



Cedefop analytical framework for apprenticeships

April 2019



Introduction

Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships is a tool to analyse apprenticeship *systems* and *schemes* in Europe and, possibly, beyond.

This framework was originally developed by Cedefop as a methodological tool for the [country reviews](#)¹ on apprenticeships that took place in nine EU countries between 2014 and 2018 as part of Cedefop's direct support to Member States. The first version of the analytical framework has been further developed taking into account the experiences of participating countries and the conceptual work from Cedefop's [cross-nation overview of apprenticeships](#)².

Apprenticeship system:

A set of interrelated structures, rules and procedures underpinned by a legal framework which regulate apprenticeship provision and make it work as a unitary whole.

Apprenticeship scheme:

A systematic arrangement about how apprenticeship provision should be designed, delivered, assessed, certified as well as governed within the overall VET system. More than one scheme may exist in an apprenticeship/VET system.

Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships is not modelled on a single recommended type of apprenticeship system or scheme. On the contrary, it draws on features that seem to work in more than one apprenticeship system or scheme and summarises key elements that they have in common to different extents and in different combinations; and provides a standardised definition of apprenticeship and outlines several areas of analysis that are further articulated into operational descriptors.

On this basis, this framework is not intended as an exhaustive list of necessary conditions or an assessment tool. It works as a frame of reference to review key elements of existing or evolving systems or schemes; to check what is foreseen in regulation and how it works in practice; to understand if stakeholders share common perceptions and ambitions regarding their apprenticeship systems and schemes.

¹ Country reviews has been carried out by Cedefop in Lithuania, Malta, Croatia, Cyprus, (French Speaking) Belgium, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/apprenticeships-work-based-learning#1>

² <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4166>



In practice, the analytical framework proved to be a reliable tool across several steps of Cedefop's apprenticeship reviews. Initially used for shaping data collection instruments and processes and exploring the systems and schemes under review, it ultimately allowed identifying country specific challenges and their causes. Combining different framework areas and descriptors in the course of the analysis helped in generating a unique picture for each country. These pictures pinpointed strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship schemes, highlighted areas for improvement and suggestions for action.

Beyond supporting in-depth country reviews, the analytical framework also helped to identify common challenges in setting up, reforming and implementing apprenticeships in the different national contexts under review. These challenges relate to the following four areas.

- (a) The place of apprenticeship in the education and training system: Visions of function and purpose of apprenticeships vary across countries and even among different stakeholders within the same country. This blurs users' expectations of apprenticeships and leaves room for competition with other forms of work-based learning or active labour market policies;
- (b) Governance mechanisms: The overall prominence of the education sector in managing apprenticeship from design to implementation brings greater burden to education actors and limits the potential benefits from the engagement of employers and social partners;
- (c) Training content and learning outcomes: Insufficient cooperation between the education and training sector and the world of work in defining, delivering and assessing apprenticeship curricula may lead to either lack of flexibility to accommodate sector needs or, in the absence of reference documents, to excessive, unstructured adaptation to firm-specific needs;
- (d) Participation of, and support to, companies: A variety of factors seem to limit companies' engagement: lack of communication and eventually trust among companies and other key actors; low status and attractiveness of apprenticeships; insufficient non-financial incentives (including information), and lack of evidence on actual benefits of apprenticeship.

The current version of Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships reflects the additional knowledge and insights gained during the review work. Among new aspects, the updated framework provides a revised definition of apprenticeships which:

- (a) clarifies the role of employer organisations and trade unions in identifying, expressing and managing the demand for apprenticeship at sectoral/occupational level and in shaping its training content;



- (b) emphasises the involvement of employers/companies in more activities, such as developing training plans, selecting apprentices etc.;
- (c) puts apprenticeship in context, exploring its relation and link to other VET programmes;
- (d) highlights the value of the qualification for the labour market;
- (e) introduces the need to prepare VET teachers to work with apprentices.

Building on its overall expertise in apprenticeships and the use of its analytical framework, Cedefop contributed to the development of the [European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships](#)³. Designed on the social partners' initiative this quality framework was endorsed as a recommendation to Member States by the Council of the EU in 2018. The criteria for framework conditions and for learning and working conditions put forward in this recommendation are in sync with the areas and descriptors set in Cedefop's analytical framework.

³ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)



Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships

Areas of analysis	Operational descriptors
1. Distinguishing features	<p>1.1. Education and training underpinned by structured alternation of learning in an education and training setting with learning and working at a workplace and leading to a recognized qualification.</p> <p>1.2. Duration is long enough to ensure meaningful alternation.</p> <p>1.3. An apprentice has a contract with the employer and receives compensation (wage or allowance) from the employer according to the relevant regulations.</p> <p>1.4. An employer is formally responsible (accreditation, training plan, assessment, etc.) for the learning outcomes set for the workplace.</p>
2. Place in the ET system	<p>2.1. Apprenticeship is defined and regulated in a legal framework.</p> <p>2.2. Position of apprenticeship in relation to other forms of VET, in particular other forms of work-based learning, is clear and education and training and labour market share its purpose and function.</p> <p>2.3. Apprenticeship offers learners access to further specialisation at higher levels.</p> <p>2.4. The certificate indicates it was achieved in apprenticeship and attests that all apprentices benefitted of comparable learning experiences (learning outcomes, duration of apprenticeship learning, length of learning and working at a workplace).</p> <p>2.5. An apprentice has a clear and formally recognised status among learners and workers.</p>
3. Governance	<p>3.1. Labour market and education and training have formal roles and responsibilities at national, regional, local levels; there are formal cooperation arrangements and explicitly assigned coordinating and decision making roles.</p> <p>3.2. Employer organisations and trade unions identify, express and manage the demand for apprenticeship at sectoral/occupational level.</p>



