



Refining HE Apprenticeships
with Enterprises in Europe

Advocacy Pack

Higher Education Apprenticeship:
By learning you teach
By teaching you learn



Introduction

The two challenges for education and training in Europe are *high unemployment among young people* and the *shortage of higher level skills required by employers*. Apprenticeships and work-based learning schemes help **learners** to gain a recognised professional qualification while building up practical skills and experience in a real work environment. For **universities**, these schemes promote the value of learning at higher education levels and improve the professional dimension and relevance of the curricula and teaching methods, accelerate exchanges with the business world and improve the employment prospects of the learners.

About this pack

To tackle the problems mentioned above and so as to find solutions, universities and business from 8 European countries joined the EU-funded ApprEnt project, <http://appr.ent.eu/en.eu>. The findings from the project have been used to develop this *ApprEnt Advocacy Pack on Higher Education Apprenticeships* (HEA).

HEAs have been proved to offer solutions for the improvement of our society, while addressing the real needs of industry and preserving the academic requirements of higher education institutions. Those who are directly involved in the development or implementation of these programmes, as well as those who have obtained a HEA certification, feel very motivated to talk about it and explain to others why their experience is so positive. However, sometimes words are not enough to explain things and it is important to have printable documents to hand out.

While developing the ApprEnt final products, it has been carefully thought what materials could be needed and how these could be used in every instance. Hence the format of this pack, where you can pick and use only those parts that are relevant to you and your specific audience. The ApprEnt materials available are -

For **enterprises**, they earnestly contribute to identify, train and recruit highly skilled staff. This formula, which helps to solve the problems of youth unemployment and higher level skilled training at the same time, stimulating the development of university-business collaboration, should be particularly encouraged by **policy makers**.

However, are all the parties involved ready to invest in this kind of programmes? Some might not fully understand how they work or which are the paybacks of such schemes. How to make Higher Education Apprenticeships known?

- ▲ Executive Summary
- ▲ Advocacy pack with 5 flash-cards highlighting the benefits of these programmes, with testimonies from real users:
 - ▲ Addressed to potential apprentices
 - ▲ Addressed to mentors
 - ▲ Addressed to HEIs
 - ▲ Addressed to enterprises
 - ▲ Addressed to policy makers
- ▲ Set of Policy Recommendations
- ▲ Guidelines to develop an Agreement Model
- ▲ Generic training course for mentors

Apprentices, enterprises, universities and policy makers are welcomed to use this pack to promote and give visibility to any HEA available in their communities or/and in Europe.

We strongly believe that **mentors** (both from HEIs and from enterprises) could be excellent ambassadors of HEA too: they are often involved in the development of HEA curricula and they know the challenges that apprentices face and the impact of these programmes in individuals, organisations and society at large. We hope that mentors feel encouraged to use these materials to inspire their colleagues to engage in similar duties.

The ApprEnt project partners

POLICY-MAKERS

Society increasingly calls upon policy-makers, at EU as well as at national level, to devise effective strategies and address the current societal and economic challenges. High (youth) unemployment rates on one side, and the skills mismatch experienced by enterprises on the other, are two very critical issues all policy-makers at all levels are expected to address. Improving the offer, quality and image of higher education apprenticeships is one way through which policy-makers can contribute to **reduce the levels of unemployment** and provide **support to enterprises, especially SMEs**. Policy-makers have the power to establish and adopt rules that make mobility and accreditation of HEA easier, they can provide policy, financial and logistical support, they are in the position to promote transnational cooperation and ensure good quality measures. It is in the interest and benefit of all policy-makers to engage with higher education institutions and enterprises to support, in both policy and financial terms, the establishment and implementation of higher education apprenticeship schemes.

