

# Apprenticeship Pulse Results April 2022

## Other Publication

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Apprenticeship Pulse – Factsheet

# Apprenticeship Pulse Results

## April 2022

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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 recommendations and closure of restaurants, bars, cultural, leisure, and sports facilities). Vocational school classes were continued with enhanced hygiene and behavioral rules, and only some of them were switched to distance learning.

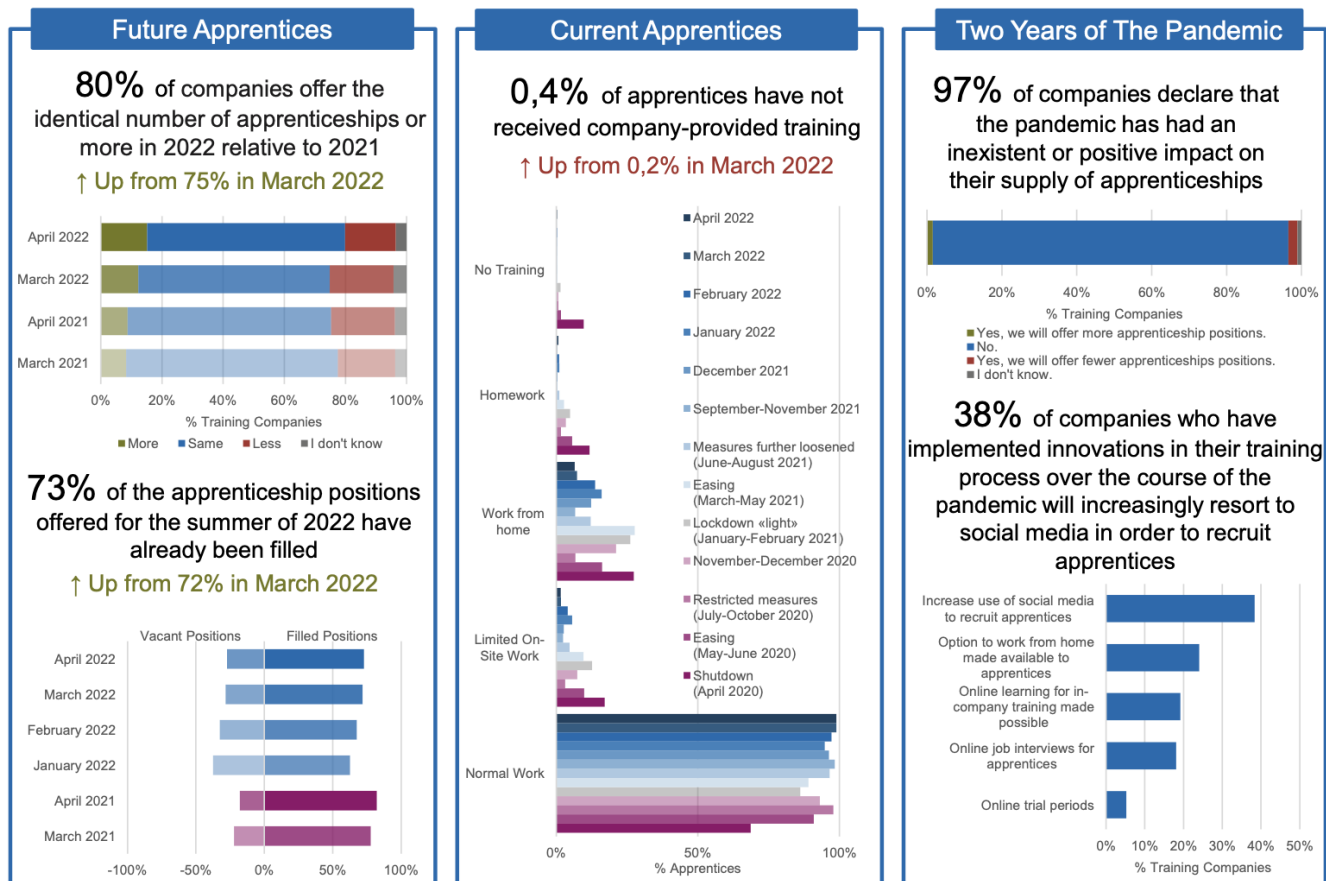
In January 2021, there was a partial shutdown, with the closure of shops selling non-daily necessities and compulsory remote working. These measures were gradually eased between 1 March and 31 May. On 26 June, the outdoor mask requirement was lifted and the COVID-19 health pass (3G: vaccinated, cured,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

After another increase in the number of cases, the COVID-19 health pass obligation was extended to many 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 certificate and wear a mask was extended to indoor areas, and the Federal Council urged teleworking. 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). Remote working became 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 on public transport and in health care facilities. On April 1, all measures were finally abolished.

