



Enterprise 2020



Towards Quality Internships & Apprenticeships

Introducing the Quality Internships
& Apprenticeships Assessment
(QIA-A) tool



An Enterprise 2020 initiative
European Business Campaign on Skills for Jobs

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Executive Summary



Internships and apprenticeships are seen as a useful tool to smooth the transition from education-work for young people in Europe. Alongside the debate on how to increase the capacity of employers to offer this type of workplace experience, comes the concern on how to ensure their quality. This is reflected in recent initiatives such as the European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships (2010), the European Commission's Quality Framework on Traineeships (2013), the European Alliance on Apprenticeships (2013) and the Global Apprenticeship Network (2013).

In response to growing expectations from society and policy makers for companies to ensure the quality of their internships and apprenticeships schemes, CSR Europe, Microsoft, Impronta Etica and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) developed the Quality Internships & Apprenticeships Assessment (QIA-A) tool, a practical benchmark assessment tool that allows any given company to:

1. Identify whether it has the necessary processes in place to assure the quality and effectiveness of its internship/apprenticeship schemes
2. Compare its results with other companies, to identify best practices and areas for improvement

QIA-A is based on the requirements outlined in the European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships, ("the Charter"), developed by the YFJ. It focuses on ten key indicators for internships/apprenticeships as part of education and six additional indicators for internships outside of education. Together, the assessment against these indicators provides a balanced picture of the quality of the internships/apprenticeships a company offers.

The tool groups the indicators under four key areas of performance and related business processes:

1. Governance
2. Recruitment
3. Quality of learning
4. Labour conditions

Companies participating in the benchmark assessment received an average score of 84% against an ideal situation of 100%, which shows that (large, multinational) companies have most of the necessary processes in place to offer meaningful and qualitative internships/apprenticeships. However, some points still require ongoing attention. Most importantly:

- Providing a fair compensation for work performed outside of working hours;
- Preparing supervisors for their role;
- Giving interns/apprentices the opportunity to discuss their progress and potential job opportunities during intermediate appraisal meetings;
- Developing guidelines/policies for how internships/apprenticeships should be structured across the organisation.

CSR Europe and its partners will further endeavour to increase the quality of internships and apprenticeships through different activities and projects. This will help companies to guarantee a good pathway for young people towards jobs and employment.

Introduction

In April 2013, CSR Europe, Microsoft, Impronta Etica and the European Youth Forum (“YFJ”) started a collaborative project to improve the quality of internships and apprenticeships within business. Central in this project stands the development of the Quality Internships & Apprenticeships Assessment (QIA-A) tool.

QIA-A aims to help companies understand and improve the quality of their internship/apprenticeship schemes, by benchmarking them against peers and the requirements of the European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships (“the Charter”). It has been tested with 15 companies to date.

The current report serves to present the tool and the results of the initial benchmark.



1 Context: Quality at the heart of the debate on internships and apprenticeships

Internships¹ and apprenticeships are increasingly common practice in Europe to facilitate young people's transition from education to work. According to a recent Eurobarometer study², about 46% of EU citizens aged 18-35 have done an internship and 26% an apprenticeship in their past. Besides providing young people with practical, real-life experience in the workplace, these work immersions also bring concrete benefits for companies in terms of an increased access to talent and an enhanced employer reputation.

Despite these benefits, concerns have also been expressed regarding the working conditions during certain internships/apprenticeships, as well as regarding their effective learning content and outcomes³. The aforementioned Eurobarometer study shows six out of ten respondents did not receive any financial compensation during their last internship and more than one in four does not believe their experience was or will be useful in finding a job.

To tackle these issues, a number of initiatives have recently been launched to improve the quality of internships/apprenticeships and promote best practice. A few examples are:

1. In 2010, the YFJ came out with the **European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships**⁴, a document that lays basic principles for internships and apprenticeships to become a valuable and quality experience for young people. It has been developed in consultation with the European Trade Union Confederation, YFJ's member organisations and other NGOs. It is currently supported by 14 Members of the European Parliament, as well as companies and organisations who sign as a commitment to strive to implement such quality standards in their workplace.