By supporting HEA schemes, policy makers can:

- ▲ Tackle some of the most critical challenges of today's society and economy
- ▲ Contribute to reducing unemployment, especially amongst youth
- ▲ Address the problem of skills mismatch experienced by enterprises, especially SMEs
- ▲ Help connect and align the worlds of education and work
- ▲ Foster social inclusion by widening participation in education, working life and society
- ▲ Increase competitiveness and encourage economic growth
- ▲ Work towards the integration of economies, through the support of mobility
- ▲ Contribute to boosting transfer of knowledge and technology to society
- ▲ Further strengthen the validation of all types of learning (formal, non-formal and informal), communicating trust, acceptance and support towards these processes to society
- ▲ Ensure flexibility of learning, diversity of learning pathways and a better future employability
- ▲ Help build trust between the worlds of higher education and business
- ▲ Prove to citizens the relevance and effectiveness of public policies and public expenditures by showing results and communicating success stories

We know that implementing HEA is not easy: it needs resources and coordination from all parties involved. But the results are very successful and the potential of its full implementation could help solving several current challenges in Europe.

We herewith call for action in the implementation of transversal policies in Europe and at national level to support these activities and promote university-business collaboration, focussing on fostering high level skills of students so that they become the leaders of our future industry.

What do policy makers say about higher education apprenticeship? Read some real testimonies from policy developers in Europe:

Marianne Thyssen (Commissioner, DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. EC), during the 4th stakeholders meeting of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship meeting, said (referring to the Alliance and apprenticeship schemes): *"it makes a valuable contribution to skills matching, linking the worlds of work and learning. This is a key component in Europe's top performing economies" ... "Apprenticeship is an important way of boosting employability" ... "Businesses grow by hiring skilled workers and investing in future talent"*.

Dana-Carmen Bachmann (Head of Unit 'Vocational training, Apprenticeships and Adult learning', DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. EC) presented the future of Vocational Education and Training in Europe during the "EU Policy Cooperation in VET post 2020 – The Way Forward" conference, Austria, July 2018: *"... The aim is that we bring, first on a local dimension and we connect better (these) key centres or set of actors, to the innovation and economic developmental actors. So we want them to be working side by side with Universities ..., with Researchers, with Businesses, in delivering ... the development of the region. ... working together with SME, by carrying out research, while involving teachers but also learners themselves"*.

We recommend you to read also:

- ▲ ApprEnt Executive Summary
- ▲ ApprEnt Policy Recommendations



HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutions today are increasingly keen on developing cooperation with the business world and make their educational offer more relevant, ensuring that their students have a smooth entry from education and training into full employment. Higher education apprenticeships can support universities in **strengthening cooperation with enterprises** while **promoting a smooth transition of higher education students to the labour market**. Universities should support mobility of staff and encourage mentoring of schemes, allocating adequate time and resources to training of mentors and giving them full recognition for their role and competences. By appointing dedicated members of their staff to the management of HEA schemes, universities can ensure the best coordination of efforts and resources to make the most out of HEA schemes.

Through HEA schemes, higher education institutions can:

- ▲ Offer to their students an honest transition to the labour market
- ▲ Ensure a better connection between education and the labour market
- ▲ Train the future managers, building up a sustainable chain of contacts
- ▲ Become more competitive and sustainable by making the educational offer more targeted to real market needs
- ▲ Get to know better their target groups and external stakeholders
- ▲ Strengthen the links with business world
- ▲ Benefit from the enterprises' practical know-how
- ▲ Stimulate creativity, updating and reviewing curricula according to real labour market needs
- ▲ Create innovative study-programmes in cooperation with enterprises
- ▲ Facilitate research, development and innovation in collaboration with industry
- ▲ Reach out to new target groups
- ▲ Strengthen the validation of learning in society (trust, acceptance)
- ▲ Ensure flexibility of learning, diversity of learning pathways and a better employability
- ▲ Build trust between the worlds of higher education and business
- ▲ Fulfil their social dimension mission by widening participation in education, working life and society

We know that HEA demands much from HEIs in terms of human resources, but the satisfaction to form the future leaders and to develop and strengthen collaboration with industry is of paramount importance.

We herewith call for action in the development of HEA programmes in collaboration with industry to train the professionals that will lead the Europe of tomorrow.

