in many national contexts, in disentangling the ‘essence’ of apprenticeships from that of the school-based track. They point to the need for further crystallising the identity of ‘apprenticeship’ within national contexts in relation to other VET tracks and particularly to school-based VET with work placements. This is an inescapable condition for ensuring the quality of apprenticeships and measuring their effectiveness.

For learning and working conditions, crystallising the identity entails strategic decisions linked to the nature of the written agreement between the learner and the employer; it should cover the status of the learner in apprenticeship training, both in relation to their peers in school-based VET and in relation to ordinary workers. Further, more effort is necessary to ensure that apprenticeships are based on a structured approach to training for both learning components (school-based and workplace) and do not merely offer a context for gaining work experience from the workplace component. The overall duration of the apprenticeship training needs to be meaningful in qualifying the labour force for the employers that need to see the benefits from investing in this specific type of training, both at sectoral level and individual levels. Within the overall duration, the workplace component needs to allow an apprentice to obtain enough knowledge and develop skills through full immersion in a real work environment.

At the level of the framework conditions, rather than settling for a compromise solution, all stakeholders (educational authorities and labour market actors alike) need to reach a shared and unequivocal understanding of ‘apprenticeship’ and build the brand name. More powers for the social partners could be necessary in all issues related to the scope, content and design of apprenticeships. For example, labour market actors need to be trusted with the responsibility for identifying for which sectors and for which occupations apprenticeship is most needed, to concentrate policy and financial efforts primarily on those ones; while this might temporarily have an impact on apprenticeship quantity, it shall certainly lead to increased quality.

CHAPTER 3.

Assessment using Cedefop's database information

3.1. Quality criteria 2 and 11

Box 1. Criteria 2 and 11

Criterion 2 - Learning outcomes

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.

Criterion 11 - Flexible pathways and mobility

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 programmes. Qualifications acquired through apprenticeships should be included in nationally recognised qualification frameworks referenced to the European qualifications framework ⁽⁴⁾. 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.

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

Quality criteria 2 and 11 are analysed together as they approach apprenticeship quality from two complementary aspects, tightly linked to the relationship

⁽⁴⁾ See Council of the European Union (2017).

between apprenticeships and lifelong learning. Criterion 11 has at its heart the need for apprenticeships to lead to formal qualifications referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) and to support lifelong learning, in addition to successful transition into the labour market. Criterion 2 approaches apprenticeships in relation to lifelong learning from the perspective of how they are implemented and devised between the two venues in such a way that the learning is not too narrow or employer-specific.

3.1.1. Link to the NQFs

The link to formal qualifications is one of the defining features of apprenticeships according to practically all EU-level definitions of the term ⁽⁵⁾; it is a feature that Cedefop has used in identifying the apprenticeship schemes in the EU countries plus Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom that were included in its database. All these schemes lead to qualifications included in the NQF, except for Spain (apprenticeship in dual VET) as there is no NQF in place in this country ⁽⁶⁾. As a result, where NQFs are in place all schemes are linked to them. As in all cases but one ⁽⁷⁾ NQFs are, in turn, linked to the EQF, the schemes comply to the pivotal component of criterion 11 of the EFQEA.

However, while all schemes lead to formal qualifications, not all schemes lead to apprenticeship-specific qualifications; most of them lead to the same VET qualifications as the school-based VET track (with or without workplace placements); Cedefop calls this 'apprenticeship as a type of VET delivery' (Cedefop, 2018). Annex 2 summarises the type and level of qualification the schemes lead to, either apprenticeship-specific or VET qualification (common to apprenticeship and school-based tracks). Most of the 27 schemes under analysis (except for five) lead to the same qualifications as the school-based VET track. The qualifications may or may not indicate which of the two tracks the graduate followed to achieve it.

The apprenticeship schemes leading to the same VET qualifications as the school-based VET track could potentially apply to all NQF levels and

⁽⁵⁾ See Cedefop (2014), Cedefop (2019), Council of the European Union (2018) and European Commission (2016).

⁽⁶⁾ According to answers provided to question 17 of the database (*Is the qualification included in the national qualification framework?*) and Cedefop (2021). www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8611_en.pdf

⁽⁷⁾ The German-speaking Community of Belgium. See Cedefop (2021). www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8611_en.pdf

in different education and training subsystems, since they do not require systematic arrangements in design and provision (such as specific standards, programmes, and governance arrangements). Information in Annex 2 shows that each of these schemes may span NQF levels 2 to 5 ⁽⁸⁾. Only exceptionally are they offered on just one NQF level. In contrast, schemes linked to specific apprenticeship qualifications are offered in one specific NQF level (usually level 4).

The emergence of the approach that disconnects apprenticeships from an apprenticeship-specific qualification, making it potentially available at all EQF/NQF levels and for all occupations, increases VET system flexibility but raises questions on the specific educational function and value in relation to other VET tracks. Different understanding of the function and value of apprenticeship in a country may lead to different standards for quality and effectiveness among key stakeholders. Clear identity is a precondition for achieving and preserving quality and for monitoring EFQEA implementation. More reflection is needed on the role of the qualification has or should have in shaping the apprenticeship identity.

3.1.2. (Direct) access to higher education

The question of whether the apprenticeship schemes under analysis provide direct access to higher education is answered straightforwardly only for specific schemes: those linked to an apprenticeship-specific qualification principally designed to qualify people for the labour market and applying to one NQF level only (Annex 2).

The answer is not straightforward when it comes to those schemes that are ‘a type of VET delivery’, as they may apply to a variety of NQF levels and VET qualifications. Access to higher education depends on the qualification type and level; it is not the apprenticeship as such which determines access or not to higher education but the configuration of the VET system overall. It may also be the case that the scheme applies to NQF level 5 qualifications and above, so the question does not apply. In this case, it is not the apprenticeship as such which determines access to higher education or not but the general VET qualification to which the scheme applies, which may or may not provide access to higher education.

Since all countries have been working on eliminating dead-ends for all VET learners, even in cases where no direct access is possible, access to

⁽⁸⁾ Apprenticeship Type 3 in Italy leads to qualifications at NQF/EQF level 8.

higher education is eventually possible for all VET graduates, for example through enrolling in (final years of) other VET tracks.

3.1.3. Delivery of a set of comprehensive learning outcomes

Being part of the formal system, linked to formal qualifications and underpinned by comprehensive standards, all the 27 apprenticeship schemes guarantee that the learner achieves the learning outcomes for the specific qualification. However, the apprenticeship schemes that lead to the same qualifications as the school-based VET tracks are not underpinned by curricula or training standards specifically designed for apprenticeships; they make reference to general training standards or curricula or even programmes that are primarily designed for the school-based track or for both tracks (Annex 3). The actual 'adjustment' is carried out at the implementation level between the education and training providers and the employers. In-company trainers and school teachers need to work together to 'adapt' part of the general VET curriculum to the work contexts. In these cases, questions may arise in relation to:

- (a) the applicability of the common standards, curricula, programmes (both for the school-based and apprenticeship tracks) to a work context;
- (b) the extent to which this approach ensures that apprenticeship is underpinned by a structured approach to training and does not merely offer a context for gaining work experience.

In principle there should be no concerns over whether apprenticeship delivers a comprehensive set of learning outcomes for the link to formal qualifications (Section 3.1.1.), but there may be concerns over whether comprehensive learning outcomes are set for the workplace and are expressed in a language which is appropriate for the work environment, since a major part (min 50% of the total apprenticeship duration) is expected to be delivered at the workplace (see analysis of quality criterion 4).

3.1.4. Job-specific skills, knowledge and key competences for lifelong learning

Because of the link to formal qualifications, the learner is expected to achieved all learning outcomes for the qualification, either at school or at the workplace. This, in principle, ensures a balance between job-specific skills, knowledge and key competences for lifelong learning.

However, the issue of workplace training needs to be addressed from another perspective: is the experience of the learners at the workplace comparable/of comparable value, underpinned by a structured approach and not merely a context for gaining work experience? This aspect is addressed under analysis of quality criterion 4.

3.2. Quality criterion 8

Box 2. Criterion 8: Regulatory framework

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.

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

The analysis of criterion 8 focuses on the existence of regulatory frameworks for apprenticeships and accreditation procedures for workplaces that offer apprenticeship placements. The aspect of fair and equitable partnership approach is understood as whether the regulatory framework introduces tripartite structures or formalises cooperation with labour market representatives with responsibilities in supporting decision-making (ideally exclusively on apprenticeship) at the national/central level.

3.2.1. Clear and consistent regulatory framework

In all countries under analysis, apprenticeships are underpinned by legislation. Except for Iceland, Latvia and Poland, all countries also have an official definition of the national concept corresponding to the English term of ‘apprenticeship’ or ‘apprentices’.