2. The Charter also served as an important input for the European Commission in drafting its **proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships**⁵, which was accepted by the Council on 10 March 2014. The document outlines a common set of principles to be included in national legislation or practice, which together should ensure the minimum quality of the so called "open market" internships that take place outside a formal educational context.
3. On the 2 July 2013, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and DG Education and Culture jointly launched the European **Alliance for Apprenticeships**⁶. The two core activities under this initiative are:
 - A Building up a network of ambassadors (professionals) to support SMEs in increasing the number and quality of apprenticeships offered and;
 - B Gathering pledges from a wide variety of stakeholders to improve the access to and supply of apprenticeships, and to increase their quality and attractiveness.
4. Similarly, in December 2013, the International Organisation of Employers and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD, with the support of the International Labour Organization, launched the **Global Apprenticeship Network**⁷. The aim of this network is to forge a coalition of companies that:
 - A Offer internships/apprenticeships;
 - B Share best practice;
 - C Advocate for an improved social status of apprenticeships and;
 - D Build capacity to establish national/regional networks.

Against this background and as part of the European Business Campaign on Skills for Jobs⁸, CSR Europe launched a project named "**Quality Internships & Apprenticeships**" in April 2013, in collaboration with Microsoft, Impronta Etica and the YFJ. The main aim of this project was to translate the Charter into a practical assessment tool on the status of a company's internships/apprenticeships related processes. The current report focuses on the work that has been done to develop/deploy this assessment tool, which was named the **Quality Internships & Apprenticeships Assessment (QIA-A)**.

Footnotes

¹ The words 'traineeship' and 'stage' are often used interchangeably with the word 'internship'.

² EUROBAROMETER, The Experience of Traineeship in the EU, November 2013

³ EUROBAROMETER, The Experience of Traineeship in the EU, November 2013, p.5; DG EMPL, Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the EU, January 2012, p.12.

⁴ The full text of the Charter has been taken up in Annex. Website: <http://qualityinternships.eu/support/>.

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0857:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/alliance_en.htm

⁷ <http://www.global-apprenticeships.org/>

⁸ <http://www.csreurope.org/skills-jobs>

2 QIA-A: A tool to benchmark the quality of internships/apprenticeships

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A. Objective and scope of QIA-A⁹

The aim of the QIA-A tool is to allow any given company to identify whether it has the processes in place to assure the quality and effectiveness of its internship/apprenticeship schemes and to benchmark their performance against peers and the requirements of the Charter.

The following definitions are used for internships and apprenticeships in relation to the tool:

- **Apprenticeships** are work-oriented trainings that are part of vocational education and training (VET) and that formally combine periods of practical work experience at a workplace with periods of theoretical/practical education followed in a school or training centre, and whose successful completion leads to nationally recognised qualifications¹⁰;
- **Internships** are work-based learning opportunities, either taking place as part of formal education (with interns having a student status) or outside of formal education (also after graduation), during which a person spends a period of time in an enterprise or organisation to acquire specific competencies required by the labour market¹¹.

While all types of internships/apprenticeships are covered¹² by QIA-A, a differentiation is made between internships/apprenticeships taking place as part of education/training and internships outside of education. Generally, there is consensus that more issues arise with the latter type. Therefore an additional set of criteria is applied to these internships. This will be further explained in the next section.

B. Structure & methodology

The QIA-A tool consists of two parts:

1. A questionnaire which translates the requirements of the Charter into practical 'yes'/'no' questions.
2. A scoring mechanism that allows the different companies taking part in the assessment to be compared with one another and evaluated against the requirements of the Charter.

A. Questionnaire

The framework of the questionnaire (see figure 1) consists of four layers:

1. On the most general level, it identifies **four key areas** that are relevant for the quality of an internship or apprenticeship from a company perspective. These are: **A** governance, **B** recruitment, **C** quality of learning and **D** labour conditions.
2. Subsequently, each of these four areas is broken down into a number of **key indicators** that together provide a balanced picture of the overall quality of an internship or apprenticeship. A core set of 10 indicators ('core indicators') applies to all types of internships/apprenticeships (within and outside of education), while 6 'additional indicators' are considered specifically relevant for internships outside of education.
3. In a next step, each of these indicators is assessed by one or more **practical and process-related 'yes'/'no' questions**, which correspond to the requirements outlined in the Charter.
4. Finally, where a question still offers room for interpretation, **additional criteria** are provided, to help the respondent decide whether a question should be answered with 'yes' or 'no'.