## The Pulse of Apprentices in April 2022 – Main Points



**Figure 1: The Headlines on Apprenticeship Pulse in April 2022.**

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between April 2020 and April 2022. The box on the left shows the main results for future apprentices, the middle one for current apprentices. The box on the right shows the companies' estimates of the future impact of two years of the pandemic on their training activities and their apprentices.

This fact sheet provides an overview of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on training companies and apprentices in **April 2022**. Three groups of young people are examined: future apprentices (group 1), current apprentices (group 2), and career starters (group 3). In particular, the results are compared with those of the previous month (March 2022) and the year before (April 2021). All results are weighted so that they are representative of the training companies in Switzerland.

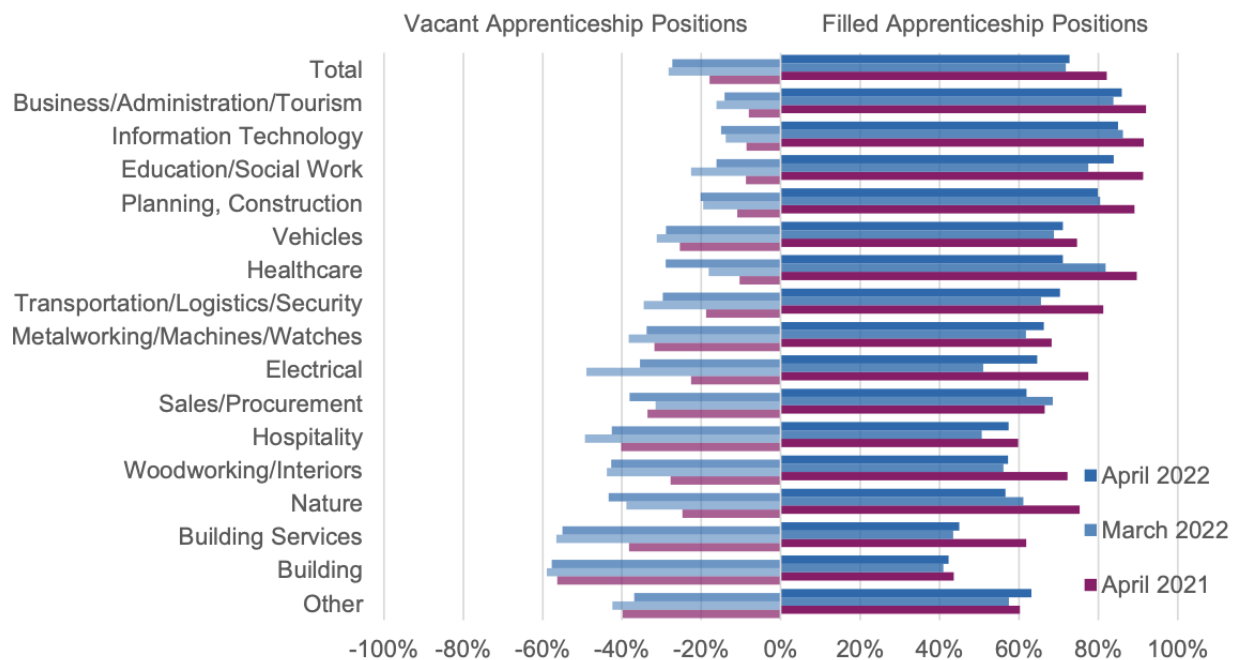
The "Apprenticeship Pulse" was first published at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in April, just two years ago. Over the course of 25 waves of surveys, it has tracked the effects of the pandemic on training companies and apprentices. For this reason, this fact sheet contains, in addition to the results for the three groups of young people, also a retrospective and an overview of the effects of the two years of the pandemic. Figure 1 shows the outline of the current survey. This fact sheet is the last publication, which is produced on a monthly basis. Thereafter, the results of the "Apprenticeship Pulse" will only be published quarterly. The next fact sheet will present the results for **June 2022**.