However, even when official definitions exist, clarity is still an issue in many cases, with consequences for shared understanding among national stakeholders and difficulties in building a brand and attracting learners and employers. The regulatory frameworks should still provide clarity on what ‘apprenticeship’ is and what differentiates it from other tracks. This is

particularly valid in those countries where there is no systematic approach to apprenticeship (where it is not a distinct education and training system of its own), but it is treated as a complementary track to school-based VET; in those countries the qualification does not play any role in differentiating apprenticeships from other methods of training and learning, particularly those involving practical training at the workplace (see analysis of quality criteria 2 and 11). For example, apprenticeship tracks may be based on curricula that are developed for all VET, not always through participatory approaches that take into consideration social partner views. Or, coordination bodies may exist, but for VET in general, not for apprenticeships in particular.

The ambiguity still surrounding the concept of apprenticeship in many countries makes it difficult to assess if, and to what extent, many of the criteria are met. In many countries, it is difficult to disentangle the analysis of the overall VET system from the analysis of apprenticeships.

3.2.2. Accreditation procedures for companies and workplaces that offer apprenticeships

In all countries under analysis, the rules and regulations define under what conditions an employer could engage in apprenticeship provision (requirements are invariably linked to the need for employers to provide a learning environment and appoint an in-company trainer).

Employers are required by regulation to provide a suitable learning environment for all schemes under analysis. This provision usually complements general requirements, such as registration in chambers or other relevant registries and proofs of financial competence/sustainability.

Analysis of the requirements specifically related to learning conditions/learning environment reveals that, in 11 out of the 27 schemes explored, a formal accreditation procedure is in place for employers wishing to provide apprenticeship placements. In this case, employers need to demonstrate to competent authorities (chambers, occupational councils, national VET institutions or VET providers) their capacity to provide training (in terms of facilities, equipment and personnel) before they are given the right to receive an apprentice. In the case of the remaining schemes, similar requirements may be in place, but are not checked through a formal accreditation procedure (Annex 4).

3.2.3. Fair and equitable partnership approach, including a structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders

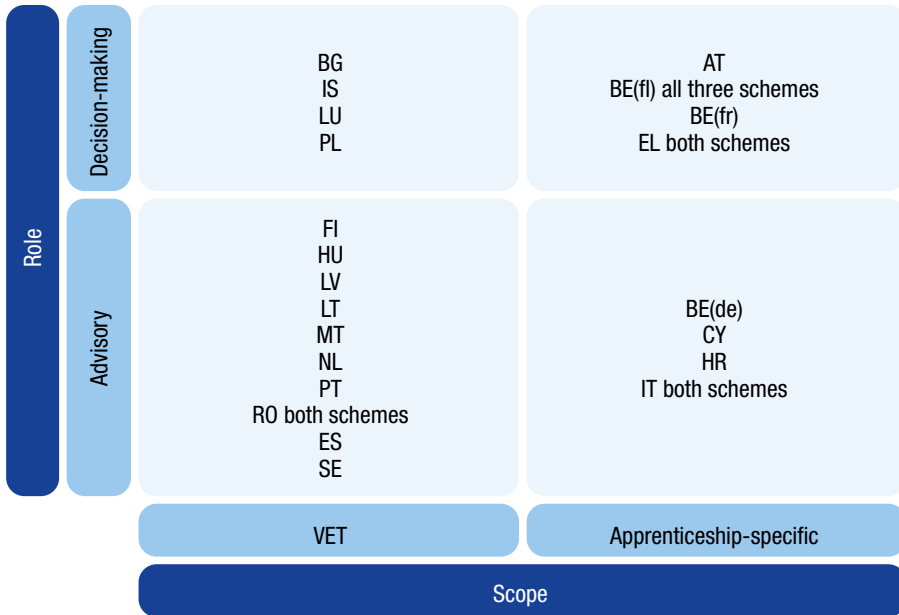
In all countries analysed, multi-stakeholder bodies are set to enable structured and transparent dialogue among apprenticeship stakeholders, bringing together the State (ministries and, in some cases, national institutions) with social partners (employer representatives, including chambers and, in most cases, trade unions).

These tripartite bodies may have either a consultative function (members are heard during the law-making process, may support decision-making through technical input) or full decision-making powers (Figure 1). In most cases, the social partners have an advisory function, rather than decisively contributing to shaping the apprenticeship system or scheme(s) in the country. It is generally the Ministry of Education with its agencies or the Ministry of Employment and the public employment services that play a central role in decision-making; other stakeholders are heard or consulted, rather than given a role and responsibility in decision-making. There are exceptions to the rule, where the social partners are involved in system level decisions: examples are Austria, the Belgium-Flemish and French Communities, Greece and Iceland.

Tripartite bodies are split between those which have an apprenticeship-specific mandate and those that have a mandate related to VET in general or, even wider, related to skills development policies at sectoral level (such as sectoral skills councils for VET curricula or qualifications or professional committees) (Figure 1). These bodies may hold a direct bilateral dialogue with the ministries and other institutions; or be indirectly involved in apprenticeship governance through higher-level structures.

It appears that countries envisage a minimum level of fair and equitable partnership approach at the central level, including structured and transparent dialogue among stakeholders. However, this dialogue often remains at an advisory level and there are even fewer cases where such tripartite bodies have an apprenticeship-specific mandate. It remains unclear to what extent, in practice and within their wider mandate, these tripartite bodies influence apprenticeship-related strategies.

Figure 1. **Role and level of topics covered by bodies that enable structured and transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders**



Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 9, 38 and 39.

3.3. Quality criterion 9

Box 3. Criterion 9: Involvement of social partners

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.

Source: European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships.

The analysis of criterion 9 focuses on whether social partners are involved in designing content, qualifications and curricula (at the national level) and on whether they are involved at the implementation level and in what roles.

Social partner involvement in apprenticeship governance at the national level has been addressed more generally under the analysis of criterion 8 (see ‘Fair and equitable approach’). Here, the aim is to investigate more closely their involvement in deciding for which qualifications apprenticeship may be offered and with which content. This can be seen as a predictor of apprenticeship responsiveness to the labour market and, as such, a precondition for its success.

3.3.1. Role of the social partners in design (qualifications and curricula)

In all countries under analysis except two (Italy and Malta) social partners are involved in devising qualifications or curricula or both (Annex 5). However, in most countries, shaping the content concerns VET provision in general, not specifically for apprenticeships. This leaves room for apprenticeships to be potentially offered for all VET qualifications but raises at least two questions with relevance for quality apprenticeships.

First, interest in apprenticeship is not as high in all sectors. Cost and benefits (also linked to the duration of apprenticeship training) vary by sector. Social partners may need to have a role in selecting/expressing an opinion on qualifications to be provided in the form of apprenticeships, based on clear justification from the sector.

Second is extent to which the ‘learning environment neutral’ qualifications and curricula are appropriate for the workplace component in terms of language and reality of a workplace (see also analysis of criteria 2 and 11). The social partners may be invited to reflect and express an opinion.

Social partners may have a bigger role to play in the design of apprenticeships when it comes to selection of qualifications for apprenticeship provision and shaping these qualifications.

3.3.2. Role of the social partners at the implementation level

The analysis looks at whether the social partners have roles in the final assessment of apprentices, accreditation of companies and workplaces and monitoring of the workplace training. The picture is quite varied: it ranges from those countries where social partners have a quite strong contribution across

all these three roles, to countries where social partners do not have any of the three roles. Between these two extremes the picture is quite mixed (Annex 6).

The role of the social partners at the implementation level needs to be reinforced and clarified in relation to apprenticeship provision.

3.4. Quality criterion 4

Box 4. Criterion 4: Workplace component

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.

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

Criterion 4 considers the minimum volume of workplace learning within the overall duration of the apprenticeship training. The analysis of Criterion 4 takes a step further and brings forward related questions with direct relevance for apprenticeship quality:

- (a) what is the point of reference for the minimum 50% (what is the overall duration of the apprenticeship training)?
- (b) is the school-based component guaranteed (besides the workplace component)?

3.4.1. At least half of the apprenticeship duration should be carried out in the workplace

The share allocated to workplace training usually accounts for more than the half of the overall apprenticeship duration; in most cases this is clearly stated in the regulation. In other cases, even if the regulation foresees a minimum lower share, or no share at all, the workplace part takes up more than 50% of the total scheme duration in practice.

