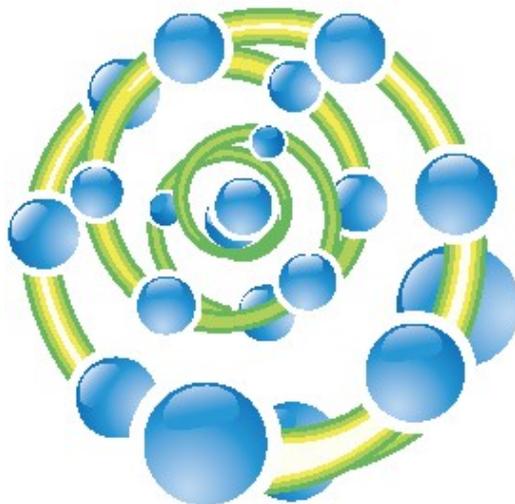


Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes

Portugal



This article on apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes is part of a set of articles prepared within Cedefop's ReferNet network. It complements general information on VET systems available online at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx>.

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The article is based on a common template prepared by Cedefop for all ReferNet partners.

The preparation of this article has been co-financed by the European Union and DGERT.

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Foreword

The National Qualification System (*Sistema Nacional de Qualificações*), hereinafter referred to as SNQ, implements the reorganization of the vocational education and training system, according to the 'Social Agreement' reform (2007). It structures IVET and CVET offer aiming at the articulation of education and training with the needs of enterprises and economic sectors.

This paper will focus on apprenticeship courses characteristics. However, other forms of apprenticeship-type schemes will also be presented, although not as thoroughly, as they represent important offers of the training system.

A. Apprenticeship-type schemes

A.1. Apprenticeship courses (*Cursos de aprendizagem*)

The SNQ establishes apprenticeship courses as an initial vocational education and training modality. The objective of these courses is to support the labour market entrance of young people (15-25 years) by improving academic, personal, social and relational skills, providing knowledge and know-how in the field of science and technology and offering practical work experience. They are carried out in alternance training schemes, privileging the insertion in the labour market but also enabling the pursuing of studies. More precisely, apprenticeship courses are a double certification training alternative, as they simultaneously confer an ISCED level 3 vocational qualifications and the upper secondary academic qualification.

Apprenticeship courses are provided by the vocational training centers of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (*Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional*), hereinafter referred to as IEFP. External certified training centers (more than 170), in articulation with IEFP, and entities/enterprises that support alternance are also part of the process.

Alternance supporting entities, through protocols celebrated with IEFP, frame the trainees during the courses. These companies (public and private) are from several economic areas including ICT, electricity and power, transports, among others. About 5.000 national entities regularly cooperate with IEFP.

The courses last between 2,800 and 3,700 hours (3 years), and include different components: socio-cultural training, scientific training, technological training and practical workplace training (accounting for at least 40% of total course length).

An apprenticeship contract is established between the training organisation (the coordinator organisation and the one providing support to alternation between work and training periods) and the trainee. This contract does not generate a subordinated working relationship and ends upon the completion of the course or training action for which it was concluded. The practical component is accompanied by a training facilitator appointed by the organization responsible for the workplace training.

There are 37 areas defined and offering courses, 11 of which are considered high-priority, namely: audiovisual and media, TIC, commerce, building and repairing of motorized vehicles, electricity and power, electronics and automation, hotel and restaurant industry, textiles, clothing and footwear, materials (cork, plastics,..), metalworking and chemistry processes industry.

Attendants are entitled to a grant, meal and transportation allowance. They may also get an additional grant for study materials and a subsidy for those with children or dependent adult relatives.

Table 1. **Apprenticeship courses – number of participants**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Apprenticeship Courses	24,129	23,737	32,844	40,246

Source: IEFP – Relatório mensal Execução Física e Financeira, Dez 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

These courses are more attended by male students, predominately under 20 years of age. However, 2013 data shows that the group 20-24 years old is now the most represented.

Data from the reports of Employment and Training Measures Evaluation System (*Sistema de Avaliação das Medidas de Emprego e Formação*) and the Active Labor Policies Evaluation Study (*Estudo de Avaliação das Políticas Ativas de Emprego*), allows us to observe that, concerning the effects of participation in apprenticeship courses relatively to other employment and training measures, apprenticeship courses, after conclusion, have relatively high rates of employment, especially in the case of the male students.

