

2025 joint Cedefop-OECD symposium

New fields for apprenticeship

1-2 April 2025, OECD Conference Centre, Paris (France)

Call for evidence

Cedefop and the OECD are seeking for papers regarding the expansion of apprenticeships to new fields.

The call for evidence will remain open until 5 September 2024. You are invited to share (a) suggestions/links to published papers and reports (authored by you or a different author/institution); or (b) information on finalised unpublished papers, via: apprenticeship-team@cedefop.europa.eu

Selected papers will be presented in the [symposium](#) and included in a subsequent Cedefop-OECD publication.

The focus of the symposium: New fields for apprenticeship

Rationale

When well-designed and seamlessly integrating education and the labour market, apprenticeship can be a particularly effective tool to deliver the skills that individuals need in today's economies and societies. Global megatrends, such as the digital and green transition, are changing skill needs and apprenticeship can equip young people and adults with the right skills.

Various EU and OECD countries have seen considerable expansion of apprenticeships in recent years. Some countries have made considerable investments in their apprenticeship system, promoting apprenticeship as an effective and inclusive strategy for fast-tracking employment in high-demand careers. Existing apprenticeship schemes have been reformed, for example to make them more flexible, and new schemes have been introduced.

On some occasions, expansion has meant opening apprenticeship provision to fields, sectors, or occupations that were previously not typically covered by apprenticeships, like for example apprenticeships in information technology, healthcare and teaching in the United States. In some cases, the expansion to new fields has also led to the introduction of apprenticeship programmes at higher levels of education, like for example graduate apprenticeships in Scotland (United Kingdom).

It is time to capture the experience of such expansion efforts and draw useful lessons on the objectives, the process followed, and outcomes of such initiatives. The 2025 joint Cedefop-/OECD apprenticeship symposium will provide an opportunity to gain insights from research on these topics from around the world.

The joint Cedefop-OECD apprenticeship symposia

Since 2019, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational training (Cedefop) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have been jointly organising apprenticeship symposia. The symposia bring together policy-makers, social partners, practitioners and researchers from around the world, to gain insights from and discuss recent evidence on apprenticeship.

Each symposium has a thematic focus, which in previous years was:

- The next steps for apprenticeship (2019, Paris)
- Apprenticeships for greener economies and societies (2021, online)
- Apprenticeships and the digital transition (2023, Thessaloniki)

The symposia feature presentations of research papers, which are submitted to the organisers following a call for evidence. The paper presentations are complemented with panel discussions with key apprenticeship actors, as well as presentations of relevant international data and policy insights from international organisations.

The papers presented during the symposia are published as a joint Cedefop-OECD publication. Other materials from the symposia, such as the slides from the presentations, are made available on the symposium webpage.

Understanding apprenticeships

The joint Cedefop-OECD apprenticeship symposia focus on education and training that can truly be understood as a quality apprenticeship. Not all initiatives to introduce or reinforce work-based learning in VET programmes would fall under what is understood as apprenticeships.

Attention has turned into reinforcing and consolidating the core features of apprenticeships as a unique education and training option, and into safeguarding its quality. Both the EFQEA (2018) and ILO Recommendation 208 (2023) set criteria or provisions for quality apprenticeship and offer an ‘understanding’ of the term. Apprenticeships are understood as:

Council recommendation on a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships (2018)	ILO Recommendation 208 concerning quality apprenticeships (2023)
...apprenticeships are understood as formal vocational education and training schemes that:(a) the term “apprenticeship” should be understood as a form of education and training that is governed by an apprenticeship agreement, that enables an apprentice to acquire the competencies required to

a) combine learning in education or training institutions with substantial work-based learning in companies and other workplaces, b) lead to nationally recognised qualifications, c) are based on an agreement defining the rights and obligations of the apprentice, the employer and, where appropriate, the vocational education and training institution, and d) with the apprentice being paid or otherwise compensated for the workbased component....	work in an occupation through structured and remunerated or otherwise financially compensated training consisting of both on-the-job and off-the-job learning and that leads to a recognized qualification;
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Therefore, training that happens purely on the job and does not involve an off-the-job learning component with an education and training institution is not covered by the symposium, nor is training that does not lead to a nationally (or regionally depending on the governance) recognised qualification. Moreover, the work-based learning element needs to be substantial, i.e. going beyond a short internship, reaching or ideally exceeding 50% of the total programme duration.

New fields

For the purpose of this symposium, **“new fields” refers to fields, sectors or occupations (or as a consequence specialties and programmes) that were not previously typically offered through apprenticeships.** These might be entirely new for apprenticeship programmes (i.e. apprenticeship programmes were offered for the first time), or used to be very small in terms of enrolments/participation but are now becoming more central to apprenticeship-related policies and choices of individuals.

