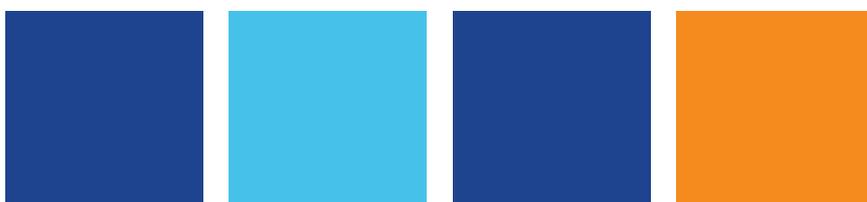

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY
IN APPRENTICESHIPS: FOCUS
ON LONG-TERM MOBILITY

UNITED
KINGDOM





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CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) is available at secondary and higher education levels through public and private providers. VET qualifications exist in a wide variety of sectors and prepare learners for work and further study. Education or training is compulsory up to age 16 (18 in England).

The UK government has devolved decision-making powers in areas including governance of VET to the administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. While there are similarities between the education and training systems in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, reforms are creating greater divergence. Qualifications and framework levels are different in Scotland to the rest of the UK.

Table 1. **NQFs and apprenticeship levels in relation to the EQF**

RQF / CQFW	England	Wales	Northern Ireland	EQF	Scotland	SCQF
8	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Level Apprenticeships	8	Professional Apprenticeships	12
7	Degree / Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Level Apprenticeships	7	Professional / Graduate Apprenticeships	11
6	Degree / Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Level Apprenticeships	6	Professional / Graduate Apprenticeships	10
					Technical / Graduate Apprenticeships	9
5	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Level Apprenticeships	5	Technical / Higher Apprenticeships	8
4	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Apprenticeships	Higher Level Apprenticeships		Modern Apprenticeships	7
3	Advanced Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships	4	Modern / Foundation Apprenticeships	6
2	Intermediate Apprenticeships	Foundation Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships / Traineeships	3	Modern Apprenticeships	5
	Traineeships	Traineeships				

NB: EQF: European qualifications framework.

CQFW: Credit and qualifications framework of Wales.

NQF: National qualifications framework.

RQF: Regulated qualifications framework in England and N. Ireland.

SCQF: Scottish credit and qualifications framework.
Source: ReferNet UK, 2018.

In England, apprenticeships are full-time paid jobs which incorporate on and off-the-job training. Apprentices are taught core, transferable skills. There are two sub-schemes running in parallel: the specification of apprenticeship standards for England (SASE) frameworks and the Trailblazers. The latter will fully replace the former by the end of July 2020. Since 2014 no new SASE frameworks have been developed and new standards have been developed by employer groups known as Trailblazers.

Apprenticeship frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are underpinned by National Occupational Standards (NOS) offering portability and mobility of occupational competence.

In Scotland, Modern Apprenticeships offer people aged 16 and over the opportunity to develop their workplace skills and experience and gain a qualification while in paid employment.

Apprenticeships in Wales and Northern Ireland are offered in the shape of apprenticeship frameworks which include a work contract, a technical/occupational qualification within the RQF/CQFW and Functional/Essential/Key Skills and other general subjects.

Apprenticeships starts have been dropping in recent years in England. From a high of 520 600 starts in 2011-12, there were 375 800 apprenticeship starts in 2017-18 ⁽¹⁾. This trend was replicated in Northern Ireland, with increases up to 2016-17 but a decrease in the most recent year (from a high of 6 498 starts in 2016-17 down to 5 650 in 2017-18). This was not the case in Wales, or in Scotland, where apprenticeship starts have risen year on year ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Department for Education (2019). [Apprenticeship and levy statistics: May 2019](#). [accessed 19.06.2019]

⁽²⁾ Department for the Economy (2019). [Statistical Bulletin ApprenticeshipsNI 2013/2017](#).

⁽³⁾ Welsh Government (2019). [Statistical First Release: Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales, 2017/18](#) [accessed 01.07.2019].

