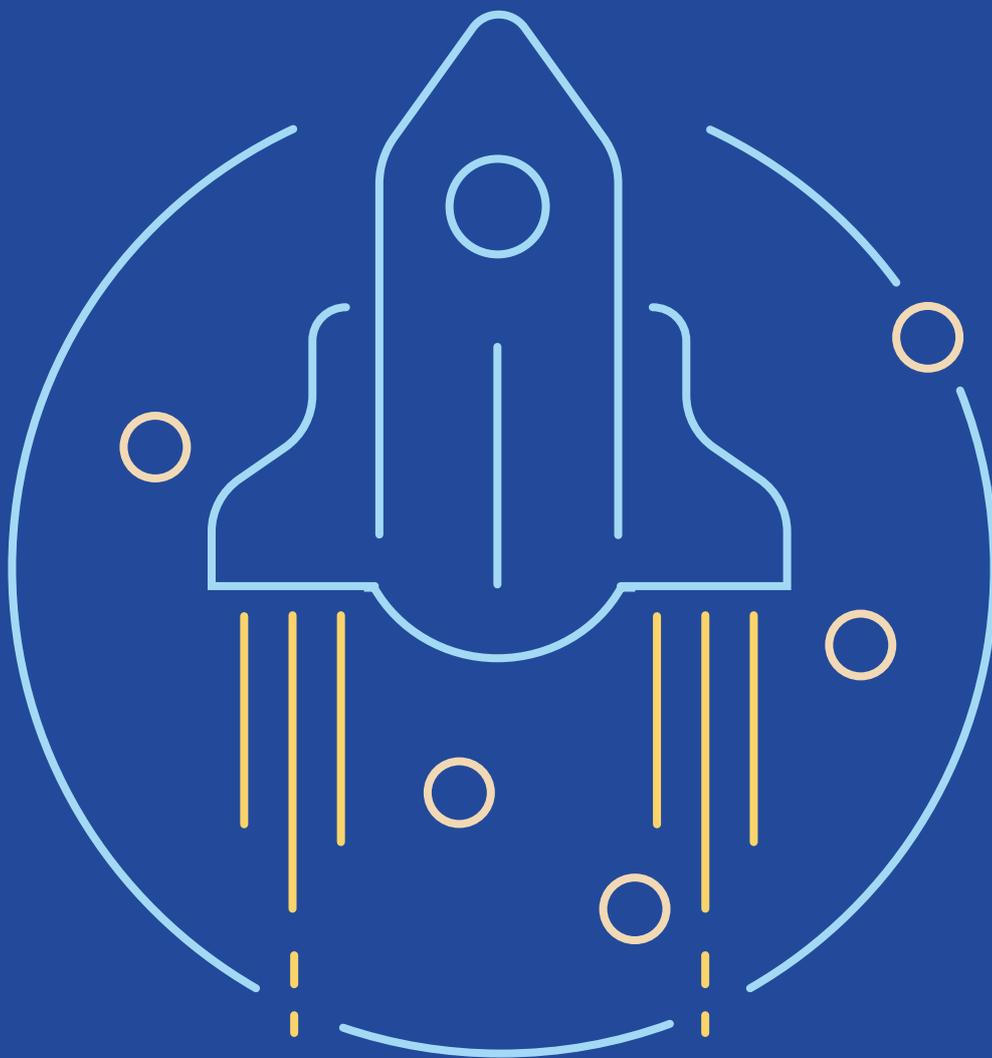


Easy Apprenticeships for Small Business

1

Getting Started

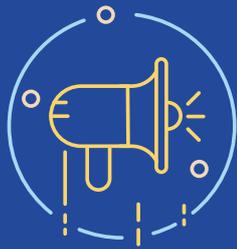
Setting up and Launching an Apprenticeship Scheme