What do the HEIs say about higher education apprenticeship? Read some real testimonies from universities offering HEA:

"The strengths of the programme are mostly related to the benefits obtained by all the participants. Students acquire a comprehensive education, not solely based on technical aspects but also acquiring professional expertise, cross-skills development and personal growth. Companies highlight the learning capacity of students, whose activity is highly aligned with the enterprise's objectives, and their contributions to their workplace are positively perceived. From the academia point of view, the programme enriches students' education, strengthens the relationships with companies and boosts knowledge transfer." University in Spain

"Despite the resistance and difficulties that still exist in using it, the form of apprenticeship is configured as a hybrid instrument with which to conceive and design training in the logic of lifelong learning. The apprenticeship is the setting in which theory and practice, needs for innovation and training can find synthesis. This is why it is an attractive challenge for universities that intend to innovate and respond to the increasingly widespread needs of students in terms of employability and the development of transversal skills " Delegate for Continuing Education, University of Siena, IT

Reading list that we recommend to you:

- ▲ ApprEnt Executive Summary
- ▲ ApprEnt Policy Recommendations
- ▲ ApprEnt Guidelines for a Model Agreement
- ▲ ApprEnt Generic CPD course for mentors



ENTERPRISES AND INDUSTRY

All types of enterprises can benefit from Higher Education Apprenticeships (HEA), however, the size of the enterprise will affect the willingness to enter in such projects. Implementing higher education apprenticeship can be particularly challenging for SMEs, which face greater constraints in terms of time, money and available resources. On the other hand, it can represent for them an opportunity to undertake tasks that, otherwise, a small company would not be able to approach. Thus, higher education apprenticeships can represent, even for SMEs, a great way to **address the problem of skills mismatch, increase productivity and bring about a smoother recruitment process**. The role played by enterprises in implementing apprenticeship is key for providing relevant feedback on the goodness of existing measures and on ways how to improve them, based on real cases. As universities, enterprise should allocate adequate time and resources to HEA, encourage the appointment and training of mentors and ensure the full recognition of their role and competences. It is the responsibility of enterprises to focus on preparing detailed description of the skills needed in the apprentices, so that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are able to identify the most appropriate candidates for the specific enterprise's needs.

Through HEA schemes, enterprises can:

- ▲ Address the problem of skills mismatch and master skills development
- ▲ Increase productivity through the contributions given by apprentices to the work
- ▲ Get fresh perspectives to do things more effectively
- ▲ Benefit from innovative ideas (especially important for micro-companies)
- ▲ Have access to knowledge transfer, research tools and consulting services
- ▲ Benefit from university-business collaboration and obtain access to university resources and spaces for events, equipment, etc.
- ▲ Benefit from theoretical and transversal knowledge and research to better address problems they face
- ▲ Avail themselves of a well-trained workforce
- ▲ Bring about a smoother, more efficient and targeted recruitment process, with lower costs
- ▲ Increase competitiveness thanks to a diverse (and sometimes international) staff
- ▲ Know the surrounding enterprises better, their own sector and the society at large
- ▲ Encourage their own employees to return to study
- ▲ Build trust between the worlds of higher education and business, gaining the opportunity to collaborate, learn from each other and influence in the design of more suitable programmes for the current working necessities
- ▲ Envisage clusters of enterprises for the delivery of apprenticeships, which can be an enabling factor especially for smaller companies
- ▲ Fulfil their corporate social responsibility mission
- ▲ Act as an inspiration for other companies in providing opportunities to young people
- ▲ Become more attractive organisations for society and for young professionals, gaining standing and recognition

We know that HEA demands much from enterprises, especially when these are small organisations, in terms of human resources, but the potential to address and solve specific problems in these companies, to form individuals that could become your own tasks force tomorrow and strengthen collaboration with HE is of paramount importance.

We herewith call for action in the development of HEA programmes in collaboration with HEIs to consolidate the professionals that will lead the Europe of tomorrow.

What do the enterprises say about higher education apprenticeship? Read some real testimonies from companies hosting apprentices:

"After my experience with the apprentice, I have no doubt that the training she has had is an added value for our company or for another company that looks for someone to integrate its teams of Maintenance." Director of Production, company in the metal-mechanical sector, Portugal

"Starting with a HEA program was essential to gain a better recognition as an employer of first choice in the field of IT for students. For us our HEA program is a crucial part within our employer branding strategy." A1 Telekom, Austria

"The apprentice quickly became part of the team and embraced the functions that were proposed. Since the first budget was sent at the close of the proceedings, he was up to its task, accompanying the sales processes and the operation of various events. In addition to the sale and events, the apprentice was invited to create new layouts for of events", Hotel assistant director, Portugal

