APPRENTICES IN MOTION

A Business Guidelines for Apprenticeship Mobility
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Executive Summary

Apprenticeship mobility helps young people to prepare for the future of work. By acquiring new hard and soft skills as well as stronger independence, young apprentices and recent graduates can find their true potential, while companies offering mobility opportunities benefit from skilled employees, enhanced employer reputation and increased workforce diversity.

To foster long-term mobility of apprentices, the European Commission launched ErasmusPRO in 2016, with an additional 400 million euros to support the long-term mobility of 50,000 apprentices by 2020. The next Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027) will further increase cross-border mobility opportunities with a proposal to triple the funds for apprenticeship mobility.

This business guidelines booklet puts forward practical guidelines on how to run business-to-business apprenticeship mobility. It summarises the lessons learned from a pilot project and provides concrete tips for interested company practitioners and is based on a European Commission funded pilot project “Apprentices in Motion”, run by four companies and CSR Europe, Fondation FACE and Fondazione Sodalitas.

To make apprenticeship mobility happen, companies need to take into account a number of factors such as ensuring internal buying, setting-up the necessary procedures as well as fostering a culture of transnational mobility among their apprentices. To access European funding on apprenticeship mobility, companies need to go through the general Erasmus+ application procedure and ensure a quality proposal that complies with main requirements such as target group or eligible costs.

For realising the mobility placements, the guideline offers practical steps for companies across four distinctive phases:

1. Agreeing on the mobility (candidate selection, logistical aspects, mobility agreement)
2. Preparing the mobility (preparing the sending and receiving company)
3. Managing the mobility (professional and social integration)
4. Ending of mobility (post mobility assessment, evaluation)

Practical implementation of apprenticeship mobility will vary according to the specific situation of the learner going abroad and the sending and receiving company. This is captured through four case study stories based on real experiences of companies testing to start apprenticeship mobility. The business guidelines also present results of a collected in a survey distributed to over 50 company practitioners (mainly form HR) across 5 companies in 13 countries as well as their apprentices, with a total of 44 responses.

The main findings suggest that companies are in general interested in apprenticeship mobility as long as it is recognised as part of their CSR agenda, and that time and resources constraints are not too high. On the apprentices’ side, the interest in mobility is equally important as they see it beneficial for their development, though some constraints may diminish the desire to go abroad, such a losing connection with family and friends.
Apprenticeship mobility helps young people to prepare for the future of work. By acquiring new hard and soft skills as well as stronger independence, young apprentices and recent graduates can find their true potential in new international environments. Companies offering mobility opportunities on their side benefit from skilled employees, enhanced employer reputation and increased workforce diversity.

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The next Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027) will further increase cross-border mobility opportunities for vocational education and training, including a proposal to triple the funds for apprenticeship mobility.

To help companies make most of this new chapter of apprenticeship mobility in Europe, this booklet puts forward practical guidelines on how to run business-to-business apprenticeship mobility.

It summarises the lessons learned from the experiment, provides concrete tips for interested company practitioners and is based on a European Commission funded pilot project “Apprentices in Motion”, run by four companies and CSR Europe, Fondation FACE and Fondazione Sodalitas.

As companies can be active players in apprenticeship mobility, their engagement will be pivotal for the future success of ErasmusPRO as well as fostering equal mobility chances in Europe to students from vocational backgrounds.
Interested to join the journey? Here are ways your company can benefit from Apprenticeship Mobility:

1) Be attractive & recruit the best:

Attractiveness of vocational studies and apprenticeships is becoming a key challenge as fewer young people opt for this form of training. Engaging in apprenticeship mobility can ensure that your company will top young people’s choices as they consider various career options and workplaces for their future.

2) Tackle upcoming skills challenges:

With the fast pace of digitalisation, robotization and internationalisation of the working environment, the future skills requirements are becoming ever more focused on adaptability and optimisation of ‘human intelligence’. Sending your future workforce for a mobility experience within Europe will ensure new levels of agility that can become a real asset in your intercultural work environment.

3) Increase your workforce diversity:

By welcoming young people from other countries, you can enhance your company’s diversity and multiculturalism for open mindedness. This will help your employees to build stronger soft skills that are notably key for successful business transformations.