**Future apprentices (group 1)** are young people who are currently looking for an apprenticeship position for this summer or who have already found one. The recruitment process starts about a year before the start of the apprenticeship in German-speaking Switzerland and slightly later, in spring, in French-speaking Switzerland. In April, the companies were optimistic when it came to designing the apprenticeship offer for the start of apprenticeships in the Summer: In this regard, 80% (75% in March) of companies indicated that they were offering as many or more apprenticeship positions this summer than in the previous year. Compared to the previous month, there has been an increase in the proportion of companies that are keeping their offer of apprenticeship positions unchanged (65%; 63% in March) and in those that are expanding it (15%; 12% in March). At the same time, a smaller proportion of companies are offering fewer apprenticeship positions (17%; 21% in March). Similar to March, 4% of companies still do not know how many apprenticeship positions they will offer this summer.

For companies, the focus is now to fill the apprenticeship positions available before summer. The recruitment process continues to progress, albeit at a slower pace than in the previous year. According to the companies surveyed, 73% (72% in March) of the apprenticeship positions planned for the summer of 2022 have already been filled, while 27% (28% in March) are still vacant. Last year, in April, the number of filled apprenticeship positions was significantly higher (82%).<sup>1</sup>

**Current apprentices (group 2)** are young people who are in the middle of their apprenticeship. Their situation largely reflects the lifting of the April 1 measures: almost all apprentices worked normally at their place of work (99%; identical to March). The percentage of apprentices who did not receive any in-company training (0.4%; 0.2% in March), or who did not receive any in-company assignments (1%; almost zero in March), has been at a very low level for some time. In addition, a small proportion of apprentices (2%, identical to March) were employed on the job in a limited way. However, the proportion of apprentices working at home was still 6% in April (7% in March).<sup>2</sup>

**Two years of the pandemic** can make a big difference for both training companies and apprentices. We asked the companies to reflect on these two years, and how they see and wish to view the future. In this respect, the companies felt that the impact of COVID-19 on the conception of their future offer of apprenticeship positions was, overall, modest. The vast majority of companies (97%) felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had either not affected their future supply of apprenticeships at all (95%) or positively, with 2% indicating that they would offer more places in the future. A modest 2% of companies plan to reduce their supply of apprenticeships in the future, and 1% are still uncertain about the future. In addition, during the pandemic, many companies launched new projects and innovations in the areas of recruitment and training, which they will continue after the pandemic. In this context, companies that have introduced innovations (about one-third of companies<sup>3</sup>) most often mentioned that in the future they would make greater use of social networks to recruit their apprentices (38%).<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 2: Apprenticeship positions to be filled and filled by occupational category and in comparison to the previous month and year.** Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys of April 2021, March 2022 and April 2022. The left-hand side of the graph shows the proportion of apprenticeship positions that are 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".

<sup>1</sup> 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 concluded apprenticeship contracts recorded by the Tripartite Conference for Vocational Education and Training (see [stable situation on the apprenticeship market \(tbbk-clfp.ch\)](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Companies were given the opportunity to select multiple responses,

as different measures may apply simultaneously and not all employees in the company are always trained in the same way.

<sup>3</sup> This only includes companies that selected at least one of the response options (N = 551).

<sup>4</sup> 19% e-learning during in-company training, 18% virtual job interviews for apprentices, 5% virtual training courses, 24% other. Multiple answers are possible.

## Detailed Results

### Future apprentices (Group 1)

Companies are optimistic about their summer apprenticeship planning: 15% (12% in March; 13% in February) of companies are planning more apprenticeships this summer than a year ago. Compared to the previous month, this proportion is slightly higher. The share of companies reducing the number of apprenticeship positions compared to last year was also slightly lower (17%; 21% in March). In addition, 65% of companies are not changing their offer of apprenticeship positions compared to last year, and 4% indicate that they do not yet know how many apprenticeship positions they will offer this summer. A year ago, in April 2021, companies were still showing some reluctance and only 9% were offering additional apprenticeship positions for the start of 2021 compared to 2020. Moreover, the percentage of companies who wanted to reduce the number of apprenticeship positions offered was slightly higher (21%).

On the market for apprenticeship positions, the supply of companies and the demand of future apprentices meet. In April, 73% (72% in February) of the apprenticeship positions planned for the summer of 2022 were al-

ready filled, while 27% (28% in February) were still vacant. This indicates that companies have only made small progress in hiring compared to the previous month, with a slight decrease in the hiring pace this year compared to last year. In February 2021, 73% of the apprenticeship positions were already filled, and by April this share had risen to 82%. The recruitment process started later in Latin Switzerland and companies were again able to catch up compared to the previous month (62%; 49% in March). In German-speaking Switzerland, however, the proportion of positions filled only slightly increased compared to the previous month (75%; 74% in March). The share of filled positions in Latin Switzerland was even slightly higher in April than in the previous year (59% in April 2021).<sup>5</sup>

The different occupational categories are also more or less advanced in their recruitment. Figure 2 shows that the occupational categories "Business, Administration, Tourism" (86%; 84% in March) and "IT" (85%; 86% in March) are as usual very advanced in the process. The occupational group "Education, Social work" (84%; 77% in March) was able to catch up with the previous month, while the occupational group "Healthcare" lost its third place in the ranking of filled positions, displaying a slight decline (71%; 82% in March).