Annex 7 presents the shares of workplace training per scheme. By regulation, the share of workplace training is more than 50% of the total duration in 16 of 27 schemes. In 10 of these schemes, the share of workplace training well exceeds the 50% threshold, rises to over 60% of

the total duration and can be up to 80%: in BE(de), in BE(fl) apprenticeship for SMEs, in Greece EPAL apprenticeships, in Cyprus, in Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland and Romania apprenticeships at the workplace.

In seven schemes the share of workplace training is formally set between 20-50% of the total duration, but at least in three cases – BE(fl) part-time vocational secondary education, Italy Type 3 and Latvia – it can exceed 50%. Similarly, in the four cases where no share is defined, in practice the workplace training part can exceed 50% and reach even 100% in practice.

3.4.1.1. *What is the point of reference for the minimum 50% (what is the overall duration of the apprenticeship training)?*

The criterion requirement of 50% of the apprenticeship time being spent at the workplace is technically covered in the vast majority of the schemes under analysis. However, this criterion needs to be related to the overall duration of the apprenticeship training to which it applies.

Duration of the apprenticeship training is of crucial importance to better understanding if the minimum 50% share is enough for the apprentice to obtain knowledge and develop skills through full immersion in a real work environment, but also for the employer to see benefits from the investment to this type of training.

Annex 8 provides an overview of the different approaches that countries apply to defining the overall duration of the apprenticeship training, and consequently of the share of the workplace training. There are roughly four types of approach:

- (a) overall duration varies by occupation and the share of workplace training is the same for all learners: this is the exception (two schemes);
- (b) overall duration varies with level of qualification and the share of workplace training is the same for all learners (five schemes);
- (c) overall duration and share of workplace training are fixed for all corresponding VET programmes (six schemes);
- (d) overall duration and share of workplace training are not fixed (but expressed as a minimum and maximum duration) and vary with each individual learner (nine schemes).

In the schemes falling under the first three approaches, countries apply a more systematic approach to apprenticeship provision by setting a common frame of reference which does not exclude flexibility at the level

of the individual: even though the total duration and share are common for all learners pursuing the same qualifications, individual variations may exist (such as shorter or longer duration) based on the individual's prior learning and needs. This systematic approach ensures transparency and sets common standards/expectations for all learners and employers, all important for trust in the qualification and the way it was achieved. What is more important, employers and learners have comparable opportunities in terms of time spent at the workplace, which is reassuring for both parties involved.

In the first two cases, variations exist by type of occupation (exceptionally) or level of qualification. This type of variation does not apply in the third case (also because the schemes apply to the same qualification level). Ideally, however, the overall duration would vary by occupation and the complexity of the qualified job for which the apprentice is studying, and not by level of qualification.

Individualisation is at the core of the third approach: all schemes applying this approach operate as an alternative type of VET delivery leading to the same VET qualifications as the school-based VET track and sharing the same VET programmes. In this case, apprenticeship may start at different points during a corresponding VET programme. The maximum overall duration of an apprenticeship training may coincide with the overall duration of the VET programme it applies to, but it may last for minimum two months of the VET programme (Lithuania, VET in the form of apprenticeship) or six months (Italy, -apprenticeship types 1 and 3) or one year (as in Hungary, Romania and Sweden). The actual duration is decided individually. At an extreme, this approach implies that two learners may have two completely different experiences in apprenticeship training even if studying for the same qualification: one may have a two-month long apprenticeship training (and one month at the employer), while the other may have a three-year long apprenticeship (and 1.5 years at the employer). This raises concerns of equality of opportunities, transparency and quality of the qualification and the way it was achieved, identity and value of apprenticeships.

In six schemes it is unclear how overall duration is fixed in relation to the four types of approach above.

Unarguably, the value of apprenticeships in delivering a set of comprehensive learning outcomes (quality criterion 2) is given by full immersion in a real work environment to the length of time considered by labour market representatives as necessary for a novice to become qualified.

Apprenticeships and the associated qualifications must reflect occupational and, where relevant, professional standards to maximise their value to employers and individuals.

More attention should be paid to the overall duration of the apprenticeship training. Further, overall duration and share of workplace training need to be discussed and agreed with labour market representatives. They should take into account the specificities of the occupation and the length of time considered by the labour market representatives as necessary for a novice to become qualified and what they consider to be a full immersion in a real work environment.

3.4.1.2. *Is the school-based component guaranteed?*

Generally, there is no issue of apprenticeships not including a workplace training part. In most cases, regulation regarding alternation between learning venues ensures that a part of the apprenticeship training takes place at the workplace. In cases of absence of relevant regulations, the workplace training is usually considered as granted, whereas the school-based component is the one in question: there are several cases where apprenticeships may take place entirely in the employer's premises, with no part of it being carried out in a learning provider.

In most schemes, the workplace component of apprenticeships is ensured by regulation, which foresees (compulsory) alternation between the learning venues (VET provider and employer). Annex 9 shows that alternation between the two venues is compulsory in 22 out of 27 schemes.

Absence of formal requirement for alternation between a VET provider and an employer does not exclude that alternation happens in practice. Absence of such a requirement may be also due to regulatory provision for other alternative options, such as practical training through voluntary work and not in an employer, or through providing both theoretical and practical training entirely at the workplace (so the school-based component is not mandatory). In most cases, regulation stipulates that the theoretical training can be delivered at the employer premises and inclusion of a VET provider is only a possibility, but not a requirement.

Given the widespread requirement for alternation and these alternatives, there is little doubt about part of the apprenticeship taking place in the workplace. More often the question is if theoretical training is actually offered by training providers or entirely by the employers. This lack of clear requirement for a school-based component raises concerns about

the delivery of theoretical training and its content in relation to educational goals and expected learning outcomes. In some cases, although not formally required, employers invite their apprentices to attend schools for the theoretical training. When employers deliver theoretical training on their own, they are often required to meet certain criteria and/or to be accredited as providers of (theoretical) training.

The concept of alternation may be further discussed as part of ensuring quality and effective apprenticeships, considering the need to integrate theoretical and practical training in all learning contexts.

3.5. Quality criterion 3

Box 5. **Criterion 3: Pedagogical support**

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, especially 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.

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

Analysis of criterion 3 covers the appointment of in-company trainers and investigates whether or not the regulation foresees that the employers appoint a person to support the apprentices at the workplace. The analysis is extended beyond the specific criterion and investigates how learning at the workplace is guaranteed, besides the appointment of an in-company trainer. This complements the discussion of the accreditation procedures for companies and workplaces that offer apprenticeships under the analysis of criterion 8 and of the learning outcomes under the analysis of criteria 2 and 11.

3.5.1. **In-company trainers should be designated**

Employers that participate in apprenticeship training are required to appoint a member of their staff to train, support or supervise apprentices in 25 out of the 27 schemes under analysis (Annex 10). The term used to designate

the status of this staff member may vary across countries (trainer, instructor, tutor, mentor, supervisor), revealing a possible variation in the roles expected and assigned.

In almost half of the schemes under analysis, specific requirements are set by the regulation for in-company trainers. Apart from technical expertise and work experience (as with the Flemish Community of Belgium, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden), these requirements may refer to having formal qualifications (such as master craftsman in Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Poland) or completing training programmes (Hungary, Austria, Poland, Sweden). The need to promote trainers' pedagogical competences and/or capacity to support learners is often addressed through such programmes and qualifications, but is required in other countries too (Finland, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands).

In nine schemes, the requirement for a trainer to be appointed is not elaborated into specific requirements of work experience or relevant qualifications.

Regulation on appointment of in-company trainers reveals the complexity of the role, going beyond mere training provision. There are numerous examples of trainers required to perform other tasks: provide support and guide apprentices, introduce and integrate them into the work environment, cooperate with schools, coordinate training in the two venues, and participate in training planning. This points to a need to reflect better the variety of roles and persons that are involved at the workplace learning during an apprenticeship.

3.5.1.1. *How is learning at the workplace guaranteed?*

The analysis of criterion 4 has shown that the workplace component is ensured and is aligned with the EFQEA requirement of minimum 50% of the total duration of the apprenticeship training; in many cases, the overall duration may range from very short periods of time (two months) to considerably longer ones (three years) for the same qualification. These situations raise concerns: whether learners and employers have meaningful proportions of workplace training for the learner to emerge fully into a real work environment; the parity of opportunities with other learners; and the transparency of the apprenticeship training and its comparable value in qualifying a person for an occupation.

Unarguably, in the spirit of the EFQEA, the minimum 50% should be the amount of time that the learner needs to spend in a real workplace; it also needs to be linked to the achievement of the learning outcomes leading

to a qualification linked to the NQF/EQF (criterion 2). Such workplace learning should be structured and intentional. Apprentices also learn while performing everyday work tasks, an aspect of informal learning that cannot be overlooked. However, following a structured approach increases the chances that apprentices acquire knowledge, skills and competences that are directly relevant for the corresponding qualification; it also improves comparability of the learning experiences across employers within the same qualification, and eventually raises the trust in the qualification obtained and its value within a sector.

