

Helpdesk on Apprenticeship & Traineeship Schemes

Frequently Asked Questions

Planning and setting up Apprenticeship & Traineeship schemes

1. What are the most important stages in setting up a scheme?

Helpdesk staff can provide general or specific advice on the steps that should be undertaken to set up a successful scheme including:

- Needs assessment
- Curriculum design
- Securing funding
- Involving stakeholders including employers/social partners
- Setting up monitoring indicators and targets
- Arranging evaluation

The Guidebook which is being produced as part of this contract and which will be available from the summer of 2013 also provides useful examples of the steps undertaken by effective schemes across EU27.

2. As an ESF Managing Authority, is it possible to use the Helpdesk to help with the preparation of the new programming period 2014-2020?

The Helpdesk offers tailored assistance and consultancy support for planning, establishing, improving and managing apprenticeship and traineeship schemes including within the Operational Programmes for the new programming period, 2014-2020.

3. I would like to receive some information about how to set up traineeships programmes financed through European funding. I would like to know what procedure to follow to access European funding for the purposes of setting up a European traineeship scheme. Is co-financing necessary as part of the process? If yes, is it possible to provide it through employees' staff costs?

Work placements in a different European country are generally funded through two dedicated programmes: Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus, which provide funding for work placement activities among other types of projects. The application and funding procedures under each programme vary depending on the applicant organisation (Higher Education body or business) and the target participants.

Funding for work placements abroad is also available under the ESF's regional Operational Programmes (OPs), which vary across countries and regions. Furthermore there are specific priorities and activities detailed in the relevant calls for application which must be considered when identifying open calls for proposals.

Alternatively, some public authorities in different countries may set up their own work placements schemes and issue relevant calls for participants including selection criteria of their choice and dedicated funding, without using European funding.

For more information on the opportunities available in your country, please contact the relevant National Agency for the Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus) http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/national_en.htm and your ESF National Authority <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en>.

4. How can a private company go about setting up or getting involved in an apprenticeship or traineeship scheme?

Helpdesk experts can provide advice to private sector companies who wish to set up or get involved in schemes.

As well as a generic overview of the most important steps, the Helpdesk can direct private sector stakeholders to key documentation and contacts within Member States, for example VET institutes, PES and ESF Managing Authorities. Expert consultations can be requested on this topic.

5. As part of a project we are working with a local organisation which provides support services to young people aged 16 to 25 to set up a transnational apprenticeship project between my country and a neighbouring one. Can the Helpdesk provide support in undertaking this action?

The Helpdesk can match you with an expert from the Pool of Policy Experts on apprenticeship and traineeship schemes who can then advise you on particular issues such as carrying out a needs assessment or the curriculum and pedagogical design.

Furthermore, other opportunities such as those under the Lifelong Learning Programme (specifically the Leonardo Mobility action as it consists of transnational placements for students) might be of interest as this action addresses young people who are involved in vocational education. For more information about the Lifelong Learning Programme in your country please go to: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/national_en.htm.

6. In the area of initiatives for youth, I would like more information on possibilities to support unemployed young people, especially drop-outs. What programmes does the ESF offer? What ESF resources are available for the technical development of VET? Are there any opportunities still available for 2013?

To discuss the matter further and ask what support ESF is likely to be able to provide in the area you are interested in we advise you contact the ESF Managing Authority in your country (full list can be found here: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en>).

For information, the current ESF programme is coming to an end in December 2013, and the new ESF regulation for 2014-2020 has not been finalised yet hence ESF Managing Authorities have not chosen their thematic priorities (called “investment priorities”) to inform the respective Operational Programmes.

7. We are a small independent company and looking to employ one or two people as apprentices. We would like to find out more information about what schemes are available and if any help is given with setting up, running and funding apprenticeships?

If you would like to receive strategic, operational and policy advice in relation to setting up an apprenticeship scheme, our Policy Experts are available to provide support in these areas, based on a specific request submitted by interested parties.

Member States might also have dedicated services at national level that can provide tailored support to interested organisations. For example, in the UK there is the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) who provide practical support to organisations who want to set up apprenticeships and have a dedicated helpline. Also, their website has multiple sources of information for employers who want to employ an apprenticeship and provides a good starting point: <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers.aspx>

8. Where does the funding to support an apprenticeship or traineeship come from?

The Helpdesk can indicate potential sources of funding such as national funds or European funds such as ESF. The Apprenticeship and Traineeship Schemes in EU27: Key Success Factors, A Guidebook for Policy Planners and Practitioners provides examples of types of funding used for different apprenticeship or traineeship schemes. The Guidebook will be available in six languages on the project website shortly.

The Helpdesk cannot however advise on specific funding sources in Member States or regions. For information on the availability of funding for specific types of schemes, Helpdesk users will be referred to funding providers, such as for example ESF Managing Authorities in individual Member States.