⁽⁴⁾ Skills Development Scotland (2019). [Modern Apprenticeship Statistics Full Year Report 2018/19](#).

CHAPTER 2.

Exogenous factors influencing mobility of apprentices at upper secondary level

There is a wide range of external factors influencing both incoming and outgoing cross-border mobility of apprentices. The primary focus is on apprenticeships for UK residents in the national context. Recent changes to the apprenticeship framework in England do not specifically encourage or provide for international mobility. The Northern Irish strategy makes a specific commitment to portability.

2.1. Economic sectors and actors

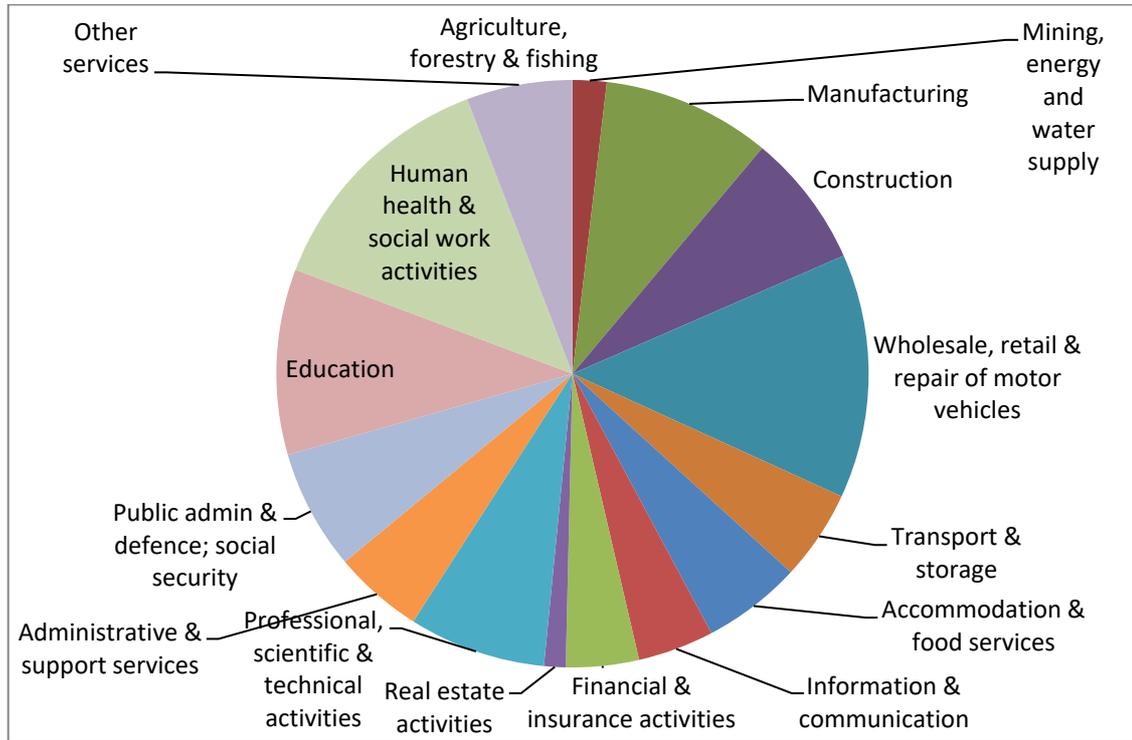
The largest economic sectors in the UK are human health and social work activities, and wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles (both at 13%) followed by education (10%) and manufacturing (9%) (Figure 1).

The sectors in which apprentices study mirror this distribution. The vast majority of apprenticeship starts in England were in health and social care, with 25% of apprenticeship starts in this area ⁽⁵⁾. A further 10% of starts were in “Wholesale and retail trade; repair motor vehicles, motorcycles”. Education and manufacturing both accounted for 7% of apprenticeship starts.

While there is no prima facie reason why these sectors could not engage in cross-border mobility for apprentices, there is little data to indicate the level of international engagement and outlook in these sectors.