	Apprentices at Work		Apprentices at Home		
	Normal Work	Limited On-Site Work	Work from Home	Homework	No Workplace Training
<b>Total</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Building	95%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Education/Social Work	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Electrical	99%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Vehicles	100%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Hospitality	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Building Services	99%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Healthcare	99%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Woodworking/Interiors	99%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Information Technology	95%	6%	23%	1%	0%
Metalworking/Machines/Watches	100%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Nature	100%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Planning/Construction	100%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Sales/Procurement	100%	1%	9%	0%	0%
Transportation/Logistics/Security	99%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Business/Administration/Tourism	98%	3%	12%	0%	0%
Other	98%	2%	2%	0%	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 April 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 attend in-company training in the "Building" occupational field, it must be borne in mind that the weighting procedure used gives more weight to some company data than to others.

<sup>5</sup> The values for Latin Switzerland are subject to greater variation than those for German-speaking Switzerland due to the small sample size.

Similarly, the occupational fields of "Electrical Engineering" (65%; 51% in March) and "Hospitality" (57%; 51% in March) were able to move forward, while in the occupational fields of "Building" (42%; 41% in March) and "Building Technology" (45%; 43% in March) still less than half of the apprenticeship positions are filled. This year, almost all occupational groups have seen a slowdown in the recruitment of apprentices, while by April 2021 almost all of them had allocated a higher proportion of their positions.

Companies sometimes have difficulty finding suitable apprentices to fill their apprenticeship positions and have found it slightly more difficult to recruit suitable candidates this year than in the years prior to COVID-19 (-0.35 on a scale of -2 "much more difficult" to 2 "much easier"; -0.29 in March).

### Current apprentices (group 2)

Figure 3 shows the overall effects of the pandemic on the in-company training of current apprentices and in the different occupational categories. The result is a positive picture of the situation of apprentices, which has been maintained with the lifting of the measures on April 1. As in the previous month, almost all apprentices worked normally at their place of work (99%; identical to March). The percentage of apprentices who did not receive any in-company training (0.4%; 0.2% in March) or

homework for in-company training (1%; almost zero in March) is also at a long-standing low level. In addition, the low proportion of apprentices who are employed on the job on a limited basis has stabilized at a low level (2%, identical to March). However, the share of apprentices working from home decreased only slightly compared to the previous month and was at 6% in April (7% in March). It also appears that the activities of apprentices are no longer too strongly differentiated between occupational categories. Working from home is an exception, with a still relatively high degree of heterogeneity. The proportion of apprentices who work at home has decreased slightly in the occupational fields of "IT" and "Business, Administration, Tourism", but is still at 23% (25% in March) and 12% (14% in March) respectively. Also, in the occupational group "Sales, Procurement", 9% of the apprentices were still working at home in April.

Figure 4 shows the temporal development of the different activities of the trainees in relation to the number of daily COVID-19 cases and the measurements. Compared to the previous year, the overall situation can be considered positive. In April 2021, by which time some relaxations had already been made after the partial closure, only 88% of the apprentices were working normally at their place, 10% were working on site to a limited extent and 29% were working from home.