Therefore, in addition to the appointment of an in-company trainer, pedagogical support also needs to be focused on whether workplace training is structured and how this structured approach is ensured.

In 26 out of 27 schemes under analysis, it is required by regulation that a training plan should be followed by the employer in workplace training. Even in the single case where it is not formally required (in Croatia) a training plan is usually agreed.

In most cases, apprenticeship schemes are not underpinned by curricula or training standards specifically designed for apprenticeships. Instead, general VET standards or curricula, or even programmes that are designed for general VET provision, apply (common for school-based and apprenticeship tracks (Annex 3)). Such common standards or curricula are 'adjusted' at the implementation level between the education and training providers and the employers. In-company trainers and school teachers need to work together to 'adapt' part of the curriculum to the dual learning context. This sort of adaptation (at the local level, frequently case-by-case) increases ambiguity in the content of training provided to each apprentice and the comparability of his/her learning experience to that of others.

Exceptionally, the learning outcomes to be achieved at the workplace are set at national or sectoral level and apply for all employers and learners in the same apprenticeship programme. In Austria, for example, a national training regulation (*Ausbildungsordnung*) exists for every apprenticeship programme. It includes a type of curriculum for the workplace part of training, which lays down the minimum knowledge and skills to be taught to apprentices by employers. The competence profile (*Berufsprofil*), which is also part of the training regulation, formulates in a learning-outcome-oriented manner the competences apprentices are expected to acquire by the end of their training in both learning sites. In Iceland, the occupational councils set objectives for workplace training. In Luxembourg, a curriculum committee consisting of

education and labour market representatives, appointed by the Ministry of Education for each (group of) occupation(s), defines the training profile (set of competences to be acquired) in each venue, and sets a schedule that enables synchronisation of the two components.

While training plans are compulsory, further attention needs to be paid to the extent to which they are based on common standards, and the extent to which they guarantee parity of opportunities, that learning is structured and intentional and linked to the achievement of the qualification.

3.6. Quality criteria 1, 6 and 7

Box 6. Criteria 1, 6 and 7

Criterion 1: Written agreement

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.

Criterion 6: Social protection

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

Criterion 7: Work, health and safety conditions

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

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

Quality criteria 1, 6 and 7 are analysed together as they relate to the contractual link between the apprentice and the employer, and its formal consequences and implications for the workplace component. These cover apprentice learning rights and obligations, social protection and work, and health and safety conditions at the workplace.

3.6.1. Written agreement defining rights and obligations

The purpose of the written agreement, as per the quality criterion, should be 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.

Existing regulations foresee a contractual arrangement between the learner and the employer in all countries with the exception of Apprenticeships programmes in Portugal, where the apprenticeship contract is signed between the learner and the VET provider but not the employer. In Spain, a 'cooperation agreement' may be signed between the school and the employer; alternatively, employers may sign an apprenticeship contract with learners.

The rights and obligations of the parties, and the working conditions of the apprentice are defined based on the nature of the contract.

The learning conditions, in contrast, are usually specified in a training plan attached to the contract or in the formal agreement (see analysis of criterion 3).

The main distinction here is between two main approaches: in the first, apprenticeship is a contract regulated by employment law (employment contracts or other specific types of contracts); in the second, apprenticeship is a formal agreement of another nature (such as a training agreement or partnership contract), with no value in employment law. The main implication of this distinction is that the former approach is normally associated with employment protection legislation and social insurance rights, while schemes in the latter group are not covered by such rights.

According to information in Annex 11, in 13 of the schemes analysed, apprenticeship is, or can be (for example, in some sectors), a regular employment contract. Apprenticeships are subject to the country's labour code, if there is one, or to the country's employment laws regulating employment contracts.

In 13 schemes, apprenticeships are considered as a 'specific type of contract'. The meaning and implications of apprenticeships falling in this category vary across countries. In all cases, this indicates that apprenticeships are not a simple formal agreement but have contractual value. Some countries specify a contract of an ad hoc nature, while most apprenticeships are a specific type of contract regulated under employment law (as in Greece, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland) with minor exceptions (Croatia). The source of regulation may be more than one and specific to apprenticeships. For instance, in Finland, the contract has its legal basis in both the Act on Vocational Education and Training and the labour code. In

Croatia, the apprenticeship contract is regulated by the Ordinance on the minimum conditions for apprenticeship contracts. In Romania, the Ministry of education regulates through its orders the formal agreements for the 'VET in the dual system' scheme.

A minority of the schemes analysed regulate apprenticeships with other types of formal agreements that are not subject to employment law and usually not covered by employment protection legislation and social protection law. These agreements may be an alternative option to hiring apprentices with an employment contract (German-speaking Community of Belgium). In Hungary, there are two types of formal agreement, one of which is a hybrid and seems to share the features of an employment contract. In Sweden, apprenticeships are associated with formal agreements, but a pilot project is giving employers the opportunity to hire apprentices with an employment contract.

What seems to make a difference in terms of quality is the nature of the written agreement, rather than its existence. This has implications for the employment protection legislation and social protection rights benefitting the learner. While all countries foresee the existence of a written agreement, more attention should be given to its nature.

3.6.2. Apprentice entitlement to social protection

Depending on the type of contract, apprentices may or may not benefit from social insurance rights covering illness, disability, work-related injury, maternity, pension and unemployment benefits.

When apprenticeships are a regular employment contract or a specific type of contract subject to employment law, apprentices are generally covered by social insurance, irrespective of the source that regulates the contract. When apprenticeships are in the form of a simple agreement, such rights are not guaranteed.

In schemes where apprenticeships are an employment contract, apprentices are typically fully covered by regular worker rights, including employment protection legislation and social protection (see below); in many cases this includes a minimum wage. In some countries, specific provisions might (not) apply to apprentices that distinguish them from ordinary workers: for example, apprentices are not covered by unemployment insurance in Estonia and Poland. In countries where apprenticeships are formal agreements, social protection legislation applies with limitations. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, for the dual learning

scheme, apprentices who sign an alternation internship contract do not build up social security rights, although it is imperative that a limited industrial accident insurance is provided.

Coverage by social insurance is associated with the apprentice status, which can be that of a student, of an employee or a special status (Annex 12). This association is not straightforward, though, except for the cases where the apprentice is a student only, where the formal agreement regulating apprenticeship training does not cover social insurance rights. There are three equally large groups of countries, each one associated to one specific status. Most of the countries indicated more than one status, such as student and employee.

In most countries where apprenticeship contracts are of a specific type, apprentices have a specific status (Annex 12). In these cases, apprentices benefit from regular employee rights but there are cases where the specific status applies only to the workplace component. In the French Community of Belgium, a new definition of 'apprentice' was introduced in July 2015 to harmonise the status of young people in apprenticeship with regards to social security. These are now mostly treated as ordinary employees, with some exceptions for minors. In Luxembourg, apprentices are covered by social security provisions specifically envisaged for the protection of young workers, including, for example, health and safety at work, occupational health, sickness and maternity rights.

Apprentices tend to be largely covered by social protection in countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as employment contracts or a specific type of contract subject to employment law, where apprentices are employees or have a status associated to that of employees at least for the workplace component. In countries with apprenticeship schemes regulated as formal agreements, irrespective of learner status – typically students or specific status such as apprentice – apprentices tend not to benefit from social protection or employment protection legislation.

In addition to the nature of the written agreement, attention should also be paid to the status of the learner undergoing an apprenticeship training. Is this learner a regular worker, a regular student or both at the same time? Or should there be a formal acknowledgement that learners undergoing apprenticeship training are a category *per se*?

3.6.3. Workplace compliance with health and safety rules and regulations

In principle, this criterion would not need any investigation, at least in relation to employers' compliance with occupational health and safety legislation foreseen for apprentices. The regulation source is an EU directive⁽⁹⁾, applying to all Member States. Its provisions apply to all sectors of activities and to all workers, which Article 3, Letter (a) defines as 'any person employed by an employer, including trainees and apprentices'.

All workplaces where apprentices carry out the workplace training foreseen by their apprenticeships are covered by the EU and related national regulations on health and safety. Any meaningful information about employers' compliance with the existing rules and regulations should be covered by the national employment inspectorate or within the scope of the national 'accreditation' procedures that, in some countries, employers need to complete in order to provide apprenticeships (see criterion 8). The accreditation procedures typically include not only requirements to have enough services and production activities and to comply with relevant financial regulations, but also the requirement for employers to comply with the relevant occupational health and safety legislation. This normally foresees compulsory provision of training on the topic, suitable for the specific occupation, and requires equipping the learner with personal protective clothing and working tools, materials and other necessary equipment.