Apprenticeship courses however lead to their attendants a longer time to get employed, as the courses themselves are also longer than other forms of training. While in the course (up to 3 years) students don't try to find a job, they are absent from the labor market, other types of training allow their attendants to start job searching earlier as the courses are much shorter. This trend, however, slows down over time.

Table 2. **Employment rate after participation in apprenticeship courses (%) (months after the beginning of the course)**

	6 months	12 months	18 months	24 months	30 months	36 months	42 months
Men	0.00	0.35	1.57	2.12	4.85	27.76	56.18
Women	0.18	0.18	1.94	2.21	5.88	19.35	40.21

Source: Estudo de avaliação das políticas activas de emprego, 2012.

Table 3. **Employment / Unemployment indicators**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Influx on employment	45.5	52.0	49.5	43.8	44.2
Influx on unemployment	35.6	29.4	29.7	31.1	34.0
Influx in education	11.3	8.5	10.8	10.1	10.9

Source: IEFP, Sistema de avaliação das medidas de emprego e formação

A.2. Vocational courses (*Cursos profissionais*)

The main purpose of Vocational Courses or *Cursos Profissionais* is to prepare students for the labour market, providing practical education of secondary level (ISCED 3).

These courses last 3 academic years. They are divided into modules of varying length, which can be combined in different ways which allows more flexibility. The programmes cover three components: social and cultural, scientific and technical training. The technical component varies from course to course and is intended to endow trainees with practical competences. These can be developed under the form of simulation practices within training, or of real practices within the workplace. The technical component varies from course to course and accounts for approximately 52% of total training hours, of which 13% are spent training in a work environment. They are organized accordingly to training referentials and distributed by about 40 areas of training.

The successful completion of these courses leads to a ISCED Level 3 vocational qualification (allowing access to the labour market) and a diploma in upper secondary education, allowing students to pursue their studies at higher education.

Table 4. **Vocational courses – number of participants**

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Vocational courses	93,438	107,266	110,462	113,749

Source: GEPE MEC, *Educação em números 2013*

A.3. Technological specialisation courses (*Cursos de especialização tecnológica – CET*)

Technological Specialisation Courses (CETs) are post-secondary non-tertiary training courses that prepare individuals for a scientific or technologic specialisation in a specific training area, enhancing adaptation to labour market and the business world and award a level 4 vocational qualification. The level 4 vocational qualification is achieved by a conjugation of a secondary training, general or vocational, with a post-secondary technical training. The course lasts approximately 1 year (between 1200 to 1560 hours).

CETs are addressed to students who have passed an upper secondary course (level 3) or a legally equivalent qualification.

Training pathways vary according to projects' characteristics and participants' profiles and give emphasis to a notoriously vocational content where the general, scientific technological and workplace training components are included.

The workplace training component aims to apply knowledge and acquired know-how for practical activities. It cannot be lower than 360 hours and no higher than 720 hours. This training component is developed in partnership between the training organisation and enterprises.

Successful completion of the course leads to a diploma in specialized technology and a Level 4 vocational certificate, and allows trainees to pursue their studies at tertiary education level.

Training received through CETs can be transferred to the tertiary education course to which the CET gives access.

Table 5. **Technological Specialization Courses – number of participants**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Technological specialization courses	757	1,305	1,353	1,486

Source: IEFP – *Relatorio mensal Execução Física e Financeira*, Dez 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010

These courses are predominantly attended by male students between 20 and 34 years old.

A.4. Education and training courses for young people (*Cursos de Educação e Formação de Jovens – CEF*)

Education and training courses are intended for young people aged 15 or over who have abandoned or are at risk of leaving the regular education system, as well as for young people who have completed 12 years in school and wish to acquire a vocational qualification.

This is a varied and flexible form of training, intended to complement other forms of training and to ensure a continuing structured training in sequential stages, allowing people to gradually acquire higher levels of qualification.

There are 5 different types of courses, which may last between 1 and 2 years, depending on the previous qualification of the student. The final certification provided after each course might vary as well, as each training cycle's completion allows students to pursue further studies in the subsequent level.

