



# TRAINEESHIP PACKAGE

## Summary Report

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



This WEXHE publication is applicable to the following disciplinary sectors:

Hard pure (e.g. physics etc.)

Soft pure (e.g. literature etc.)

Hard applied (e.g. engineering etc.)

Soft applied (e.g. management studies etc.)

WEXHE research has showed that there are no substantial differences between these four sectors regarding the implementation of Work Based Learning in Higher Education. Therefore this document represents the four sectors mentioned.

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## INTRODUCTION

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This summary report compiles the information and guidelines from the Traineeship Package of Work Package 4 of the WEXHE project, composed of content targeting three major stakeholders of the Traineeship schemes offered to graduates, namely Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and Government Institutions & NGOs. As the cases of the WEXHE project show, coordinators of a traineeship can be various types of organisations (companies, enterprises, firms, NGOs, institutions, etc.) which offer employment and posts for trainees, and will be in this report termed as 'employers' or 'organisations'.

### **Why have traineeship programmes?**

Traineeship is a type of WBL that is aimed at students who have finished their educational training (graduated students) but have not yet entered the labour market. It includes not just structured trainee programmes aimed to attract new talents and prepare them for leadership roles - normally offered by larger organizations, but also schemes for the reinsertion into the workforce, such as the ones found in Spain and Cyprus.

*SMEs and their associations* who respond positively to the initiative of universities to provide training to graduates prove themselves to be socially responsible. Among the trainees taken on training there could be some who prove themselves as excellent workers and they may enrich the organisation's human resources as future employees. Traineeships also help organisations to develop their existing personnel, such as supervisors and mentors, who work with trainees.

*Governments, governmental agencies and NGOs* can use traineeship as a means to raise the employability of graduates, ensure their inclusion into the labour market and / or to retain graduates in the region or country to provide employers with high quality human resources.

*Universities* can increase the employability of graduates, help them find ways into (self-) employment, and provide knowledgeable and well-trained graduates to employers. In addition, universities providing traineeship strengthen links with employers, increase their reputation and get valuable feedback about their teaching programmes.

### **Organisation of the Report**

The report will present targeted sections for the three groups of stakeholders, by presenting a variety of approaches, practices and solutions applicable in the surroundings of various organisations and traditions. Each section will provide information on the (i) learning and training arrangements and the (ii) organisational arrangements, as well as outlining goals and objectives of the traineeship scheme for each stakeholder. Learning and training arrangements focus on goals and objectives, key competences and learning outcomes, forms and methods of learning and teaching, admission criteria and assessment of trainees. Organisational arrangements, on the other hand will include the steps leading to effective implementation of traineeship

schemes. The report is prepared as reference material, which helps HEIs, SMEs, and governments and NGOs dealing with traineeship to find the ways, which fit best to their conditions. Therefore, it also contains a number of appendices, which serve as examples of practical tools taken from various WEXHE and other cases and literature

## 1. SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE ENTERPRISES (SMES)

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### 1.1. How can SMEs and trainees benefit from the traineeship schemes?

SMEs can use a traineeship as a means to attract young graduates and to motivate them to join the organisation, which will enrich their human resources.

The trainees can test their knowledge, competences and skills, which they can upgrade where needed.

While SMEs usually take the steps to effectively implement traineeship programmes, with small enterprises SME associations could step in to develop the required professional services and thus help their members. Their support can include making human resources and training needs analyses, attracting and selecting trainees, elaboration of training programmes, preparing training contracts and learning agreements, assigning mentors, monitoring the training programmes and performing evaluation.