3.7. Criterion 5

Box 7. Criterion 5: Pay and/or compensation

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. conditions, in particular health and safety legislation.

Source: [European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships](#).

⁽⁹⁾ Directive 89/391 of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (see Council of the European Union, 1989).

The criterion focuses on there being a form of compensation for the apprentices' productive effort at the workplace. This needs to be aligned to existing regulations and should reflect the cost-sharing arrangements between employers and State.

3.7.1. Apprentices should be paid or otherwise compensated

All schemes foresee a form of compensation with the exception of Dual learning at upper secondary level in the Flemish Community of Belgium in those cases where an 'alternation internship contract' is used (compensation is foreseen in cases where different contracts are used).

The nature of the compensation depends on the nature of the apprenticeship contract. If it is an employment contract or a specific type of contract subject to employment law, compensation usually takes the form of taxable income paid by the employer (wage), likely to be linked to the national minimum wage and include payment of social and pension contributions. If the contract is a formal agreement, compensation usually takes the form of an allowance (non-taxable income), typically paid by the State, or there is no compensation at all. No countries foresee only reimbursement of expenses (such as travel costs or meals) for apprentices.

According to information in Annex 13, in most schemes (16), apprentices receive a wage (a form of taxable income) or an allowance (non-taxable) paid by the employer. In two schemes, the allowance is paid by the State, while in six compensation (wage or allowance) is shared by employers and the State. In Latvia and Malta, employers have the choice of whether to pay a wage or an allowance: the two cannot be combined but at least one form of compensation to apprentices is compulsory. Swedish employers have the same options, but this is linked to the type of contract they use to take on apprentices: an employment contract is used only in a minority of cases, in the context of a pilot project.

Given that in 15 schemes, the State supports all or part of the compensation for all employers and sectors alike, the question arises to what extent the State should entirely or partly cover the apprentice remuneration (completely or partly take over the direct cost) across the board (all employers alike).

3.7.2. Compensation is in line with national or sectoral requirements or collective agreements

Apprentice allowances are generally set by the State. Wage levels are generally set by collective bargaining, which never sets the level of allowances. Annex 14

indicates there are cases where the law sets the level of apprentice wages, as in Greece, Luxembourg and Hungary. In many countries that foresee a national minimum wage, the apprentice's wage is linked to it but set by collective bargaining or individual agreements. It is typically calculated as a share of the national minimum wage or there is an indication that it cannot be lower than that. Collective agreements or individual agreements/contracts may often deviate from the minimum threshold and foresee higher wages for apprentices. In many cases, there are progression mechanisms that gradually increase the apprentice's salary each year, to reflect the greater involvement of apprentices in productive work and their contribution to the employer's productivity. Individual agreements at employer level are in place as a rule in Lithuania, Romania (apprenticeship at the workplace scheme), or as an exception in Austria, when collective bargaining does not define the apprentice wage.

The level of compensation varies widely across countries and schemes. When the wage is set by collective labour agreements, it generally tends to be relatively high or in scale with qualified workers wages. In other cases, especially when the apprentice receives an allowance, this is more often than not closer to a symbolic compensation or way to reimburse expenses.

3.8. Criterion 10

Box 8. Criterion 10: Support for companies

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

Source: European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships.

This criterion focuses on the presence of financial support for employers other than the full or partial coverage of the apprentice remuneration (addressed under criterion 5), considering the cost-sharing arrangements between the employers and public authorities ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Cedefop database on financing apprenticeships provides much more detailed information on the topic. It structures and displays information on apprenticeship scheme financing

3.8.1. Financial support

Financial support may be granted in the form of:

- (a) indirect universal financial support (e.g. tax or contribution deduction) which normally applies to all employers hiring an apprentice;
- (b) direct universal subsidies to all employers hiring an apprentice;
- (c) direct targeted subsidies subject to specific conditions (such as the apprentice achieving the final qualification) or linked to predefined target groups (such as employers taking in apprentices who have been made redundant or faced obstacles to employment).

In most schemes, both direct (universal and/or targeted) and indirect financial subsidies are foreseen (Annex 15).

In countries where employers receive indirect financial support, these typically cover contribution deductions in the form of waivers in non-labour costs: employers may pay less or not pay at all their foreseen quota of social security contributions for apprentices for sickness, unemployment and accident insurance. Tax deductions may also apply, so that charges for training expenditures lead to a reduction in the employers' taxable profit. Other specific costs may be deducted. Where indirect financial support is in place, it is generally for all employers.

A small group of schemes foresee direct financial subsidies only. In most cases, these are universal, applying to all employers receiving an apprentice. In the Netherlands they are targeted: some direct subsidies are managed by sectoral social partners and therefore only apply to the relevant sectors.

In Spain (if the apprentice signs a 'cooperation agreement' instead of an apprenticeship contract), Cyprus and Portugal there are no financial incentives.

In most cases, the schemes are covered at least by universal direct subsidies (applying to all employers hiring apprentices). Targeted direct support, used in less than a half of the schemes under analysis, could be an option to explore in support of certain policy priorities.

Acronym

EFQEA	European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships
EQF	European qualifications framework
EU	European Union
NQF	national qualification framework
VET	vocational education and training
WBL	work-based learning

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Data base

Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes

[www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/
apprenticeship-schemes](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes)

ANNEX 1.

Apprenticeship schemes under analysis

Country/region	Abbreviation	Scheme
Austria	AT	Dual apprenticeship
Belgium – German- speaking Community	BE(de)	Apprenticeship
Belgium – Flemish Community	BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education
		Apprenticeships for SMEs
		Dual learning (upper secondary level)
Belgium – French Community	BE(fr)	Dual training
Bulgaria	BG	Work-based learning (dual system of training)
Croatia	HR	Unified model of education
Cyprus	CY	New modern apprenticeship
Finland	FI	Apprenticeship training
Greece	EL	EPAS apprenticeship
		EPAL apprenticeship
Hungary	HU	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract
Iceland	IS	Apprenticeship
Italy	IT	Apprenticeship for vocational qualification and diploma, upper secondary education diploma and high technical specialisation certificate [type 1]
		Higher education and research apprenticeship [type 3]
Latvia	LV	Work-based learning (WBL)
Lithuania	LT	VET in a form of apprenticeship
Luxembourg	LU	Apprenticeship contract
Malta	MT	MCAST apprenticeships

Country/region	Abbreviation	Scheme
Netherlands	NL	Dual pathway
Poland	PL	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers
Portugal	PT	Apprenticeship programmes
Romania	RO	Apprenticeship at the workplace
		VET in dual system
Spain	ES	Apprenticeship in Dual VET
Sweden	SE	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3)

Source: Cedefop.

ANNEX 2.

Type and level of qualifications the apprenticeship schemes lead to and access to higher education

The scheme leads to specific qualifications			NQF/EQF levels	Direct access to higher education
Apprenticeship qualification	AT	(Dual apprenticeship)	NQF 4	Yes (universities of applied science (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>)) (*)
	BE (de)	(Apprenticeship)	NQF 4	no
	CY	(New modern apprenticeship)	NQF 3	no
	EL	(EPAS apprenticeships)	NQF 4	no
	EL	(EPAL apprenticeships)	NQF 5	N/A
	IS	(Apprenticeship)	NQF 3	no
The scheme leads to the same qualification as school-based VET			NQF/EQF levels	Direct access to higher education
VET qualification (does not indicate the path)	BE (fl)	(Part-time vocational secondary education)	NQF 2, 3, 4	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	BE (fl)	(Dual learning (Upper secondary level))	NQF 2, 3, 4	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	IT	(Apprenticeship type 1)	EQF 3, 4	Yes
	IT	(Apprenticeship type 3)	EQF 5 to 8	N/A
	LV	(WBL)	NQF 2, 3, 4	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	LT	(VET in a form of apprenticeship)	NQF 1 to 5	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	NL	(Dual pathway)	EQF 1 to 4	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	ES	(Apprenticeship in Dual VET)	No NQF	Yes, no (depending on the level)

The scheme leads to the same qualification as school-based VET		NQF/EQF levels	Direct access to higher education
VET qualification (indicates the path)	BG (Work-based learning (dual system of training))	NQF 2 to 4	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	FI (Apprenticeship training)	NQF 4, 5	Yes
	HU (Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract)	NQF 3, 4	No
	LU (Apprenticeship contract)	NQF 2 to 4	No
	MT (MCAST apprenticeships)	NQF 3, 4 (but potentially at higher levels)	Yes, no (depending on the level)
	PT (Apprenticeship programmes)	NQF 4	Yes
	RO (Apprenticeship at the workplace)	NQF 1 to 4	No
	RO (VET in dual system)	Potentially all NQF levels (**)	No (for NQF 4)
	SE (Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school)	NQF 4	Yes, no (***)
VET qualification (may or may not indicate the path)	BE (fl) (Apprenticeships for SMEs)	NQF 2, 3	Yes, no (depending on the level)
The scheme leads to either a formal VET qualification or a specific apprenticeship qualification (****)		NQF/EQF levels	Direct access to higher education
BE (fr) (Dual Training)		No NQF, but according to draft NQF it would be qualifications at level 3 and 4 of EQF.	Yes, no (depending on the qualification)
HR	(Unified model of education)	NQF 4.1	No
PL	(Vocational preparation of juvenile workers)	NQF 3	No

(*) If the study field corresponds to the apprenticeship programme and the applicant passed positively the entrance procedure at the university of applied science.