4) Enhance your company reputation:

Tackling youth unemployment and the skills gap are among top priorities for public authorities at national and EU level. Working on apprenticeship mobility can distinguish your company as a future shaping leader as you engage in new forms of mobility to help young people in their transition to jobs.

5) Connect to new frontiers:

Engaging in international apprenticeship mobility can expand further the frontiers of your company as you will bridge new collaborations with your business units, suppliers and clients in other European countries.
So, you have decided to get your company engaged in apprenticeship mobility. Here are couple of things to consider getting the journey started:

**Ensure internal buy-in**
Realising apprenticeship mobility takes a bit of grit and being committed to the action is very important. In this respect, creating an internal buy-in within your company is key for the success of the project. This does not only mean leadership commitment, but also changing the culture among employees. For example, it is the line managers on the shop floor or HR professionals who will be identifying the candidates or welcoming the youngster as well as playing a key role in matching supply and demand of mobility opportunities. Consequently, to succeed apprenticeship mobility, it is vital to build ambassadors among your existing employees who can support the action.

Inscribing apprenticeship mobility in your social responsibility actions can therefore be a good strategy, as to ensure internal buy-in and company wide recognition of the efforts made by every employee. Our survey suggests for example that almost 70% of HR Managers are in favour of having apprenticeship mobility recognised as part of the company’s CSR actions.

**Getting yourself organised**
Realising apprenticeship mobility can take some time, but once you get your processes sorted, there you will be able to save time and streamline the action. To get there, it is good to have an assigned person to sort out the process for your company. At the end of the day, the benefits of apprenticeship mobility will also depend on the effort you put into it.

To plan your mobility in advance, and in line with the Erasmus+ application timeline (see page 4 for yearly cycle), you will need to identify the candidates and
the receiving entities one year ahead. When deciding for the length of the placements, you will also want to consider legal and contractual implications while consulting participating companies and the candidates. For example, while tax rules are set by each European Member State, you will usually be considered tax-resident in the country where you spend more than 6 months a year.

Finally, there can be additional costs to consider for running apprenticeship mobility. On the positive, the Erasmus+ funding provides language fee support, organisational support, specific needs and extraordinary costs (for disability or inclusiveness), as long as they are specified in your application.

Finding the right candidates
While apprenticeship mobility is still a niche in Europe, the numbers are rapidly going up, as an increasing number of learners, VET providers as well as companies are getting engaged. Yet, finding the right candidates might be difficult due to limited profiles with foreign languages, low level of awareness on existing opportunities or lack of role models with success stories.

In this respect, it is good to foster awareness of future mobility opportunities among young apprentices two to three years ahead. This can notably be done together with VET providers, that can also help to identify potential candidates for mobility.
### Applying To ERASMUS+ Funding for Apprenticeship Mobility

#### Who can apply
Applications must be submitted by organizations. Individuals cannot apply directly by a grant.

Companies can apply as part of a national mobility consortium which needs to include at least 3 VET providers from the same country.

#### Types of mobility
Long-term mobility in VET providers and/or companies abroad from 3 to 12 months, with a focus on work placements.

#### Target group
- Students in vocational training / apprenticeships
- Recent apprenticeship graduates (max 12 months after graduation)

#### Eligible costs
The following items are listed as eligible costs:
- Travel expenses
- Subsistence expenses
- Organizational costs
- Specific needs costs
- Extraordinary costs
- Language support fee

#### Eligible countries
- EU Members States
- + Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey

#### Where to apply
Applications are dealt at national level by the Erasmus+ National Agencies, in charge of mobility for vocational education and training. The agencies can also be contacted for any questions as well as reviewing your application to access the funding.

