



Lifelong  
Learning

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## Work-based Learning and Lifelong Guidance Policies



EUROPEAN LIFELONG  
GUIDANCE POLICY  
NETWORK

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Tibor Bors Borbély-Pecze and Jo Hutchinson



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## Abbreviations

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
EURES	European Employment Services
EMCO	Employment Committee
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
LLG	Lifelong Guidance
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
PES	Public Employment Service
STW	School to Work Transition
VET	Vocational Education and Training
I-VET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
C-VET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training (also known as Further Education)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
WBL	Work-Based Learning

## Why read this Concept Note?

This Concept Note is designed to provide policy-makers and stakeholders across Europe with an understanding of the key concepts underpinning the relationship between work-based learning and lifelong guidance. The note suggests that lifelong guidance policies reinforce policy goals for work-based learning. Quality lifelong guidance practices support positive work-based learning experiences and contribute to the fulfilment of the different skills agendas of the European Union.

In this Concept Note:

- i. The first and second parts describe the conceptual links between guidance and work-based learning and the policy underpinnings.
- ii. The second part outlines work-based learning forms across the member countries.
- iii. The third and final parts discuss the role of lifelong guidance as a service, policy and system to foster better and stronger outcomes at the policy and system level from work-based learning.
- iv. The final section develops possible future co-operation opportunities between national/regional lifelong guidance systems and systems of national work-based learning.



## Executive Summary

This Concept Note discusses the relationship between lifelong guidance and work-based learning. While these are distinct activities, they are often advanced as approaches to answering similar broad policy challenges, such as developing a skilled and socially inclusive population, ensuring engagement with education and work, and helping people to progress and live happy and useful lives. This paper argues that lifelong guidance can be particularly useful in relation to work-based learning in three main ways:

- **Engagement.** Increasing citizens' understanding of work-based learning, the routes into it and the rewards of participation.
- **Achievement.** Helping participants (learners, employers and learning providers) in work-based learning to remain engaged and consider how best to enhance their skills and employability.
- **Transition.** Assisting the effective utilisation of the skills developed within work-based learning by supporting individuals in transitions from work-based learning programmes to sustainable employment.

The word engagement is used deliberately as it describes the personal preference and associated choices that the French term *l'orientation* invokes but it also implies two other elements. Firstly it focuses on the perspectives of individual learners (young people and adults) and secondly it implies a more active and deeper level of knowledge and understanding. The word engagement therefore refers to the commitment of the individuals for different learning pathways. A strong personal engagement of the learner for a learning option can be also understood as the first preventive step against dropout and early-school leaving.

Work-based learning performs different functions in relation to European countries' skills systems. For young people, work-based learning provides them with a knowledge and understanding of what work is, and what occupational areas they are attracted to. Later on, it provides training for young people to build specific competences needed for particular jobs. Work-based learning also provides a form of active labour market intervention to motivate, skill and reward young people who are having difficulties in making the move from education to employment.

In addition, it offers workers whose skills lose their value in the labour market with a way to retrain and re-integrate to the modern economy.

Work-based learning has strong associations with vocational education and training in the form of apprenticeships and traineeships. However, in this paper we perceive work-based learning to necessarily incorporate significant periods of time within the workplace and to include episodic periods of learning as people progress through their careers. Therefore, in this Concept Note we are focusing on linking lifelong guidance with all types of work-based learning forms, at any age and any stage of the lifespan.

Work-based learning therefore plays a dual function alongside the lifelong guidance process. It offers young people a way of learning about jobs and work to help inform their choices; but it also provides skills, knowledge and accreditation which give people access to opportunities. Making and implementing decisions throughout life requires strong understanding of the labour market structure, the nature of different vocational pathways, the content of the different occupations and occupational outlooks (labour market intelligence), but is also linked with self-awareness and the ways individuals identify themselves in learning and working. Matching between individuals and job positions is usually sustainable only if these decisions are based on personal understanding of the self, the labour market and occupational needs. Different forms of work-based learning can provide opportunities for Europeans to learn for jobs from jobs.

The same “dual” viewpoint is valid for other sectors as well: for example, in higher education where college-based training is often combined with workplace-based experiences; or in the utilisation of active labour market policy tools such as labour market training or wage-subsidies. In some regions of Europe continuing professional development (CPD) as a term also has been used since the 1980s

to describe the lifelong process of (continuing) vocational training.

For some countries and some industrial sectors work-based learning is part of their cultural heritage, as well as providing the basis for sustained economic growth through the continuing supply of skilled young people into businesses. Practices such as mentoring and co-referral between education providers and employers are an established part of the industrial practices that underpin growth and innovation.

Work-based learning has a strong impact on individuals’ lives and also on the labour market if these activities are based on individual decisions which are aligned both with (i) economic and labour market needs but also with (ii) individual career constructions which keep the individuals moving towards certain educational, economic and labour market targets and translating these objectives to personalised ones. Engagement in any type of work-based learning as well as successful graduation from it depend upon strong correspondence with the individuals’ work values, interests, skills and motivations. It is therefore crucial to discuss the role of lifelong guidance within this process.

This Concept Note describes work-based learning (WBL) and its different forms in relation to different parts of the individuals’ life path. It then connects future challenges of work-based learning developments across Europe with the agenda of lifelong guidance (LLG). The connection of these two issues (WBL and LLG) is certainly not a new idea, but during the implementation phases of national school, adult education, VET system or PES reforms, these links are sometimes forgotten or not fully defined and implemented. The Concept Note seeks to build a common understanding of the supporting role of lifelong guidance as a service, as a system and as a policy for a more effective work-based learning models across Europe.