B. Scoring methodology

The scoring methodology rests on the assumption that each key indicator can be attributed the same weight in ensuring that the internship/apprenticeship brings relevant learning outcomes and is conducted in a qualitative working environment.

- Each **indicator** can receive a total maximum score of '1';
- Together this adds up to a total **maximum score** of '10' for the core indicators and '6' for the additional indicators;
- Each indicator is broken down in one or more questions. For each **question**, a score '0' is awarded for each 'no' and a score between '0,25' and '1' to each 'yes', depending on the number of questions under that indicator.

⁹ <http://www.global-apprenticeships.org/>

¹⁰ Definition based on the Erasmus + Programme Guide (p. 255): http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/documents/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

¹¹ Definition based on the Charter (p.1) and the Erasmus + Programme Guide (p. 159).

¹² It could be discussed whether schemes such as 'management traineeships' or '(young) graduate programs' that aim to fast-track recent graduates with high potential into management positions also fall under the common denominator of Internships. This type of schemes is usually based on a 2-3 year rotational system within the company, during which the person completes different projects in different departments, countries or content areas. As the employment offer and benefits for this type of internships is sometimes better than for entry-level positions, they are not considered a relevant target group for QIA-A.

Figure 1: Outline of questionnaire, including core indicators in part 1 and additional indicators in part 2.

PART 1: CORE INDICATORS			
AREA	KEY INDICATOR	QUESTION TO ASSESS WHETHER THE COMPANY HAS A SPECIFIC PROCESS IN PLACE	ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
GOVERNANCE	1. Multi-stakeholder approach	<p>A Does your company partner/engage with at least one of the following stakeholders to develop the content/framework of the internships/apprenticeships offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational institutes Training providers or employment agencies Social partners Employer representative bodies (trade association, Chamber of Commerce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least engaging with the stakeholder(s) for the recruitment of candidates
	2. Policy/guidelines	<p>B Does your company have a policy/set of guidelines to inform the way internships/apprenticeships are organised (either at HQ or office level)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written (set of) document(s) or online tool(s) Containing clarifications/ instructions to streamline the procedure for an internship/ apprenticeship (and/or anything related to it) across the organisation
RECRUITMENT	3. Transparency of information in recruitment	<p>C Are the following elements clearly communicated during the recruitment process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job description Length of the internship/apprenticeship Details about remuneration/reimbursement of costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future intern/apprentice has easy access to this information (e.g. information provided on the recruitment website, during an interview, in documents/emails sent to the person) The information is provided before the person formally agrees to do the internship/ apprenticeship, whether or not this is concluded by signing a written type of agreement All three points mentioned in the question are covered
QUALITY OF LEARNING	4. Qualified supervisor	<p>D Is the intern/apprentice provided with a company supervisor(s) during his/her internship/apprenticeship?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated person that supervises the intern/apprentice on the actual (content) work he/she is doing
		<p>E Does your company prepare a supervisor for his/her role as supervisor (e.g. specific training)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any type of support specifically tailored to working with interns/ apprentices (training, handbook, regular working group, briefing sessions, detailed briefing email) System to ensure every supervisor receives this support/preparation
		<p>F Is there a limit to the amount of interns/apprentices that can be assigned to one supervisor?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at the practice, there is a rule (established or unspoken) to limit the number of interns/apprentices that can be assigned to one supervisor
		<p>G Is there a lower limit to the number of years of experience a supervisor must have?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at the practice, there is a rule (established or unspoken) to assign interns/apprentices only to supervisors that have a minimum number of years of relevant working experience. This can also be linked to a certain position (e.g. line manager, team leader, ...)

PART 1: CORE INDICATORS (Continued)