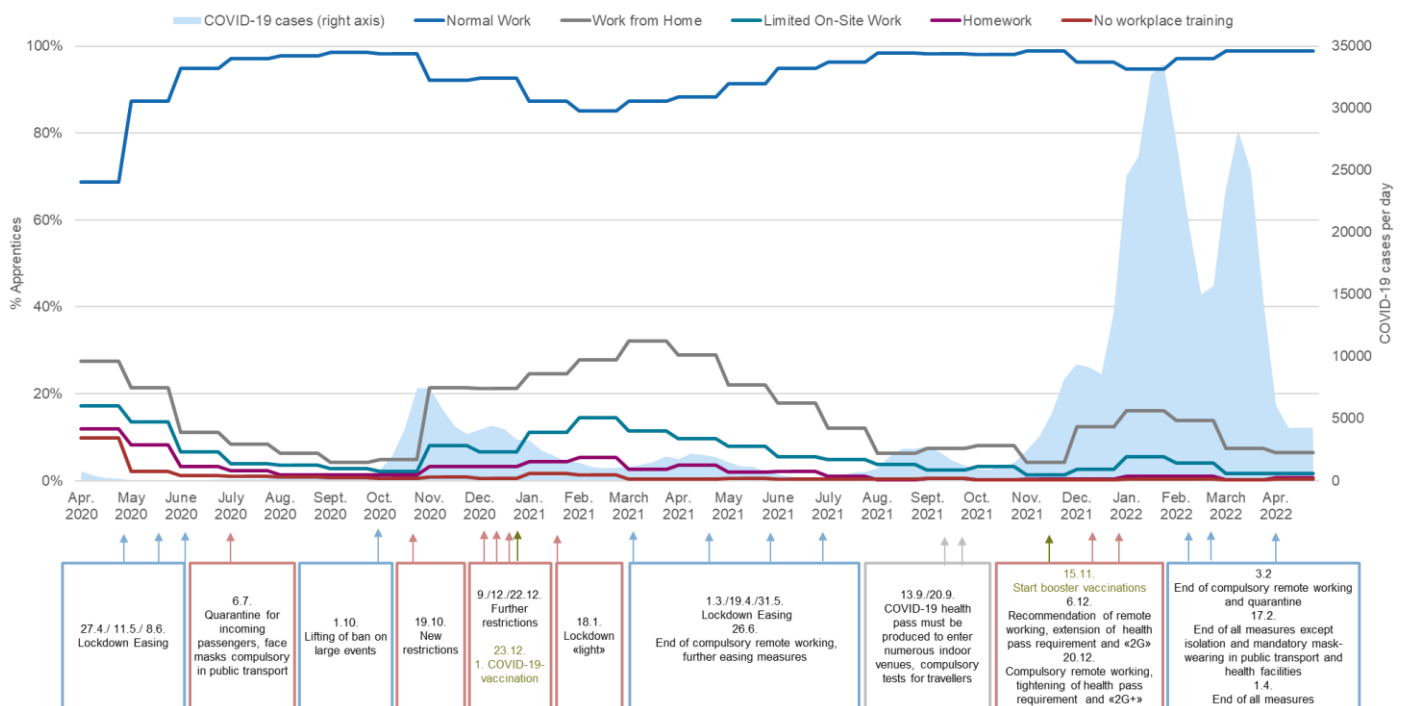


Figure 4: Catching up on missed content due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between April 2020 and April 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 2022.

### Quarantine/isolation measures

Since the lifting of all measures on April 1, isolation and quarantine to protect against COVID-19 infections are no longer mandatory. However, the results show that apprentices, vocational trainers and other employees still practice quarantine/isolation to some extent, either out of illness or to protect themselves from others. In the four weeks prior to the survey, 24% (37% in March) of the companies had apprentices, 17% (26% in March) had vocational trainers and 48% (68% in March) had other employees in quarantine/isolation. In addition, the proportion of people per company in quarantine/isolation was only slightly lower than in the previous month, with 9% (12% in March) of apprentices, 6% (9% in March) of trainers and 9% (13% in March) of staff in quarantine/isolation.

### Impact on costs and productivity

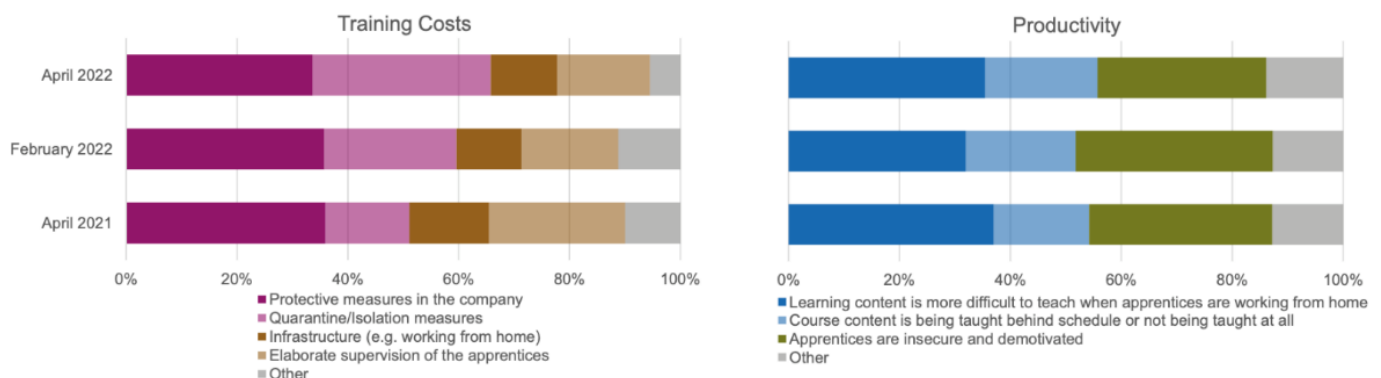
According to the companies, the costs of training apprentices have increased slightly due to the changes brought about by COVID-19 and their productivity is slightly lower overall. Companies' estimates of the magnitude of the cost increase are relatively constant over time (0.18 on a scale of -2 "much lower costs" to 2 "much higher costs"; 0.20 in February; 0.20 in April 2021). The left side of Figure 5 shows that companies most often, and with a relatively constant weighting over time, attributed higher training costs to the implementation of protective measures within the company (34%; 36% in February; 36% in April 2021). However, with 32% quarantine and isolation measures were made more responsible for higher costs compared to February (24%) and the previous year (15% in April 2021). Intensive monitoring of apprentices generated slightly