# 1 The related purposes of work-based learning and lifelong guidance

## 1.1 Work-based learning

1. The nature of work and the world of work have always been changing. Prevailing ideas of globalisation, specialisation and de-industrialisation are being challenged by academics, politicians and industrialists. The recent financial crises and recessions have generated new ways of thinking: notions of insourcing, relocation of jobs and re-industrialisation (Westkämper, 2014) are increasingly talked about in political debates and the media. However, these new trends are linked with different levels of production and productivity in the Western world than before. This has strong implications for the labour force, where the “one vocation and one job” paradigm is no longer an expectation. This is a significant issue for the European Union and for each of its Member States.
2. Several European initiatives target this challenge. Linking the world of work with the world of learning through work-based learning is one of these. This mode of learning not only integrates labour market demand and supply, but also opens up social debates on the career adaptability (Savickas, 2008) of the European labour force for our uncertain labour market. Multiple bridge-building between work, learning, individuals and families also means that new types of cognitive competencies such as career management skills for life are necessary.
3. The European Council (2013) and the Council of the European Union (2013b, 2014) have been promoting the development of a range of work-based learning infrastructures (e.g. on traineeship on alliance for European apprenticeship, and on the Youth Guarantee), not least as a means of generating positive labour market and social inclusion outcomes. However, they acknowledge that the meanings of these concepts are not the same across the different Member States. Some countries have strong, well-established and culturally embed-

ded systems such as the dual training system in Austria and Germany, or well-advertised and well-known traineeship/internship opportunities as in Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Other countries continue to develop their offer in this area for young people and adults. The European Alliance for Apprenticeships is building actions to promote reform of apprenticeship systems, promote their benefits and use funding and resources smartly (Council of the European Union, 2013c).

4. The nature, duration and investment in work-based learning is based on a number of variables. These include the role of social partners, the engagement of companies in tripartite dialogue, average size of the firms (e.g. mainly micro and small or medium and large), degree of foreign direct investment, shape of the banking system, availability of loans, cultural heritage of a region, familial expectations, development of technology in a region, and intrinsic regional geographical opportunities.
5. As the nature of work changes, the nature of work-based learning may also need to change. If multiple transitions between careers becomes common over the working life, alongside the incidence of portfolio working, project-based jobs, virtual offices and other aspects of work change, then we might need to reconceptualise work-based learning structures as a series of short-term interventions in any working life rather than a longer-term period of training relating to multiple aspects of a single job role.
6. Skills systems that equip people with a single set of skills or functional knowledge at the outset of their working life are inadequate within this context. People who are active in the labour market have constantly to acquire new skills within their existing work, to achieve promotion, to develop a deeper skill-set in an occupation, or to move into and between places of work. Portability of work-base-learnt skills or learning outcomes is still not fully developed in Europe; however, the evaluation of these personal skills is a formal or informal part of European companies' recruitment processes (Cedefop, 2014a). The skills that are needed as work changes are often developed at the workplace or as a blended approach – combining learning at work with learning in education or training. This type of work-based learning has several forms, providing opportunities to:
  - gain personalised experiences from the world of work and the nature of different professions and jobs before the vocational education/training begins (orientation);
  - develop a better understanding of the chosen occupational track based on real work experiences during the training period / vocational education years;
  - support easier access of individuals to the labour market at any age of their life through evidencing their achievements by accreditation;
  - support transitions through to employment by providing concrete experiences;
  - give people who have become unemployed, or who are having difficulty making their first transition into the labour market, the motivation, experience and skills to effect a more rapid transfer to employment (active labour market policies).
7. Work-based learning therefore offers ways to orient people towards particular occupations before they make career choices. It gives them an opportunity to gain and practise skills that are relevant to all work (such as communication and commercial skills) and simultaneously relevant to a particular occupation (to support economic growth), and through accreditation and experience it offers a passport to help secure sustainable employment.
8. Work-based learning clearly has strong associations with vocational education and training, and in many cases the discussion of one can

be conducted interchangeably with the other. However, in this paper we perceive work-based learning to necessarily incorporate significant periods of time within the workplace (rather than an entirely college-based training programme, for example), and to include episodic periods of learning as people progress through their careers. Therefore, in this Concept Note we are focusing on linking lifelong guidance with all types of work-based learning forms, at any age and any stage of the lifespan.

## 1.2 Lifelong guidance

9. The purpose of lifelong guidance has strong affiliation to the purpose of work-based learning. It has been described by OECD (2004, p.19) as follows:

*“Career guidance refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it.”*

10. Thus, if the purpose of work-based learning is to orientate, to provide learning opportunities and to equip people with the skills and experience to progress to sustainable employment, then lifelong guidance is the process that helps to ensure that people are aware of this, and have the skills and outlook to maximise the benefits from the experience. Lifelong guidance can be particularly useful in relation to work-based learning in three main ways:

- **Engagement.** Increasing citizen’s understanding of work-based learning, the routes into it and the rewards of participation.
- **Achievement.** Helping participants in work-based learning to remain engaged and consider how best to enhance their skills and employability.
- **Transition.** Assisting the effective utilisation of the skills developed within work-based learning by supporting individuals to transition from work-based learning programmes to sustainable employment.

11. Significant decisions have to be taken in advance of taking up a work-based learning opportunity, and the role of lifelong guidance in engaging people with these opportunities is well-established. But there is a misconception that once people have enrolled on an apprenticeship or commenced a traineeship/internship, they no longer require lifelong guidance. However, decisions often have to be taken within a programme, and support is needed towards the end of a learning experience to help the transition into an employment contract. This could be with the employer hosting the work-based learning opportunity, but this is not necessarily the only option, nor indeed may it be the best option for an individual. The need for personal, well-informed guidance, based on current and objective labour market information that is available to an individual at the point at which they need it, remains true for work-based learners.