AREA	KEY INDICATOR	QUESTION TO ASSESS WHETHER THE COMPANY HAS A SPECIFIC PROCESS IN PLACE	ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
QUALITY OF LEARNING	5. Regular interaction with supervisor	H Are there regular meetings (minimum one per month) between the intern/apprentice and the supervisor(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting is interpreted as a moment where the intern/apprentice has the opportunity to discuss the work he/she is doing with the supervisor (e.g. daily interaction, weekly meeting)
	6. Complaints channel	I Does the intern/apprentice have access to a complaints channel in case of any issues occurring during the internship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A complaints channel is a dedicated person/tool the person can revert to in case of problems (e.g. dedicated contact point in HR, anonymous hotline, ...), other than the supervisor The person is clearly informed about the existence of such a channel at the beginning of the internship
	7. Process to ensure personal development	J Is the intern/apprentice provided with learning objectives at the beginning of the internship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined list of technical/personal competencies the intern/apprentice is expected to acquire during the internship/apprenticeship Clear communication of those objectives to the intern/apprentice Definition of learning objectives happens before/at the beginning of the internship/apprenticeship
		K Does your company offer at least one intermediate appraisal meeting with the intern/apprentice to monitor progress against the learning objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated meeting (other than regular meeting/time of contact between the person and the supervisor)
		L At the end of the internship/apprenticeship, does your company offer performance evaluation, including e.g. strengths and areas for improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated meeting/procedure to evaluate the internship/apprenticeship towards the end of the period (preferably assessing performance against learning objectives and to provide feedback on the person's personal competencies)

PART 1: CORE INDICATORS (Continued)

AREA	KEY INDICATOR	QUESTION TO ASSESS WHETHER THE COMPANY HAS A SPECIFIC PROCESS IN PLACE	ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
LABOUR CONDITIONS	8. Written & legal agreement	<p>M Does your company offer a written and legally binding contract, stipulating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of the internship/apprenticeship • Details about remuneration/compensation • Description of tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any type of written agreement (e.g. offer letter, project plan, adaptation of a normal employee contract, ...) that is signed by both the company and the intern/apprentice, and that is not in conflict with national labour law • All three points mentioned in the question are covered
	9. Fair compensation	<p>N Does your company offer additional compensation for work performed outside of standard working hours, e.g. overtime?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a system in place to track overtime • Interns/apprentices receive additional compensation according to the overtime they have performed
		<p>O Are interns/apprentices reimbursed or otherwise compensated for costs incurred during the internship/apprenticeship?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interns/apprentices receive reimbursement of any type of expense they have to incur because of work-related activities (e.g. travel expenses, business lunches/dinners, attendance of paid events, ...) • For internships/apprenticeships part of education, interns/apprentices receive reimbursement for additional living expenses incurred because of the internship/apprenticeship (e.g. costs related to work-home travel as opposed to normal transport expenses when the person is following courses; if necessary, housing) or a fixed amount that realistically can cover for this
	10. Transparent communication regarding relevant rights/duties	<p>P Is the intern/apprentice informed at the beginning of the internship/apprenticeship of his/her relevant rights and duties, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety risks • Social and labour rights • Responsibilities towards the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three points mentioned in the question are covered

PART 2: ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

AREA	KEY INDICATOR	QUESTION TO ASSESS WHETHER THE COMPANY HAS A SPECIFIC PROCESS IN PLACE	ADDITIONAL CRITERIA
RECRUITMENT	1. Public advertisement	A Is the position publicly advertised?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Publicly advertised' denotes that the key information about the position can be found on a channel that is accessible by the general public (e.g. the company's jobsite, a recruitment portal, ...)
	2. Reasonable quantity of interns/apprentices	B Is there a defined limit to the number of interns your company employs at the same time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The limit can change over time (according to internal capacity), but should be a specific cap (e.g. maximum 10% of FTE).
	3. Enabling a job transition	C Does your company provide the intern the opportunity to discuss the option of being hired as a permanent employee?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either the person is informed during the recruitment whether an opportunity for permanent employment can be offered after the internship/apprenticeship, or this has clearly been discussed before the end of the internship/apprenticeship
		D In case the intern is not hired upon completion of the internship, does your company support him/her in any way in the transition to finding permanent work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any activity that can help the person move forward professionally is accepted (e.g. provide the stakeholder that sent the person with feedback/advise for the orientation of the person; letter of recommendation; support in CV-writing; ...)
QUALITY OF LEARNING	4. Reasonable length	E Does the length of the internship fall within the scope of 2-6 months?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for additional criteria
LABOUR CONDITIONS	5. Fair remuneration	F Are interns entitled to remuneration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Remuneration' denotes a fixed, monthly income
		G Is the remuneration in line with the national legislation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for additional criteria
		H Does the remuneration exceed the EU poverty line of 60% median income or national minimum wage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU poverty line of 60% median income for each country is taken from the most recent Eurostat number.
	6. Access to social security systems	I Is the intern included in the following social security systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health security Unemployment Pension systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three points mentioned in the question are covered

