



Apprenticeship Pulse – Factsheet

Apprenticeship Pulse Results

February 2022

3 March 2022

Research Team

Thomas Bolli, Katherine M. Caves, Lena Dändliker, Guillaume Maxence Morlet, Ladina Rageth, Ursula Renold, Aranya Sritharan

Chair of Educational Systems, ETH Zurich

The Apprenticeship Pulse has been surveying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on basic vocational training in Switzerland on a monthly basis since April 2020. The first survey was conducted during the shut-down, which was then gradually relaxed. After lower case numbers and limited measures in summer, the second wave of the pandemic in October was followed by a renewed tightening of measures (incl. remote working recommendation and closure of restaurants, bars, cultural, leisure and sports facilities). Vocational school classes were continued with enhanced hygiene and behavioural rules, and only some of them were switched to distance learning.

In January 2021, there was a partial shutdown, with the closure of shops selling non-daily necessities and a compulsory remote working. These measures were gradually eased between 1 March and 31 May. On 26 June, the outdoor mask requirement was lifted and the COVID-19 health pass (3G: vaccinated, cured or tested) was introduced in clubs and at large events.

After a renewed increase in the number of cases, the COVID-19 health pass obligation was extended to many

Research Partners

Urs Casty
Domenica Mauch

Yousty.ch Professional.ch

indoor areas (e.g. restaurants, bars, fitness and sports facilities, museums, theatres) on September 13th.

A further significant increase in the number of infections at the end of 2021 has led to a further tightening of protective measures: on 6 December, the requirement to present a COVID-health pass and wear a mask was extended to indoor areas, and the Federal Council urged working from home. The Federal Council also made it possible to introduce the 2G rule (vaccinated and cured). On December 20, the requirement for certification was reinforced in many indoor areas by the 2G rule, the wearing of masks and the requirement to eat sitting down. For activities where masking or sitting is not possible, a 2G+ rule has been introduced (access restricted to persons who have been vaccinated or cured for less than 4 months or to persons who have been vaccinated or cured and can show a negative test result). Working from home has also become mandatory again. On January 13, 2022, the duration of isolation and quarantine was reduced and on February 3, the contact quarantine was eliminated. On February 17, all measures were lifted, except for isolation and the requirement to wear a mask in public transport and in health care facilities.