12. Work-based learning structures and their associated learning opportunities benefit from effective integration with lifelong career guidance services. OECD (2010) has highlighted the emerging role of lifelong guidance concerning good-quality vocational education and training:

*“One way of ensuring that vocational programmes meet labour market needs is to give VET students good guidance. As careers diversify, career choices and therefore career guidance are becoming both*

*more important and more demanding. To meet this challenge, there needs to be a coherent career guidance profession, with personnel experienced in labour market issues and separated from psychological counselling. Guidance needs to be adequately resourced, with some assurance of pro-active one-to-one delivery of guidance at key career decision points. Guidance personnel need to have an independent base to underpin their objectivity, and be able to call on a wide range of information and web-based material. Strong links between schools and local employers are very important means of introducing young students to the world of work.*

*Guidance initiatives also need to be carefully evaluated" (p.77).*

13. The purpose of work-based learning shares a number of elements with the purpose of lifelong guidance. Both are designed to link individuals to the labour market, through the acquisition either of transferable skills or of career management skills. Furthermore, both have the potential to deliver this undertaking to achieve the combined goals of social cohesion with economic growth. The following section explores the European policy context for these dual elements in more detail.

## 2 European policy context for work-based learning and lifelong guidance

14. In the fields of work-based learning and lifelong guidance there are a number of strands of policy that bring both areas together. These are briefly outlined in this section as comprising education and training strategy, social cohesion, labour market participation and lifelong guidance in its own right. Guidance services and their policy-maker advocates play an important role in policy process through local networks and channels as well as internationally through networks such as the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Their day to day work with employers, social partners, learning providers and individual learners builds a rich knowledge and understanding of the local interface of EU policy strands and enables them to play a role as policy mediator – advising and shaping policy based on their rich knowledge whilst simultaneously interpreting and shaping its implementation nationally, regionally and locally.

### 2.1 Education and training strategy

15. During the last 20 years the European landscape on vocational education and training has reinforced the importance of work-based learning, at least partly as a consequence of European policy initiatives. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the adoption of the indicators and benchmarks developed for the Education and Training Strategy, known as ET2020 (Council of the European Union, 2009). These set standards for a range of issues such as educational attainment, lifelong learning, graduate employability and labour mobility. Countries are benchmarked against a set of clear national standards. Work-based learning provides a strategic response to a country's ability to achieve many of these standards, to ensure that they can contribute to the collective achievement of the European benchmarks through national actions.
16. The role of work-based learning has been widely recognised and supported in recent years (UNESCO/Watts, 2013; ETF/Sweet, 2014; Cedefop, 2014b). An OECD (2010) review, sig-

nificantly entitled *Learning for Jobs*, declared that:

*“In the 21st century, those entering the labour market need immediate job skills, but they also need a range of career and cognitive competences that will enable them to handle changing jobs and career contexts and to sustain their learning capacity. Workplace learning can play an important role here, since workplaces are a favourable learning environment for the development of many soft skills, and the blend of school and workplace learning is a powerful and effective method of preparing young people for jobs...”* (p.14).

17. The Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2010, p.3), which set up the European policy programme on vocational education and training for the current decade of the European Union, stated the following:

*“Work-based learning is a way for people to develop their potential. The work-based component contributes substantially to developing a professional identity and can boost the self-esteem of those who might otherwise see themselves as failures. Learning on the job enables those in employment to develop their potential while maintaining their earnings. A well performing VET, which enables learning on and off-the-job on a part-time or full-time basis, can thereby also strongly contribute to social cohesion in our societies.”*

## 2.2 Social cohesion

18. According to the Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2010), vocational education and training in Europe has two key objectives: (a) contributing to employability and economic growth; and (b) responding to broader societal challenges, in particular promoting social cohesion. The Communiqué highlighted the role of all forms of VET as a strategic issue for European prosperity, but also as a potentially powerful tool to build stronger social equity. It

therefore established work-based learning as a policy tool to support the growth of individuals through their identification with an economic role and purpose for themselves in the labour market.

19. A recent Communication from the European Commission (2013a) urges Member States to strengthen the social dimension of the European Monetary Union (EMU) in the following ways:
- enhancing capacity to monitor employment and social developments in the EMU to better co-ordinate a timely and adequate policy response;
  - mobilising EU action and funding to tackle unemployment (including youth unemployment) and social distress in an effective and sustainable way;
  - combining the steps taken on responsibility and economic discipline with more solidarity and financial support;
  - reducing existing barriers to cross-border labour mobility in the EU;
  - strengthening the role of social dialogue in developing euro-area-wide and national strategies, through appropriate involvement of the social partners.

## 2.3 Labour market participation

20. Work-based learning is also commended as a tool to achieve a wider range of policy goals. One example is to address skills mismatches. During any economic cycle it is possible to observe skills mismatches, with the apparently perverse situation of high unemployment co-existing with numbers of job vacancies. These skill mismatches arise when the people without jobs are unable to access those that are available. This can occur for a number of reasons, but often because they do not have the right skills. This mismatch between the skills employers demand and those that exist within the labour

supply is felt especially acutely by certain groups in the labour market, including those who have not been active for some time, and in particular young people and other vulnerable groups. The legacy of the global economic crisis for people's transitions to/in the labour market is long-term unemployment and under-employment.

21. The European Union faces massive and long-standing unemployment: 25 million European cannot find jobs, of whom more than 5 million are under the age of 25 (Eurostat, 2014). Within the European Union between mid-2008 and the first quarter of 2011, 5 million jobs were lost, and only a fifth of these (0.9 million) were recovered (European Commission, 2012b, p.355). There are hopeful signs of economic recovery: after the EU28 lost 4.5% of its GDP in 2009, recent reports of growth may be sufficient to return the Union back to where it was in 2008 (Eurostat, 2014); GDP growth is expected to be 1.2% in 2014 and 1.8% in 2015 (European Commission, 2014). There are also however notes of caution, and it could be that there is a strong risk of job-less recovery on the global stage (ILO, 2014).
22. The job-gap for young Europeans – and their economic and social implications – have been recognised by the European Council (Council of the European Union, 2013a) and the Commission (European Commission, 2013a). In response to the current negative social and political impact of the crisis, several political actions have been formulated across Europe. The Youth Guarantee was introduced in 2013 (Borbély-Pecze & Hutchinson, 2013). Other initiatives have been designed to bridge the growing gap between jobs and job-seekers and to support young career starters. These include closing the gap between the world of schools and the world of workplaces. Guidance for work and at workplaces including work-based learning needs to play an important part in these initiatives:

*“Guidance must be integral to any strategy to promote skill development in the workplace, in particular, for the low-skilled”* (Cedefop, 2011).

