



European alliance for apprenticeships

Member States – Planned reforms/initiatives

Ireland

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

COUNTRY	Ireland
Year	2019
Ministry/ministries	Department of Education & Skills
Contact person(s), title(s)	Phil O’Flaherty, Principal Officer
Email(s)	Phil_oflaherty@education.gov.ie
Website	https://www.education.ie

Implementation of the national commitment

Progress and main achievements

An **Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and** Traineeships in Ireland for 2016-2020 set out a series of detailed actions and annual targets to be met, with the aim of enrolling 31,000 people in apprenticeships by 2020. The plan draws from significant learning over a number of years in developing new apprenticeships, and sets a roadmap from now until 2020.

Annual registrations on apprenticeship programmes have increased considerably over the plan's period, with growth of 80 % between 2015 and 2018. There are now over 16 000 apprentices in the national system. 20 new national apprenticeship programmes have been developed during the plan period, almost doubling the number of programmes on offer. This has been achieved through open calls for proposals issued by Ireland's Apprenticeship Council. The programmes are in diverse areas, such as financial services, hospitality and ICT. A further 36 programmes are in the development pipeline.

Update of the national commitment

Planned reforms and initiatives

The process of developing a **successor to the current Action Plan** will begin shortly, and involve consultation with social partners. The expansion programme is supported by a major communications and social media campaign, under the banner of 'Generation Apprenticeship', in conjunction with employers, educators and representatives of apprentices themselves.

Targets and/or indicators

A target of a cumulative 31 000 apprenticeship registrations between 2016 and 2020 was set under the Action Plan, along with the development of 40 new apprenticeship programmes. These targets will be refreshed in the context of a successor plan.

Budget of the reform/initiative

No EU funding is currently used for apprenticeships. Expansion, to date, has been funded by Ireland's National Training Fund, and supported by an increase in employer contributions to the Fund. The 2019 budget allocation for apprenticeship training is EUR 142 million, which represents an increase of over 16 % of the 2018 allocation of EUR 122 million.

Key stakeholders involved

The Department of Education and Skills, SOLAS, Education and Training Boards, Higher Education Authority, unions and employer bodies, representative bodies of education and training institutions – these groups are represented on Ireland's Apprenticeship Council.

Further measures planned as a follow up to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

Ireland's apprenticeship system is strongly aligned with the provisions of the Council Recommendation. It has a strong statutory base, with all apprentices employed under employment contracts, and employers obliged to release apprentices to off-the-job training without reducing their wages. All apprenticeships lead to qualifications on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications, and all training (on and off the job) is quality assured in accordance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012.