The Pulse of Apprentices in February 2022 – Main Points

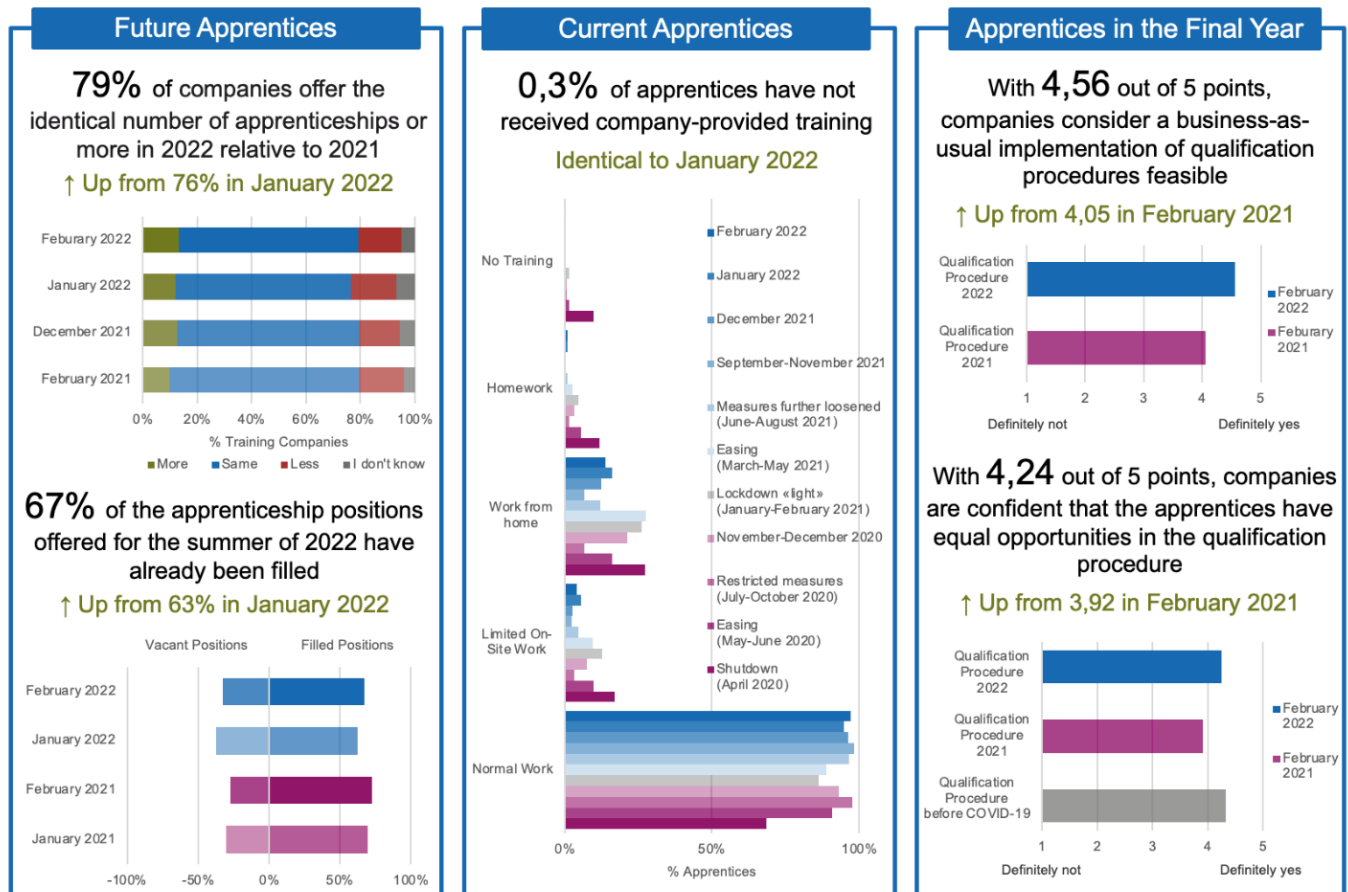


Figure 1: The Headlines on Apprenticeship Pulse in February 2022.

Remarks: Results based on weighted data from the monthly Apprenticeship Pulse surveys from April 2020 to February 2022. The left box shows the main results for future apprentices, the box in the middle shows those for current apprentices (not in their final year) and the right box shows those for apprentices in the final year.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on training companies and apprentices in **February 2022**. Three groups of young people are examined: future apprentices (group 1), current apprentices (group 2) and apprentices in the final year (group 3). In particular, the results are compared with those of the previous month (January 2022) and the year before (February 2021). All results are weighted so that they are representative of the training companies and apprentices in Switzerland. Figure 1 shows the main headlines of the current survey, which are summarized below.

Future apprentices (group 1) are Future apprentices are expected to start their apprenticeship in August 2022 and some of them are in the middle of the application process. The recruitment process starts in German-speaking Switzerland about a year before the apprenticeship begins and in French-speaking Switzerland somewhat later in the spring. 79% (76% in January) of companies said they are offering the same

number or more apprenticeships for this summer compared with summer 2021. Thus, the outlook for future apprentices looks slightly better than the previous month, with 13% (12% in January) of companies offering more apprenticeships and 66% (64% in January) offering the same number of apprenticeships. 16% (17% in January) of establishments said they are offering fewer apprenticeship positions for the 2022 apprenticeship start than they did for the 2021 apprenticeship start. In addition, slightly fewer companies than in January do not yet know what their apprenticeship offering for the summer will look like (5%; 7% in January).

While some apprentices have already found an apprenticeship place for August, others have not yet found the right one. The "Apprenticeship Pulse" shows the proportion of apprenticeship positions that are still vacant or already occupied for the start of training in 2022. The companies report that in February 67% (63% in January) of the apprenticeship positions offered for the summer of 2022 were already occupied, while 33% (37% in

January) were still vacant¹. This shows that companies were able to make some progress in allocating apprenticeship positions compared to the previous month. However, the recruitment process is still less advanced than in the same period of the previous year: in February 2021, 73% of the apprenticeship positions offered for the start of the 2021 apprenticeship year were already occupied.

Current apprentices (group 2) are young people who are in the midst of an apprenticeship but will not complete their training this summer. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the activities of the apprentices in their training company are partly limited. The situation of the current apprentices has improved compared to the previous month: with 97% (95% in January), almost all apprentices were able to work normally in February while applying the protective measures of the FOPH. In addition, a slightly smaller proportion of apprentices worked on a limited basis in the company (4%; 6% in January) or at home (14%; 16% in January). 1% (identical to January) of apprentices received homework for the practical part of their in-company training and only 0.3% (identical to January) did not receive in-company training at all².

Apprentices in the final year of their apprenticeship (group 3) are young people who will take their qualification procedure (QP) in the summer and then enter the job market. In February 2022, companies were rather optimistic that the qualification procedure could be implemented as usual: with an average score of 4.56 on a scale of 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely yes", the companies were confident that a business-as-usual implementation of the qualification procedure would be feasible despite the pandemic. A year ago, in February 2021, companies were less optimistic about the feasibility of the qualification procedure in summer 2021 (4.05 points out of 5).