23. The European Commission (2012a) also noted the hidden potential of vocational education and training, including the added value of particular forms of work-based learning for supporting effective transitions of all young people: *“Both apprenticeships and traineeships can and do play a critical role in helping young people make smoother transitions from school to work (STW). A long-standing and robust body of evidence has consistently shown that countries with rigorous apprenticeship schemes, such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland, are the most successful in terms of facilitating STW transitions. Likewise, some forms of traineeships, notably those associated with educational programmes and well-structured active labour market policies (ALMPs), have proved to be highly effective in facilitating STW transitions”*.
24. Work-based learning is also part of the policy tools to ensure effective labour market engagement over the life course. The Employment Committee (Council of the European Commission, EMCO, 2010) of the EU Member States noted: *“A life cycle approach to positive transitions for women and men should ensure easily re-entering into the labour market after a period devoted to care of family dependants or studies, moving from unemployment to employment, from education and training to employment or moving between jobs throughout the lifetime.”*

## 2.4 Lifelong guidance policy

25. A Resolution of the Council of the European Union (2004) on lifelong guidance stated that: *“In the context of lifelong learning, guidance refers to a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their*

*capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used."*

26. Four years later (Council of the European Union, 2008) a second Resolution linked the role of lifelong guidance with multiple transitions through the lifespan, also noting the role of vocational education and training as part, and not as end (chosen occupation), in the lifelong process:

*"Citizens' lives are increasingly characterised by multiple transitions: notably from school to vocational education and training (VET), higher education or employment, or from employment to unemployment, further training or departure from the labour market. Guidance plays a decisive role in the major decisions that individuals have to take throughout their lives. In this respect, it can contribute to empowering individuals to manage their own career paths in a more secure way in the context of*

*today's labour market, and to achieve a better balance between their personal and professional lives."*

27. Both work-based learning and lifelong guidance have clear and documented roles to play in the context of ET2020 and also the Bruges Communiqué, which focused on the dual role that vocational education and training can play in both promoting economic growth and enhancing social cohesion. The Commission has promoted work-based learning as a means to achieve a more effective operation of the skills infrastructure, especially for young people who need additional support through the Youth Guarantee for instance, but also for young people across the skills levels who can benefit from this type of learning. Finally, policy statements make clear the personalised and integrative role that lifelong guidance can play throughout the life-course. The next section introduces in more detail the various components of work-based learning and how it has developed across the Member States.

## 3 Work-based learning across Europe

### 3.1 Introduction

28. Work-based learning can be described from the perspective of the individual as bringing the different forms of work closer to European youth, adults and their families, to make different occupations, sectors and job roles more familiar, and to develop in them the motivations, skills and aspirations to succeed in work. Throughout life, such experiences help to develop career decision-making skills and career adaptability. From the labour market demand side, work-based learning helps employers of all sizes across different sectors to develop their own recruitment and human resource practices, and to learn from and inform curricula being fol-
- lowed in schools and colleges, all of which serve the company's long-term goals.
29. Several forms of work-based learning (WBL) exist across the European Union. Not only educational administrations deal with WBL: it is also part of the portfolio of higher education and of lifelong learning (including formal and non-formal learning), and also forms a significant part of the work of labour administrations (e.g. labour market training, employment guidance and mentoring). In this section we outline the core features of apprenticeships, traineeships and internships, and how these vary across the Member States.
30. The architecture of training provision across Europe has evolved as a consequence of the

different nature and pace of industrialisation across the continent. These are summarised in Table 1 which outlines how different market models impact upon the nature of provision of vocational education and training. It shows that between these structures the relative importance of state and industry shape how people experience vocational education and training in terms of its regulation, duration, curriculum, remuneration, accreditation, and place of study.

31. The learning opportunities available to a person in a country which operates the “dual system” will be different to those who live in a country with a state-regulated system, for example. These differences relate to the age at which they enrol, the amount of time they spend learning in a college or school compared to the workplace, the nature of the work they do in the workplace, the qualifications they receive, the age they complete their studies, and how much they pay or are paid.

**Table 1:** The three “classical” models of vocational education and training

Features	The liberal market model (e.g. UK)	The state-regulated model (e.g. France)	The dual corporate model (Germany*)
<b>Who determines how vocational education and training is organised?</b>	Negotiated “in the market place” between representatives of labour, management, and providers of vocational education and training	The state	The federal law regulates the organisational structure of the VET component in companies; school laws of the Länder regulate vocational education; chambers of commerce or craft trades are required to monitor and control the implementation of the training in companies
<b>Where does vocational education and training take place?</b>	Many options: in school; in companies; in both schools and companies; via electronic media; etc.	In special schools, so-called “production schools”	In predetermined alternation between companies and vocational schools (“dual model”)
<b>Who determines the content of vocational education and training?</b>	Either the market or the individual companies, depending on what is needed at the moment; content is not predetermined	The state (with social partners): does not aim primarily to reflect practice in enterprises, but relies instead on more general, theoretical training	Federal Institute of VET sets up mandatory training content profiles/orders (arranged by professions) which are jointly developed by tripartite commissions of representatives of companies, trade unions and the state
<b>Who pays for vocational education and training?</b>	In general, the people who receive the vocational education and training are also the ones who pay for it; some companies finance certain courses, which they provide themselves	The state levies a tax on companies and finances vocational education and training, but only for a certain number of applicants each year	Companies finance training within the enterprise and can set off the costs against tax; trainees are paid a contractually determined sum; vocational schools are financed by the state
<b>What qualifications are gained? and what opportunities are opened?</b>	No monitoring of training; no universally accredited final examinations	State certificates entitle the best graduates to go on to higher courses	After a formal examination, the VET certificate enables the holder to work as a skilled professional worker in the relevant occupation and to access higher courses