#### How to apply
- Create an EU Login account, to access the eForms for Erasmus+ Applications
- Complete the form in detail making sure you address the award criteria
- Assemble and upload all annexes required for the application
- Submit online before the deadline
- For any questions, contact your national agency or attend info sessions organized by them

#### Yearly timeline for applications to Erasmus+
- October: opening of Erasmus+ call for applications
- February: Deadline for submitting applications
- June: Selection results
- September: Start of mobility period with Erasmus+
## Action Guidelines for Running Mobility

### Phase 1: Agreeing on the mobility

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| 1 Communicate opportunity in sending company | • Presentation of mobility opportunities and benefits for apprentices  
• Organise informative session for Q&A | • Create partnerships with schools, Visit school and inform learners from an early age  
• Engage internal ambassadors who have been on mobility to share their experience in info sessions  
• Present mobility opportunity as part of onboarding processes of new apprentices |
| 2 Select candidate | • Select apprentices following internal recruitment system | • Align your diversity & equal opportunity policies with the recruitment process for apprenticeship mobility |
| 3 Find receiving company | • Liaise with your country/HQs coordinator for finding receiving company  
• Agree on destination according to apprentices’ background and needed profiles abroad | • Make use on-line platforms / matchmaking tools to connect sending & receiving entities for exchanging apprentices |
| 4 Tackle legal & logistical aspects | • Agree how insurance, health care, income & taxation abroad will be addressed abroad | • Legal & logistical aspects need to be addressed either by sending or receiving company based on length of time spent abroad.  
• Clarifying respective responsibilities ahead is key to success |
| 5 Formulate mobility agreement & sign | • Mobility agreement should be sign with the apprentice & the company to ensure commitment on both sides  
• Clarify to the apprentice the payment schedule of Erasmus subsidy | • Do already include task description & learning objectives as to have a mutual understanding on assigned work during mobility |

### Phase 2: Preparing the mobility

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| 1 Preparation at sending company | • Assign tutor responsible of pre-mobility preparations & language assessment and lessons  
• Cultural training: organise introduction sessions to the hosting country, city and culture | • Do organise calls with the learner and the receiving company tutor to align on practical arrangements for the mobility  
[Do make use of Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support](https://erasmusplus.education.ec.europa.eu/online-linguistic-support)  
• Try matching employees from destination country with the apprentice for tandem learning |
| 2 Preparation with receiving company | • Clarify (new) responsibilities of the line manager for overseeing the professional integration of the learner  
• Define a detailed learning plan for the learner’s stay and expected skills to be acquired  
• Make sure to take care of housing, transport & food, social integration and travel to destination  
• Assign apprentice (same age group) buddy to facilitate local and social integration | • Make sure that the line manager is fully aware of their ‘tutoring’ responsibilities towards the welcomed learner  
• Creation of a generic book / guide for all newcomers (to be adapted according to the needs of the apprentice)  
• Organise video calls between the buddy and the learner to introduce the culture and future work environment |
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<td><strong>Phase 3: Managing the mobility</strong></td>
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| 1 Professional integration | • Conclude legal & contractual arrangements (including insurance, taxation etc.)  
• Offer tailored onboarding to the newly welcomed learner, with a start assessment on skills & language  
• Organise regular interactions/meetings between manager & learner on work duties and learning plan  
• Ensure the learner can raise issues or concerns in an impartial way and lowers the level of conflicts | • Build together learning plan with the apprentice                     |
| 2 Social integration       | • Help arranging logistical details (housing, transport, banking, living expenses) either by HR or buddy  
• Make sure the buddy welcomes the new learner and shows him/her around on leisure activities in the city/region. | • Welcoming lunch between the buddy and the apprentice  
• Schedule Volunteer action in solidarity with the team  
• Join apprentices network                                                   |
| 3 Liaising between sending & receiving company | • Organise interim check calls between sending & receiving companies to evaluate how the placement is going and encountered challenges |                                                                      |
| **Phase 4: End of mobility**                                      |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                      |
| 1 Post-mobility assessment and certifications | • Assess of post-mobility technical and social skills and support the apprentice in the upload of CV, profile on social networks and redaction of recommendation letters | • Evaluate the difference between ‘before’ and ‘after’ mobility  
• You can use profile pass for this purpose                               |
| 2 Provide career guidance for future orientation                  | • Organise a tutoring session with apprentice to assess achieved results and possible future professional trajectories | • Engage both sending & receiving company to have cross-cutting view on future areas of development |
| 3 Programme evaluation   | • Project output used to elaborate company guidelines for setting up internal apprenticeship mobility programmes | • Set up an online survey to capture the feedback from participating entities for continuous improvement |
Company Stories On Apprenticeship Mobility

Those cases described below are part of the AIM project. In partnership with 4 companies, 8 French learners did a long-term mobility to different European countries (UK, Portugal, Germany). Those cases highlight the **key stages of the different phases, and provide a concrete illustration of the good practices** applied during the implementation of AIM project.

