

Governments should focus on the design of apprenticeships to get employers fully involved, says new OECD report

A new OECD report, *Seven Questions about Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience*, sets out conclusions from a three-year study into how to make apprenticeships flourish. The study argues that government attempts to encourage employers to take on apprentices through financial incentives is less likely to succeed than adjusting the design of apprenticeships to ensure that employers cover their costs over the duration of the training programme.

Adjustment of apprenticeship duration, apprentice pay and in-company training can better reflect the pace at which apprentices develop productive skills, allowing employers to recoup their investment. International data show that the extent of skills accumulation varies by country and occupational area, meaning that one size fits all apprenticeship frameworks are unlikely to be attractive to employers and apprentices.

Engaging employers, professional associations and trade unions in apprenticeship design creates a favourable mechanism for balancing the interests of trainee and employer. The focus on costs and benefits enables, moreover, adjustments to be made to help apprenticeships work better for disadvantaged youth and older workers in need of retraining.

Policy interventions like pre-apprenticeship programmes can help enhance the productivity of apprentices, while systems for recognising the existing knowledge and skills of adults can reduce the time needed to secure apprenticeship qualifications.

Speaking at the launch of the report at the WorldSkills Conference in Amsterdam, Head of the OECD Skills Centre Montserrat Gomedio said: "Ever more countries see apprenticeships as an entry route to a growing range of occupations. To ensure the expansion of apprenticeship, employers need to gain from apprenticeships. This report, which represents the conclusions of a three-year study in multiple countries, provides tried and tested tools to help governments create vibrant apprenticeship programmes."

Seven Questions about Apprenticeships: Answers from International Experience is available from 15.00 CET at: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264306486-en>.

For more information about the study, contact Dr. Anthony Mann, Head of the OECD's Vocational Education and Training team: Anthony.Mann@oecd.org; +33 7 50 18 32 78.