"Hiring an apprentice is often an interesting and reliable solution for the company, as a pre-recruitment. The apprentice can show his/her skills and competences in a professional context. Full proficiency and knowledge of the company are in principle acquired at the end of the apprenticeship training. Several mentees trained at our company have been hired and are now employees of the company." Design and production of fishing items, France

"Two and a half years ago we decided to set up a school within my company. A small course open to graduates from the high school of engineering. An important experience, above all because those topics are not normally studied in traditional degree courses. It would be interesting to find synergies like those that can be developed in the apprenticeship." Engineering Manager from Italy

Reading list that we recommend to you:

- ▲ ApprEnt Executive Summary
- ▲ ApprEnt Policy Recommendations
- ▲ ApprEnt Guidelines for a Model Agreement
- ▲ ApprEnt Generic CPD course for mentors



STUDENTS

There is no doubt that students would benefit from the advantages offered by higher education apprenticeship schemes. Apprentices have the opportunity to learn valuable workplace skills in a professional environment while studying at the same time, which ensures to them a smoother **transition from education and training to work** and **greater future employability**. Apprenticeships combine work-place training with academic education, leading to a nationally recognised qualification when completed. Despite the additional workload required by HEA for students and the need to for good time-management, the benefits are indisputable: quality apprenticeships enhance employment prospects, support personal development and deliver the skills needed in the labour market.

Through HEA schemes, students can:

- ▲ Have a smooth entry into the world of employment
- ▲ Study and work in a relevant post at the same time, while receiving a remuneration
- ▲ Obtain a nationally recognised qualification while acquiring work experience
- ▲ Interact with professionals and staff from different departments while enjoying an employee status
- ▲ Acquire the full set of knowledge, competence and skills of a professional occupation
- ▲ Build a better CV with valuable and practical experience, increasing employment possibilities in the same area and widening career perspectives
- ▲ Receive useful advice and insights from mentors
- ▲ Build a professional network
- ▲ Have access to mobility opportunities
- ▲ Develop a stronger motivation for learning because they get a better grip of what is needed in the subject of their study
- ▲ Acquire better time management and organisational skills
- ▲ Develop not only specific technical skills but also soft skills such as problem-solving and teamwork
- ▲ Develop innovativeness and flexibility skills
- ▲ Receive help and inputs for their research thesis or final course works
- ▲ Acquire enough preparation (theoretical and practical) to consider becoming themselves entrepreneurs
- ▲ Adult/mature students have an opportunity to leave their current work to attend these programme, pursuing lifelong learning while receiving a remuneration, with the final objective to obtain a higher diploma or changing speciality
- ▲ Adult/mature students have the opportunity to update their skills and keep up to date with technological developments and re-position themselves in the labour market

We know that carrying out a HEA programme is hard. Carrying it out while working is even tougher. However, the knowledge and practice that you will obtain when you have finished your course will be so complete that it will open your doors to better opportunities.

We herewith encourage you to find out more about HEA programmes and to consider becoming one of the professionals that will lead the Europe of tomorrow.

What do the apprentices say about higher education apprenticeship? Read some real testimonies from apprentices:

"The Company collaborated a lot, giving me the opportunity to show and put into practice the knowledge acquired and allowed me to evolve in the training. In the end, there was no need to look for a job because the company proposed me to continue the work". Apprentice from the School of Design, Management and Production Technologies Northern Aveiro, ESAN-UA, Portugal

"The Automotive Mechatronics and Management course has a program clearly focused on the most current needs of the automotive market. All of the lectures were selected for having a direct and immediate application in the various possible scenarios in this market. The faculty, guest speakers, and mentors have extensive market experience, not only academic. Therefore, the connection between theory and actual practice was always clear in each lesson." Apprentice from the FH OÖ Campus Wels, Austria

"I have had the opportunity to work with excellent professionals who provided me with great moments, both in a practical and theoretical context. I had opportunities to observe and work in many areas with many different employees and all of them have helped me in one way or another to grow as a professional and get a different perspective of the reality of the world of work. I learned and very much enjoyed the chance to evolve in this experience in the near future." Apprentice from the Águeda School of Technology and Management – University of Aveiro (ESTGA-UA), Portugal