fewer costs than the previous year (17%; 17% in February; 25% in April 2021).

Companies' assessment of productivity loss, meanwhile, showed greater variation over time, with companies viewing it as slightly lower than a year earlier (-0.22 on a scale of -2 "much lower productivity" to 2 "much higher productivity"; -0.26 in February; -0.33 in April 2021). The reasons remained similar over time. For example, companies still felt that imparting learning content while working at home was the main obstacle to apprentices' productivity (35%; 32% in February; 37% in April 2021). In addition, insecurity and demotivation of apprentices was also cited as an important reason (30%; 35% in February; 33% in April 2021).

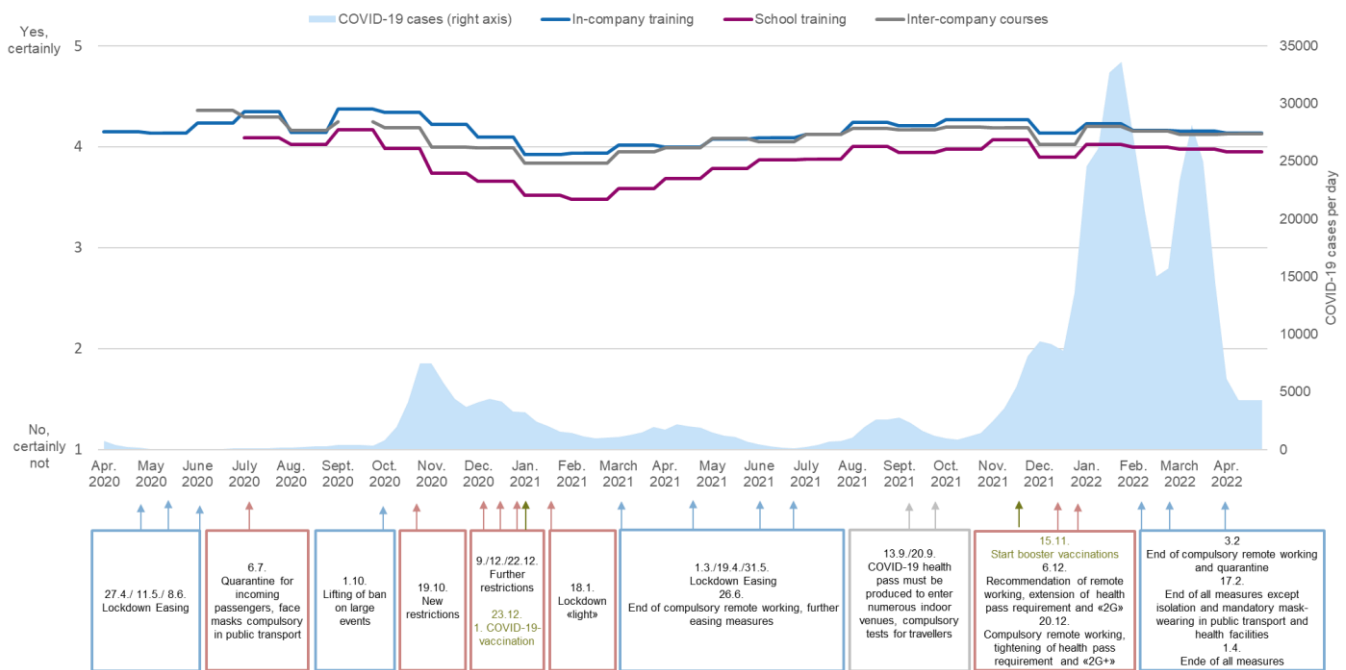
### Catching up on missed learning content