⁽⁵⁾ DfE (2017) [The incidence of apprenticeships in England](#). [accessed 19.06.2019]

Figure 1. **Employment in the UK by industry**



Source: Office for National Statistics (2018). [Employment by industry](#) [accessed 06/07/2018].

2.2. Dynamics of skills demand and supply at the medium level occupation level

The UK has a shortage of skilled workers in a number of different areas, with the majority in the health, engineering and IT sectors ⁽⁶⁾. Previous skills shortages in medium level occupations in these areas influenced the government’s decision to develop new apprentice standards to replace frameworks in England, as a way to encourage companies to address shortages directly at employer level. Due to the fall in recruitment and registration from the EEA since 2016 for medium level occupations such as nursing ⁽⁷⁾, immigration policies have been introduced which encourage the recruitment of individuals from non-EU countries. Recruitment from non-EU countries in shortage areas is expected to refer mostly to individuals who are already fully qualified to practice the position they are applying for, rather than apprentices from these countries.

⁽⁶⁾ Migration Advisory Committee – [Full review of the Shortage Occupation List](#) [accessed 31.05.2019]

⁽⁷⁾ NMC [The NMC register](#) [accessed 07.06.2019]

2.3. Attitude of employers towards training

The apprenticeship levy, introduced in April 2017 in the UK, has influenced the attitude of employers towards training. Employers with annual pay bills in excess of £3 million are required to pay the levy ⁽⁸⁾. Organisations that are required to pay the levy are much more likely to offer apprenticeships than those who do not (72% and 17%) ⁽⁹⁾. However, more employers are now choosing to upskill their existing workers rather than providing opportunities for new apprentices to enter the company, and some rebrand training of existing employees as apprenticeships in order to recoup some of the levy funds. This may have a negative impact on the mobility of apprentices as the number of apprenticeships available to non-UK residents is reduced.

Despite employers being generally supportive of the levy ⁽¹⁰⁾, particularly as it gives them more control over apprenticeship standards in England, there appears to be some on-going misunderstanding by them regarding its appropriate usage for employee training ⁽¹¹⁾. Moreover, the benefits of inward/outward mobility of long-term apprentices may not be clear to many SMEs, as there are few schemes or initiatives promoting this at a national level.

2.4. International qualifications existence (and extent)

In the UK there are currently no apprentice programmes that lead to international qualifications. The apprenticeship system in the UK is focussed on the national context rather than the international context.

2.5. Any other relevant factors

Language ability can be a barrier to mobility of apprentices. A European Commission survey found that 38% of British people can speak more than one language, in contrast to the overall EU average of 56% ⁽¹²⁾. In addition, the

⁽⁸⁾ HM Revenue and Customs. [Policy paper: Apprenticeship Levy](#) [accessed 19.06.2019]

⁽⁹⁾ CIPD [Assessing the early impact of the apprenticeship levy – employers' perspective](#) [accessed 05.06.2019]

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Open University [The apprenticeship levy: one year on](#) [accessed 31.05.2019]

⁽¹¹⁾ Ofsted (2018) [The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18](#)

⁽¹²⁾ Special Eurobarometer 386 [Europeans and their languages](#) [accessed 07.06.2019]

second language British people speak will vary, whereas the second language of many EU nationals is more likely to be English. This may hinder outgoing cross-border mobility from the UK as the lack of language skills acts as a barrier for people taking up apprenticeships in other EU countries.

Apprentice age may influence mobility. Of apprenticeship starts in England in 2017-18, 41% were undertaken by those aged 24 or over ⁽¹³⁾. Older apprentices are more likely to have families or other responsibilities that prevent them from undertaking a long-term apprenticeship abroad. According to a recent survey, 40% of apprentices had children in their household or living elsewhere, with the media age of the youngest child being 8 years of age ⁽¹⁴⁾. By comparison, this proportion was higher in Wales (52% aged 25 and over), lower in Scotland (32%) and much lower in Northern Ireland, where only 11.6% of apprentices starting in the most recent year were aged 25 and over.