"I started in 2011 and it was one of the first apprenticeship courses activated in the university. I had the need to keep work together and the need to do research, to innovate work processes. Contamination is the main distinctive mechanism of apprenticeship in higher education." Student who obtained a PhD Apprenticeship in Italy

Reading list that we recommend to you:

- ▲ [ApprEnt Guidelines for a Model Agreement](#)



MENTORS AND ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS

Mentors and supervisors are key actors in the effective delivery of HEA. They contribute to the development of the programmes both in the planning phase and by giving feedback on supervised apprentices and support to apprentices in the successful completion of their course. Understanding and fulfilling the duties of mentor/supervisor is a crucial role in HEA. The return is the satisfaction and positive feedback of your apprentice and the development of further collaborations and projects between university and industry. The extra work that it may represent to accept this role or lack of information about what it involves, may, however, lead to shortage of these key persons.

Through HEA schemes, mentors/academic supervisors can:

- ▲ Interact with stakeholders that might not been in their circles before
- ▲ Develop new projects and ideas with other parties
- ▲ Reflect on their own work
- ▲ Learn through teaching
- ▲ Improve self-management and leadership skills
- ▲ Acquire specific competences to supervise and work with students placed in enterprises
- ▲ Get to know better their target groups
- ▲ See ways of doing things more effectively, with a fresh look
- ▲ Receive recognition for their own work
- ▲ Receive feedback in their own field (specially supervisors in HEIs)
- ▲ Help students match theory and practice and apply it
- ▲ Help students develop their capacities and skills



We know that mentoring/supervising HEA apprentices is demanding and sometimes it is difficult to know exactly what it involves. However, if you are trained and you have tools to professionalise this work, mentoring would be easier and very rewarding. And the satisfaction of a well done job that means something to your apprentices will also be a reason of pride.

We herewith call for your personal action to encourage others to find out more about HEA programmes and to consider becoming one of the professionals that form the leaders of the Europe of tomorrow.

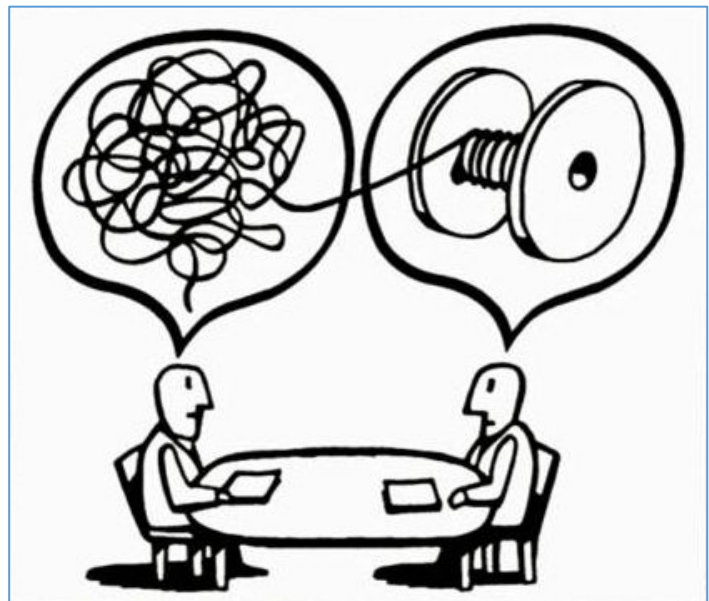
What do the mentors/academic supervisors say about higher education apprenticeship? Read some real testimonies from mentors/supervisors:

"As an employer for 220 people in hotel industry we cannot underestimate the importance of supporting education in every form. Having 27 years of experience in hotel business, I feel the responsibility to pass on my knowledge. One great way of doing that is being a mentor to apprentices. As a bonus you always learn something new yourself through the teaching process". Illi OJAVERE, General Manager at the Tallink SPA & Conference Hotel, Estonia

"Clearly we advise young people to take this course. For a company like ours and for our specialised collaborators, namely in Sales and Marketing Management area, it is important to welcome people with academic training in the area. Academic training in this area allows other horizons and highlight areas of sales that are forgotten on a day-to-day basis". Mentor in company of Sales and Marketing Management, Portugal