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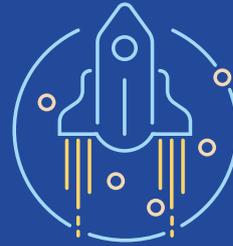
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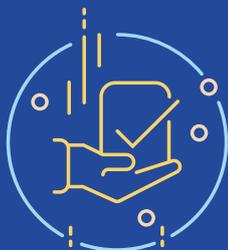
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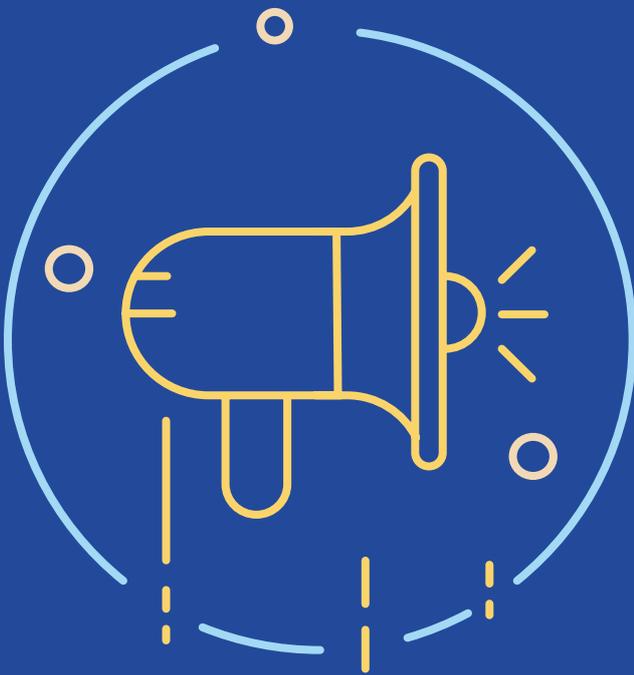
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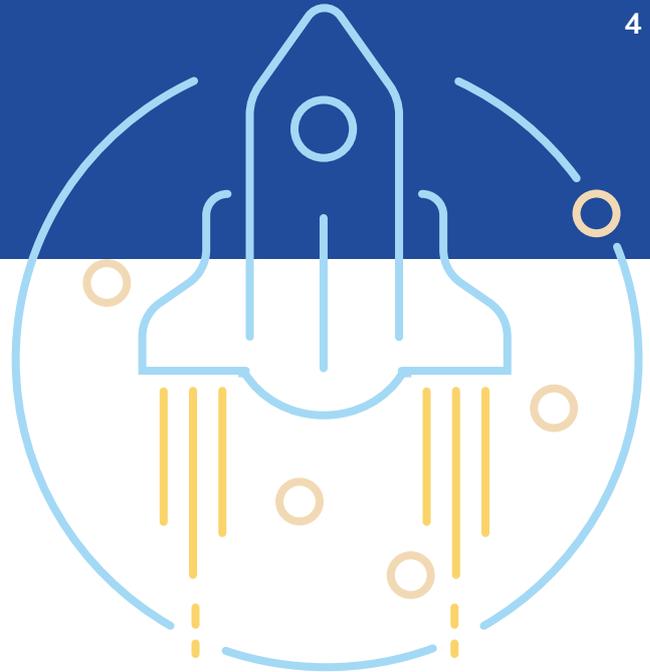
CONSIDERING SPECIAL NEEDS



Apprenticeships are a particularly effective form of work-based learning that eases the transition from education and training into work. They provide the skills that employers need and enhance the competitiveness and productivity of companies and workplaces.

This booklet outlines the opportunities for businesses in embracing apprenticeships, tackles some of the common misconceptions SMEs have about apprenticeships and gives a general overview on how to cooperate with educational providers on how to launch an apprenticeship scheme.

WHY SHOULD MY COMPANY SET UP AN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME?



Apprenticeships offer SMEs an opportunity to help build a pool of high-quality future recruits for their sector.

Apprenticeships enable businesses to grow their skills base resulting in better products, lower prices and increased profits.

An apprentice brings into the company latest academic knowledge and a new perspective to finding solutions to existing challenges and unresolved issues.

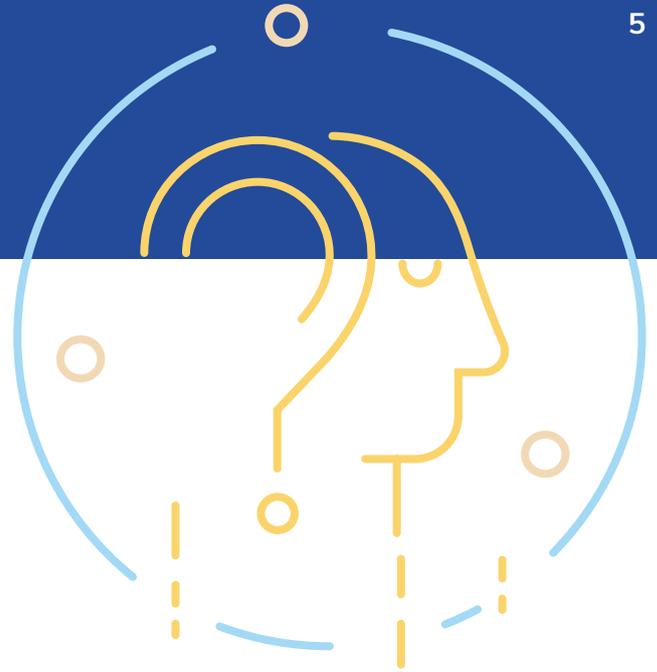
Apprenticeships are cost-effective as a form of training because apprentices make a contribution to the work place while they are learning.

Companies which offer apprenticeships enjoy an improved image in general public, which can lead to marketing opportunities and an increase in value of a company's brand.