In February, companies were also confident that all apprentices would have a fair chance of passing the qualification procedure this year if it were held on a regular basis (4.24 on a 5-point scale from 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely yes") and rated the equality of opportunity only slightly lower than before COVID-19 (4.32³). In February of the last year, companies considered the difference between the qualification procedure in 2021 and the one before the pandemic to be slightly greater in terms of equal opportunities (3.92 for the qualification procedure in 2021).

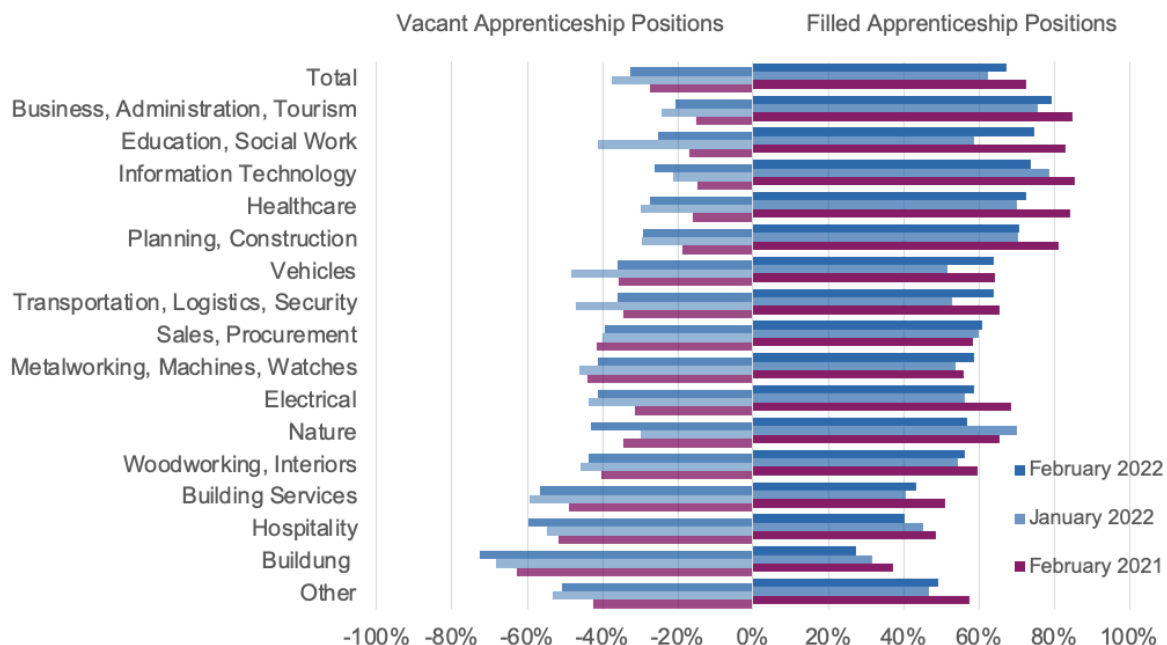


Figure 2: Apprenticeship positions filled and vacant by occupational category in comparison to the previous month and year.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys of February 2021, January 2022 and February 2022. The left-hand side of the graph shows the proportion of apprenticeship positions still vacant for each occupational group, while the right-hand side shows the proportion of positions that are already occupied. Occupational fields with fewer than 50 companies are grouped under "Other".

¹ The Apprenticeship Pulse analyses the proportion of apprenticeship positions still available or already occupied out of the number of apprenticeship positions currently on offer and can therefore not be directly compared with the number of apprenticeship contracts concluded, as recorded by the Tripartite Conference for Vocational Education and Training (see [Stable situation on the apprenticeship market \(tbk-ctfp.ch\)](https://www.tbk-ctfp.ch))

² These percentages do not add up to 100% because institutions could choose more than one answer. Indeed, different measures can be taken simultaneously. In addition, not all apprentices are trained in the same way in the company.

³ This is the average value of the March 2021, April 2021 and February 2022 "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys.

Detailed Results

Future apprentices (Group 1)

For young people who want to start their apprenticeship in the summer, the outlook is slightly better than in the previous month: 13% (12% in January) of companies offer more apprenticeship positions for the start of apprenticeship in 2022 than for 2021, and 66% (64% in January) offer the same number. However, 16% (17% in January) of companies still indicate that they will reduce their supply of apprenticeship positions compared to the summer of 2021, and 5% (7% in January) are still unsure about the number of positions they will offer.

The supply of companies and the demand of future apprentices meet on the apprenticeship market. Recruitment for the 2022 school year is already in full swing. In February, 67% (63% in January) of the apprenticeship positions offered for August 2022 were already filled, while 33% (37% in January) were still vacant. Hence, companies were able to move forward with their recruitment efforts. However, this month (as well as in January), companies are not yet as far along in filling their apprenticeship positions as they were a year ago when the percentage of filled apprenticeship positions for the start of the 2021 apprenticeship year was already at

73%. This difference compared with the previous year is due in particular to the fact that the proportion of filled apprenticeships in Latin Switzerland was significantly lower in February 2022 (45%) than a year ago in February 2021 (60%). In contrast, the proportion of apprenticeships filled in German-speaking Switzerland (71% in February 2022) was approximately the same as a year earlier (74% in February 2021). However, it must be considered that in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, the recruitment process generally starts somewhat later in the spring and may have been further delayed this year due to the effects of the pandemic⁴.