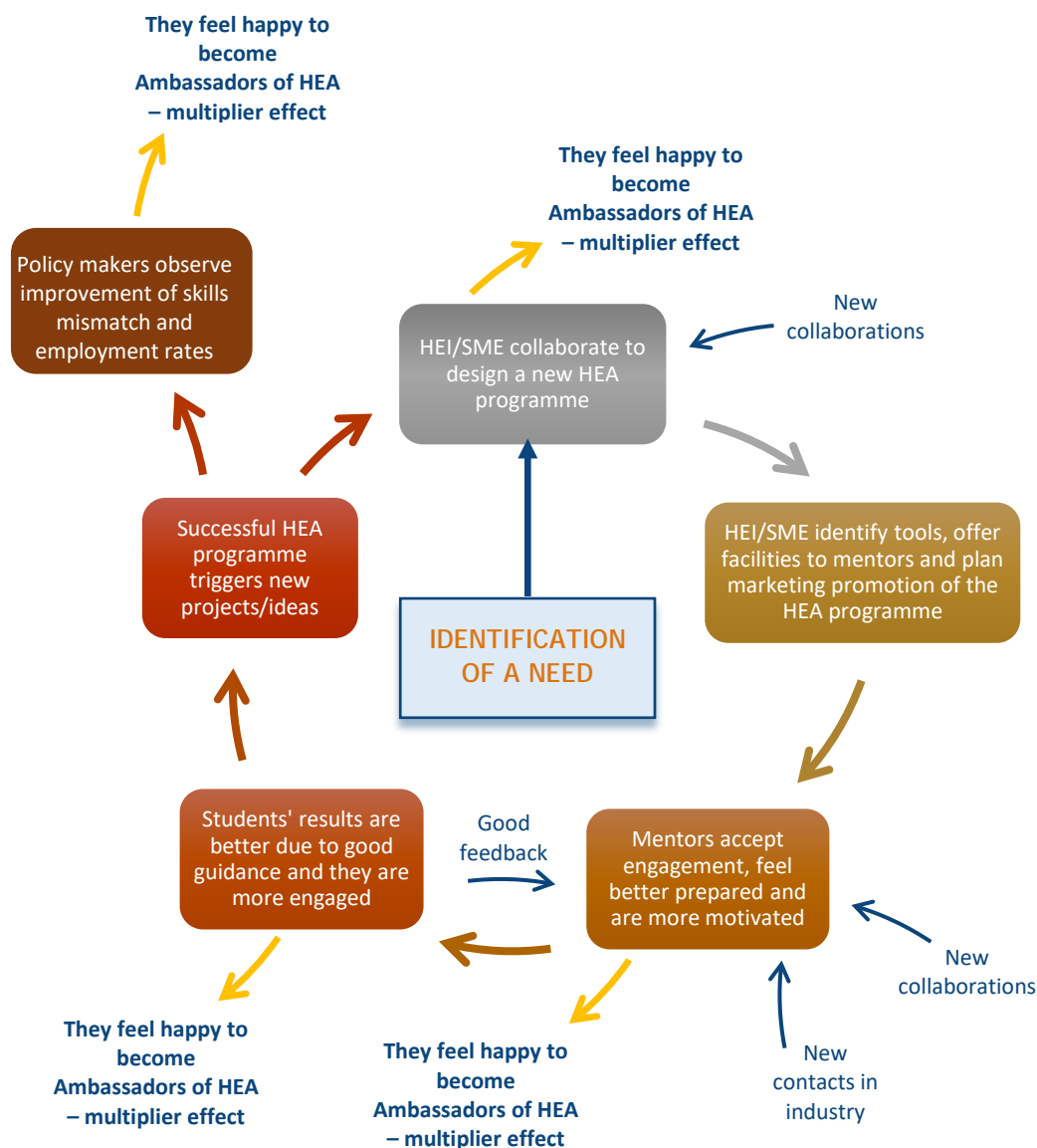
Reading list that we recommend to you:

- ▲ Guidelines for the Model Agreement
- ▲ Generic course for mentors



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Higher Education Apprenticeship: A model where everyone wins!



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