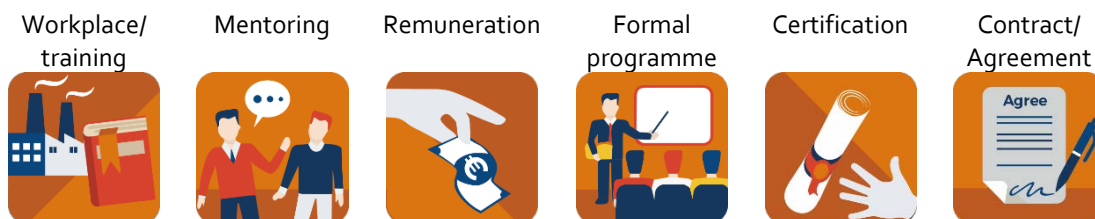


Authors

Name SURNAME	Hanna-Maria PÕLDMA		
Institution	Tallinn Health Care College	Country	Estonia

Suitability of this case to the ApprEnt definition of HEA



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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Develops work-based learning practices and materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

Occupational therapist apprenticeship programme in Tallinn Health Care College

Description

Model

Types of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships within the Estonian education context are understood in two ways:

- a) As part of the curriculum (this is particularly the case in VET);
- b) Apprenticeships as separate tracks of education.

In VET, this type of education was legally introduced in 2013 ("Töökohapõhise õppe rakendamise kord" <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/129122013002?leiaKehtiv>).

In HE, only the first type of apprenticeship (apprenticeship as part of a curriculum) is legalized at national level. The second type – apprenticeship as separate track of education – has not been legally introduced at HE level yet.

ESF Programme – PRÕM

In 2014, the government introduced the ESF Programme "The systematic development of the practical training and apprenticeship learning in VET and HE" (PRÕM), 2014-2020. The main aim of the PRÕM is to develop a system of practical training that is consistent, transparent and meets the needs as well as requirements of the stakeholders at VET and HE. The second aim of the programme is to provide the learner with the experiences of practical work (e.g. teaching) within a work environment.

THCC's Apprenticeship Programme

The apprenticeship (or work-based learning) programme in Tallinn Health Care College (THCC) is included within occupational therapist curriculum. Every year the programme allows for new intakes. At least half of the learning is school-based (conducted by university teachers) and the other half is company-based/work-place learning (conducted and guided by supervisors in companies). During the first year, students are attending school one week each once a month. This kind of cycle for school attendance (school-based learning) is a strength of this system, as it allows students to focus only on academic learning in a very specific period of time.

All the study materials are uploaded to Moodle's e-learning environment, another strength of the system. Moodle allows for the lecturers to upload all the necessary theory and literature materials, so that the students may work on such readings before the lectures. Moodle also allows to post active discussions and independent work. The Moodle system works well, because it partially allows to track the students' activity (e.g. downloading and reading through the study materials).

THCC is responsible for the evaluation of studies: evaluation criteria and methods are described in subject programmes. When possible, the different supervisors from the companies might also take part in the evaluation process.

According to the THCC, the main weakness of the programme so far is the rather high rate of students' absence from face-to-face lectures/lessons. These lectures are actually quite important as they allow for the students to reflect on their work-based learning experience. Besides, this increases the teachers' workload, as they have to monitor the absentees and possibly organise their seminars or practicums on more suitable hours.

Since the work-based learning in HE is still in its piloting phase, one of the weaknesses is also that there is lots of confusion with the national documentation. In fact, some of it is based on the VET

system, which does not always match with the HE system, so that, at times, the programme coordinators do not know who and how should fill the documentation.

According to the apprentices' employers, the main weaknesses are the following:

- When the student is also a full-time worker (which is generally the case in Estonia), it is a great challenge to fully perform on his work tasks. In fact, the student is away from work for one week each month, and in the course of another week, the student has to study or carry out the practical study of apprenticeship. The intensity for the student remains very high, since he/she has to ensure the completion of the same amount of work in a shorter time) and for the colleagues, whose work becomes more complicated in case there are teamwork activities to perform.
- This model is rather unequal if compared with those of students enrolled in non-apprenticeship programme. Indeed, apprenticeship students make use of a one-week study-leave period each month and for others twenty days per year;
- For the employer, ensuring that the work is completed while the student is on a study-leave can prove very expensive; it does mean extra pay for the replacement workers. At the same time, they have to continue paying full salary for the student;
- Ensuring that the student will continue working for the same organisation (considering the time and effort put in), after graduating from the apprenticeship studies, is another challenge for the employer. Such legal connections or guarantees are non-existent.

Best practice

The aim of the occupational therapist apprenticeship programme is to allow people, already working in that field, to acquire higher education in this occupation. At the moment, all the students enrolled in the occupational therapist apprenticeship programme already have a diploma in HE and all of them have passed an occupational therapist assistant training programme (one of the criteria to apply for the programme). That can also be considered as a strength of the programme, as its students already developed fundamental learning skills.

Various teaching and learning methods are used in the programme. Employers require that theoretical learning takes place at school, so that it can be later combined and implemented within the work environment. All study materials are available on the Moodle platform. In fact, when the students spend their study sessions at the school, it is assumed that they have already worked through the theoretical material on their own. Therefore, at school they can dedicate themselves to seminars as well as to learning specific work methods.

It is very important that lecturers possess the skills necessary for facilitating the students' integration within the different working contexts, so that such training may be included into the teaching process. Lecturers as well are always in need of additional training, and for this purpose too the college continuously seek collaborations with the employers. To develop the cooperation further, and to find out which learning outcomes can be filled in the workplace, THCC specialists have visited all the students' workplaces. All the employers are informed about the particular features of the apprenticeship programme.

Feedback from users

The programme is still in piloting process. For this reason, THCC has not yet collected any feedback from the students. The feedback will be collected and analysed at the end of the spring semester.

Relevance and Transferability

N/A

Comments

So far the peculiarity of Estonian apprenticeship system in VET and in HE is that the average students are already full time workers in the field that they are studying in. The average age of a student is around 35-45 years old.