The different occupational categories are also at different stages of filling their positions. Figure 2 shows that the occupational categories "Business, Administration, Tourism" (79%; 76% in January), "Education, Social Work" (75%; 59% in January) and "IT" (74%; 79% in January) have already filled most of the offered positions for the start of the apprenticeship in 2022 in February. Compared to the previous month, in particular the occupation field "Education, Social Work" could catch-up. However, the occupational fields "Building" (27%; 32% in January), "Hospitality" (40%; 45% in January) and "Building Services" (43%; 41% in January) were only able to fill a relatively small proportion of their

	Apprentices at work		Apprentices at home		
	Normal Work	Limited On-Site Work	Work from Home	Homework	No workplace training
Total	97%	4%	14%	1%	0.3%
Building	100%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Education/Social Work	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Electrical	99%	1%	3%	1%	0%
Vehicles	97%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Hospitality	99%	3%	1%	1%	0%
Building Services	100%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Healthcare	100%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Woodworking/Interiors	100%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Information Technology	87%	9%	41%	2%	0%
Metalworking/Machines/Watches	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Nature	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Planning/Construction	98%	1%	12%	1%	0%
Sales/Procurement	96%	2%	12%	0%	0%
Transportation/Logistics/Security	99%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Business/Administration/Tourism	96%	4%	21%	1%	0%
Other	97%	5%	11%	2%	0%

Figure 3: Effects of the coronavirus pandemic on apprenticeship training by occupational category.

Remarks: The results are based on the weighted data from the "Apprenticeship Pulse" survey of February 2022. The table shows the proportion (%) of apprentices in all surveyed training companies in the relevant occupational category (multiple answers possible), by measure and occupational category; occupational categories with fewer than 50 training companies are grouped under "Other". When interpreting the relatively high proportion of apprentices who did not receive in-company training in the "Vehicles" occupational field, it must be considered that the weighting procedure used gives more weight to the answers of certain companies than to others.

⁴ In addition, it should be considered that the values for Latin Switzerland are less reliable than those for German-speaking Switzerland due to the smaller sample size.

offered positions. The distribution of ranks among the occupational fields was also similar in the previous year, although in February 2021 many occupational fields had already filled slightly more positions for the coming start of apprenticeships.

In addition, 6% of companies (5% in February 2021) indicated in February, similarly as in the previous year, that they were offering additional apprenticeship places for apprentices who did not have any due to the pandemic. This year, these companies are offering on average 1.23 (1.41 in February 2021) such additional apprenticeship positions.

Current apprentices (group 2)

Apprentices in the midst of their apprenticeship are sometimes limited in their activities within the company due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 3 shows the overall impact of the pandemic on apprentices' in-company training and in the different occupational categories. Compared to the previous month, the situation has slightly improved again: 97% (95% in January) of the apprentices were able to work normally on site, applying the protective measures of the FOPH, and the proportion of apprentices who received limited on-site work (4%; 6% in January) and who were working from home (14%; 16% in January) has slightly decreased compared to the previous month. In addition, 1% (identical

to January) of the apprentices received homework for the practical part of their in-company training, while a still very small proportion did not receive in-company training (0.3%; identical to January). Figure 3 shows that the situation of apprentices in the different occupational categories reflects this picture: For the "working from home champions" "IT" and "Business, Administration, Tourism", the share of apprentices working normally has increased compared to the previous month, while the share of apprentices with limited on-site work or work from home has decreased. In the "IT" category, 87% (77% in January) of the apprentices were again working normally on site, while 9% (15% in January) were working on-site to a limited extent and 41% (52% in January) were working from home. In "Business, Administration, Tourism", 96% (92% in January) of the apprentices were already working normally at the company, 4% (7% in January) were working on-site to a limited extent and 21% (24% in January) were working from home. Also, the occupational categories "Planning, Construction" (12%; 21% in January) and "Sales, Procurement" (12%; 11% in January) had relatively high shares of apprentices working from home last month. Figure 4 shows the temporal development of the different activities of the trainees in relation to the daily COVID-19 cases and the measures of the Federal Council.