All courses comprise the following training components: Social and cultural, Scientific, Technological and Practical. The practical component is structured in an individual plan or activity itinerary to be developed in the workplace, in the form of a traineeship under the supervision of a training facilitator.

Apart from these types of courses, there exists also other training schemes available at sector level, such as the Tourism industry. Hotel and Tourism Schools (*Escolas de Hotelaria e Turismo*), develop and support initial training schemes leading to various levels of qualification and occupational routes, aiming to answer to the qualification needs in the tourism industry. Courses vary in length from one to three academic years. They also allow the pursuing of studies, mainly in the form of postsecondary courses in specialised technology or tertiary education in a polytechnic school.

Table 6. **Education and Training Courses – number of participants**

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Education and Training Courses	8,424	7,004	5,769	5,142

Source: IEFP – *Relatório mensal Execução Física e Financeira*, Dez 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010

The attendance of these courses does not vary greatly between male and female, although the number of males is slightly more expressive but that situation has become more balanced over the years. The predominant age group was, until 2012, the under 20 years old but in 2013 the group 20-24 has become more significant. Participants under 24 represent 93% of the total.

B. Specific features

B.1. Governance

Central government has overall responsibility for the Education and Training system in Portugal, whereby *Ministério da Educação e Ciência* (MEC – Ministry of Education and Science) is traditionally responsible for the educational sector (pre-primary education, basic education, secondary education, school based training and higher education) and *Ministério da Solidariedade, Emprego e Segurança Social* (MSESS – Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security), particularly IEFPP, is traditionally responsible for training – CVET, apprenticeship and Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs). The two ministries share the responsibility for the *Agência Nacional de Qualificação e Ensino Profissional* (National Agency for Qualifications and VET) hereinafter referred to as ANQEP. Overall responsibility for the education and training services lies with central departments of both Ministries that are the key bodies in implementing policy. Non-higher education regional authorities and VET regional authorities (respectively, under the coordination of the MEC and MSESS) are responsible for the implementation of policies at local level.

The main stakeholders for VET are a) internal stakeholders: ANQEP and IEFPP, schools and IEFPP training centers, certified VET providers, learners, teachers/trainers and b) external stakeholders: social partners, including confederations of both employers' associations and trade unions that participate in the VET advisory bodies.

At each level of the education and training system a number of advisory bodies, including social partners, deliver views and recommendations, i.e.

- *Conselho Nacional de Educação* (National Educational Council covering the whole spectrum of E&T);
- *Conselho das Escolas* (School Council specifically focused on basic and secondary education);
- *Conselho Coordenador do Ensino Superior* (Coordinating Council for Higher Education);
- *Conselho Nacional de Formação Profissional* (National Council for Professional Training);
- *Conselho Geral da Agência Nacional de Qualificação e Ensino Profissional* (General Council of the National Agency for Qualifications and VET).

B.2. Financing

In Portugal, the cost of the vocational education and training system is covered almost entirely by public funding through contributions from the State budget (*Orçamento de Estado*), the Social Security Budget (*Orçamento da Segurança Social*) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Under the Basic Law of the Education System (LBSE), basic education is free. All costs associated with registration, attendance and certification are covered, and some pupils may be eligible for free use of school books and materials as well as for free meals and accommodation, depending on the socioeconomic situation of their family.

The initial vocational education and training offered within the education system is essentially funded by the Ministry of Education and Science's budget, though the thematic agenda for human potential contribution (from European Social Fund) to the funding of training pathways is also significant, supporting apprenticeship system courses, vocational courses, education and training courses for youth and specialized technology courses.

B.3. Enhance programme attractiveness and career guidance

In Portugal, formal guidance has always been provided by professionals both in schools and in public employment services.

Besides private guidance services or guidance developed by higher education or municipal institutions, there are three national guidance subsystems:

- *Serviços de Psicologia e Orientação* (Psychology and Guidance System – SPO), to students in basic and secondary institutions under the Ministry of Education and Science;
- *Serviço Público de Emprego* (Employment Public Service), aimed at young and adults looking for training and/or employment (Ministry of Economy);
- welcome, diagnosis, information and guidance for young people and adults into vocational education and training paths in the net of *Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional* (Centers for Qualification and VET – CQEP), under the coordination of ANQEP, I.P. They also aim at developing a collaborative work, streamlining local nets for qualification, structuring education and training offer accordingly to local and regional reality and needs, the monitoring of young people and adults VET pathways and also at the identification of opportunities for work-based training.