Figure 6 shows the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on apprentice skill acquisition and compares the results with changes in the number of infections and actions taken over time. In addition, companies felt that apprentices would not be able to fully catch up on missed learning content in on-the-job practical training (4.14 on a scale of 5 for "can definitely be caught up." 4.16 in March), in theoretical training (3.95; 3.97 in March) and in inter-company courses (4.13; 4.12 in March) during the rest of the apprenticeship. A relatively constant proportion of companies (about one-third) initiate measures to help apprentices catch up on missed learning content during the remainder of the apprenticeship (33%; 34% in March; 36% in April 2021). Figure 7 shows the different measures taken by companies to help apprentices catch up on forgone learning content.



**Figure 5: Reasons for the lower practical and theoretical knowledge of apprentices.**

Remarks: Results are based on weighted data from the April 2021, February 2022, and April 2022 "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys. The figures show, for each month and separately for training costs (left side) and productivity (right side), the shares of the different reasons for changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic in an average training company.



**Figure 6: Catching up on missed learning 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 April 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 April 2022.

Most companies reported that apprentices are given more time on the job to learn (68%; 59% in March) and that apprentices are supervised more intensively by trainers (67%; 76% in March). Compared to the previous month, the proportion of companies that allow more in-company learning time has increased slightly, and those that favour more intensive supervision by vocational trainers have decreased slightly. Other measures included catching up on missed inter-company course learning content (17%; identical to March) and school learning content (16%; 14% in March), additional inter-company skills courses (11%; 13% in March), more time at home to study (9%; 5% in March) and their own online solutions for missed school learning content (2%; 3% in March). Compared to the previous year, these proportions were similar, except that in April 2021, a higher proportion of companies gave apprentices more time at home to study (18%).

However, the desire of companies to provide additional support to apprentices remains rather low (11%; 9% in March; 12% in April 2021). In April, most companies wanted offers for recouping on missed school learning content (79%). Also mentioned were psychological and social support to motivate apprentices (42%), catch-up courses for missed in-company classes (36%), subsidies (31%), catch-up courses for missed in-company work (26%), and a telephone tutoring line (21%).

### Final year apprentices (Group 3)

The final apprenticeship examinations are approaching.

Companies with apprentices in their final year were still optimistic that all apprentices will have a fair chance this year, if the qualification procedure (QP) takes place normally (4.40 points on a scale of 1 "definitely no" to 5 "definitely yes"; 4.39 in March). This is a positive evaluation, especially in comparison to the previous year, when in April 2021 companies reported lower confidence in equal opportunities in the 2021 qualification procedure (3.96).