Sources: CEDEFOP, 2002; 2004. \*This description has been modified by the German ELGPN team and applies only to Germany

32. As individuals move through their educational experiences, they are being prepared for their working lives or new engagement with work. Consequently different types of learning are integrated into secondary and CVET curricula. These include:
- **Learning about work:** to help people to understand what work is, the importance of commerce and service, team-working, time-keeping and how work is organised within companies and employer organisations.
  - **Learning about jobs:** to give people a sense of what different skills and aptitudes are needed in different types of jobs across the industrial sectors and to generate a better understanding of self, with nascent professional or vocational identities.
  - **Learning how to do a particular job:** to provide a vocationally specific training that will give a person the skills they need to undertake a particular job.
  - **Learning how to progress in work:** the career management skills that are needed to secure and retain employment and actively plan for subsequent moves.
33. The several different types of work-based learning combine some or all of these aspects of learning within their curriculum. The offer can be tailored to the needs of different groups within the labour market. For example, young people who are still at school can benefit from learning about work and about jobs to help them to make good subject and pathway choices. Alternatively, people with higher-level skills might need to gain work experience in a specific vocational area, to allow them to demonstrate those skills to an employer.
- ### 3.2 Forms of work-based learning
34. Work-based learning is an umbrella term which describes a set of learning programmes that include apprenticeships, traineeships and internships. These are understood differently across the Member States, either as a result of the different economic structures within which they operate, or as new initiatives are evolved that borrow terminology from elsewhere. Table 2 summarises how the European Commission (2013b) differentiates apprenticeships and traineeships.
35. An *apprenticeship* is associated with the dual corporate economic model as typified by areas with German heritage. They are usually part of a VET training programme and are linked with employment contracts under a fully regulated structure. A *traineeship* is more often associated with the liberal market model typified by Anglo-Saxon heritage countries. Lacking regulation or formal structures, traineeships complement learning activities and provide practical experience but are not necessarily accredited or paid. An *internship* is a concept borrowed from the USA and applied to a wide range of learning opportunities within a work-place. It is increasingly understood to apply to a traineeship or unpaid work experience for a graduate.
36. The European Trade Union Confederation (2013) have drawn together the range of definitions that apply to apprenticeships and traineeships noting that the CEDEFOP description of ‘a systematic long-term training alternative periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training institutions’ is particularly strong, whilst warning of the implications of introducing ‘apprentice-type schemes’ which could compromise both quality of intervention and employment outcomes.

**Table 2:** Differences between apprenticeships and traineeships

	<b>Apprenticeship</b>	<b>Traineeship</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Fully qualifying professionals or vocational education and training profile	Complementing educational programme or individual CV
<b>Goal</b>	Professional profile/qualification	Documented practical experience
<b>Educational level</b>	Usually EQF levels 3-5	Can be found as part of programmes at all EQF levels – common forms in (pre-) vocational education, in higher education and after graduation (sometimes compulsory)
<b>Content</b>	Acquisition of full set of knowledge, skills and competencies for an occupation	Vocational and/or work/career orientation, acquisition of parts of knowledge, skills and competences of an occupation or profession
<b>On-the-job learning</b>	Equally important to coursework	Usually complementing coursework or optional extra
<b>Length</b>	Determined, middle- to long-term	Varying, short- to middle-term
<b>Length (2)</b>	Usually up to four years	Usually less than one year
<b>Employment status</b>	Typically, employee status	Student/trainee often based on an agreement with employers or school; sometimes volunteer status, or status not clearly defined
<b>Employment status (2)</b>	Often contracted/employed apprentice	Student/trainee often based on an agreement with employer or school
<b>Compensation</b>	Typically remunerated – amount collectively negotiated or set by law	Varying remuneration, often unpaid
<b>Compensation (2)</b>	Apprenticeship allowance which takes into account net costs and benefits for the individual and the employer	Unregulated financial compensation
<b>Governance</b>	Strongly regulated, often on a tripartite basis	Unregulated or partly regulated
<b>Actors</b>	Often social partners, training providers	Individuals, companies, state, educational institutions
<b>Role of lifelong guidance*</b>	Supporting the development of professional identity and learning career management skills	Supporting the development of professional identity and learning career management skills

Source: European Commission (2013b). \*This line was added by the authors.

37. However, the terms traineeship and internship can be used interchangeably to mean the same thing or can have quite distinct meanings in different countries. ELGPN members were asked to describe how these terms relate to work-based learning provision in their countries.
38. Apprenticeships are well understood as part of a dual system which blends learning with a VET provider with employment. Key features

reported by sample of ELGPN member-countries are that they are:

- Developed to meet the needs of industry and the labour market. For example, Ireland reports that the curriculum for each apprenticeship programme is based on uniform, pre-specified standards which are agreed and determined by industry.
- Regulated by the state. For example, the

Netherlands reported that the origin of their apprenticeship system was the Technical Education Act of 1919; while Hungary has recently introduced legislation to undertake a systematic reform of its VET infrastructure to build up its apprenticeship system.