4. Offer, content and quality assurance	4.1. Apprenticeship is provided in the sectors that express such demand and for the occupations for which such demand is expressed.
	4.2. Apprenticeship is based on qualification standards and/or occupational profiles.
	4.3. The duration and organisation of apprenticeship take into account the specificities of the sector and occupation in which it is offered, in particular, the average duration for an apprentice to become productive.
	4.4. Apprenticeship curricula are specifically designed or school-based VET curricula are adjusted for the purpose of structured alternation of learning in an education and training setting with learning and working at a workplace; the aim is to guarantee comparable learning experiences - for the purpose of the qualification - irrespective of the employer.
	4.5. In case an employer cannot ensure the acquisition of all required learning outcomes for the workplace part of the curriculum, there are arrangements to compensate for that (for example, intercompany training centres, cooperation of employers, etc.).
	4.6. A training plan is drafted on the basis of the workplace part of the curriculum.
	4.7. There are provisions for adjusting part of the curriculum to specific needs (local labour market needs, individual training needs, etc.).
	4.8. There are requirements for learners to access apprenticeship.
	4.9. Representatives of employer organisations and trade unions take part in the final assessment.
	4.10. Quality assurance procedures/arrangements exist for apprenticeship or take their specificities into account.
5. Cooperation among VET providers and employers	5.1. There is clear and balanced distribution of responsibilities between VET providers and employers.
	5.2. The VET provider follows the learning progress of the apprentice, also at the workplace through established feedback mechanisms.



	5.3. VET providers and employers co-operate to support the apprentice in view of the final assessment.
6. Participation of and support to employers	6.1. Rights and obligations of employers providing placements are legally stipulated and clear.
	6.2. There are minimum requirements for employers willing to provide apprenticeship placements.
	6.3. It is clear who carries out the procedure for accrediting/validating/check of compliance with the relevant regulation.
	6.4. It is clear who is responsible for registering the contract and the changes, if any.
	6.5. Employers participate in the selection of apprentices.
	6.6. There are strategies and initiatives marketing apprenticeship and informing employers of benefits, responsibilities and available support when taking on apprentices.
	6.7. Employers, especially SMEs, receive non-financial support to participate in apprenticeship provision, before and during their engagement.
	6.8. Employer organisations and chambers play a key role in engaging and supporting employers.
	6.9. There is recognition for employers that provide quality apprenticeship placements.
7. Requirements and support to teachers and in-company trainers	7.1. Teachers are prepared to work in apprenticeship.
	7.2. Employers have to assign a qualified staff member (in-company trainer) to train apprentices and/or provide mentoring.
	7.3. There are stipulated requirements for qualifications and competences (pedagogical/didactic) of in-company trainers.
	7.4. Provision of training is available for in-company trainers to develop and update their pedagogical/didactic and transversal competences and for teachers to update their competences.
	7.5. Mechanisms for cooperation and exchange between in-company trainers and teachers are in place.
8. Financing and	8.1. Employers pay compensation (wage or allowance) to



cost-sharing mechanisms	apprentices and cover indirect costs (materials, in-company trainers' time).
	8.2. Incentives for employers (subsidies, tax deductions) are targeted to support specific policy objectives (support of SMEs, encourage in-take of particular target groups, etc.).
	8.3. Incentives for apprentices are targeted to support participation of (policy priority) groups of individuals (women in certain occupations, adults, etc.).
	8.4. All employers (even the non-training ones) participate to the cost of apprenticeship (e.g. training funds, etc.)
9. Apprentices' working and learning conditions	9.1. Potential apprentices and their parents receive targeted, unbiased and comprehensive information about apprenticeship and what is on offer.
	9.2. Rights and obligations of apprentices are legally stipulated, both for working and learning.
	9.3. Health and safety regulations take into account, as necessary, the specificity of the occupation for which apprenticeship is delivered.
	9.4. Trade unions are aware of and actively engaged in supporting apprentices.
	9.5. There is a reference point (responsible body or person) that informs apprentices of the rights and responsibilities of all parties and supports them in case of problems.
	9.6. There are safety nets in case no apprenticeship places are available and alternative options for apprentices to continue their training and obtain a formal qualification in case their contract is interrupted.
	9.7. Apprentices receive support in finding places (through the VET provider, chambers, employer organisations, etc.).
10. Monitoring and evaluation	10.1. Outputs and outcomes of apprenticeships are regularly monitored and evaluated, including transition to work and progress on the labour market.
	10.2. Costs and benefits of apprenticeship for employers, apprentices and the state are measured, and results are clearly demonstrated and communicated to employers, learners and parents.



Acknowledgements

The current version of the framework reflects the experience from the reviews carried out in nine EU Member States and is the result of the team work of Cedefop experts Ramona David Craescu, Irina Jemeljanova, Vlasios Korovilos, and Lisa Rustico under the supervision of Antonio Ranieri (Head of Department for learning and employability, Cedefop).

Further information:

apprenticeship-team@cedefop.europa.eu