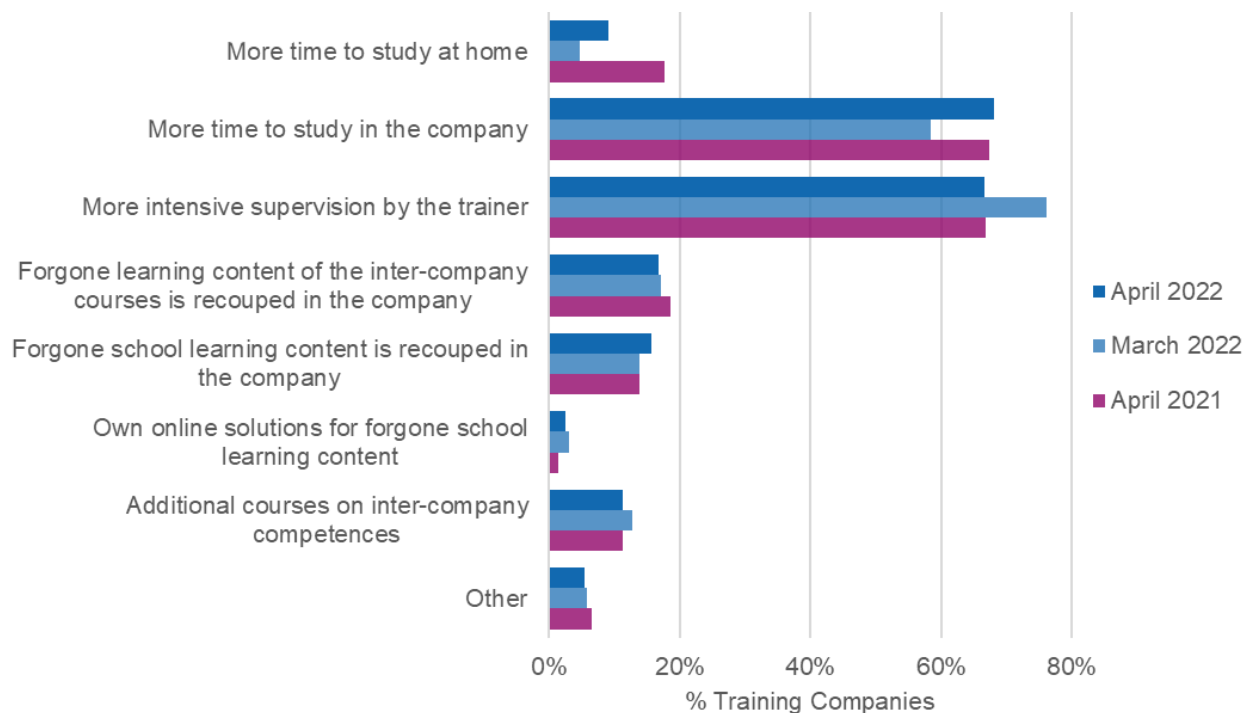
### Two years of the pandemic

It has now been two years since training companies and apprentices were exposed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the effects have been limiting for only a short period of time, others have accumulated over time and will likely persist regardless of the evolution of the pandemic. Companies indicated the extent to which they felt that the changes brought about by COVID-19 had an overall impact on learning in their company over the past two years. In this regard, companies rated the influence of the safeguards in the company as having the greatest impact (3.42 on a scale of 1 "low impact" to 5 "high impact"). Companies rated isolation and quarantine measures as having the second highest impact (3.07), followed by the requirement of the COVID-19 health pass and testing (2.45) and containment and partial containment (2.20). With an average of less than two points on the scale, recommendation and the requirement to work from home (1.95) were considered rather weak in terms of the impact on apprenticeship. According to the companies, the COVID-

19 pandemic had little influence on the design of their future apprenticeship offer. 97% of the companies were optimistic and indicated that the pandemic had no (95%) or even a positive (2%) influence on the number of apprenticeships they will offer in the future. A modest 2% of companies plan to reduce the number of apprenticeships they offer in the future and 1% are still uncertain about the future.

In addition, some companies launched new projects or innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic that they will continue after the pandemic. Of the companies that

have launched such innovations, most indicated that they would make greater use of social networks to recruit their apprentices (38%), even after the pandemic. Also, working from home is maintained in some of these companies (24%). In addition, 19% of these companies indicated that e-learning would remain a component of in-company training, 18% want to rely more on virtual job interviews for apprentices, and a relatively small share of 5% want to maintain virtual induction courses after the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has therefore not only restricted, but also encouraged projects and innovations, and thus brought positive outcomes.



**Figure 7: Measures taken to support apprentices in catching up on forgone learning content.**

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted in April 2021, March 2022 and April 2022. The figure shows various measures that the companies have implemented to support their apprentices in catching up on the forgone learning content during the rest of the apprenticeship period. It shows the values for an average company, with multiple responses possible.

### Data and representativeness

1653 training companies (1984 in March) of various sizes, from all cantons and occupational groups, took part in the Apprenticeship Pulse in April 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, with a return rate of 3.7% in April (4.24% in March). The return rate calculation is not exact, however, as the survey was also distributed through other channels. The companies surveyed offered a total of

13,808<sup>6</sup> apprenticeship positions (16,960 in March) in various regions and occupational categories. In April, they covered 1.81% (2.17% in March) of all training companies in Switzerland. Coverage was better in German-speaking Switzerland (2.25%) than in Latin Switzerland (0.41%). The best represented categories were "IT" (4.47%) and "Electrical Engineering" (4.19%), while "Sales, Procurement" (1.35%) and "Nature" (1.44%) were rather underrepresented. The weighting procedure used<sup>7</sup>, however, corrects for differences in representation according to company size, language region and professional sector.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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](http://www.lehrstellenpuls.ch).

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- Hotel and Gastro training
- ICT vocational training Switzerland
- Kunststoff Schweiz
- login Vocational Training Ltd.
- OrTra Stewardship Switzerland
- OrTra health
- Swiss Meat Industry Association (SVB)
- 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

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