- Supported by state infrastructure such as PES to support recruitment and selection, monitored by employment and/or education ministries.
  - Generally of at least one year duration. The time spent in the classroom and in the employer varies: for example, in Austria 80% of the time is spent in industry; while in Poland there is a requirement for at least 50% of time to be spent in industry.
  - Generally designed for young people. For example, apprenticeship in Portugal is addressed to young people up to 25 years old and focuses on their integration in the labour market by providing practical training in the work context with courses in sociocultural, scientific and technological fields.
39. Traineeships were reported to cover a range of different learning experiences:
- In Malta, traineeships are bound by national legislation and are designed to provide training in places other than educational establishments for unemployed people. In contrast, Austria reported that there were no official national definitions for the term "traineeship".
  - In Poland, a traineeship is an obligatory part of the transition from technical and post-secondary education to employment in a specified occupation.
  - Some countries see traineeships as part of their active labour market policy suite. In Croatia, for example, employers in the private sector can take on people in a form of traineeship called "occupational training without commencing employment". In Hungary, a "workplace traineeship" is an accredited period of work to allow people to gain the skills they need in the labour market. In Portugal, the "Employment Trainingships" has successfully integrated young people into the labour market.
  - Elsewhere, traineeships complement apprenticeships. For example, young people who are not ready for an apprenticeship in Germany can take a one-year pre-vocational traineeship to help them to secure an apprenticeship.
  - A traineeship is seen as a different variant of an apprenticeship in countries such as Poland, and also in Luxembourg where it is a combination of longer periods in an education/training institution and shorter periods (minimum 12 weeks) in the workplace than would be the norm in an apprenticeship.
  - Traineeships are also commonly associated with graduate-level study, either as part of a university course or as part of a graduate recruitment programme designed by an employer. In the Netherlands, for example, many companies have traineeships for graduate students, which often lead towards management positions.
40. According to ELGPN respondents, internships share many of the features of traineeships, often in the context of active labour market policies, or components of VET and HE study programmes:
- A legislative context was only mentioned by one country, Croatia, where internships have to be exclusively in a specific occupation and cannot last for more than a year.
  - In Germany, an internship is understood

to be a short period of work experience which is mandatory in secondary general education and is increasingly being integrated into a careers programme. In Austria and Finland it is a compulsory part of secondary VET education.

- Internships are also used as part of countries' active labour market policy suites. In Luxembourg, they are offered to unemployed young people with the aim of motivating them to achieve a qualification; while in Poland, under the name "work practice", it is used as a way of developing and demonstrating the skills of an unemployed person to a prospective employer in the workplace.
- Internships, as with traineeships, are also part of study programmes in higher education. In Poland as in the Netherlands, an internship or work placement is a mandatory element in all programmes of VET and higher professional education. In Spain, there is similar provision, although it is not mandatory.

41. In the light of the common features between traineeships and internships, the remainder of this Concept Note will refer to traineeships/internships alongside apprenticeships.
42. From these descriptors of the features of apprenticeships and traineeships/internships, it is clear that as a concept work-based learning takes different forms across ELGPN member-countries. It can be part of a career education programme to encourage young people to learn about work and to orient them towards particular occupations; it is generally a feature of VET; but also increasingly plays a role in higher education. Work-based learning can be formally accredited, but it can also be part of an informal training or induction into a workplace. Finally, work-based learning can be part of packages of support to integrate or re-integrate young people and adults into the labour market. The next section explores how, in practice, lifelong guidance policy and practice support both the delivery and the strategic ambitions of work-based learning.

## 4 Lifelong guidance and work-based learning practices

### 4.1 Introduction

43. The policy goals for work-based learning are to move towards a knowledge economy within a socially cohesive society based on sustained economic growth. The goals for lifelong learning are to support individuals to integrate, enrich and develop within such a socio-economic structure. The two areas are thus mutually reinforcing in policy terms. At a strategic level, lifelong guidance can provide a bridge to arbitrate between the needs of different stakeholders, and a means to achieve broader strategic policy goals.

44. Lifelong guidance services also have a role to play in supporting the effective operation of work-based learning with dynamic labour markets. This section outlines the role that lifelong guidance plays both strategically and practically for work-based learning and work-based learners.

### 4.2 Strategic links

45. Lifelong guidance services have a range of functions which are associated with bridging. Firstly, they support individuals to build career management skills that enable them to bridge their

career transitions from education and learning to training and earning:

*“Career management skills refer to a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions”* (ELGPN, 2010, p.23).

46. Secondly, guidance services can provide a bridge between employers and learning providers, helping to shape and refine training and employment opportunities that align the needs of both groups of stakeholders.
47. The importance of linking work-based learning including apprenticeships and traineeships/internships with lifelong guidance lies with meeting the needs of both learners and employers. In some economic systems the partnership between the state and industry is closely aligned and forward-looking: in such situations the planning and resourcing of work-based learning opportunities should be in line with labour market projections. But this may not always be the case, and there is a danger that in systems which incentivise accredited learning over employability, work-based learning opportunities will be overly responsive to learner demand. In these cases the role of lifelong guidance is to act as an arbiter between the world of work and the world of learning, seeking to direct learning opportunities towards labour market opportunities.
48. Lifelong guidance in a work-based learning context can also help to achieve mobility of the workforce between EU Member States and to promote social mobility. Lifelong guidance services can challenge stereotypical thinking and broaden the aspirations of disadvantaged groups. In so doing they can help people to access opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them. The existence and quality of labour market information/intelligence (LMI) play a crucial role in this process. In some countries LMI is not closely connected with personal preferences (like work values or work interests); unless this self-knowledge is linked to the labour market and training realities, there is little chance for well-established personal decision-making. Lifelong guidance as a system and as a service can integrate LMI with personal self-learning processes, and accordingly should provide better outcomes at both individual and system level than LMI alone.
49. Lifelong guidance services alongside the range of social partners can also play a role in assuring quality interventions that build genuine and sustainable impacts. The Quality Framework for Traineeships (Council of the European Union, 2014) will support the improvement of working conditions and the learning content of traineeships. Social partners including lifelong guidance services can play a role in providing trainees with targeted information of opportunities, rights and responsibilities as well as by building a resource for simple and concise model traineeship agreements.
50. Thus lifelong guidance services have a key role to play in shaping skills systems and helping labour markets to operate more effectively, helping European citizens to link their own learning and career plans as well as previous working and learning experiences with learning and working opportunities. Lifelong guidance services also support individuals through their careers in a number of fundamental ways, such as providing labour market information as well as information about learning opportunities (e.g. CPD, C-VET) and supporting individuals to link this objective information with their subjective career views and values.

### 4.3 Practice links

51. The different elements of lifelong guidance are presented before, during and after work-based learning forms at different levels of intensity.