Companies that offer apprenticeships, contribute to the social good, by giving apprentices important skills for life. As such apprenticeships improve your sustainability.

Apprenticeships bring "other benefits" including improved staff retention levels and improvements in staff morale.

Apprenticeships give an opportunity to promote company's products, market and value proposition in the public, at least in the educational or scientific institution through word of mouth.



“Apprenticeships are too demanding”

There is a misconception that apprenticeships are too demanding as they require a lot of time investment at the beginning and usually the apprentices do not stay enough time to return the investment in work and knowledge transfer.

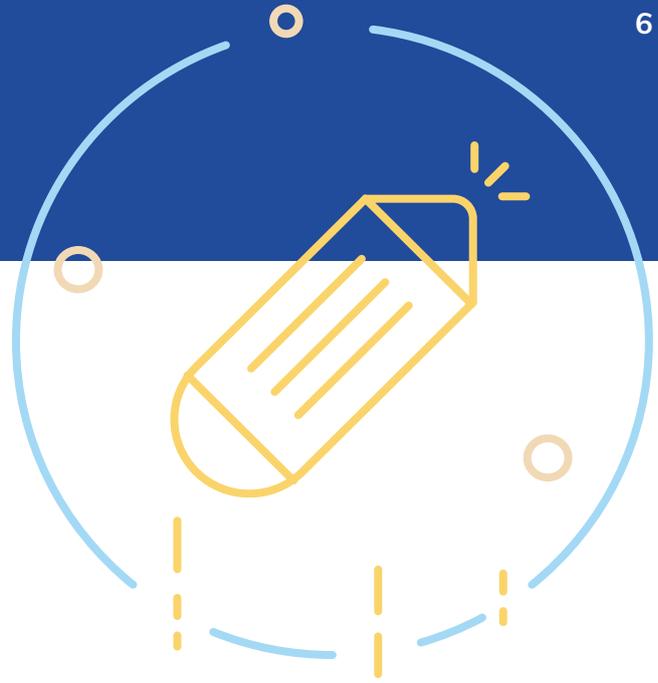
However, with a well thought out apprenticeship programme and business plan, apprenticeships should be profitable for all parties involved. It may take some time to create procedures and rules for recruiting and developing people in the future, but by investing in apprentices, companies secure their talent flow, establish a long-term competitive advantage in human capital and boost the motivation of their own employees.

“SMEs are too small offer apprenticeships”

Employers often think that they are too specialised to offer a comprehensive apprenticeship programme. However, apprentices will only choose to work in companies within their own speciality, and their main requirement is a mentor who will be willing to guide an apprentice on a day to day basis. Thus, even one-person companies can successfully offer apprenticeships.

“We don’t have an office where to train apprentices”

Many SMEs work from home, or work in the field. All successful apprenticeships involve practice at the actual place of work – whether that be at the premises of clients, in a vehicle or remotely from home – as long as apprentices work in the same place/context as their mentor an apprenticeship can be successful.



Identify the challenges in your business and future skill needs of the company.

Apprenticeships are all about preparing and training your future workforce. Identify which areas of your business are likely to grow most strongly in the coming years such as new markets or product areas, as well as which specific skills will be needed to fill those positions and integrate them in your apprenticeship scheme.

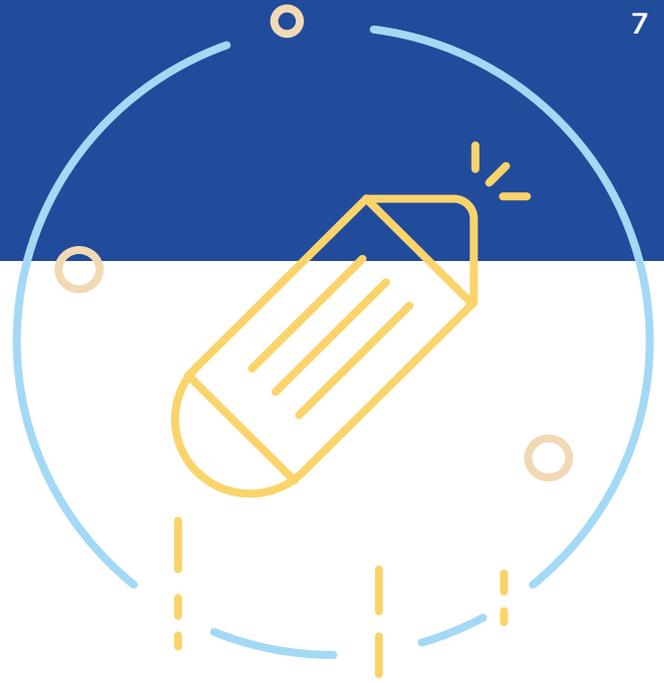


Contact the local or regional VET/PHE provider or an Intermediary Institution for support.