### 1.2. What are the goals and objectives of the traineeship programme in an SME?

Concrete objectives of the traineeship programme in a SME are:

- To attract a sufficient number of talented graduates
- To have a proper selection procedure, so that the best suited candidates can participate in the programme and expectations from both sides are met
- To upgrade a trainees' existing competences and skills and develop possible missing ones
- To acquaint trainees with and include them into existing work and organisational environments
- To select well-prepared trainees for key expert and leading positions in the organisation, and
- To enhance employability of trainees

### 1.3. What are the learning and training arrangements to be considered?

a. Competences and skills: Based on the WEXHE cases the most desired and least developed transversal / generic competences and skills, as well as expected learning outcomes to be achieved in the course of training are communication and negotiation; teamwork; independent learning and working; leadership; initiating innovative ideas, designing and managing of projects; and identifying and solving problems.

b. Learning format: Forms and methods of learning and teaching of trainees involve different combinations and configurations of (i) course work, (ii) project work, and (iii) training in regular work environment.

c. Admission criteria: Employers specify criteria that need to be met by graduates in order to be admitted to the training programme, e.g., generally defined field of study and achievements of graduates during their study period. In the obtained WEXHE cases, the criteria for admission are identified as: recent date of graduation, field of study, marks obtained in the study process, certain competences (such as language and communication skills, extra-curricular activities) and special achievements.

d. Assessment of Trainees and Certification: Assessment methods and instruments should be specified in the traineeship programme in order that every trainee and mentor/ supervisor knows them in advance. Special attention should be paid to the assessment of competences specified in the traineeship programme. Frequently mentioned assessment instruments are: Trainees' records / diaries on daily / weekly activities; Trainees' written reports on the projects' realisation, process and results; Trainees' physical / oral / video presentations of project results; Trainees' self-assessment; Group meetings of mentors / tutors with their trainees; Examination of trainees during or at the end of coursework; Supervisors' / mentors' performance appraisal and feedback to trainees

**1.4. What are the organisational arrangements to be considered?**

a. Process:

Steps that can lead to an effective implementation of traineeship programmes by the SMEs are presented in the Diagram 1:

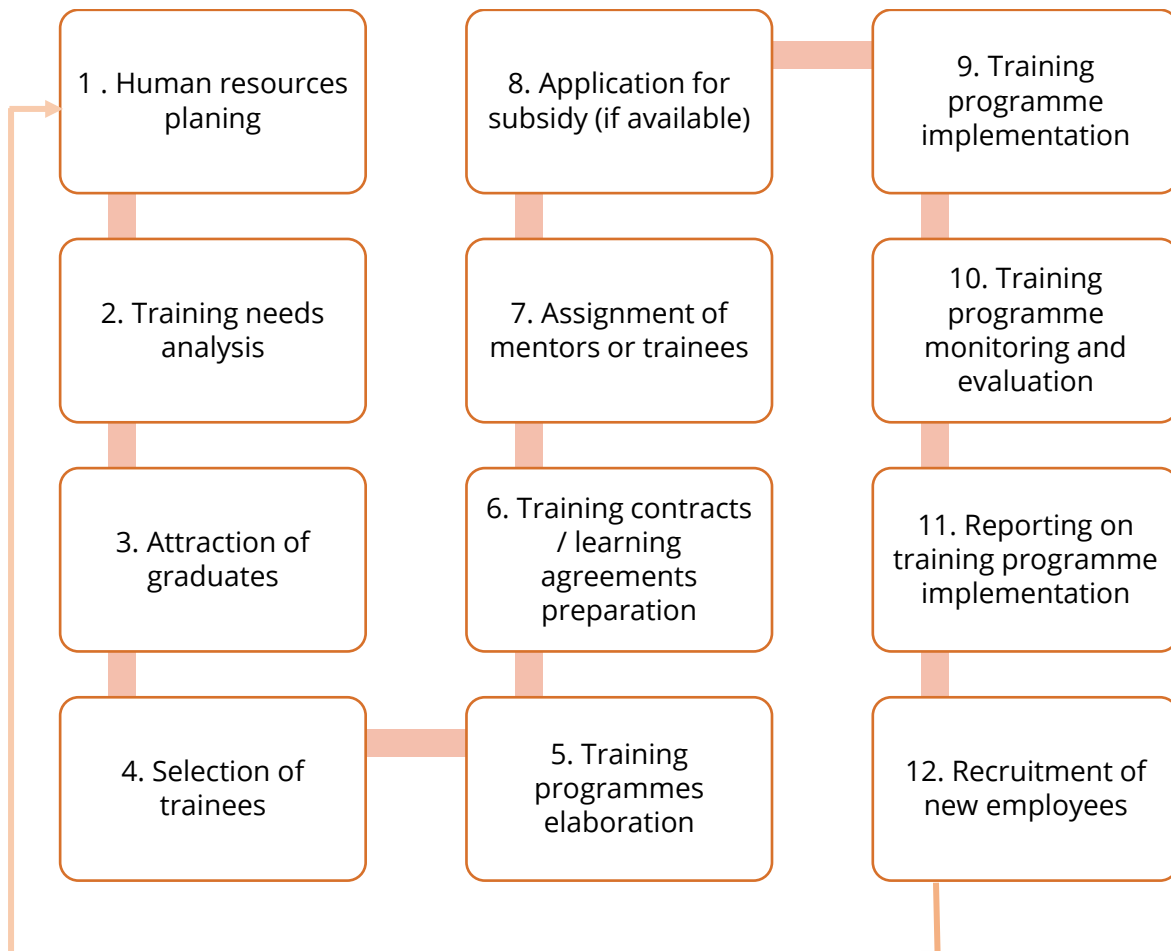


Diagram 1: Steps that can lead to an effective implementation of traineeship programmes by the SMEs

b. Roles specifications: Main roles involved in a traineeship scheme include:

(i) Mentors / tutors / coaches: Mentors at employers are chosen from among the experienced workers, who can instruct trainees how to do the assigned jobs directly. They

provide the trainees overall guidance, support to trainees throughout their training period, empowerment for self-confidence and mutual trust building.

(ii) Supervisors / project leaders are in charge of work processes in the groups of workers where trainees are placed.

(iii) Programme coordinator / traineeship project manager manages the traineeship programme and coordinates the activities of the other personnel involved in traineeship at the employer, as well as keeps contacts with universities, government and agencies. This manager often comes from the HR department where this person (possibly in cooperation with internal specialists or external agencies) does everything necessary for the smooth training of graduates involved in traineeship at the employer and at the university.

### **1.5. How are the finances managed?**

The WEXHE cases show that there are 'poor' and 'rich' traineeship programmes provided by enterprises. The rich programmes offer trainees a real salary and not only a kind of compensation for individual's costs of training. They invest in additional equipment and other facilities used by trainees, or allocate additional resources for new projects that trainees work on. Rich programmes also reward mentors, supervisors and coordinators for their additional efforts made in the course of training. They offer training to mentors and send trainees to courses, seminars, conferences, fairs etc. The opposite situation can occur in case of poor programmes where organisations try to carry out traineeship with least resources possible.

### **1.6. How is the quality of the traineeship assured?**

The quality of traineeship is usually assured by:

- Well prepared training programmes tailored to individual trainees
- Learning agreements
- Training of mentors / tutors, instructors, supervisors for their teaching and coaching roles
- Mentors / instructors counselling and giving advice to trainees
- Regular meetings of mentors / tutors with their trainees including their reports to coordinator



## 2. GOVERNMENTS, AGENCIES AND NGOS

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### **2.1. How can government organisations and trainees benefit from the traineeship schemes?**

Governments, governmental agencies and NGOs use traineeship as a means to raise the employability of graduates, their inclusion into the labour market and their retaining in the region or country to provide employers with high quality human resources. Graduated students represent an important public investment and development potential. Their inclusion into the labour market in the region means that their knowledge, skills and competences are being used to everyone's advantage and can enhance (regional) economic development.

### **2.2. What are the goals and objectives of the traineeship programme in a government agency or an NGO?**

There could be three main goals of traineeship from the perspective of governments, NGOs and agencies: (i) strengthen the existing workforce of the governmental organisation or NGO involved, (ii) increase employability of graduates and help them find ways into (self-) employment, (iii) retain graduates in the region or to attract them from other regions and to provide knowledgeable and well-trained graduates to employers. Concrete objectives of the traineeship scheme provided by governments, agencies and NGOs are: Providing training to graduated students who have the most difficulties to find employment; Attracting sufficient number of employers who offer training posts for graduates; Upgrading graduates' existing competences and skills and developing missing ones; Retaining graduates in the region/ country; and Enhancing employment of graduates either at the employers offering training or elsewhere.