52. Work-based learning is about providing opportunities to learn about work and about jobs, and this is often most effective within the secondary education phase. There are clear associations between activities such as work experience and employer engagement in schools and those that are undertaken within a broader career education curriculum such as learning about jobs, about different progression routes and about ensuring that aspirations are both broad and high. Career information, including labour market information, is crucial to support individual decision-making processes before enrolment. In Figure 1 below, the relationship between practical activities that help young people in particular to learn about jobs and work and those that are associated with the engagement purpose of guidance is clear.
53. Similarly, the links between learning how to do a job and the guidance focus on achievement on course are evident. Work-based learning in this respect is about teaching a person about the functions associated with a particular job and acquiring the skills to undertake it. Guidance can be a mutually reinforcing activity that supports study and retention skills as well as individual mentoring and counselling. Career counselling is a tool to support the development of individuals' learning and working action plans, but also a tool to support initial engagement (with career starters) or re-engagement with work after the training process.
54. Finally, associations can be made between the capacity of work-based learning to help people to progress into or in work and the same aspirations for lifelong guidance. Both support the development of career management skills that are useful for job-search and career negotiations such as conflict in work or salary negotiations. Work-based learning can also be a workforce development tool for employed or self-employed people, while career counselling can support individuals in gaining better understanding of their labour market and business perspectives.
55. ELGPN member-countries have provided examples of effective integration of lifelong guidance with respect to work-based learning. These encompass the three elements outlined above:
- **Engagement** before entering programmes and typically whilst still at secondary school.
  - **Achievement** whilst experiencing work-based learning, to encourage participation and retention as well as successful completion.
  - **Transition** after leaving vocational programmes, to include personalised follow-up and on-going

**Figure 1:** Linking the dual purpose of work-based learning with lifelong guidance

Examples of activity	Work-based learning	Lifelong guidance	Examples of activity
Work experience Employer engagement in education Taster courses Summer schools	Learning about work Learning about jobs	Engagement	Decision-making skills Labour market information Building ambition Broadening aspiration
Apprenticeships Traineeships/internships	Learning how to do a job	Achievement	Coaching and mentoring Prevention of drop-out Pastoral and study support
Continuing professional development Voluntary work Job rotation	Learning how to progress in work	Transition	Opportunity awareness Labour market analysis CV & interview skills Resilience

career support to help individuals develop their own career management skills as well.

#### 4.3.1 Engagement practices

56. Guidance services perform their strategic role with respect to the design of work-based learning as they do for other aspects of the labour market. In most cases there are no special lifelong guidance services that support only work-based learners, but European citizens can use general guidance services, whether run by educational providers (e.g. Poland), by vocational schools (e.g. Netherlands) or by the Public Employment Service (e.g. Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary).
57. In many cases these guidance services will support people into work-based learning opportunities through a combination of information, education and counselling. For example, in Northern Ireland, careers advisers explore training as an option with young people at key transition points. Prior to entering training provision, each young person, if required, will receive a pre-entry guidance interview from a careers adviser.
58. In some countries the guidance offer is structurally embedded within a programme of work-based learning. For example, in Luxembourg, some programmes require participants to enrol with the PES prior to entering a work-based learning opportunity. The PES provides counselling and recruitment services to ensure that there is a mutually beneficial match between the employer and the work-based learner.

#### 4.3.2 Achievement

59. In some cases this embedded approach operates throughout the lifetime of the learning programme. Some national lifelong guidance systems try to cover the three functions under

one roof, providing before, on-programme and follow-up services through the same state agency (e.g. NAV in Norway) or in guidance centres of the local/regional authorities (e.g. Denmark). In addition, where work-based learning is part of a package of active labour market measures to encourage employability, lifelong guidance services remain available to people who have experienced some form of work-based learning and require additional support to enable them to secure employment.

60. An alternative approach to this model is for teachers and trainers to provide guidance within an embedded model. On-programme guidance services can be provided by school staff or specialised guidance professionals/teachers employed within schools and training providers. In Austria and Denmark, specially-trained professionals help the students; the same situation applies in Ireland for colleges. In Germany, the federal employment agency (BA) supports the VET schools, whilst academics within the higher education institutes are responsible for guidance. In Hungary, the youth vocational training schools have a special subject on guidance as part of the curriculum.

#### 4.3.3 Transition

61. On leaving a work-based learning opportunity, few countries have specialist support for individuals outside an ALMP programme; rather, the individuals then access the general guidance service if help is required.
62. Work-based learning has considerable potential to support effective integration of the world of work with the world of learning, but this is clearly complex and there is a need for brokerage between these two worlds. Flexibility of the labour force for the fast-changing economic and labour market needs can be only guaranteed if, as a part of the high quality of vocational and academic programmes, students learn how to

deal with career adaptability. For this purpose, lifelong guidance is a strategic partner both prior to entering a work-based learning programme and within the programme. Within programmes, Watts (2009) states that two further principles are important: namely, that career guidance should be available at all relevant decision points including on exit; and that career education programmes have an important role to play both in preparing participants for future career decisions and in supporting the transferability of their learning.

#### 4.3.4 Dual practice within active labour market measures

63. It is common practice for countries to integrate an element of work-based learning into programmes that seek to redress labour market imperfections. The work-based component can support a range of different groups within the labour market, including young people who might otherwise disengage from learning, new entrants to the labour market who need work experience to secure employment, and unemployed people who need to remain connected with the labour market or to secure new skills. Examples include:
- In the Netherlands, the School Ex Programme is designed to give young people who might otherwise drop out of learning an opportunity to receive counselling and/or work experience. The experience of work is used to motivate their ambitions and to guide them in their transitions either to further learning or to the labour market.
  - In Latvia, work-based learning is used to give new entrants to the labour market the opportunity to gain some general work experience and to facilitate long-term inclusion into the labour market.
64. In all these examples of ALMPs, the integration of employers within the schemes – and the search for market-based solutions – is an important component. From the employers' perspective, work-based learning offers a number of advantages: it allows them to shape the training that is offered within public provision; it gives them the opportunity to search for talent; and it helps to ensure that all entrants to the labour market are better prepared and "skills ready". However, receiving trainees also creates costs for enterprises in terms of time, tools and raw materials, for example. In some national systems, these costs are absorbed by all employers either directly or through taxation. In others, employer incentives have to be deployed, such as the offer of tax relief, brokerage services or direct inducements. This is more often the case where the trainee needs additional support to become work-ready and where their learning needs include learning
- In other EU Member States, periods of work-based learning are designed for people who are unemployed, either to provide them with new skills for new jobs or to help to keep them engaged and prevent long-term unemployment. For example, in Poland, work practice is offered for 6 months (or 12 months for a person aged up to 30 years old) to unemployed people within the workplace. Examples of similar programmes are found in Greece where programmes are available to people at all skill levels, in Malta where work exposure schemes are targeted at sectors where there is a shortfall of specialised workers, in Ireland where there is a National Internship Scheme and in Portugal, Employment-Insertion Contracts are used to develop social and professional skills of unemployed by linking them with socially useful work