3 Initial results: Strengths and weaknesses of current practice



Initial results

On the basis of this questionnaire, structured interviews have been conducted with 15 companies¹³ from seven different industries: basic materials (1), consumer goods (2), financials (3), healthcare (2), industrials (5), technology (1), and telecommunications (1). The people interviewed were all HR professionals, overseeing internships/apprenticeships at international (e.g. EMEA), national or office level for their company. Of the companies interviewed, 13 offered internships/apprenticeships as part of education, one company offered internships outside of education exclusively, and one offered a combination of the two.

Each of the companies that participated in an interview received an individual company report, based on the scoring methodology outlined above and showing their results against the other participants.

The aggregated results of the 15 participating companies are provided below. Since only two companies offered internships outside of education, these results will not be analysed here, as the sample is too limited to be of value.

The average performance of companies is 84%, with one company achieving the highest possible score of 100% (see figure 3). This means that, on average, companies are not lacking processes under more than 2 of the core indicators.

Looking at the specific processes supporting the indicators, figure 4 shows for each question how many companies report to have the specific process the question inquires about in place.

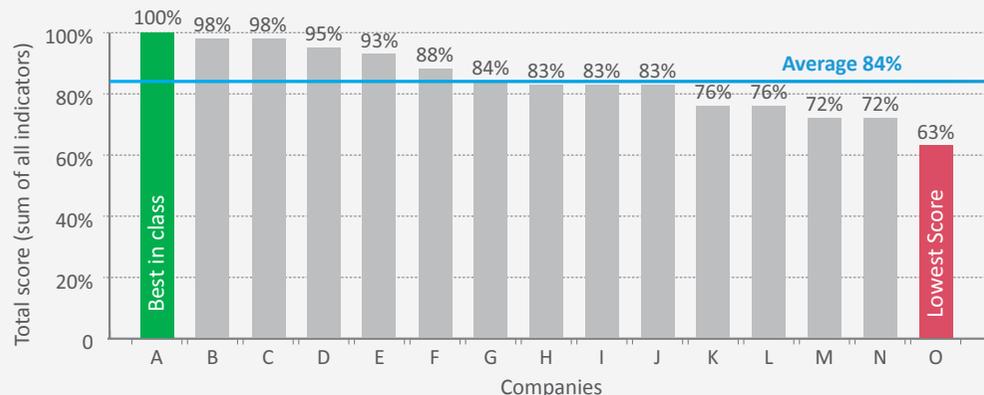
Well-established processes

All companies report to have following processes in place:

- Partnering with stakeholders (at least for recruitment purposes);
- Providing clear information about the tasks to be performed, the length of the internship/apprenticeships and the remuneration/compensation the person will receive during the recruitment process;
- Having a dedicated supervisor for each intern/apprentice. All but one company also indicate the intern/apprentice regularly has the opportunity to discuss the content of the work he/she is doing with the supervisor. Most often this happens either on a daily basis or in a weekly or bi-weekly meeting.

Additionally, for the majority of processes (75%), at least 80% of the companies interviewed report to have the required process in place.

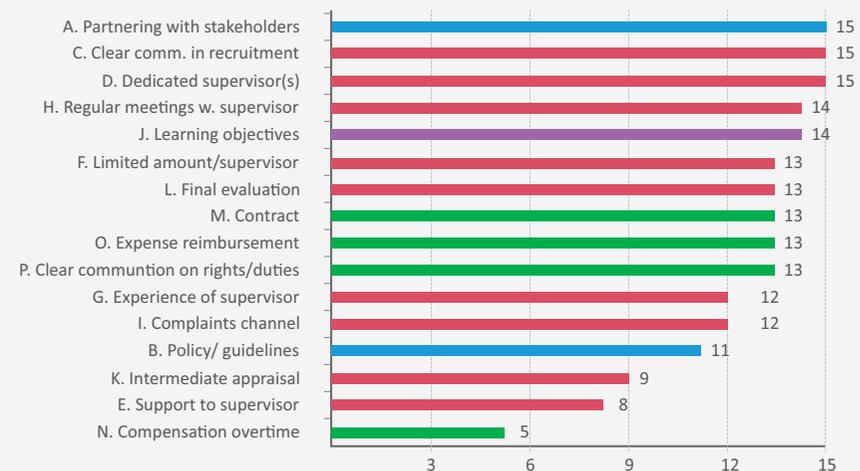
Figure 3: Overall performance across participating companies core indicators



Footnotes

¹³ of those companies are large multinational company members of CSR Europe; 3 are members of Impronta Etica, a CSR Europe National Partner Organisation in Italy.

