

Austria - Financial Support “Digi Scheck for Apprentices”

Title of inspiring practice	Financial Support “Digi Scheck for Apprentices” (<i>“Förderung “Digi Scheck” für Lehrlinge”</i>)
Geographical area	Austria, at national level.
Period of implementation	The first phase started in April 2021 until December 2022 and the second phase started in January 2023.
Rationale	<p>“Green skills” are implemented in this structural financial support given to enterprises who train apprentices.</p> <p>During the COVID crisis, the federal government initiated allocating structural funding for apprentices and training companies. This also includes the “Digi Scheck for Apprentices” (Phase 1), which promotes transversal professional skills but also measures aiming at catching up with competences which have not been learned during the Corona crises.</p> <p>The “Digi Scheck for Apprentices” was very well received. Therefore, in January 2023, the “Digi Scheck for Apprentices” will be extended. In its second phase, the federal government wants to focus on digital, green (in the areas of climate protection, sustainability, energy and resource management) and international competences (e.g. job-related foreign languages). Participation to courses that convey or consolidate the content of the job profile or vocational school as well as cross-job profile professional skills will be funded on the above-mentioned areas.</p>
Scope of the practice	The scope of the practice involves only apprenticeship and companies
Educational level	EQF 4
Introduction and context	<p>The key stakeholders involved in the initiative are the Austrian government (Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy) and social partners.</p> <p>The labour market demand following the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing skills demand are both drivers behind the structural financial support allocated as part the initiative. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of apprentices in Austria decreased. In order to create more incentives for companies and young adults to choose dual vocational training, the Austrian federal government launched this funding measure.</p> <p>Because these support measures were completely exhausted after a short time, a second phase was launched.</p> <p>The practice targets apprentices, companies and training provides and has the goal of supporting digital & green skills in VET. The initiative has a structure that fits into the frame of the Austrian supporting system.</p> <p>The initiative relies on governmental budget, specifically on the funding targeting the development of the apprenticeship system (=betriebliche Lehrstellenförderung).</p>

Key activities and outcomes	<p>VET is seen as a common task and high responsibility of all the relevant stakeholders at national level in Austria. There is a shared idea that apprenticeship training shall be promoted.</p> <p>The activities organised as part of the initiative includes the participation to courses that convey or consolidate the content of the job profile or vocational school as well as cross-job profile professional skills (e.g. in the areas of digitisation, resource management or climate protection).</p> <p>The funding is a major tool used to guarantee the participation of target groups to activities. Furthermore, the structural funding system in Austria is one of the key success factors of VET and is supported by the governmental representative as well as the social partners. As financial funding, no obstacle is detected yet as part of the project.</p> <p>As main achievement of the initiative, the funding allowed the target groups to take advantage of these training opportunities.</p>
Other information	<p>Training-related activities add-on courses for apprentices. Participation to courses that convey or consolidate the content of the job profile or vocational school as well as cross-job profile professional skills (e.g. in the areas of digitalisation, resource management or climate protection) are funded.</p> <p>The apprentice can find out which courses are eligible for funding from the training provider or from the funding departments of the apprenticeship offices of the Economic Chambers. The courses therefore have already been approved and are eligible for funding, even if these are carried out as interactive and individualised face-to-face courses with digital tools due to the Corona crises.</p> <p>The funding covers 100% of the costs for approved course measures (incl. any VAT), up to the upper limit of EUR 500 per course. Up to three course measures per apprentice per calendar year are possible. Costs above the funding limit of EUR 500 must be paid by the apprentice.</p> <p>An upright apprenticeship-contract is the major condition to receive funding.</p>
Contacts and sources	<p>Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Wirtschaft (Federal Ministry for Labour and Economy)</p> <p>Sektion VI – Nationale Marktstrategien / National Market Strategies</p> <p>Abteilung / Department 7 - Berufsausbildung / Vocational Training</p> <p>Referat / Unit 7a – Innovation der Lehre / Innovation of Vocational Training Systems</p> <p>POST.VI7_22@bmaw.gv.at</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Sources Website (“Digi Scheck”): Digi Scheck für Lehrlinge - WKO.at</p>
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