They will help you understand the resource and time commitments involved and support you in the process of preparing your business to take an apprentice. They may also offer some support in launching your own apprenticeship scheme, matching the interests of the student with your company needs, as well as handling paperwork and training arrangements.



Contact your Nearest Educational Provider and get more information!



Identify your own capacity to integrate an apprentice into your company's work as an active participant. Allocate resources for the apprenticeship (financial, mentoring, working space and equipment, ...) and develop a business plan which outlines what you intend to gain as a company from the experience.



Identify a manager in your company to be responsible overall for the apprenticeship scheme - including liaison with external partners as well as with apprentices and your staff. and have the overview of the whole apprenticeship scheme.





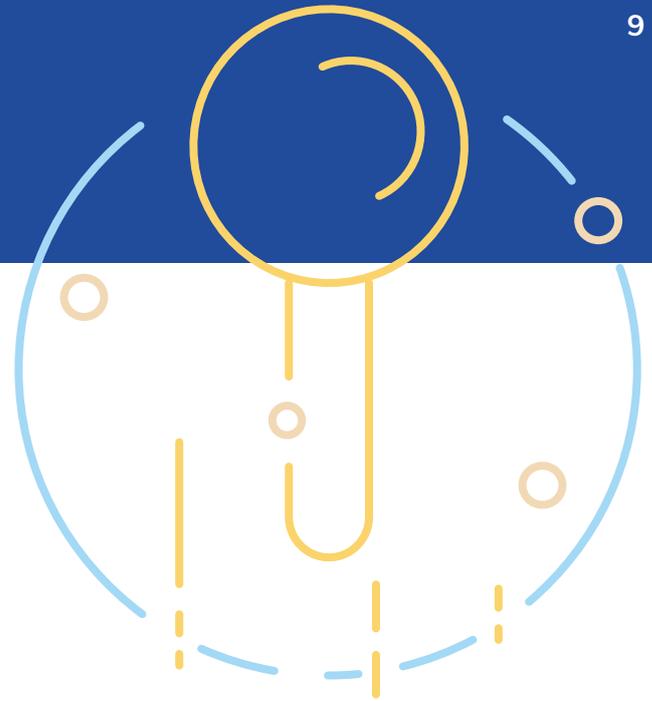
Explore your possibilities for cooperation

Join open business days at your local/regional VET/PHE provider or intermediate institution in order to explore the possibilities of cooperation; meet with the relevant contact persons to exchange experience with other employers who are just thinking of launching an apprenticeship and the more experienced ones in offering apprenticeships; get to know your pool of potential apprentices; promote your company among potential apprentices; and participate on any local event related to the subject.

Secure financial support for apprenticeships

Costs related to apprenticeship payment, compensation, financial subsidies or incentives, and provision of trainers and mentors can in many countries be shared between public budgets (supplied over a national budget or through specific levies, taxes or voluntary contributions) and the company providing the apprenticeship. To get to know more about this, please ask the sending organization or your local economic chamber or representative, as this will be strongly differing between various regions, countries and businesses.

Support from intermediary institutions such as chambers of commerce/crafts, sectorial associations, employment services, educational organisations/associations, employers' networks, etc. Many of these will offer schemes to support employers through the processes of preparation and launch of their apprenticeship scheme, implementation and validation of it.



Disabilities can be generally divided into the following groups:

- Physical disabilities: mobility (locomotors) disabilities, chronic internal illnesses,
- Sensory disabilities: blindness and vision impairment, deafness and hearing impairment,
- Psychological disabilities: psychiatric illnesses, intellectual or learning disabilities.

Establishing any special needs of an apprentice is crucial to:

- clarifying the barriers to fulfilling the apprenticeship,
- decide whether your SME would be able to offer a valid position under the circumstances, depending on your prior experience and knowledge.

But do not be afraid! If a student with special individual needs is applies for an apprenticeship, they will help you to find the best way to fulfill their needs in the selected job.

There are some general rules and suggestions each employer should know while entering into the working relationship with persons with special needs. First of all, disability should not be accepted as a primary characteristic. Rather, a student with a disability should be considered and approached as all the rest, having the same duties and rights.

Further information is provided at <https://learntowork.eu/special-needs>.

“In order to maximise a person’s potential it is important to have knowledge and understanding of their individual special needs.”



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OTHER BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES

- **Booklet 2:** Maximising the Business Case for Participation: Designing Profitable Apprenticeship Programmes
- **Booklet 3:** Effective Introductions to your Business: Onboarding Apprentices
- **Booklet 4:** Assisting Apprentices in Learning to Work: Effective Mentoring



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“Apprenticeships give an opportunity to SMEs to find and bind a good recruit before bigger companies get the best recruits.”

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