### **2.3. What are the learning and training arrangements to be considered?**

a. Competences and skills: Based on the WEXHE cases the most desired and least developed transversal / generic competences and skills, as well as expected learning outcomes to be achieved in the course of training are communication and negotiation, teamwork, independent learning and working, leadership, initiating innovative ideas, designing and managing of projects, and identifying and solving problems.

b. Learning format: Forms and methods of learning and teaching of trainees involve different combinations and configurations of (i) course work, (ii) project work, and (iii) training in regular work environment.

c. Admission criteria: Admission criteria for graduates who experience problems in entering the labour market could be: (i) field of study and (ii) time of job search as admission criteria. Special criteria for employers to benefit from government funding schemes are a well-prepared traineeship programme, learning agreements, qualified mentors / supervisors, and certain period of employment for a trainee after he / she finishes training.

d. Assessment of trainees and certification: The WEXHE cases demonstrate that certification of traineeships is predominantly internal, meaning that employers issue their certificates to trainees when they finish traineeship. If trainees cannot be employed at

the traineeship provider certificates may help when they present themselves to other employers. However, the value of the trainee would increase if the traineeship programme is publicly accredited, which could be expected in case of governmental traineeship schemes. Accreditation of the scheme with the educational authorities would be required if the country's qualification framework provides for that.

#### 2.4. What are the organisational arrangements to be considered?

a. Process: Diagram 2 presents the traineeship process for governments, agencies and NGOs in the labour market inclusion of graduates:

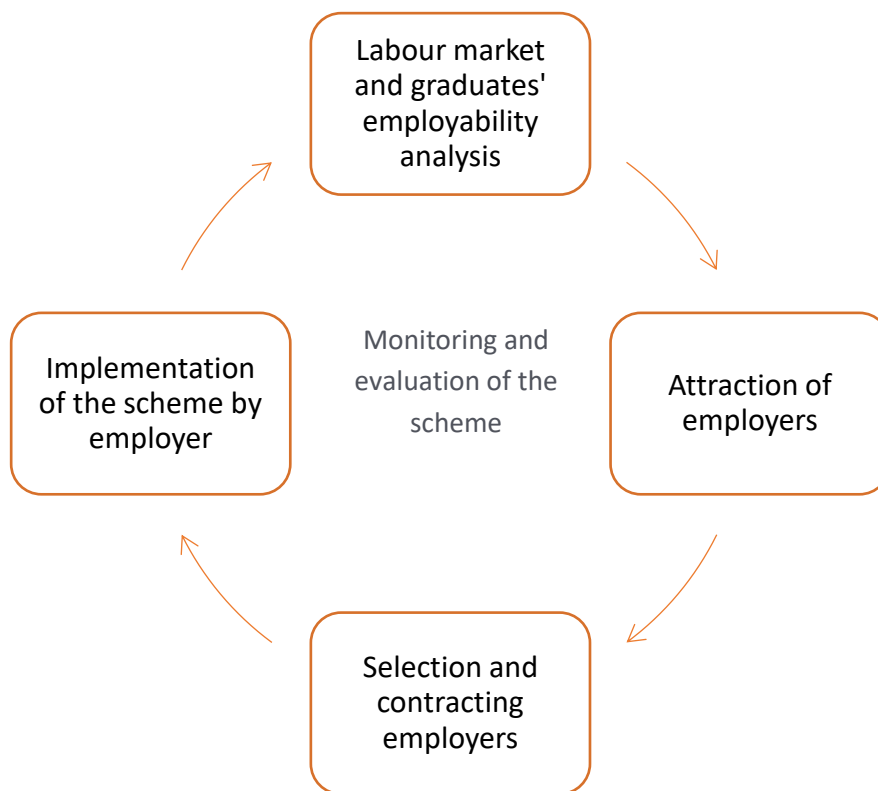


Diagram 2: traineeship process for governments, agencies and NGOs

Diagram 3 presents the traineeship process specification for governments and agencies in the retention of graduates in the region:

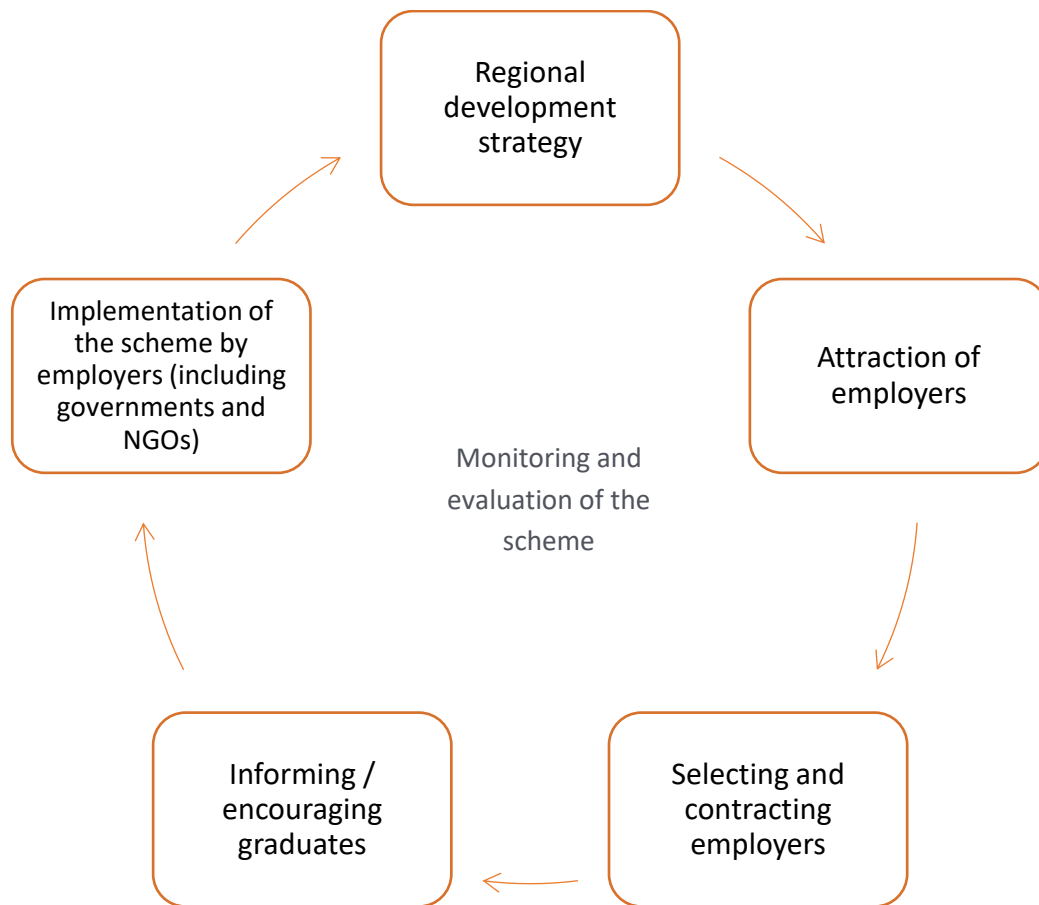


Diagram 3: The traineeship process specification for governments and agencies

**b. Roles specifications:** The roles involved in the traineeships are

- (i) Mentors / tutors / coaches: Mentors at employers are chosen from among the experienced workers, who can instruct trainees how to do the assigned jobs directly. They provide the trainees overall guidance, support to trainees throughout their training period, empowerment for self-confidence and mutual trust building.
- (ii) Supervisors / project leaders: Supervisors are in charge of work processes in the groups of workers where trainees are placed.
- (iii) Scheme coordinators: They manage the traineeship scheme and coordinate the activities of the other personnel involved in traineeship at the employer and, if applicable, in the governmental agency.

## 2.5. How are the finances managed?

The WEXHE cases demonstrate that traineeship may be organised in a rather modest way, meaning that there is a modest payment to trainees, trainees are not sent to additional courses and conferences, there is few investments in additional facilities and projects for the work of trainees, and rewards to supervisors and coordinators are

modest - if given at all. Government schemes usually only allow for modest financial solutions.