The UK's planned departure from the EU may be another factor influencing mobility. There has been a fall in the number of EU citizens immigrating to the UK after the vote to leave in June 2016 and an increase in the number of EU citizens emigrating during the same period ⁽¹⁵⁾. Moreover, the current uncertainty of future work and residency rights will make international apprenticeships less appealing to potential participants.

⁽¹³⁾ House of Commons Briefing Paper [Apprentice Statistics: England](#) [accessed 03.06.2019]

⁽¹⁴⁾ Department for Education (2018). [Learners and Apprentices Survey 2018](#). [accessed 12.06.2019]

⁽¹⁵⁾ Office for National Statistics – [Migration Statistics Quarterly Report: May 2019](#) [accessed 05.06.2019]

CHAPTER 3.

The link between the apprenticeship scheme design and apprentices' mobility

3.1. Apprenticeship type

Apprenticeships in the UK are offered as basic training at secondary level to advanced education and training at higher education level. It should be noted that, apart from the new apprenticeship standards in England, it is the qualifications within the apprenticeship frameworks that are benchmarked to the NQFs, not the frameworks as a whole ⁽¹⁶⁾.

All UK apprentices are employed, and off-the-job training is available from colleges and independent training providers and training organisations (subcontracted to colleges where required). Apprenticeship providers must be registered with the Register of Training Organisations to be eligible to deliver education and training services under the adult education budget in England. In Scotland, in order to receive public funding, colleges and training providers must successfully bid for a contract from Skills Development Scotland.

The latest reform of apprenticeships in England is based on the Richard Review (2012). New apprenticeship standards are being developed by Trailblazer groups for use in England only ⁽¹⁷⁾ and the quality of the standards are being regulated by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. New standards do not seem to include conditions which could make accommodation of outgoing or incoming apprentices arguably easier or harder. New apprenticeships must include a work contract and at least 20% off-the-job training in addition to English and mathematics, but there is no longer a requirement to include an occupational qualification within the programme. Standards are linked to single professions and the unit-based structure of the previous apprenticeship frameworks has been replaced with holistic end-point

⁽¹⁶⁾ In Scotland the Frameworks are allocated an SCQF level and appear in the SCQF Database and on the SCQF diagram (see <https://scqf.org.uk/interactive-framework/>). The level allocated is, however, based on the level of the mandatory qualification.

⁽¹⁷⁾ [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Trailblazer Apprenticeship Groups \[accessed 19.02.2018\]](#)

assessment (EPA). The new apprenticeship standards are currently being phased in and run in parallel with the previous frameworks ⁽¹⁸⁾.

The current series of reforms to apprenticeships in Northern Ireland is based on the Apprenticeships strategy ⁽¹⁹⁾. The strategy includes a specific commitment on developing apprenticeship qualifications with a view to wider international applicability and calls for support measures to fully utilise opportunities for international placements and exchanges. Apprenticeships are a job offering with a minimum of 21 contract hours per week with the employer, with an additional 20% classroom-based off-the-job learning. These are jobs for new employees, or existing employees in a new job role (requiring substantial learning and development) that lead to industry recognised qualifications. However, addressing such learning and development needs through outgoing mobility is less likely due to potential costs and logistical issues involved in this process, compared with meeting such needs in-house.

Apprenticeships in England are usually at Level 2 (EQF Level 3), provided by 65% of employers in 2015 (with 47% providing level 3 apprenticeships) ⁽²⁰⁾. This level may be lower than in other countries leading to potential difficulties in arranging mobility placements. In Northern Ireland, apprenticeships at secondary level are at either Levels 2 or 3 (EQF 3 or 4) with a slightly higher proportion being at Level 3 ⁽²¹⁾. In Scotland, most Modern Apprenticeship frameworks are at SCQF level 6 and 7 (EQF levels 4 and 5).

3.2. Apprenticeship governance

The landscape of apprenticeship governance in the UK is complex, involving a number of different bodies.