Figure 4: Number of companies that have the required process in place. The colours indicate to which area the process belongs: governance (blue), recruitment (purple), quality of learning (red) and labour conditions (green).



3 Initial results: Strengths and weaknesses of current practice (Continued)



Processes that are often weak or lacking:

Figure 4 also shows that a number of processes are less well established, namely:

- Few companies have a system in place to track whether interns/apprentices do overtime and to compensate them accordingly if they do. In this context, some of the companies have stated that interns are not allowed to work outside working hours and that supervisors monitor this well. While this approach may work in specific cases, this is not seen as a structured process that can ensure interns in that organisation will not work outside working hours in general.
- Only half of the companies indicate to have a process in place which makes sure that all supervisors are prepared to work with interns/apprentices specifically (for example through dedicated training, a handbook/manual or contacts with the HR department). Companies that do not provide this kind of support often indicate that supervisors are people with a certain level of seniority that have gone through people management training and are therefore considered capable to work with interns/apprentices as well. However, since interns/apprentices may have specific needs or characteristics that are different from full-time employees, this is not seen as a sufficient preparation for the supervisor.
- In a number of cases, it has also been indicated that there are no specific meetings set between the supervisor and the intern/apprentice during the time the person is working at the company to evaluate progress against learning objectives and to provide feedback on the person's skills and competencies. Most companies do have a final evaluation meeting at the end of the internship/apprenticeship, however.
- Finally, it is also surprising that few companies have a policy or a set of guidelines in place to streamline internships/apprenticeships across the organisation.

B. QIA-A results against the Charter

Testing the QIA-A tool with 15 companies in CSR Europe's network also presented an opportunity to gain feedback on the requirements of the Charter in a practical company context.

Overall, it can be said that few elements in the questionnaire were contested by participants in the interviews, indicating that the overall framework is generally accepted. Two points could be taken into consideration, however, in the further use and development of the Charter:

1. The decision whether or not to include interns/apprentices outside of education into social security systems is largely influenced by the national context and practice. In some instances, companies do not have the decision power to include interns/apprentices in all three systems that are mentioned (as this is regulated by national legislation) or are also not offering inclusion in these systems to regular employees. Therefore, it is recommended not to include this as a set requirement in the Charter.
2. It could be considered to replace the term 'contract' by a more flexible term, such as 'agreement' (which is also used by the European Commission in its Quality Framework for Traineeships). Reactions to the term contract were that it raises the expectation that an internship/apprenticeship agreement should be more or less conform to a contract offered to regular employees, while some flexibility is required for internships/apprenticeships. This is especially the case for internships that take place in a short timeframe (e.g. summer internships), as the administrative burden should be kept low here.

C. Policy recommendations

Finally, the respondents of the questionnaire have also been asked whether there were any points in the questionnaire that would cause their company to stop/avoid hiring interns/apprentices if they would become compulsory by law. While around two thirds of participants expressed that they did not see any points that would be problematic, three general concerns regarding potential future policy developments are worthwhile mentioning here:

1. Regarding internships as **part of education** (and in one case also apprenticeships), it was advocated that **policy makers should not strive to put minimum wages in place**. In this phase of a young person's education, companies can benefit in many ways from employing him/her for a limited period of time, but it also requires a certain investment in the person by the company. It should therefore be left up to the company to evaluate if there should be a form of remuneration involved or not.
2. While the companies interviewed would not respond negatively towards an attempt to put the questions listed in the questionnaire into national frameworks, they would be concerned if this would increase the **administrative burden** too much (e.g. if each internship would need approval from a social partner). If monitoring tools would be put in place, the advice is to keep them as simple as possible.
3. Through different funds and initiatives, the European Commission is trying to increase the capacity for internships/apprenticeships in the member states. An important warning here is that, if national quota or targets would be put in place, this should include **supporting measures to ensure companies can maintain the level of quality** of the schemes provided to interns/apprentices.