## **2.6. How is the quality of the traineeship assured?**

The quality of traineeship is usually assured by:

- Well prepared training programmes tailored to individual trainees
- Good preparation of graduates before they start their traineeship
- Learning agreements
- Training of mentors, instructors, supervisors for their teaching and coaching roles
- Mentors/ instructors counselling and giving advice to trainees
- Regular meetings of mentors/ tutors with their trainees including their reports to coordinator
- A strong coordination by the agency.

In governmental schemes public money is involved. Therefore, it is recommended that an external evaluation is made. The agency performing external evaluation may check the internal organisations' reports, reports prepared for the financier, and collects additional information by means of interviews.

## 3. UNIVERSITIES

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### 3.1. How can universities and trainees benefit from the traineeship schemes?

Universities can use traineeship as a means to raise the employability of their graduates, ensure their inclusion into the labour market and retain graduates in the region. On the other hand, a traineeship can help graduates to:

- acquire some missing or less developed competences, particularly those that can only be successfully developed in a work environment.
- spending a year or two with an employer provides the trainee with experience on how to apply theoretical knowledge and skills at the work place.
- familiarize him/herself with an organisational environment which can serve as a valuable reference when looking for a job.

Although graduates are expected to be equipped with up-to-date knowledge, skills and competences, this is not always fully achieved. A traineeship can help them to acquire some missing or less developed competences, particularly those that can only be successfully developed in a work environment. Spending a year or two with an employer brings the trainee experiences on how to apply theoretical knowledge and skills at the work place. In some cases a traineeship is organised by the universities themselves. An essential task then is to build a network of employers (as partners), who offer appropriate posts for training of graduates. Quite often universities together with other partners, such as employers, establish special intermediary organisations – foundations to which they delegate the responsibility for the traineeship. These organisations maintain links between universities and employers and coordinate traineeship activities.

### 3.2. What are the objectives of the traineeship schemes at the university?

The objectives of traineeship schemes at the university are to (i) provide training to graduated students of a certain university / region / who have the most difficulties to find employment, (ii) attract sufficient number of employers who offer training posts for students, (iii) upgrade students' existing competences and skills and develop missing ones, and (iv) enhance employment of graduates either at the employers offering training or elsewhere.

### 3.3. What are the learning and training arrangements to be considered?

a. Competences and skills: Based on the WEXHE cases the most desired and least developed transversal / generic competences and skills, as well as expected learning outcomes to be achieved in the course of training are communication and negotiation, teamwork, independent learning and working, leadership, initiating innovative ideas, designing and managing of projects, and identifying and solving problems.

b. Learning format: Forms and methods of learning and teaching of trainees involve different combinations and configurations of (i) course work, (ii) project work and (iii) training in regular work environment.

c. Admission criteria: Universities generally specify the (i) field of study, and the (ii) time of job search as admission criteria. Universities also may require from employers (i) well-

prepared traineeship programmes, (ii) learning agreements, (iii) qualified mentors/supervisors, and (iv) certain period of employment for a trainee after he/she finishes the traineeship.

d. Assessment of trainees and certification: Frequently mentioned assessment instruments are:

- Trainees' records / diaries on daily / weekly activities
- Trainees' written reports on the projects' realisation, process and results
- Trainees' physical / oral / video presentations of project results
- Trainees' self-assessment
- Group meetings of mentors / tutors with their trainees
- Examination of trainees during or at the end of coursework
- Supervisors' / mentors' performance appraisal and feedback to trainees

The WEXHE cases demonstrate that certification of a traineeship is predominantly internal. This also applies to universities. At some universities traineeship is linked to or integrated into (post graduate) study programmes. Trainees are awarded credits which they can use if they continue their education and receive certificates when they finish their traineeship. This practice provides the traineeship with public recognition if the traineeship is attached to programmes that are publicly accredited. Many trainees do not get employment at the employer that provides the traineeship. This is why a publicly recognized certificate issued by the employer or the university may help them when applying for jobs at other employers. This practice benefits also the employers, since it provides more transparency in the labour market.