**Phase 1 - Agreeing on the mobility**

For this phase, it’s necessary to **handle all the logistical aspects as the accommodation**. Here a story of Suzanne about this aspect.

At the beginning of 2018, Suzanne was about to go in England for 6-month. Before her arrival, the company found for her a **host family to live in**. After a few weeks, Suzanne had some **difficulties** in being integrated into the family.

This one was not very welcoming and the young apprentice decided to talk to the company’s HR department about it. The company quickly decided to react and called their partner to **find another host family** and relocate Suzanne.

The apprentice was delighted with this reactivity and the rest of her mobility went very well with her new family. Where everything is new, it is important to have a home where you feel comfortable.

**Phase 2 - Preparing the mobility**

Language is one of the principal steps to handle for all the learner, wherever of the destination of the mobility. **Language can often be a brake for apprentices**.

Learning English, German or Portuguese is not easy for everyone, especially for low-skilled profiles. To encourage mobility departures, Daniela’s company financed private English courses in order to
prepare her mobility in England. Therefore, the French apprentice had a test to assess her English level. 12 hours of oral conversation with a personal teacher was followed in July and August. Daniela expressed that it had been very useful to her.

There is a big difference between understanding a language, reading it or speaking it. It is important to be at ease with a new language to be integrate professionally or socially in a new country. This was also true for apprentices who went to Hanover or Lisbon and were able to learn Portuguese or German, even if English remains the first language spoken!

**Phase 3 - Managing the mobility**

Managing the mobility concern the professional and the social integration. Both they are complementary and necessary for the well-being of the learners.

Social integration is just as important as professional integration. Alice’s mobility in Portugal was a real success. In addition to the fact that Lisbon is a very welcoming city, Alice’s team was very warm. Various activities have been implemented to strengthen team cohesion. Breakfasts, team lunches, birthday event and afterwork have all contributed to this cohesion. Furthermore, voluntary activities were organised during the Christmas holidays (distribution of meals to the most deprived people).

This activity helped to develop a sense of usefulness and to meet new people. Finally, Alice also had the initiative to share pass on some of her culture by giving to 3 colleagues French lessons. This example of social integration shows how much taking time for this phase is important and positive on the work efficiency.

**Phase 4 - End of mobility**

After a long-term mobility, it’s important to help the learners to define their professional project. For most of them, an abroad experience can trigger an awareness of what they want to do.

After working for more than a year in his chemical company, Benjamin had 9 months’ experience in Hanover. Before his mobility, the company wanted to hire him. So, this experience allowed him to discover new techniques, different laboratories and new way of working. He has strengthened his professional skills and soft skills.

It is therefore quite naturally that Benjamin was hired when he returned to Paris. Indeed, by this experience, Benjamin has shown his flexibility and his capacity to adapt to a different corporate culture.

This mobility serves to reinforce the wish to hire Benjamin. He became then a permanent staff member the company thanks to this experience.
Below you will find results of a survey distributed to HR & line managers in Europe on their views on apprenticeship mobility. In total the survey collects the views of 52 HR & Line Managers, and 44 from apprentices of five companies across 13 countries.

The survey used the following definition of apprenticeship mobility:
- 3 months (or longer) work placement in another country within the same group or in another company
- Apprentices not in university education
- Above 17 years old

**GENERAL MOBILITY**

1. **Would you like to engage in apprenticeship mobility in the future, either receiving or sending apprentices?**
   - 92% yes
   - 8% no

2. **What would be your preferred length for apprenticeship mobility?**
   - 39% Six months or longer
   - 37% Three to six months
   - 22% One to three months
   - 2% Two to four weeks

3. **Should your engagement in apprenticeship mobility be**
   - 69% Recognised as part of your group’s CSR actions
   - 23% Voluntary activity
   - 4% Linked to managerial bonuses

4. **How would you see apprenticeship mobility within your company in three years from now?**
   - 37% We will start working on setting up long-term programmes for apprenticeship mobility
   - 32% We will monitor possibilities, with option of spontaneous engagement
   - 31% We will investigate options for future apprenticeship mobility partnerships
What do Companies say about Apprenticeship mobility?