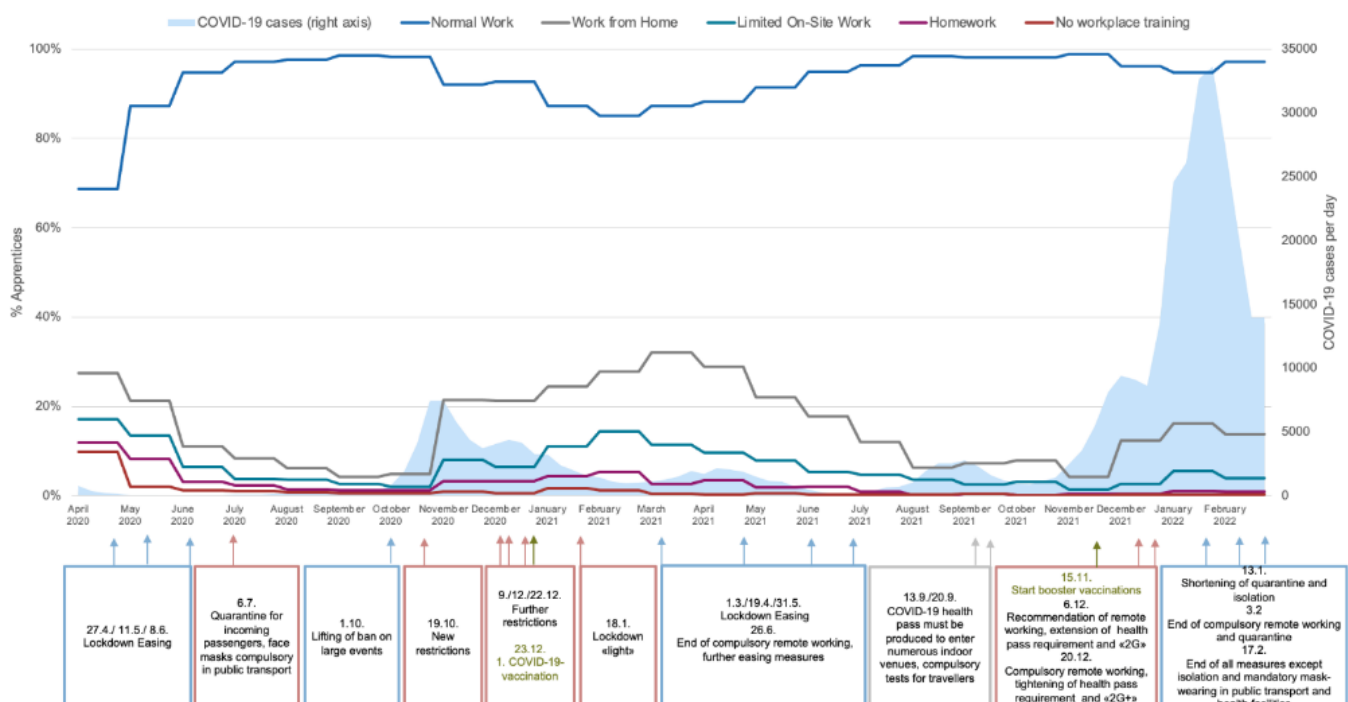


Figure 6: Catching up on missed content due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between April 2020 and February 2022. The graph shows, on the left vertical axis, whether companies believe that apprentices will definitely (1) or definitely (5) not catch up with the material missed. The vertical axis on the right represents the number of COVID-19 infections per day (weekly average) from April 2020 to February 2022.

Yet, during the April 2020 lockdown, the partial lockdown in early 2021 and the following months, relatively few apprentices were working normally at their workplaces and many were working from home. In comparison, apprentices have so far been relatively unrestricted in their activities within the company during the Omicron wave of late 2021 and early 2022. The February survey results give hope that the situation will improve further with the lifting of the measures in mid-February.

Quarantine measures

Because of regulations to protect against COVID-19 infection, apprentices must be temporarily quarantined or isolated during their training. The "Apprenticeship Pulse" for February is only slightly affected by the lifting of the contact quarantine, as the company data refers to the period from early/mid-January to early/mid-February. It can be seen that during this period, companies were still affected by these absences to a similar extent as in the previous month: 37% (38% in January) of companies indicated that they had apprentices in quarantine in the four weeks prior to the survey. The proportion of companies with other employees in quarantine was slightly lower than in the previous month (59%; 64% in January), but the proportion of companies with vocational trainers in quarantine increased slightly (21%; 17% in January).