### **3.4. What are the organisational arrangements to be considered?**

a. Process: Steps that can lead to an effective implementation of traineeship programmes by the universities include two paths, as presented in Diagram 4 & 5 below:

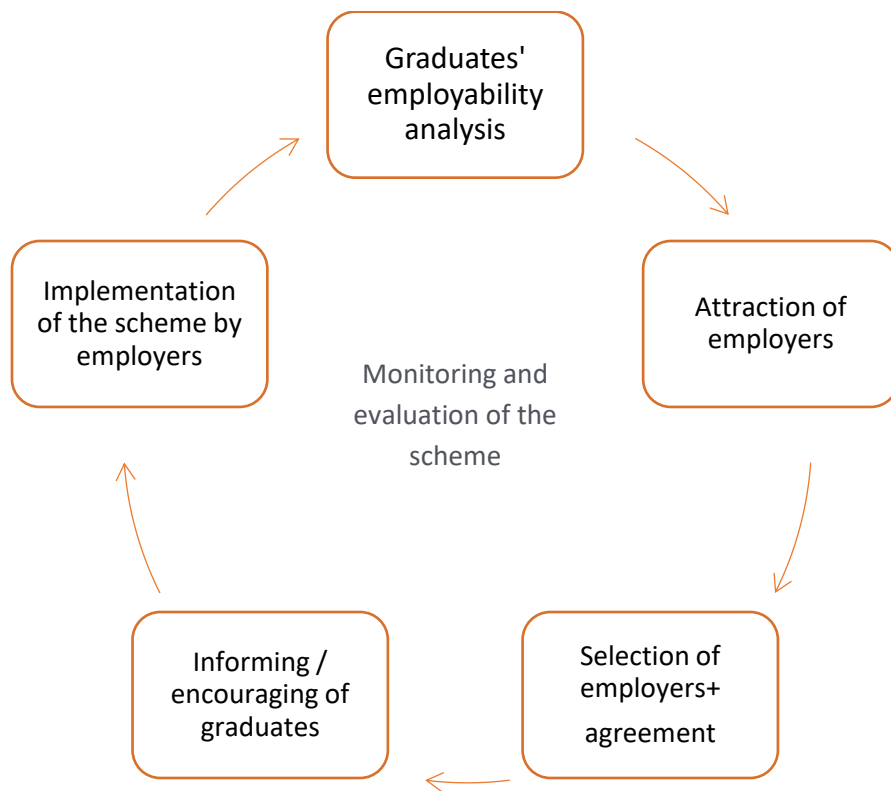


Diagram 4: Traineeship process specification for universities – responsibilities shifted to employer