MOBILITY IN RECRUITMENT

5. When hiring talent, would you give preferential treatment to an apprenticeship graduate with a mobility experience?

- 90% yes
- 10% no

Here are top reasons for it:

1. They have better soft skills & resilient attitude (67%)
2. They could bring new knowledge and perspectives in (65%)
3. They would have stronger foreign language skills (56%)
4. I could increase internal interest for mobility (23%)
5. Their career progression can be potentially faster (21%)

SENDING APPRENTICES

6. What would be the main motivations to send apprentices / recent graduates abroad?

1. Supporting young people’s career development (87%)
2. Developing further the skills of future recruits (64%)
3. Better employer branding (46%)
4. Increased company loyalty from sent candidates (31%)
5. Better identification of potential strong recruits and candidates (27%)

7. What would be main constraints to send apprentices / recent graduates abroad?

1. It would take too much of extra-time to set up a mobility placement (52%)
2. It would be difficult to find a replacement to cover the person sent abroad (44%)
3. Other youth employment actions have higher benefits (42%)
4. Sent candidates might not come back to work for me (23%)
5. I would rather keep good candidates to work for me than send them abroad (13%)

RECEIVING APPRENTICES

8. What would be main motivations to receive apprentices / recent graduates abroad?

1. Increase in workforce diversity (75%)
2. Supporting youth employability across Europe (63%)
3. Access to a larger pool of potential candidates for recruitment (48%)
4. Building better connections with other markets (38%)
5. Making use of larger set of competences (33%)

9. What would be main constraints to receive apprentices / recent graduates abroad?

1. Difficulty to release additional budget to cover salary (60%)
2. Their language level would not be good enough (50%)
3. Hiring talent from existing apprentices is more beneficial (35%)
4. Assigning productive work would be difficult (27%)
5. Their work input would not be high enough (19%)

10. Please rank the difficulty of the following items for setting up a mobility placement
(Results = 1 most difficult, 6 is least difficult).

1. Contractual items & legal issues
2. Setting up insurance and health care access
3. Setting up social security
4. Finding accommodation
5. Supporting with banking
6. Youth & cultural integration
Results: What do Apprentices say about Mobility?

WORKING ABROAD

1. Would you consider ever working in a foreign country to yours (Europe or beyond)?
   - 82% Yes
   - 18% No

2. What would be your preferred period for a work placement abroad?
   1. Six months + (39%)
   2. Three to six months (37%)
   3. One to three months (21%)
   4. Two to four weeks (3%)

3. What would be your main reason to go abroad for a work/apprenticeship experience?
   1. I see this contributing to my career development (57%)
   2. It will allow me to further develop my language skills (56%)
   3. It will allow me to face new challenges & experiences (55%)
   4. I will learn and experience other cultures (48%)
   5. Discovering the world is just so exciting (25%)

4. What would be main reasons not go abroad for a work/apprenticeship experience?
   1. I don’t want to lose connections with family and friends (64%)
   2. The pay level might not be enough to cover extra expenses abroad (50%)
   3. I would rather work nearby my current location (25%)
   4. My foreign language level is not high enough (16%)
   5. It would take too much extra effort (5%)
   6. I don’t see this contributing to my career development (5%)
About Apprentices in Motion  
(2017 – 2019)

Apprentices in Motion was a European Commission funded pilot project led by CSR Europe, and involving two of its national partners, and four companies.

The project tested B2B intra-company and long-term mobility of recent apprenticeship graduates with a non-university level diploma. The pilot was launched to investigate how companies can improve their involvement in long-term mobility of apprentices, mainly organised only between VET training providers up to now.

The business guidelines are a result of the concrete piloting of B2B apprenticeship mobility and the peer learning organised during the project.

Implementing partners

CSR Europe  
Fondation FACE  
Fondazione Sodalitas  
Four companies (anonymous)

Knowledge partners

European Vocational Training Association (EVTA)  
European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB)  
Jacques Delors Institute  
Don Bosco International