The proportion of people in quarantine has also increased slightly: in the average company, 13% (12% in January) of apprentices, 7% (4% in January) of vocational trainers and 11% (10% in January) of other employees were in quarantine. However, companies still consider apprenticeships to be relatively unaffected by

quarantine measures (1.74 on a scale of 1 "weakly affected" to 5 "strongly affected"; 1.83 in January)

Effects on costs and productivity

As in December 2021, companies felt that training costs had increased as a result of the changes caused by the pandemic (0.20 on a scale of -2 "much lower costs" to 2 "much higher costs"; identical to December⁵). This assessment has changed little over time and was also at a similar level the previous year (0.23 in February 2021). The left-hand side of Figure 5 shows that the training companies mainly attributed the change in training costs to protective measures in the company (36%; 43% in December) and to quarantine measures (24%; 22% in December). In February 2021, protective measures were also considered to be the main factor responsible for the increase in training costs (37%), but quarantine measures had a lower weighting (16%) and elaborate supervision of apprentices a higher weighting (17% in February 2022; 24% in February 2021). The companies also believe that the productivity of apprentices has suffered somewhat from the effects of the pandemic. However, they were slightly more optimistic in February than they were two months ago (-0.26 on a scale of -2 "much lower productivity" to 2 "much higher productivity"; -0.28 in December) and substantially more confident than they were a year earlier (-0.36 in February 2021). The right-hand side of Figure 5 shows that companies attribute the drop in productivity mainly to the fact that apprentices are insecure and demotivated (35%; 42% in December) and to the fact that learning content is more difficult to teach when apprentices are working from home (32%; 28% in December).

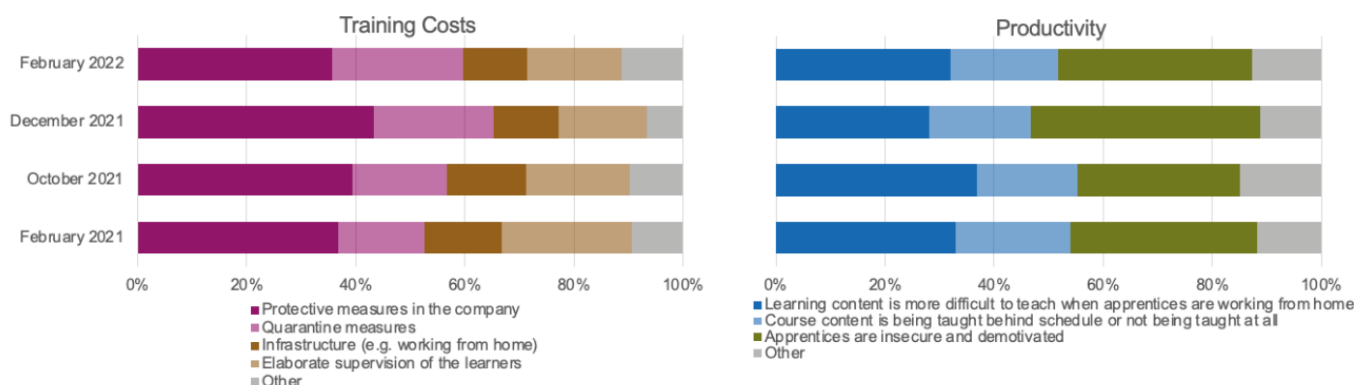


Figure 5: Reasons for increased training costs and decreased productivity of apprentices.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys of February 2021, October 2021, December 2021 and February 2022. The graphs show, for each month and separately for training costs and productivity, the share of reasons for changes due to COVID-19 in an average training company.

⁵ Questions about training costs and productivity are only asked every two months.