about work and learning about jobs. In many of the examples above, the costs of employment are subsidised by the state. For example, in Poland, people on the work practice programme are entitled to a monthly scholarship equal to 120% of unemployment benefit. In Latvia, the state will subsidise employment and training costs, but there is an expectation that once training is finished the employer will hire the participant in an appropriate occupation for at least 6 months.

65. Specialist employment guidance services are needed that offer expertise in the various modes of work-based learning to support young people and adults into these opportunities, through them, and to ensure that people are supported in their transition from work-based learning where it is needed. These professional services will be focused on university graduates as well as on young people with lower-level skills, and thus will need to be accessible to a broad spectrum of the labour market.

## 5 Conclusions

66. Different countries in Europe have different education and training structures. Within those structures, work-based learning takes many different forms. Fundamentally, though, work-based learning can be described from the perspective of the individual as bringing the different natures of work closer to European youth, adults and their families, to make different occupations, sectors and job roles more familiar, and to develop in them the motivations, skills and aspirations to succeed in work. Throughout life, such experiences help to develop career decision-making skills and career adaptability.

67. From the labour market demand side, work-based-learning forms help employers from all-sized organisations across different sectors to develop their own recruitment and human resource practices, and learn from and inform curricula being followed in schools and colleges, all of which serve the employers' long-term goals.

68. Utilisation of job-related skills is connected with the individual's personality which includes, for example, work interests, motivations and values. Lifelong guidance is essential to provide meaning for any type of work-based learning at

the personal level and to keep the individuals "on the right track" before, during and after the vocational education and training. In this personalised context "right track" has an individualised meaning based on individual interests, values and skills.

69. Work-based learning processes help people to learn about work, about particular jobs, about the skills needed to perform specific jobs, and about how to move between jobs. The most commonly referenced form of work-based learning is apprenticeship. ELGPN member-countries share a broadly common understanding of the structure and purpose of apprenticeships. This is not the case when referring to traineeships and internships, where different definitions apply between these two terms across countries. From these descriptors of the features of apprenticeships and traineeships/internships, it is clear that as a concept work-based learning is: (a) part of active labour market measures; (b) part of mainstream VET (for youth and adults) at all skill levels; and (c) part of a process of lifelong learning.

70. Just as work-based learning extends over the life course, so does career guidance. Lifelong guidance operates at strategic levels to help

structures develop in ways that enhance the operation of the labour market and achieve broader policy goals such as labour market and social mobility.

71. In the context of work-based learning, lifelong guidance supports individuals into, through and beyond individual episodes of work-based learning. Such guidance can operate parallel to work-based learning, being part of a suite of activities that are available from specialist services and PES to individuals whatever their learning context. A different model is for a guidance element to be integrated within the work-based learning programme and delivered either by specialist services and PES or by trained teachers and tutors. A third model is for guidance services to manage or co-ordinate a range of work-based learning opportunities as part of active labour market measures which are designed to improve employability.
72. Work-based learning can be an effective way to bring the world of work closer to citizens of any age. It helps the familiarisation process with workplaces, and how literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are applied within the workplace, alongside the social contract of work and other implicit learning that comes from experience within a workplace. Lifelong guidance fosters individualisation of the work-based learning process, often as part of the lifelong learning process.
73. These advantages accrue from different work-based learning forms and for different groups of citizens, in different life circumstances and at different ages. However, such advantages are not automatic, nor are they necessarily well understood by individuals, the business sector or schools. Therefore it is important to make these learning options transparent and permeable both for the participants and also for the business sector and schools.
74. Workplace practice is part of individuals' professional socialisation process: therefore the quality of the job and of the apprenticeship or traineeship/internship matters. It is especially important for career starters and young professionals, as professional socialisation has started in the VET school and during the workplace practices, but the first two to three years in the labour market construct their understanding of work which they will broadly then carry for four to five decades, until retirement age (Borbély-Peczé, 2012). This indicates that work-based learning is not only a work position (often for limited wages) but also a preparatory place for socialisation in work and personal professional development in a certain occupation or occupations.
75. Vocational education and training / active labour market training programmes at any age can be more effective with built-in lifelong guidance services. These services can help the citizens and families to clarify their training/learning paths but also support employers to identify certain needs for certain job posts before entry. Lifelong guidance services as part of the programmes support preventing drop-out and early school-leaving through customising learning to individuals' need. Last but not least, lifelong guidance plays an important role on exit, supporting learners in (re)entering the labour market and also in entering particular workplaces through the mobilisation of their own career management skills.

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**EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK (ELGPN)** aims to assist the European Union Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. The purpose of the Network is to promote co-operation and systems development at member-country level in implementing the priorities identified in EU 2020 strategies and EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The Network was established in 2007 by the Member States; the Commission supports its activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

**WORK-BASED LEARNING** performs different functions in relation to European countries' skills systems. It offers young people a way of learning about jobs and work to help inform their choices; but it also provides skills, knowledge and accreditation which give people access to opportunities. This Concept Note discusses the relationship between lifelong guidance and work-based learning and argues that lifelong guidance can support individuals in transition from work-based learning to sustainable employment.

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