

Best Practices on Higher Education Apprenticeship (HEA)



Refining HE Apprenticeships
with Enterprises in Europe

Authors

Name SURNAME	Christina MAIER		
Institution	A1 Telekom	Country	Austria

Suitability of this case to the ApprEnt definition of HEA

Workplace/ training	Mentoring	Remuneration	Formal programme	Certification	Contract/ Agreement

Evaluation of how the programme/practice reaches the following goals Scale: 1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = well; 5 = very well

	1	2	3	4	5
i. Enhances relevant working life skills and qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Promotes professional growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Develops learning environment practices as a whole	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Develops work-based learning practices and materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Improves work performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi. Improves tutoring and mentoring practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Enhances University-Business collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
viii. Showcases potential aspects for programme standardisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Title

Telekom Dual Study with FH Technikum Vienna

Description

Model

A1 Telekom's Dual-Study Programme

The A1 Telekom dual-study programme started in September 2017. A1 Telekom had acknowledged that it was not the employer of first choice for IT and ICTS workers in Vienna, primarily due to the strong competition of companies such as Microsoft or SAP. Therefore, they proposed FH Technikum Vienna to collaborate to establish a dual-study training programme, which would not only support their recruitment procedures but also help publicise their brand.

Initially, the first semester consisted of subsequent two-week shifts between FH Technikum and the company. However, such short periods of work practice did not allow for a proper involvement within those project-driven contexts typical of the IT and ICTS business sector. As a result, since the following spring semester, the programme has ensured the students spend 3 months in the company and other 3 months at FH Technikum. This programme structure, which is now positively appreciated by all the parties involved, will thus be maintained for the following year.

Target Groups and Selected Apprentices

The first batch selected for the dual-study programme included people with technical background (from technical schools such as HTL) as well as without any of it. However, apprentices lacking technical expertise often struggled to follow FH Technikum's complex curriculum and fast progresses. In fact, all 5 of the participants without any technical background quitted the programme; they are nonetheless still employed within the same company. The next group of apprentices beginning in September 2018 A1 will consist of 13 new participants with technical background.

A1 Telekom decided to utilise FH Technikum's normal curricula in order to introduce external knowledge into the company. They figured that by creating a special curriculum, perhaps such knowledge would be partly omitted.

Regardless of the fact they spend regular periods at the University, participants are paid for working 20 hours per week during the whole 3 years of the programme through an official working contract. Furthermore, A1 Telekom pays all the tuition fees for the students, who are also assigned a personal mentor. The manager of the company department where the apprentice works is in charge of handling organisational and practical issues. Given their interest and involvement in the dual-study programme, the managers often form very strong relationships with the students.

A1 Telekom – FH Technikum's Cooperation

Study periods do not overlap with the working hours; however, there is further coordination between A1 Telekom and FH Technikum. For example, if, in the course of the 3 months spent in the company, some practical cases are assigned to the apprentices, they might try to further discuss them at University. Naturally, when apprentices are working on projects meant for A1 Telekom's costumers, there may be instances in which they cannot reveal sensible information to anybody at FH Technikum.

After the completion of the 3 years, the students obtain an official Bachelor's degree and can prove their professional experience. While in the company, they may join 2-3 different departments in order to gather more general knowledge of the company and its activities. At

present, A1 Telekom is designing the compensation scheme for those apprentices that will finish the first round in 2019.

Best practice

Participation in the Programme

First of all it is still difficult to promote the programme adequately because the candidates are not familiar with dual studies in Austria. Most confuse them with extra occupational degrees, which expect the participants to work full-time and study in the evening, on weekends, or throughout the holidays.

A1 Telekom worries for the apprentices leaving after they have completed the dual-study programme, especially as long as such degrees remain uncommon in Austria. A higher risk is that students will not finish the programme; however, considering the cases of the 5 students mentioned before, A1 Telekom believes that at least these employees will not leave them.

As of September 2018, 12 students are enrolled in the 2nd year and 13 new ones in their first; in summary, there are 25 participants in 2018, and 38 – 40 planned for 2019.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Programme

From A1 Telekom’s perspective, the most important strength of the programme is that supporting IT and ICTS students achieve their Bachelor’s degree remains much cheaper than hiring them on the labour market. In fact, due to the lack of such professionals in Austria, A1 Telekom often makes use of external resources and collaborators in order to fulfil customer requests.

Conversely, finding enough managers and departments, whose tasks fit FH Technikum’s curricula remains one of the programme’s key challenges. However, the major one is the overall coordination between A1 Telekom and FH Technikum: Christina Maier's counterpart is the manager of the degree course, and the students are in direct contact with the lecturers. Sometimes, internal communications do not function properly, so that the lecturers’ understanding of some aspects of the programme may conflict with the information the students receive from A1 Telekom. Generally, lecturers must take into account that due to the dual-study apprentices spending 3 months in FH Technikum and 3 months in A1 Telekom, various organisational issues concerning exams and homework may occur.

Feedback from users

The first students pointed out that handling the double workload was the most difficult part during the initial phase of the programme. Nonetheless, they also considered that A1 involved its managers in the programme, and it has shown a lot of consideration towards the students.

Relevance and Transferability

N/A

Comments

N/A