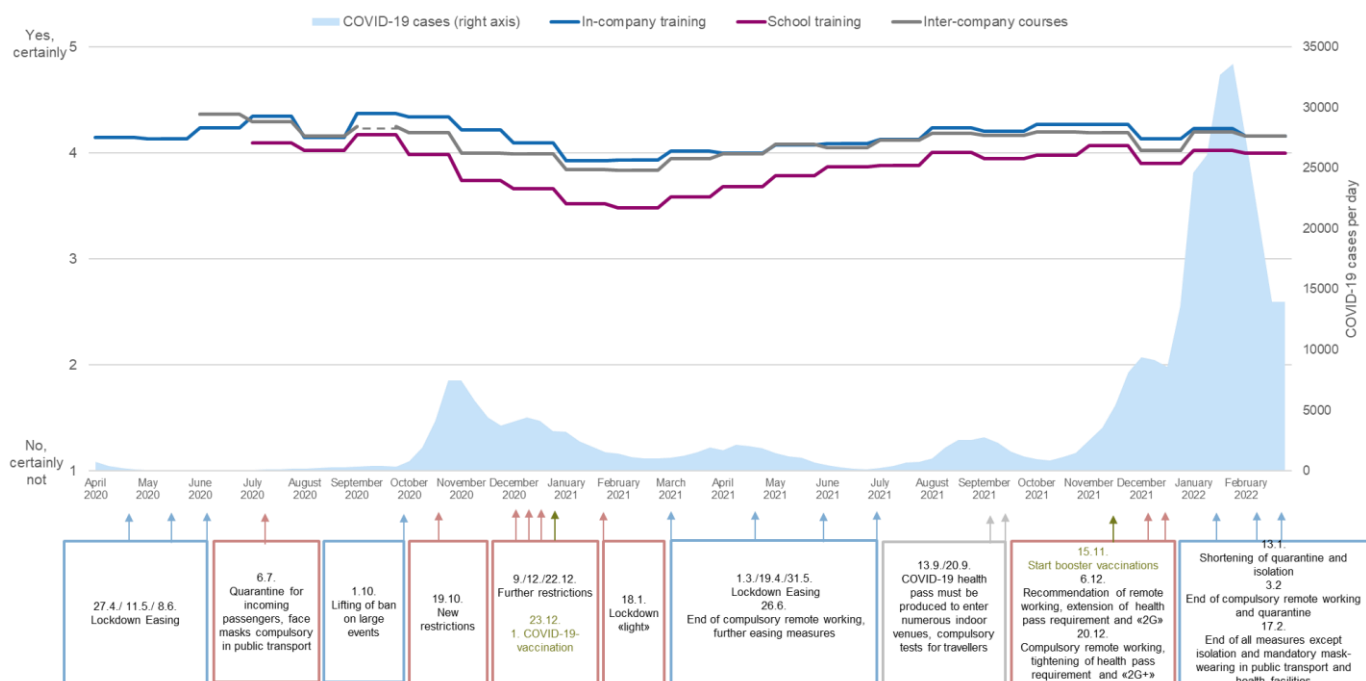


Figure 6: Catching up on missed content due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between April 2020 and February 2022. The graph shows, on the left vertical axis, whether companies believe that apprentices will definitely (1) or definitely (5) not catch up with the material missed. The vertical axis on the right represents the number of COVID-19 infections per day (weekly average) from April 2020 to February 2022.

Last year, companies rated the situation similarly, with telecommuting (33% in February 2021) and insecurity or lack of motivation (34% in February 2021) also being the reasons that are the most responsible for the decline in productivity among apprentices.

Catching up on missed content

Figure 6 shows the effects of the pandemic on apprentices' skill acquisition and compares the results with changes in the number of infections and actions taken over time. In February 2022, companies were slightly less optimistic than in the previous month that apprentices would still be able to catch up with their missed learning content in on-the-job training (4.16 on a scale of 5 for "can definitely be made up"; 4.23 in January), in theoretical training (4.00; 4.02 in January), and in inter-company courses (4.16; 4.20 in January). The next "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys will show how the situation will develop with regard to the qualification procedure in the summer.

Apprentices in the final year of their apprenticeship (group 3)

Young people who are currently in their final year of apprenticeship will take their qualification procedure (QP) in the summer before entering the job market. Companies with apprentices in their final year⁶ are generally

optimistic that the qualification procedure can be carried out normally this year despite the pandemic (4.56 points on a scale of 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely yes"). A year ago, companies were still somewhat more skeptical that the qualification procedure could be implemented business-as-usual in 2021 (4.05 in February 2021). In addition, companies were generally of the opinion that all apprentices will have a fair chance this year if the qualification procedure is implemented business-as-usual (4.24 points on a scale of 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely yes"). Companies rated equal opportunities to be only slightly worse in the 2022 qualification procedure compared to those before the pandemic (4.32). In February 2021, companies were still slightly less confident about equal opportunities in the 2021 qualification procedure (3.92). Thus, the overall picture is positive regarding the feasibility and equal opportunities of the qualification procedure this summer.

However, there are also reasons against a business-as-usual organization of the qualification procedure and that not all apprentices will have a fair chance. Figure 7 illustrates these possible reasons and compares the situation in the 2022 qualification procedure with the one in 2021. These responses also reflect the increased confidence of companies compared to the previous year.

⁶ Only companies with apprentices in their final year answered the questions about the qualification procedure.

In March 2021 as well as in February 2022, the most commonly cited reason was that weaker apprentices needed more time and support to catch up on the learning content they were missing (37%; 53% in March 2021). Nevertheless, this reason was less important than in the previous year. Other reasons were the lack of clarity in the rules for apprentices who have to be quarantined during the qualification procedure (13%; 18% in March 2021) and the fact that apprentices have

missed a lot of content and cannot catch up before the qualification procedure (11%; 15% in March 2021). Compared to the previous year, the reasons that have become less important are, in particular, that there is too much uncertainty regarding the on-site implementation (8%; 28% in March 2021) and that, due to the protective measures of the FOPH, there are insufficient resources for the regular implementation of the qualification procedure (5%; 10% in March 2021).