In England, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education started operations in England in 2017 as an independent statutory body with a remit to develop and maintain quality criteria for apprenticeships and assessment plans, support employer-led development of new apprenticeship standards and regulate the quality of apprenticeships, including both approval functions for

⁽¹⁸⁾ Frameworks and Standards for the same occupation should not run in parallel; as a Standard is introduced, its corresponding framework is removed.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Department for the Economy (2014). [Securing Our Success](#).

⁽²⁰⁾ Department for Education (2017). [Apprenticeships Evaluation 2017: Employers](#). [accessed 10.06.2019]

⁽²¹⁾ Department for the Economy (2019). [Statistical Bulletin ApprenticeshipsNI 2013/2017](#).

apprenticeship standards and quality assurance of assessment ⁽²²⁾. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting apprenticeship providers who are funded by the ESFA up to level 5. Ofqual regulates the qualifications which are undertaken during the off-the-job training portion of apprenticeship frameworks (and may be undertaken as part of apprenticeship standards). The QAA is involved in the regulation of degree level apprenticeships.

In Scotland, the Modern Apprenticeship Group approves apprenticeship frameworks. Education Scotland inspects apprenticeship providers and SQA Accreditation regulates the qualifications which are undertaken during the off-the-job training portion of a learner's training. QAA Scotland has a role in regulating higher education level apprenticeships.

In Wales, the Welsh Government approves apprenticeship frameworks and Estyn inspects apprenticeship providers and Qualification Wales regulates the qualifications taking during off-the-job training.

In Northern Ireland the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland approves apprenticeship frameworks. The Education and Training Inspectorate inspects apprenticeship providers and CCEA Regulation regulates the qualifications taken during the off-the-job training portion of the apprenticeship.

There has been a focus on enhancing the role of local stakeholders in apprenticeship development at every level ⁽²³⁾; however, this has created an associated challenge, with the diverging approaches to apprenticeship design, delivery and governance potentially making navigation of the systems more complex.

3.3. Duration of apprenticeship and of the company placement in particular

The minimum duration of an apprenticeship in the England is 12 months; the average expected duration at present is 19.2 months ⁽²⁴⁾ ⁽²⁵⁾. This is considerably

⁽²²⁾ Institute for Apprenticeships. *What we do* [accessed 15.11.2018].

⁽²³⁾ For example, in England, local stakeholders would include local government authorities, schools, businesses and training providers. For example, the newly created Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) involve such local stakeholders. SAPs are designed to bring together local employers and skills providers to pool knowledge on skills and labour market needs, and to work together to understand and address key local challenges.

⁽²⁴⁾ 372 days for an apprenticeship standard, including the end point assessment period. 365 days for the training element of either a framework or standard.

less than many other EU Member States and could be a potential barrier, as the learner has less time in which to undertake a placement abroad in comparison to the total overall time of their apprenticeship. The duration of apprenticeships in the other regions is variable and can be comparable to other European systems; there is a commitment in the Northern Irish strategy to a minimum of two years for an apprenticeship.

3.4. Organisation of alternance

In current frameworks and standards in England, while a minimum of 20% of the apprentice's time must be spent "off-the-job" in a college or other training institution (with the remainder spent in-company) the manner in which this is accomplished can vary. The classical pattern would be for the apprentice to undertake four days per week with the employer and one with the college or training body; however, other options exist including scheduling a week or more away from the company to conduct "off-the-job" training in a longer block of time. The 20% may be measured against weekly or monthly contracted hours, or against the total duration of the apprenticeship such that a longer block of time away from the workplace can be scheduled. This level of flexibility could assist in arranging long-term mobility placements (particularly for an apprentice undertaking a placement in a work setting) as they would in theory be able to schedule their off-the-job learning in a block of time upon their return to the UK (or vice versa).