Additionally, non-formal guidance (awareness raising activities) is also implemented and generally perceived as a very good way to reach people, particularly the younger generations. Some examples of good practice are the following:

- *Mundo as profissões* (World of professions), a website developed by ANQEP where learners can find vocational guidance,
- TV and radio programs under protocols between IEFP and television and radio stations,
- exhibitions and fairs,
- Competitions.

B.4. Quality assurance

Quality assurance in Portugal is based on several instruments aimed at assuring quality at teacher/trainer level and at VET providers' level.

Certification of individual VET trainers and of VET providers is mandatory in the Portuguese VET system and it constitutes one of the foundation stones, among others (e.g. external evaluation studies, audits, regulations), of the mechanism to ensure VET system.

A VET trainer is defined as someone who performs in many different contexts, modalities and levels of learning by using different strategies, methods, techniques and instruments of assessment/evaluation. Trainers are expected to establish a diversified and effective pedagogical relationship with various groups or individuals in order to facilitate their acquisition of knowledge and competences as well as the development of attitudes and behaviours adequate to their professional performance, bearing in mind both present and future labour market needs.

The profession is regulated at two levels:

- at the level of the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security that establishes the basic conditions to accede the profession of VET trainer. Basic conditions include: either a higher education degree or the professional experience and a pedagogical certificate;
- at the level of the Ministry of Education and Science through the legal requirements to enter the teaching profession (a higher education degree in teaching).

In addition to these general requirements, individual candidates must have a sound knowledge of the *Sistema Nacional de Qualificações* (National system of qualifications), particularly of the different VET paths available.

The certification of a VET provider is the overall recognition of its capacity to develop the different phases of the training cycle in a specific area or areas of education and training (described in the national classification of the education and training areas).

The validation of the VET provider's specialized performance requires an evaluation of the existing conditions (resources and practices) in relation to the certification reference framework and a technical assessment of such dimensions as the correlation between training objectives and training content, trainers' professional competences and minimal requirements for buildings and equipment needed for the specific types of training.

C. Main strengths and weaknesses

One of the main strengths of the apprenticeship courses and apprenticeship-type schemes relies on its articulation with the needs of enterprises and economic sectors.

Also, in the overall, the apprenticeship and apprenticeship-type courses presented award a double certification, i.e. an education certification and a VET certification, thus giving access to the labour market but also allowing further learning opportunities.

One of the main challenges relies on enhancing the attractiveness of these type of courses and their social recognition. Efforts will have to continue to be made in this scope in order to fully use the potential of these training pathways.

D. Conclusions

The apprenticeship courses comprise an apprenticeship contract established between the training organization and the trainee, the practical component is accompanied by a training facilitator appointed by the organization responsible for the workplace training and cover several different economic areas. After conclusion, they have relatively high rates of employment, especially in the case of the male students, although their attendants take a longer time to get employed, as the courses themselves are also longer than other forms of training. Thus, when evaluated only by short term employability, they present a poorer result than other types of courses.

Regarding other forms of apprenticeship-type schemes, the vocational courses provide a broad range of secondary-level training, are pathways of the secondary level of education and have a strong link with the labour market. Education and training courses allow, through its conclusion, further post-secondary studies and access to higher education, to the Technological Specialization Course or to the labour market in the specific area of the course, the training provision is divided into several different fields. Technological specialization courses have had a large growth, doubling in attendants between 2010 and 2013, and in locations. They allow access to tertiary level of education.

These types of offer in the scope of apprenticeship and apprenticeship-type courses, allow a large range of choice. They are an important path in the education and training system and in recent years efforts have been made in order to increase both offer and participation. One of the recent measures, among others, is the celebration of a protocol between Portugal and Germany that includes the creation of a dual system of training. Among the initiatives, there is a pilot project of technicians training courses and a mobility programme for apprenticeships abroad.

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