(**) The dual VET scheme is organised for qualifications included in NQF, according Law No 82/2018 for the approval of Government Emergency Ordinance No 81/2016 regarding the modification and completion of the National Education Law No 1/2011 (Article 331, Paragraph (1)).

(***) All students have the right to study the courses that will give eligibility for entry to higher education. In some VET programmes, these courses are built into the programme structure, while in other programmes the learner may need to take the courses as additional to their programme.

(****) Depending on the subsystem.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 16, 17, 18 and 19.

ANNEX 3.

Link to programmes and standards

The scheme is implemented via specific apprenticeship programmes	AT	(Dual apprenticeship)
	BE (de)	(Apprenticeship)
	BE (fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs
	BE (fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)
	EL	(EPAS apprenticeships)
	PT	(Apprenticeship programmes)
Apprenticeship programmes and based on VET standards	BE (fr)	(Dual training)
	IS	(Apprenticeship)
	PL	(Vocational preparation of juvenile workers) (*)
Based on VET standards	FI	(Apprenticeship training)
	IT	(Apprenticeship type 1)
	LV	(WBL)
	NL	(Dual pathway)
	RO	(Apprenticeship at the workplace)
Based on VET programmes	BG	(Work-based learning (dual system of training))
	CY	(New modern apprenticeship)
	HR	(Unified Model of Education)
	HU	(Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract)
	LT	(VET in a form of apprenticeship)
	MT	(MCAST apprenticeships)
	RO	(VET in dual system)
	ES	(Apprenticeship in Dual VET)
	SE	(Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3))

(*) Apprenticeship can be offered for occupations under any two classifications: one of the Ministry of Education for the branch schools (KZSB) and one of the Ministry of Labour ('market qualifications'). Branch school apprenticeship is based on general VET standards (Programme Basis). There are also apprentices organised for labour 'market qualifications' (including those that take place entirely at the employer premises) that do not follow these standards but base their curricula on the journeyman examination standards.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 20, 21 and 22.

ANNEX 4.

Formal requirements for an apprenticeship training company

Requirements are linked to accreditation procedures	
Austria	Company should be 'declared' suitable to offer apprenticeship training according to the relevant occupation profile, including having sufficient qualified trainers. An apprentices/trainer ratio applies
BE(de)	To be able to conclude apprenticeship contracts, the company must operate as a training company recognised by IAWM
BE(fl) (all three schemes)	Accreditation, including on compliance to standards regarding equipment and organisation according to the training programme
BE(fr)	Accreditation after an application submitted by the company to the training institution, requirements include appointment of a tutor
Croatia	Licence from Chamber of Trades and Crafts to take on apprentices based on capacity to provide training according to the relevant curriculum and appoint a qualified trainer
Iceland	Approval by occupational councils, on the basis of adequate training environment, facilities, equipment and trained staff, including the appointment of a supervisor
Luxembourg	Accreditation agreed by employers' and employees' chambers, on the basis of employer's professional competence, including appointment of trainers
Netherlands	Accredited by SBB based on suitable facilities, correspondence of tasks to the profession, cooperation with VET schools and appointment of a trainer
Portugal	Employers applying to become providers of apprenticeship training should demonstrate technical and organisational capacity, provide suitable environment, staff and equipment and appoint a trainer
No formal accreditation, but requirements apply	
Bulgaria	General requirement for a suitable work environment and appointment of a trainer. An apprentices/trainer ratio applies
Finland	Requirements for sufficient activities, necessary tools and competent/experienced staff, one of which is appointed as workplace instructor
Greece (both schemes)	General requirements for appropriate facilities and equipment, contribution to personal skills development and the learning agreement and appointment of a trainer

Hungary	Conditions for practical training and the practical exam, including appointment of an instructor
Italy (both schemes)	Structural (facilities), technical (equipment) and training (tutor) capacity required
Latvia	General requirements, including pedagogical competences of tutors in ESF-funded apprenticeships. An apprentice/trainer ratio is recommended
Lithuania	Alignment to the VET programme content and conditions to reach its LOs, appointment of staff to organise and one to coordinate training
Malta	Employers and trainers must have sufficient technical experience, technical qualifications and personal competences
Poland	Employers must train apprentices according to the corresponding VET programme, plan the practical part, provide material for training, and appoint teachers/instructors/tutors
Romania (Apprenticeship at the workplace)	Employers should ensure training of apprentices, including by finding an authorised VET provider for the theoretical part. A coordinator should be appointed to oversee training
Romania (VET in dual system)	Employers should organise and carry out training and provide the suitable equipment according to the relevant VET standards and curricula, and to provide a tutor for the practical training
Spain	Requirement to designate a tutor

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 36.

ANNEX 5.

Involvement of social partner representatives in designing apprenticeship content

Designing qualifications and curricula	Schemes leading to specific qualifications	AT, BE(de), CY
	Schemes leading to the same qualifications as school-based VET	FI, HU, LV, LT, LU, PL, RO
Designing qualifications	Schemes leading to specific qualifications	EL
	Schemes leading to the same qualifications as school-based VET	BE(fl), BE(fr), BG, NL, PT, (graduate apprenticeship)
Designing curricula	Schemes leading to specific qualifications	IS
	Schemes leading to the same qualifications as school-based VET	ES, HR, SE

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 38.

ANNEX 6.

Involvement of social partner representatives in implementing apprenticeships

Final assessment, accreditation, monitoring	AT, HU, LU, PL (Chambers) NL (through representation in SBB) (*)
Final assessment, accreditation	BE(fr) (through representation in OFFA for the accreditation, while representatives of sectoral branches sit on the final examination boards) HR (Chamber of Trades and Craft)
Accreditation, monitoring	BE(fl) (sectoral partnerships appointed by the Flemish Partnership for dual learning)
Final assessment, monitoring	FI RO – apprenticeship at the workplace (through authorisation commissions)
Final assessment	BE (de) (Employers' representatives) BG (Employers' and employees' organisations) LT (Chambers and employers' representatives) PT (for regulated professions, a tripartite jury is foreseen)
Accreditation	IS (through occupational councils)
No role in assessment, accreditation, monitoring but may have other roles	CY, MT, ES, IT (dissemination and promotion) SE (help the schools by providing information and support about the working life) EL (SP, sectoral associations or chambers may sit in the final examination panel, role in dissemination and promotion) LV (**)

(*) *Stichting Samenwerking Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven.*

(**) The sector expert councils have the right to express their opinion on the employer potentially implementing WBL – if their opinion is being required, as it's usually the schools that select reliable and suitable employers for the learners.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 39.

ANNEX 7.

Minimum percentage of in-company training

The in-company training is defined as more than 50% of the apprenticeship scheme duration		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	Circa 75-80%
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	At least 24 of the 38 hours per week (avg.)
BE(fl)	Apprenticeship for SMEs	At least 20 of 28 hours per week (avg.)
BE(fl)	Dual learning – upper secondary level	At least 14 hours a week, more depending on the contract type or sector
BE(fr)	Dual training	At least 20 of the 38 hours per week (avg.)
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	At least 50% in the last two years of the five-year programme
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	three of five days a week in the company
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	24-30 hours a week in an employer, 21-22 hours at school
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	80% in an employer (28 hours a week)
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	Varies between 40-80%, usually 70%
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	At least 70% of the total duration
Netherlands	Dual pathway	At least 60%
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	At least 40%, in practice 60.6%
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	At least 2/3 of total duration
Romania	VET in dual system	50% (20% in the first year, 60% in the second, 72% in the third)
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	At least 50%

The in-company training is defined as 20-50% of the apprenticeship scheme duration		
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Minimum 13 hours per week in company, 15 hours per week in a VET provider
Croatia	Unified model of education	From 40% in the first year to 50% in the third
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	Varies by qualification
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	School-based component cannot exceed 60%
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	At least 25% of total programme duration, may be up to 70% (*)
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes	Approximately 40% (1 100-1 500 hours out of total 2 800-3 700)
Spain	Apprenticeship in dual VET	33% in the case of 'cooperation agreements'
No minimum share is defined for the in-company training		
Finland	Apprenticeship training	No minimum set, could be 100% with an employer
Iceland	Apprenticeship	Varies by programme
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	Varies by qualification, in practice more than 50% in most tracks
Malta	MCAST apprenticeship	Varies by programme or VET provider, 50% in practice

(*) In practice, the share is above 50%

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 25.