3.5. Type of contract and status of apprentices

Apprentices are largely treated as employees. They must have the same employment conditions as others of a similar level, for example, entitlement to paid leave, sick pay, or other employment benefits. They are also subject to the same rights regarding redundancy as other members of staff ⁽²⁶⁾. Given that they are treated as employees, it would be necessary for these employment conditions to be replicated abroad and agreements would need to be in place to ensure apprentices retained their status while on a placement. Incoming apprentices would similarly be subject to these considerations.

⁽²⁵⁾ Department for Education (2018). [Apprenticeship expected duration by age, level and sector subject area 2016 to 2017 and 2017 to 2018](#). [accessed 19/06/2019]

⁽²⁶⁾ <https://www.gov.uk/take-on-an-apprentice/pay-and-conditions-for-apprentices>

3.6. Remuneration

Apprentices are entitled to a minimum wage for time spent in-company as well as those hours spent training “off-the-job”. This is set by the government and presently stands at £3.90 per hour for apprentices under aged 19, or those over age 19 who are in the first year of their apprenticeship. Apprentices who are over 19 and have completed the first year of their apprenticeship are entitled to the appropriate minimum wage for their age (£7.70 per hour for those aged 21 to 24, and £8.21 per hour for those aged 25 and over) ⁽²⁷⁾. For apprentices aged 19, this means that the apprentice is entitled to £2.25 less per hour than if they were working but not in an apprenticeship (minimum hourly wage for employees aged 18 to 20 is £6.15).

Apprentices, as employees, would need assurance that their remuneration would be maintained during the placement abroad. Incoming apprentices would need to be aware of the current regulations regarding remuneration and, if these fall below local levels, this may be a barrier to long term inbound mobility.

3.7. Provisions on occupational health, safety and social insurance

When employing a young person as an apprentice, UK employers have a responsibility to provide the same protection for their health, safety and welfare as for other employees. If employing a young person for the first time, or employing one with particular needs, an employer will need to review their risk assessment, taking into account the specific factors for young people before they start their apprenticeship ⁽²⁸⁾. In England, Ofsted inspects providers with relation to safeguarding, to ensure apprentices are not subject to bullying or discrimination.

Apprentices pay national insurance contributions on their earnings; employers can, in some cases, pay a reduced employer contribution provided the learner is under the age of 25.

While abroad, apprentices would expect the same occupational health and safety and welfare provisions as the ones at home. However, with a divergence in systems across the EU providing comparable coverage may not always be

⁽²⁷⁾ <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

⁽²⁸⁾ See the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the website of the Health and Safety Executive (www.hse.gov.uk)

possible. It could be stipulated in any apprenticeship contract signed that in case of international mobility, provision of occupational health, safety and welfare would be subject to local rules and regulations.

3.8. Curriculum / training standards specification

The focus of the current reforms to the training standards in England have been to move away from “qualification focused” frameworks towards “occupation focused” standards. The standards are intended to specify the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will acquire during their training. The programmes are then set to have a single end-point assessment. In theory, this move from a unit-based structure to holistic end-point assessment should work in favour of outgoing mobility in the apprenticeships as EPA should be easier to incorporate into an apprenticeship with an element of mobility, than it would have been in the previous, more rigid, unit-based structure where continuous assessment was typical. In practice though (as international experience also shows), this benefit may not be actually captured, as EPA may be used in conjunction with other assessment and formal accreditation practices, over the whole lifetime of the apprenticeship, as well in a summative form at the end of the programme, and through formal qualifications.

The prior frameworks which run in parallel (and continue to be the main provision in other parts of the UK apart from England) incorporate a recognised national qualification based on NOS within the training programme. To this end, the existing frameworks have multiple pathways within them to account for differing choices of qualification and are multi-occupational.

The correspondence of the UK system with the systems in other countries in terms of levels and standards is of relevance in determining whether a placement will be easily compatible with the apprenticeship the individual is undertaking.

Employers’ increased role and control over apprenticeship standards in England since the introduction of the levy could in theory boost outgoing mobility further, if this is of their interests. However, in practice, individual company priorities and cost/logistics of mobility schemes would have a greater impact than who sets the training standards.

