

Eduwork.Net

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Work Based Learning

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Why is enabling Work Based Learning (WBL) good for your company?

Many employers say that having a workforce that engages in work-based learning e.g. through apprenticeships or traineeships can bring a fresh approach and a positive attitude into the workplace. Furthermore, it improves productivity and results in better services and higher staff morale.

Many employers report that offering an apprenticeship or traineeship programme can transform their business, especially in terms of having an impact on customer perception and within the community. It is an opportunity to boost innovation in the company and is an opportunity to address skills gaps. Work Based Learning facilitates the access of people to the labour market, thus promoting social inclusion and corporate social responsibility.



What is Work Based Learning?

Work-based learning is most effective when there is meaningful collaboration between employers, vocational education and training (VET) providers and students. In Ireland VET is referred to as Further Education and Training (FET) and is delivered by Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

Work Based Learning provides an opportunity to put theory into practice, to enhance career development and foster talent within the workforce. At its best, work-based learning features strong leadership, exclusive connections between VET providers and local or sector-based employers. It provides students with real-life work experiences, where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop their employability and their professional skillset.

The main current work based learning programmes are **Traineeships** and **Apprenticeships**.

In addition, the **Skills to Advance** programme has been developed to offer affordable, practical training opportunities customised to a range of industry sectors and SMEs. It helps to upskill and reskill staff to capitalise on emerging opportunities and overcome business challenges. It is aimed at Employees in lower skilled jobs *and/or* Employees who are 50+ *and/or* Employees in an industry at risk of displacement or with emerging opportunities.

For help identifying and supporting business training needs requirements under Skills to Advance, employees or employers can contact their local ETB. Contact details of relevant ETB staff are at skillstoadvance.ie



What is a Traineeship?

A Traineeship is an occupational skills development training programme that is tailored to the identified needs of a specific industry sector.

Traineeships combine directed off-the-job training (classroom-based learning) in an ETB or ETB-approved training centre with on-the-job training (work-based learning) delivered in a host company.

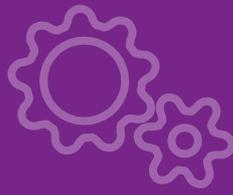
Traineeships within the Further Education and Training sector in Ireland have the following key features:

- They respond to an identified industry skills need
- Lead to an award at NFQ Levels 4-6, or equivalent
- Are between 6-20 months in duration
- Have at least 30% of learning on-the-job
- Combine transversal and technical skills development
- Are designed for flexible delivery-online, face-to-face, blended learning
- Provide open access to prospective trainees, unemployed people may be eligible for income support

Traineeships commence with a classroom-based learning phase where trainees attend a training/further education centre, learning the skills and knowledge that will be further developed in the host company.

The work-based learning phase provides planned and structured training for the trainee. This is carried out under the normal operational conditions of the host company.

Both classroom-based and work-based phase structures and durations can vary depending on the programme.



What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is the recognised way people are trained in a craft trade or profession.

The main craft trades and professions have been designated by SOLAS (the state organisation with responsibility for funding, planning and co-ordinating Further Education and Training in Ireland), and come within the scope of the Statutory Apprenticeship system. This system is organised by SOLAS in co-operation with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Employers and Unions. An Apprenticeship Council is also in place.

An apprenticeship provides on-the-job training with an employer. It usually alternates between off-the-job training in an education centre and on-the-job training at the employer's workplace.

An apprenticeship generally lasts for 2 to 4 years, during which time you will spend different periods in off-the-job training. There are currently two types of Apprenticeships.

Craft apprenticeships

A craft apprenticeship will generally last for 4 years, during which time the Apprentice will spend 3 different periods in off-the-job training. Generally, the first off-the-job training phase will take place in an Education and Training Board (ETB) while the subsequent off-the-job training phases will take place in an Institute of Technology. The skills developed are assessed through on-the-job competence testing as well as off-the-job modular assessment and examinations. If these assessments are completed successfully, an Advanced Certificate – craft (level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications) is awarded. Craft apprenticeships include carpentry, plumbing, motor mechanics and electrical apprenticeships.

New apprenticeships in other areas of industry 2016-2020

Apprenticeships introduced from 2016 on lead to an award between Levels 5-10 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Each apprenticeship programme can be for between 2 and 4 years.

There are a number of models of on-the-job and off-the-job training, as well as different models of delivery and different target groups (including people already in employment). Industry-led groups (consortia), which work with education and training providers and other partners, oversee the development and roll-out of new apprenticeships.