ANNEX 8.

Overall duration of apprenticeship training

Overall duration varies by occupation and % of in-company training is the same for all learners		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	For each individual apprenticeship occupation, the Ministry of Economy issues a training regulation, which also regulates the duration of the training. The usual duration of an apprenticeship is between two and four years. There are scenarios where a prolongation of the predefined duration is possible.
Iceland	Apprenticeship	The duration of apprenticeships varies considerably by field. Within the certified trades alone (where a journeyman's licence is required to work) the longest apprenticeship scheme (culinary fields) is 126 weeks and the shortest are 24 weeks (as in dressmaking and tailoring).
Overall duration varies with level of qualification and % of in-company training is the same for all learners		
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs (NQF 2, 3)	The training programme takes from one to three years. Specialisation is possible and can add an extra year to a training programme.
BE(fr)	Dual training (No NQF, but according to draft NQF it would be qualifications at level 3 and 4 of EQF).	In IFAPME and SFPME, specific apprenticeship programmes last from 18 months to three years.
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	The duration of the programme depends on the level of qualification, as well as the specific track.
Netherlands	Dual pathway	The duration of BBL coincides with the duration of the programmes it applies to.
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	

Overall duration and % of in-company training are fixed for all corresponding VET programmes		
BE(de)	Apprenticeship (NQF level 4)	Apprenticeship programmes always have the same duration (three years) and the same form of alternation.
Croatia	Unified model of education (NQF level 4.1)	The curriculum for UME programme defines the number of hours per school year that the apprentice has to spend in training (either at school workshop or at the employers) – and out of that, the minimum number of hours that a student has to spend at the employer’s premises – where they do training/work for which they are paid.
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship (NQF level 3)	The duration of the core apprenticeship is defined as three school years, divided into six terms. Each school year starts in September and ends in June.
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships (NQF level 4)	The duration of EPAS Apprenticeship Schools is two school years.
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships (NQF level 5)	The duration of Post-secondary year-apprenticeship class is almost nine months. More specifically 203 laboratory hours at the vocational school and 156 working days at the workplace.
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers (NQF level 3)	Full apprenticeship programmes last for three years.
Overall duration and % of in-company training vary with each individual learner		
BE(fl)	Part time vocational secondary education	The duration is flexible and can range from a few months to several years, based on the progress of the apprentice.
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	The duration of the VET programme is five years; however, students spend time at the workplace only in the last two years of the programme. The min 50% applies to the last two years of the VET programme which has an overall duration of five years.
Finland	Apprenticeship training	The duration of apprenticeship is based on each student’s individual learning pathway and personal competence development plan.
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	Vocational school programmes run for three years. An apprenticeship may be concluded effective from the start of the first year, the second year or the third year. The min 50% applies to 12, 24 or 36 months.
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	Apprenticeship may start at any point in time during the VET studies, but cannot be less than six months. The maximum duration may range from one year to four years depending on the final qualification.

Overall duration and % of in-company training vary with each individual learner		
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	Duration is set within the individual training plan and is not necessarily linked to the duration of the learning pathway, as the object of the contract might be the possibility to carry out a research activity and not necessarily the earning of a specific qualification.
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	Apprenticeship should be applied for at least one module of VET programme (with duration of 10 credits or more) or not less than for two months. An apprenticeship employment contract is not required for the whole duration of the training programme. Apprenticeship may start at any point during the VET studies but cannot be less than two months.
Romania	VET in dual system	Vocational school programmes run for three years. An apprenticeship may be concluded effective from the start of the first year, the second year or the third year. The min 50% applies to 12, 24 or 36 months.
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	Vocational school programmes run for three years. An apprenticeship may be concluded effective from the start of the first year, the second year or the third year. The min 50% applies to 12, 24 or 36 months.
Other		
BE(fl)	dual learning (upper secondary learning) (NQF 2, 3, 4)	Some dual courses last one school year, but others last two school years. It is possible to follow a dual learning scheme in the second stage of secondary education (third and fourth year; see Q6), and to add another 'specialisation year' or 'secondary after secondary' which lasts one school year. This is the standard duration; in practice it can be flexible.
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL) (NQF 2, 3, 4)	The scheme is analogous to and directed at the same learning outcomes as its corresponding school-based VET programme. The overall duration is the same as in the corresponding school-based VET programme. The difference is the amount of the time (and part of the programme) spent in company (no less than 25%).
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships (NQF 3, 4 (but potentially at higher levels))	The duration of the apprenticeship period is established by the VET provider. Shortest duration is one year and longest is three years.
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes (NQF 4)	Total duration ranges between 2 800 and 3 700 hours, of which 1 100 to 1 500 hours for in-company practical training, split into three periods of training.
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET (No NQF)	The 'apprenticeship' contract lasts between one and three years.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 21 and 22.

ANNEX 9.

Alternation

Alternation between two learning venues is compulsory	
Austria	Dual apprenticeship
BE (de)	Apprenticeship
BE (fl)	Apprenticeship for SMEs
BE (fl)	Dual learning – upper secondary level
BE (fr)	Dual training
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)
Croatia	Unified model of education
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract
Iceland	Apprenticeship
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3 (*)
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract
Malta	MCAST apprenticeship
Netherlands	Dual pathway
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace
Spain	Apprenticeship in dual VET
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)

Alternation between two learning venues is not compulsory	
BE (fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education
Finland	Apprenticeship training
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3 (**)
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers
Romania	VET in dual system

(*) In Italy, Apprenticeship type 3, alternation is compulsory for the subtype apprenticeships for higher education only.

(**) In Italy, Apprenticeship type 3, alternation is not compulsory for the subtype of apprenticeships for research.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 24.

ANNEX 10.

Appointment of a mentor/tutor/trainer

Employers have to appoint a mentor/tutor/trainer – specific requirements apply	
Austria	Requirement to have previous professional qualification, but also proof of knowledge and skills related to vocational pedagogy and law. IVET trainer examination (module of master craftsman exams) or complete a 40-hour IVET trainer course.
BE(de)	Requirement for relevant professional competences, shown by certified basic training in the profession (through apprenticeship or school-based VET) and relevant subsequent experience, or relevant university degree and three years of experience, and pedagogical training
BE(fl) (all schemes)	The tutor should be of impeccable behaviour, have five years of experience in the profession and be 25 or more (exception for supervisors, they can be 23 or more)
BE(fr)	Company assures that the tutor meets the conditions set in the contract, including behaviour (no criminal record, no sexual misconduct etc.).
Croatia	A mentor should have qualification (after a master craftsman's exam) that includes pedagogical competences
Finland	Professional, educational competences and work experience required
Hungary	Instructors should combine higher education degree and professional experience, or complete either a Master craftsman programme or a 'Professional trainer of commerce' programme that includes pedagogy and psychology
Iceland	Requirements for a supervisor refer to people's skills and overview of workplace functions/aims. At least one trained employee (journeyman) in the relevant field is essential
Latvia	Pedagogical competences required for tutors in ESF-funded apprenticeships
Luxembourg	Tutors must be authorised by agreement of employers' and employees' chambers; they provide training, educational support and mentoring
Malta	Trainers should possess the vocational knowledge and skills required by the training programme and have been employed in a practical capacity for a period of five years in their own occupation
Netherlands	Good profession insight and ability to coach and manage apprentices
Poland	Pedagogical training required for instructors, craftsman standards include psychology, pedagogy and didactics
Sweden	Supervisors/trainers must have the 'necessary skills and experience' and be considered 'generally suitable'. A course including pedagogical methods and supporting apprentices is required for trainers in those companies that want to receive extra State subsidy

Employers have to appoint a mentor/tutor/trainer – general requirements apply (no specific criteria)	
Cyprus	An employer is expected to have at least one technician or related professional in the relevant field to act as a mentor and supervisor. There are no formal criteria for a mentor's pedagogical competences
Greece	General requirement exists, recent specific conditions are not put in practice yet
Italy both schemes	A tutor is responsible to coordinate training, but a different person can be appointed as trainer
Lithuania	One person is appointed to organise training and one to coordinate (trainer) its provision in relation to regular work
Portugal	Employers are asked to appoint an in-company trainer
Romania (Apprenticeship at the workplace)	A coordinator is appointed to oversee training at the workplace but also at a VET provider (theoretical part)
Romania (VET in dual system)	Employers are required to appoint tutors
Spain	A tutor is appointed to monitor training and support the apprentice, but may not necessarily train – a different person can be appointed as trainer

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question 36.