3.9. Use of validation in apprenticeships

Validation of prior learning is conducted at the discretion of the VET provider guided by the requirements of awarding organisations. In Northern Ireland, the

operational requirements state that apprentices should not be enrolled in an apprenticeship programme if they have “extensive prior experience and competence, and competence can be certified through the accreditation or recognition of prior learning” (29).

Qualifications offered within Scottish and Welsh apprenticeship frameworks are unit-based which enables credit transfer. The new apprenticeship standards in England are, however, not unit-based and are assessed through a final examination, which makes the process of credit transfer more dependent on the discretion of the learning provider.

Learners in England undertaking apprenticeships based on standards receive an apprenticeship certificate upon completion. Apprentices completing frameworks, including those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, receive both an apprenticeship certificate and the certificates relevant to the recognised national qualifications which they have completed as part of their training.

(29) Department for the Economy (2019). [ApprenticeshipsNI 2017 Operational Requirements](#)

CHAPTER 4.

Lessons learnt from existing policies, initiatives, projects of apprentices' mobility

Financial support to IVET learners is provided within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Under the programme, organisations applying to send VET learners abroad (training providers or intermediary bodies) may receive a student grant to contribute to the costs that can be incurred on an international mobility placement. These costs include contributions to VET learners' travel and subsistence as well as contributions to the organisations' management costs. Funding is set at European level and is based on lump sums and unit costs and varies depending on the numbers of VET learners. Funding for apprenticeship placements abroad is not only available to employed apprentices but has in fact been extended to trainees and recently graduated apprentices too.

The ErasmusPro project promotes apprentice mobility; while the programme is still new, in 2018 there were 21 applications received in the UK for KA1 projects involving ErasmusPro activity, out of 156 applications overall ⁽³⁰⁾. Of these, 17 were approved. This points to a modest but potentially increasing interest in longer term mobility for apprentices.

In terms of the Erasmus+ project, the UK had the largest differential of major participating countries between the number of sending and receiving students (almost 50% - 16 414 to 31 243) ⁽³¹⁾. This may be an indicator that ErasmusPro will result in an increase in incoming cross-border mobility to the UK rather than outgoing.

⁽³⁰⁾ Erasmus+ UK National Agency (2018). [SEED Final Event Report July 2018](#).

⁽³¹⁾ Erasmus+. [Annual Report 2017](#) [accessed 03.06.2019]

CHAPTER 5.

Conclusion

The apprenticeship system in the UK is a complex and changing area of vocational education, with differing arrangements in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as within England during the transition period from apprenticeship frameworks to apprenticeship standards. This complexity is one of the chief barriers to successful mobility.

The structure of the system, however, does not carry any insurmountable obstacles for mobility. There are no limitations placed on where on-the-job training must be located. While there are inevitable considerations surrounding duration and level of training, remuneration and the apprentice's employment contract with the employer, these are considerations in the case of any cross-border mobility of apprentices. In fact, aspects such as the flexibility to arrange the "off-the-job" learning in varied blocks of time as part of the apprenticeship standards in England could be conducive to arranging longer placements. For companies with cross-border facilities, the arrangement of a mobility placement as part of the apprenticeship programme should, in theory, be a viable option, and may be viewed as an attractive prospect for employers, particularly if information on ErasmusPro were more widely promoted to employers.

The exogenous factors are strong considerations when viewing the attractiveness of mobility for apprentices. The UK's low levels of engagement with Europe at present, compounded by the current political landscape and the lower levels of language competence than elsewhere in Europe, are relevant to the ability to promote outbound mobility to UK apprentices.

List of abbreviations

CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework Wales
DfE	Department for Education
EEA	European Economic Area
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
EU	European Union
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
KA1	Key Action 1 (Erasmus Plus funding stream)
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NQF	National qualifications framework
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
SASE	Specification of apprenticeship standards for England
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
UK	United Kingdom
VET	vocational education and training

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