4 Conclusions and next steps

In light of growing attention to the quality of internships and apprenticeships in the public and policy debate, the QIA-A tool provides a useful framework for companies to evaluate where they stand in this regard. While the majority of processes described in the QIA-A questionnaire are well-established among the companies interviewed, some points require ongoing attention. These are, most importantly:

- Providing a fair compensation for work performed outside of working hours;
- Preparing supervisors for their role;
- Giving interns/apprentices the opportunity to discuss their progress and competencies during intermediate appraisal meetings;
- Developing guidelines/policies for how internships/apprenticeships should be structured across the organisation.

Additionally, the engagement with 15 companies around the quality of their internships/apprenticeships has also brought a few interesting remarks to the surface that can help the YFJ and policy makers continue their work on establishing better quality frameworks.

- Regarding the Charter, it is recommended that the requirement regarding social security systems (for internships outside of education) should be taken out of the document and that the term 'contract' would be replaced by 'agreement';
- When developing future legislation regarding quality internships/apprenticeships, policymakers should keep the following points in mind: minimum wages should never be compulsory for internships as part of education; legislative measures should not increase the administrative burden for companies (too much); and a push for an increased capacity to provide internships/apprenticeships should not go without accompanying measures to maintain the quality.

Disclaimer

CSR Europe maintains a policy of not acting as a representative of its members, nor does it endorse specific policies or standards. The views expressed in this report are those of its authors and not necessarily those of CSR Europe's members or those of the leaders of the collaborative project.

About the project

The Quality Internships & Apprenticeships assessment tool has been developed as part of CSR Europe's collaborative project "Quality Internships & Apprenticeships", co-led with member organisations Microsoft and Impronta Etica, and in partnership with the European Youth Forum.

The project is part of CSR Europe's European Business Campaign on Skills for Jobs. The goal of the campaign is to strengthen both pathways to jobs (strengthening the relationship between business and education providers) and workplace innovation (optimising workers employability throughout careers). By shaping multi-stakeholder learning networks, supporting the right policy framework at European level and making good practice visible, CSR Europe aims to inspire companies and partners to join the movement and magnify the impact of Skills for Jobs solutions across Europe.



For more information about the European Business Campaign and the project, contact Liesbeth Reynders at lr@csreurope.org

Annex: The European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships



[More information on the European Quality Charter on Internships & Apprenticeships can be found on the dedicated website:](#)

www.qualityinternships.eu/about

The full text of the Charter reads as follows:

Preamble

Given that:

- Transition phase for young people from education to the labour market has become increasingly difficult;
- Youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment and face structural challenges in finding quality, stable employment, and to earn decent income;
- Early labour market experience such as internships and apprenticeships are useful to facilitate youth access to labour market, to ease the transition between education and employment and to develop labour market relevant skills¹;
- Not all pupils or students have the possibility and the necessary financial means to take part in quality work trainings (apprenticeships & internships) as part of the school curricula and university programmes, including those that are taking place abroad;
- Is mounting evidence that work placements (internships) outside formal education are frequently replacing quality employment for young people;
- Lack of clear quality guidelines undermines the main purpose of internships and apprenticeships as educational opportunities that give practical skills to young people;
- There is a need for more research and labour market monitoring in this area.

We urge all the providers of internships and apprenticeships to commit to quality standards and to apply a clear and coherent code of conduct, leading by example.

We urge European countries, European institutions and social partners² to commit to establish (or where applicable reinforce already existing) legal quality frameworks for internships and apprenticeships.

We call on internship and apprenticeship providers and public decision makers to adopt a system of certification and to ensure the recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired through internships and apprenticeships. Implementation of this Charter does not constitute valid grounds to reduce the general level of protection afforded at national level.

Article 1

We are convinced that **internships and apprenticeships should be primarily a learning experience and believe that:**

- Internships/apprenticeships should never lead to job replacement;
- Well organised internships/apprenticeships help young people acquire practical experience and add practical skills to the knowledge and qualifications that have been previously acquired through either formal or non formal education;
- Internships/apprenticeships help to orientate oneself professionally and also widen one's perspectives of different sectors;
- Internships/apprenticeships provide recognised working experience that develops the skills of young people and elevates their professional capacity;

- Internships/apprenticeships should be carried out under guidance of a competent supervisor and have access to robust evaluative and complaints channels to monitor progress and quality of the internship/apprenticeship experience;
- Interns/apprentices should be informed at the beginning of their internship/apprenticeship experience of their social and labour rights, workers representatives, their responsibilities to the organisation, any health and safety risks posed to them through the position or at the work place and are provided the relevant social protection accordingly.