ANNEX 11.

Nature of the link between the employer and the learner

There is a formal link and it is an employment contract		
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	It may also be a formal agreement
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	May be also a specific type of contract
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	May be also a specific type of contract
BE(fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	May be also a specific type of contract
BE(fr)	Dual training	Normally, it is a specific type of contract
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	
Iceland	Apprenticeship	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	Alternatively, cooperation agreement between school and company
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	
There is a formal link and it is a specific type of contract		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	Signed by apprentice and company
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Or ordinary part-time employment contract
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	Or ordinary part-time employment contract
BE(fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	Alternation training and alternation internship
BE(fr)	Dual training	In some sectors may be employment contract
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	Signed by student and company
Finland	Apprenticeship training	
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	

There is a formal link and it is a specific type of contract		
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	VET provider signs contract too
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	VET provider signs contract too
Netherlands	Dual pathway	VET provider stamps the contract
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	VET provider signs contract too
There is a formal link and it is a formal agreement		
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	It may also be an employment contract
Croatia	Unified model of education	Agreement not under employment law and registered at school
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	Apprenticeship training contract or cooperation agreement
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	Reference to employment and social protection regulation
Romania	VET in dual system	Signed also by the VET school head
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school	

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 27 and 28.

ANNEX 12.

Status of the learner

The apprentice is a student		
Croatia	Unified model of education	
Finland	Apprenticeship training	
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	And specific status
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	And employee
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	And employee
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	
Romania	VET in dual system	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	If cooperation agreement
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary	
The apprentice is an employee		
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	If employment contract
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	If part time employment contract
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	If part time employment contract
BE(fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	If part time employment contract
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	
Finland	Apprenticeship training	And student
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	If apprenticeship contract

The apprentice has a specific status		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	Employee and student
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	If employment contract, employee
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	If alternation training contract, but same rights as employees
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	If alternation training contract, but same rights as employees
BE(fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	If alternation training contract, but same rights as employees
BE(fr)	Dual training	But mostly treated as employees
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	And student
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	
Iceland	Apprenticeship	But insurance rights as employee
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	Recognised by the labour code
Netherlands	Dual pathway	
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes	
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary	'Apprentice-employee' vis-à-vis the employer

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, question Q30.

ANNEX 13.

Who covers the direct cost (wage or allowance)

Apprentices receive a wage paid by the employer		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	
BE (fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Wage for ordinary part-time employment contract
BE (fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	Wage for ordinary part-time employment contract
BE (fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	Wage for ordinary part-time employment contract
BE (fr)	Dual training	
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	
Finland	Apprenticeship training	
Iceland	Apprenticeship	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	Depending on the choice of employers
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	
Netherlands	Dual pathway	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	Wage if apprenticeship contract and depending on the Autonomous community
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school	

Apprentices receive an allowance (non-taxable income) paid by employers		
BE (de)	Apprenticeship	
BE (fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Allowance if alternation training contract
BE (fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	Allowance if alternation training contract
BE (fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	Allowance if alternation training contract
Croatia	Unified model of education	
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	Allowance depending on apprenticeship subtype
Romania	VET in dual system	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	Allowance if cooperation agreement or Autonomous community
Apprentices receive an allowance paid by the State		
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes	
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	If the apprentice does not have an employment contract
Apprentices receive compensation (wage and/or allowance) whose cost is shared by employers and State/VET providers		
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	Wage with State support (ESF)
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	Wage with State support (ESF)
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	Wage and optional public allowance
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	Wage and public allowance
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	Wage with State support (Labour fund)
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	

NB: Wage: taxable income. Allowance: non-taxable income.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 31 and 33.

ANNEX 14.

How countries set apprentice wage or allowance

By law		
BE (de)	Apprenticeship	The law sets the minimum wage
BE (fr)	Dual training	The law sets the guaranteed average minimum monthly income
Bulgaria	Work-based learning	The law sets the minimum wage
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	75% of the daily minimum wage of unskilled workers
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	75% of the daily minimum wage of unskilled workers
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	10.5-19.5% of the monthly minimum wage
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	Apprentices pay set by regulation
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	Calculated as a share of the average monthly wage
By collective cross-sectoral or sectoral agreements		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship (*)	For sectors with collective bargaining
BE (fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Only for part-time employment contracts
BE (fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	Only for part-time employment contracts
BE (fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	Only for part-time employment contracts
Finland	Apprenticeship training	
Iceland	Apprenticeship	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	Intersectoral or national level sectoral agreements define the level and how it progresses
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	Intersectoral or national level sectoral agreements define the level and how it progresses
Netherlands	Dual pathway	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	No lower than national minimum wage
Sweden	Apprenticeship education in upper secondary school (ISCED 3) (**)	

At firm level with individual agreements		
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	
Finland	Apprenticeship training	Contract defines remuneration basis
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	Individual agreement, no lower than NMW
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	Individual agreement, no lower than NMW

(*) If there is no collective bargaining, firm level individual agreements are signed.

(**) In the rare cases where apprenticeship is an employment contract.

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 31 and 33.

ANNEX 15.

Type of financial support

Indirect and direct (universal (U) and/or targeted (T)) financial subsidies		
Austria	Dual apprenticeship	Direct U and T and indirect financial subsidies
BE(de)	Apprenticeship	Direct T (for all successful apprentices under 18) and indirect financial subsidy
BE(fl)	Part-time vocational secondary education	Direct U and indirect financial subsidy
BE(fl)	Apprenticeships for SMEs	Direct U and indirect financial subsidy
BE(fl)	Dual learning (Upper secondary level)	Direct U and indirect financial subsidy
BE(fr)	Dual training	Direct T (to hire, to retain the apprentices in training for at least nine months) and indirect financial subsidy
Finland	Apprenticeship training	Direct U and T and indirect financial subsidies
Hungary	Apprenticeship - Dual vocational training based on the apprenticeship training contract	Direct T (employers not obliged to pay the vocational training contribution or SMEs under financial conditions) and indirect financial subsidy
Italy	Apprenticeship type 1	Direct U and T (micro companies) and indirect financial subsidy
Latvia	Work-based learning (WBL)	Direct U and indirect financial subsidy
Poland	Vocational preparation of juvenile workers	Direct T (for employers who successfully trained apprentices) and indirect financial subsidy
Indirect financial subsidies (e.g. tax deductions) only		
Bulgaria	Work-based learning (dual system of training)	
Croatia	Unified model of education	
Italy	Apprenticeship type 3	
Malta	MCAST apprenticeships	
Romania	VET in dual system	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	

Direct financial subsidies only		Universal (U) or targeted (T)
Greece	EPAS apprenticeships	U
Greece	EPAL apprenticeships	U
Iceland	Apprenticeship	U
Lithuania	VET in a form of apprenticeship	U
Luxembourg	Apprenticeship contract	U
Netherlands	Dual pathway	U and T (managed by sectors)
Romania	Apprenticeship at the workplace	U
No financial incentives to employers		
Cyprus	New modern apprenticeship	
Portugal	Apprenticeship programmes	
Spain	Apprenticeship in Dual VET	only if under a cooperation agreement

Source: Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes, questions 12 and 13.



EFQEA IMPLEMENTATION: A CEDEFOP ANALYSIS AND MAIN FINDINGS

The Council recommendation on the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships (EFQEA) invites Member States to ensure that their apprenticeships are responsive to labour market needs and provide benefits to employers and apprentices, by building on a well-defined set of criteria.

This report provides an analysis against several of these criteria of schemes included in the Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes.

The analysis reveals areas of strength for several criteria but also unearths issues and gaps that require further action. Crystallising the identity of 'apprenticeship' within national contexts in relation to other VET tracks and promoting a structured approach to training for both learning components (school-based and workplace) are essential conditions for ensuring the quality of apprenticeships and measuring their effectiveness.

4195 EN – TI-03-21-090-EN-N – doi:10.2801/563247



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Publications Office
of the European Union

ISBN 978-92-896-3228-7