There are new apprenticeships in ICT, finance, property management, software development, accounting technician and commis chef. This list is continually expanding.

Developments in Apprenticeships 2021-2025

The Action Plan for Apprenticeships 2021-2025 was launched by the Government of Ireland in April 2021. It sets a target of 10,000 new people registering as apprentices every year by 2025. To achieve this, it is intended to introduce a wide range of new apprenticeships and offer further incentives to employers.

The Action Plan can be viewed at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0879f-action-plan-for-apprenticeship-2021-2025/#>

All Details on Apprenticeships can be found at <https://apprenticeship.ie/>

How can a Company or Employer get involved in Work Based Learning Programmes?

Traineeships

There are five main steps involved in developing a new traineeship. Based on experience, it is estimated that development of a traineeship will in general take between 6–8 months.



The development of a Traineeship begins with an ETB identifying employers who have a recruitment requirement to meet existing or future needs in the sector and who are interested in participating in a Traineeship. Alternatively, employers or employer representatives can contact their local ETB. Following consultation, the ETB will determine the employer's suitability to act as a traineeship host company.

The ETB then engages with identified sector representative bodies and identified employers to establish an employer network for the purpose of informing programme development, as well as the provision of work-based learning opportunities for programme participants.

The ETB will provide a named contact person, for both the trainee and the host company, throughout the programme to ensure that the work-based learning element of the programme is successful. The ETB will also ensure that appropriate quality assurance procedures for both the assessment of direct and work-based learning elements of the programme are in place. Training is provided for nominated workplace supervisors which will include training in the use of relevant IT supports.

Apprenticeships

An employer must be an approved apprenticeship employer (approved by SOLAS) for the duration of the programme. Employers can visit <https://apprenticeship.ie> and register their interest completing an online Expression of Interest. There is an Apprenticeship Code of Practice which employers commit to and which sets their obligations as an apprentice employer.

The approval process is completed online and through a site visit to the employer's premises from an Authorised Officer. SOLAS draws on a network of 'Authorised Officers' (AOs) located in the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) around the country to do this. The employer must demonstrate that they can provide quality, relevant on-the-job apprentice training as per the requirements of the national apprenticeship programme. Once an employer has been approved to train apprentices, s/he can recruit suitable candidates and register these as apprentices. To do this, the employer contacts the Authorised Officer in the local ETB.



Enabling Work Based Learning Abroad

European programmes such as **Erasmus+** enables students, recent graduates and staff to study, gain work experience, teach or train abroad. For students, Erasmus+ is a chance to develop new skills, gain international experience and boost employability. According to an Erasmus+ Impact Survey, Erasmus+ changes people's lives - it opens up new learning experiences and nurtures the concept of global citizenship. 90% of students reported improved intercultural, foreign language and communication skills.

Erasmus+ supports the internationalisation of Vocational Educational Training (VET) providers and companies, strengthens the different national VET systems with regard to work-based learning and improves the quality of VET systems in relation to the labour market.

The project Eduwork.Net network represents an opportunity to develop mobility activities for WBL experiences abroad, through its expertise, cooperation with the companies and services delivered within a dedicated platform www.eduwork.net



Eduwork.Net project and partnership

Eduwork.net project aims at building networks and partnerships of VET providers and the world of work, at regional, national and European level.

Eduwork.Net objectives:

- Establish a **network of VET providers** and facilitate exchange of knowledge, feedback and experience of policy implementation; sharing of best practices on VET excellence
- **Improve quality of VET provision** and linkage with the needs of the labour market
- **Enhance impact and relevance of VET provision** for both learners and employers
- **Support transnational mobility of VET students** for work-placements, implementing the European VET policies for transfer and recognition of learning outcomes and using ECVET

Eduwork.Net project brings together 13 partners from six countries and a European Economic Interest Group based in Germany.

Partner

VET Networks

- CIOFS-FP (Italy)
- LITHUANIAN ASSOCIATION OF TRAINING CENTRES (Lithuania)
- CECE (Spain)
- FORMA (Italy)
- RINOVA Ltd (UK)
- CDETb (Ireland)
- PANEDDIEK (Greece)
- VAVM (Lithuania)

Employers' representations; Trade Unions

- ASSOLOMBARDA (Italy)
- CONFARTIGIANATO LOMBARDIA (Italy)
- LETU (Lithuania)

Thematic partners

- IDEC (Greece)
- METROPOLISNET (Germany)

For more information on Eduwork.Net see www.eduwork.net or contact info@cdetb.ie