Footnotes

¹ This Charter defines apprenticeships as work oriented trainings that are part of vocational education and training and that are solely school-based programmes or combined school and work-based programmes, both carried out in the formal education system bringing credit points. This Charter defines internships as either:

- A** part of higher education that brings credit points where interns have a student status, access to services like student loans, student housing, health insurance, scholarships etc.
- B** taking place outside formal education (also after graduation) that do not bring credit points for the diploma. Some of these internships do not have a legal status or may even be considered illegal.
- C** and any other form of similar work experience that is offered to young people as a work based learning opportunity.

² EU Social Partners, in their Inclusive labour markets agreement, signed in March 2010, already committed themselves for more and better traineeships and apprenticeships.

Article 2

We believe that **internships (as part of higher education) and apprenticeships should meet the following criteria:**

- Existence of a written and legally binding contract between the educational institution, intern/apprentice and hosting organisation outlining the main principles of the internship/apprenticeship, including how many credit points this will contribute to the diploma of the intern/apprentice; a description of learning objectives and tasks should be attached to the contract;
- Length and tasks of the internship/apprenticeship correspond to specified learning objectives that are shared with the student at the beginning of his/her internship/apprenticeship;
- Guidance throughout the internship/apprenticeship period by a supervisor(s) trained specifically for the role;
- The right of the intern/apprentice to receive reimbursement of costs incurred during the internship/apprenticeship or right to receive food, housing, and public transportation tickets instead;
- Decent remuneration for work carried out additional to the requirements outlined in the internship/apprenticeship contract, including compensation for overtime;
- Clear evaluation criteria of the internship/apprenticeship period.

Article 3

We believe that **internships taking place outside/after formal education should ideally not exist however where they exist they should meet the following criteria:**

- Existence of a written and legally binding contract outlining the length, remuneration of the internship, a description of learning objectives and tasks should be attached to the contract;

- Decent remuneration not below the EU poverty line of 60 % median income or national minimum wage, if more favourable, in accordance to the tasks which are performed by the intern and to working hours (overtime should be additionally compensated). Internship remuneration should be regulated either in law or collective agreements in accordance with national practice;
- Use of internships should be limited to pupils, students and very recent graduates, length of internships period should be restricted to a reasonable and fixed number of months;
- Reimbursement of costs incurred during the internship;
- Inclusion of the intern in the social security system, especially those of health, unemployment, pension systems; mid-term evaluation, discussion of the possibilities to be hired as a permanent employee during the internship period and a final evaluation at the end of the internship period;
- Limited number of interns per internship provider;
- Transparent advertising that includes a detailed task description and working conditions.

Article 4

We urge the competent stakeholders to **progressively develop the following support and monitoring policies for a better implementation of quality internships:**

4.1 Legal framework and recognition of skills

- Internships should be given a place in the national legislation and employers should be provided assistance to any legal enquiries related to the implementation process;
- At the European level there should be mechanisms in place to promote the exchange of best practices in the area and the implication of the main criteria that define quality internships;

- National and European systems for certification and recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through internships should be in place to further support to smooth integration of young people in the labour market and support youth labour mobility.

4.2 Monitoring and statistics

- Statistics should be available on internships, nationally and at European level, with a special focus on: the number of internships available, the average length of internships, the social benefits being made available for interns, the allowances paid to interns, the age groups of interns;
- An overview should be available, nationally and at European level, on the different internship schemes and their place within the legal systems.

4.3 Partnerships

- National partnerships run between schools, universities, civil society organisations and the social partners should be encouraged and supported;
- More career development loans and investment in training by employers should be encouraged and supported;
- Schools should provide assistance to the young people when they are looking for a suitable apprenticeship;
- Student and pupil organisations, trade unions should be available to provide assistance to interns throughout the internship period.



For more information about CSR Europe, its national partner organisation network or to become a member please contact Stefan Crets, Executive Director, at sc@csreurope.org

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