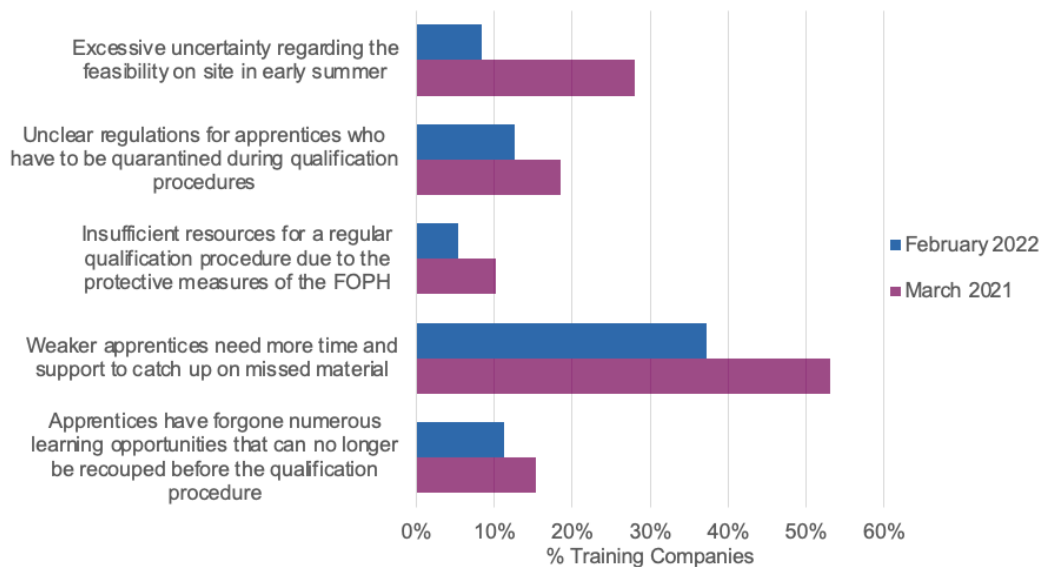


Figure 7: Reasons against a regular organization of the 2022 qualification procedure and for a reduction in equal opportunities.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted in March 2021 and February 2022. The figure shows the reasons why companies think that a regular qualification procedure may not be feasible and does not offer a fair chance to all apprentices. It shows the values for an average company, with multiple responses possible. The month of March 2021 is given as a comparison, as the corresponding values for February 2021 are not available.

Data and representativeness

2059 training companies (1854 in January) of various sizes, from all cantons and occupational groups, took part in the "Apprenticeship pulse" in February 2022. People in various positions in these companies answered the questions, including vocational trainers, human resources specialists and managers. Overall, 44,660 training companies were contacted to participate in the survey. The return rate of the "Apprenticeship Pulse" was 4.61% in February (4.15% in January). The return rate calculation is not exact, however, as the survey was also distributed through other channels.

The companies surveyed offered a total of 17,193⁷ apprenticeship positions (15,031 in January) in various regions and occupational categories. In February,

they covered 2.25% (January: 2.03%) of all training companies in Switzerland. The coverage is better in the German-speaking part of Switzerland (2.76%) than in Latin Switzerland (0.57%). The best represented categories were "IT" (5.54%), "Planning, Construction" (5.14%), "Electrical Engineering" (4.73%) and "Metalworking, Machines, Watches" (4.69%), while "Sales, Procurement" (1.69%), "Nature" (1.96%) and "Vehicles" (1.98%) were rather under-represented. However, the weighting procedure used⁸ corrects for differences in representativeness according to company size, language region and professional sector.

⁷ The number of apprentices in a training company is only asked for the first participation in the survey. This data was collected for the first time in March 2021 and again in January 2022 from all participating businesses to reflect interim fluctuations in the number of apprentices.

⁸ Detailed information on the weighting method used is provided in the "Weighting and representativeness of results" sheet: <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000454763>.

You can find more information on
www.lehrstellenpuls.ch.

We would like to thank all training companies that participated in this survey. We would also like to thank the following organizations that support this research project:

- Allpura
- Swiss Automobile Association (SAVV)
- GastroSuisse / HotellerieSuisse
- Building envelope Switzerland
- Hotel & Gastro formation
- ICT vocational training Switzerland
- Kunststoff Schweiz
- login Vocational Training Ltd.
- OrTra stewardship Switzerland
- OrTra health
- Swiss Meat Industry Association (UPSV)
- Swiss Conference of Vocational Education and Training Agencies (SCVET)
- Swiss Conference of Directors of Vocational, University and Career Guidance (CDOPU)
- Swiss Employers' Association
- Swiss Society of Entrepreneurs
- Swiss and Liechtenstein Association for Building Technology (suissetec)
- Swiss Association for Vocational Training in Logistics (SVBL)
- SPEDLOGSWISS
- Swiss Textiles
- swissmem vocational training
- swissceramics, Swiss Ceramics Association
- Polybau Association

Contact

ETH Zurich
Prof. Dr Ursula Renold
Chair of Education Systems
www.ces.ethz.ch →

Apprenticeship Pulse
info@lehrstellenpuls.ch →
www.lehrstellenpuls.ch →