9. Have there been any reforms with regards to traineeship legislation in the Members States since 2011?

The Helpdesk carried out a mapping exercise in order to identify which of the Member States had gone through reforms with regards to traineeship legislations since 2011. A detailed analysis was prepared with information on relevant legislation in the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Austria, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden and Ireland, and can be provided upon request.

10. What obstacles do the Member States face when setting up transnational traineeship schemes?

Research undertaken by the Helpdesk experts indicated that all Member States face administrative and legal obstacles when it comes to transnational traineeships. The findings showed that there is a lot of information available about the different types of obstacles faced in implementing transnational traineeships; however, it is more difficult to find detailed information on overcoming particular challenges.

11. What are the elements to consider when carrying out a health and safety risk assessment in the workplace for transnational placements?

When sending interns or trainees on placements in another country, carrying out a health and safety risk assessment in the workplace of the recipient organisation is an important element of the preparatory stage. Prior to engaging in a transnational apprenticeship or traineeship programme, you need to make sure that the recipient organisation – particularly if it is abroad – provides a suitable and safe working environment for your trainees. It is therefore advisable to complete an adequate risk assessment, including a health and safety check. Ideally an inspection in person should be made, if possible.

As each country is likely to have slightly different rules concerning health and safety, rather than requesting that the recipient organisation complies with your rules, reasonable mutual discussion/ cross-checking of the rules in both countries should take place. This will enable the parties to determine whether the recipient organisation will be able to provide a safe enough environment for the interns during their stay.

As an example of risk assessment procedures for transitional placements, we can recommend the ‘Good Practice Guide to Health & Safety’ document from the Leonardo Mobility Programme, which provides useful practical steps and templates that can serve as reference: www.leonardo.org.uk/core/core_picker/download.asp?id=58

12. What legal rights do interns have when they are participating in cross-border internships and traineeship programmes?

In general, the territorial rule applies to candidates when they take part in cross-border internships or traineeship programmes. This means that they have to abide by the legal rules of the recipient country. The Helpdesk can provide basic advice and support regarding specific laws and regulations on apprenticeships and traineeships in each Member State.

13. Can the Helpdesk provide feedback on national or regional policy proposals on apprenticeship and traineeship programmes, including comparison with EU best practices?

The Helpdesk can assign a High-Level Expert to provide detailed, tailor-made feedback on policy documents such as national or regional reviews of apprenticeship or traineeship schemes, looking at good practice examples from other EU Member States. For example, the Helpdesk provided such feedback on the interim review of apprenticeship schemes in Northern Ireland. The Helpdesk experts can also assist with the planning stage, for example with the preparation of the national/regional ESF operational programmes.

14. Is it legally possible to fund company-based training schemes for young, unemployed graduates in Spain?

Spanish legislation does not foresee the possibility that university graduates can get traineeships in companies without remuneration outside the framework of an education/training programme. Several traineeship possibilities exist for young graduates with no prior work experience and/or who are unemployed to undertake in companies. However, this requires both an agreement with a training/education institution and a remuneration of at least 80% of the IPREM¹.

15. What types of funding opportunities are available to social partners in Poland for the provision of apprenticeships or training?

EU funding for training activities is part of the Human Capital Operational Programme (PO KL). It is administered by the Polish Agency of Enterprise Development. More information is available here: <http://en.parp.gov.pl/index/index/1887>

Apprenticeships for students of so-called “commissioned fields of study” are commissioned by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education through educational institutions (more information is available in Polish here: <http://nauka.gov.pl/kierunki-zamawiane/>). These apprenticeships are available only to students of specific fields, and are organised in cooperation with the relevant higher education institution.

A number of apprenticeship/traineeship measures are available under the provision of Labour Offices in Poland, most of them financed through the Labour Fund. Please see a leaflet in English <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/en/labour-market/>

Funding for training can also be obtained from the Ministry of National Education (www.men.gov.pl), however, it is mostly allocated under regional support measures and therefore more detailed information would be available at regional or local level. Finally, universities (higher education institutions) can also provide funding for apprentices and trainees on an individual basis (such as contributions to housing costs), but these have to be negotiated individually with each university.

16. Where would I find information in regards to placement/ internships contract procedures in the Netherlands?

There are many opportunities offering trainee-/intern-/apprenticeship types of contracts to graduates in the Netherlands; however, there are differences between higher education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET). The following links provide information on traineeships for both higher education and vocational education in the Netherlands.

¹ The Public Indicator of Multiple Effect Income (IPREM) is an index introduced in Spain in 2004 to replace the minimum wage as a reference for unemployment aid.

The NUFFIC organisation in the Netherlands provides information on traineeships for higher education, <http://www.nuffic.nl/en/expertise/training>

The Vocational Education and Labour Market platform provides information on traineeships for vocational education <http://s-bb.nl/work-placements.html>