Such “new fields” may vary among countries. In countries where apprenticeships are the prominent VET option, the range of programmes offered through apprenticeships is much wider compared to countries where apprenticeship has traditionally been linked to a specific set of craft or skilled trades occupations. For example, apprenticeships in IT might have been a more established offer in the former set of countries, whereas it represents a novelty in the latter.

Therefore, what represents a “new field” depends on the national context, and may refer to (not exhaustive) health, business and administration, financial services, sales and marketing, design, and ICT/digital industries. Also, especially in the light of the digital and green transition, new programmes may emerge in more traditional sectors (e.g. construction, crafts, food, hospitality/tourism), e.g. wind turbine technicians and photovoltaic installers.

Call for evidence

The organisers are seeking for papers regarding the expansion of apprenticeships to new fields, that may offer responses to some of the following questions (indicative and non-exhaustive list):

- What are the intended (policy) outcomes of the studied cases of apprenticeship expansion? Are these already met? Are there other side benefits that emerged from this process?
- What has been the process to design and introduce such initiatives? What has been the basis and rationale of this expansion, what has been the contribution of labour market actors? Were the main

features of apprenticeship redesigned to be better aligned with the needs of the field/sector (e.g. duration, balance between on-the-job and off-the-job training)?

- Was the intended expansion received positively by the main target audiences, i.e. companies, learners or schools/training providers? What are the outcomes for learners (e.g. labour market integration) and employers (e.g. costs and benefits)?
- What have been the key challenges of such an expansion, e.g. digital divide, lack of infrastructure, limited readiness and willingness of teachers, rigidity of the system, weak employer engagement?
- Has the expansion triggered reactions, challenges, e.g. in terms of competition between VET strands, or different levels of providers? How have these been addressed/mitigated?
- Are there lessons for similar initiatives in other sectors? What is the way forward for apprenticeship to be/become a suitable training pathway in a variety of fields? What are the limitations for apprenticeship (i.e. why can they or can they not work in all fields)?

Angles that may be of interest:

- The use of skills intelligence to inform and drive the expansion to new fields (labour market responsiveness)
- The role of social partners and social dialogue in selecting and entering into new fields
- Addressing needs and opportunities of the twin transition
- Adapting the features of apprenticeship to the needs of different fields
- Positioning apprenticeship programmes at new education and training levels
- Improving VET attractiveness through the expansion to new fields
- Using the expansion to new fields to improve opportunities for women or other less represented groups to benefit from apprenticeships

Input can be based on:

- Insights from data (e.g. household surveys, tracer surveys, online job advertisement data)
- Survey outcomes (e.g. interest among employers or students)
- Case studies (e.g. cases of introducing apprenticeship programmes in a new field)
- Quantitative or qualitative analyses

Process

- **Call for evidence: 15 July - 5 September 2024**
 - During the period of the call for evidence you are invited to share via apprenticeship-team@cedefop.europa.eu :
 - (a) suggestions/links to published papers and reports (authored by you or a different author/institution); or
 - (b) information on finalised unpublished papers
 - The organisers will contact the authors of these papers/reports if deemed relevant and invite them to submit full papers (by 25 October, see below).

- **Deadline for paper submissions: 25 October**
 - The organisers accept published papers and reports, working papers, as well as finalised unpublished papers. Extended abstracts or unfinished papers are not accepted.
 - The organisers also accept papers that cover a broader topic but could be refocused/redrafted to fit with the topic of the symposium.
- **Selection of papers to be presented: 15 November**
- Deadline for submitting paper to be included in the symposium proceedings (if needed, in case of refocused/redrafted papers): 10 January
- Guidelines for presentation from Cedefop and the OECD (and comments on refocused/redrafted papers, if needed): 10 February 2025
- **Deadline for submitting symposium presentations: 20 March 2025**
- **Symposium: 1-2 April 2025, Paris**
- Deadline for submitting full papers for the publication (or extended summaries as described below): 2 May 2025

Publication

The papers selected for and presented at the symposium will feature in a dedicated Cedefop-OECD publication that will be released a few months after the symposium.

Terms applying to the joint Cedefop-OECD publication:

- authors who have submitted their paper retain the copyright to their original contribution and will be acknowledged as authors of the corresponding chapter
- Cedefop and the OECD will be cited as institutional authors and will hold the copyright to the publication
- Creative Commons BY 4.0 license will be used
- the publication will be in English, in electronic format, and will be disseminated free of charge.
- submitted papers should be checked for plagiarism
- authors submitting papers should warrant that all necessary permissions and releases have been obtained and paid for, and they do not violate the right of privacy or publicity or infringe upon any copyright or other proprietary right of any other person or entity.

For papers that cannot be included in the publication, for example because they have already been published and cannot be reproduced, an extended summary can be included instead.