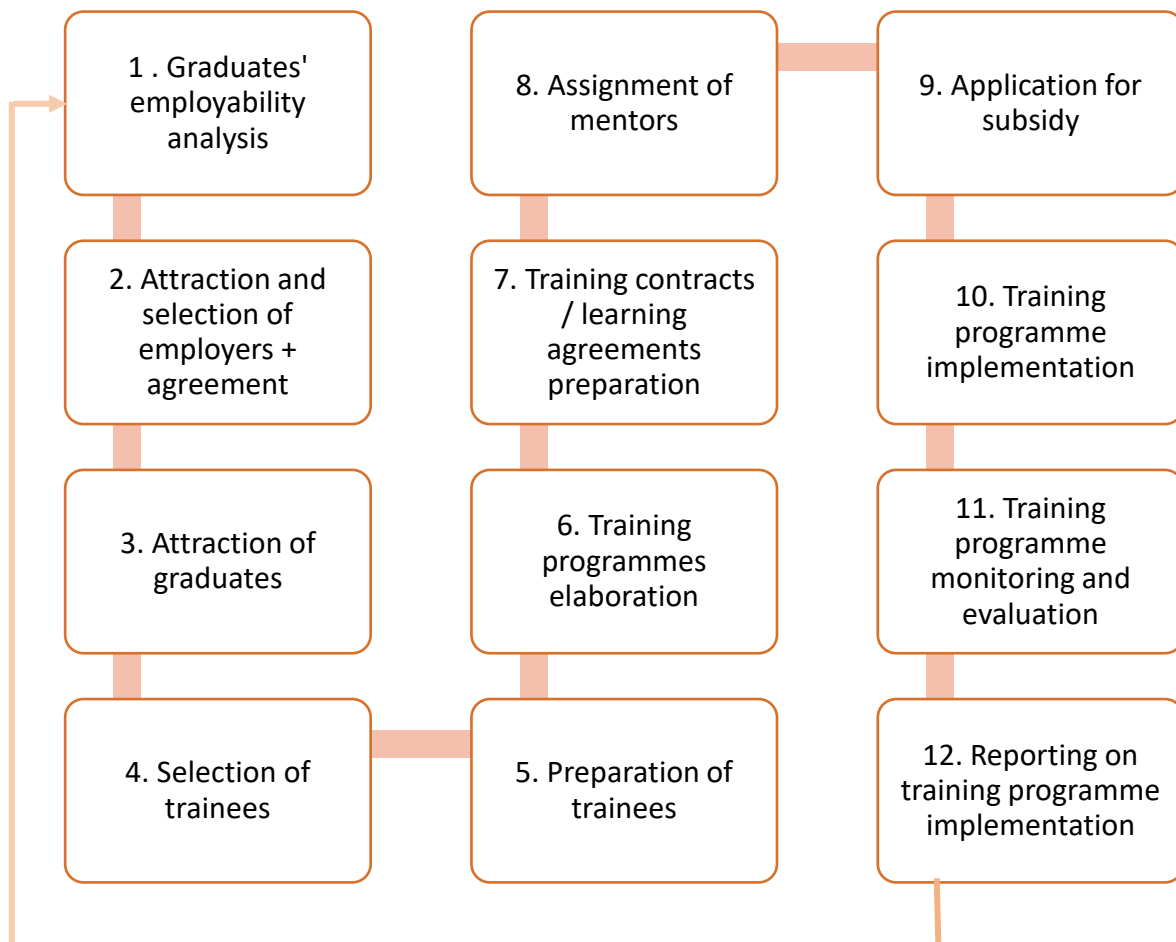


Diagram 5: Traineeship process specification for universities – sharing responsibilities with companies:

b. Roles specifications: Main roles involved in a traineeship scheme include

(i) Mentors / tutors / coaches: Mentors at the universities may be (previous) teachers of graduates or a coordinator in charge of traineeships. They provide the trainees overall guidance, support to trainees throughout their training period, empowerment for self-confidence and mutual trust building.

(ii) Supervisors / project leaders: Supervisors are in charge of work processes in the groups of workers where trainees are placed.

(iii) Traineeship coordinators: They manage the traineeship scheme and coordinate the activities of the other personnel involved in traineeship at the employer and at the university. They also attract and select employers and keep contacts with partners of the traineeship scheme.

### 3.5. How is the quality of the traineeship assured?

The WEXHE cases demonstrate that traineeship may be organised in a rather modest way, meaning that there is a modest payment to trainees, trainees are not sent to additional courses and conferences, there is few investments in additional facilities and projects for the work of trainees, and rewards to supervisors and coordinators are



modest - if given at all. The crucial point is that well trained supervisors and mentors are provided. The opposite situation can occur in case of rich universities and traineeship providers that can raise enough resources to organise trainees' work placements.

### **3.6. How is the quality of the traineeship assured?**

The **quality** of traineeship is usually assured by:

- Well prepared training programmes tailored to individual trainees
- Good preparation of graduates before they go on training/ start their traineeship
- Learning agreements
- Training of mentors, instructors, supervisors for their teaching and coaching roles
- Mentors/ instructors counselling and giving advice to trainees
- Regular meetings of mentors/ tutors with their trainees including their reports to coordinator
- A strong coordination by the university

When universities design and coordinate a traineeship programme which is carried out in various employers' organisations and when public money is involved, it is recommended that an external evaluation is made. The agency performing the external evaluation may check the internal organisations' reports, reports prepared for the financier/ funder, and collects additional information by means of interviews, for instance.