


Apprenticeship Pulse Results March 2022

Other Publication

Author(s):

[Bolli, Thomas](#) ; [Caves, Katherine Marie](#) ; [Dändliker, Lena](#) ; [Morlet, Guillaume Maxence Augusti](#) ; [Rageth, Ladina](#) ; [Renold, Ursula](#) ; [Sritharan, Aranya](#) 

Publication date:

2022-04

Permanent link:

<https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000561755>

Rights / license:

[In Copyright - Non-Commercial Use Permitted](#)

Originally published in:

Apprenticeship Pulse – Factsheet



Apprenticeship Pulse – Factsheet

Apprenticeship Pulse Results

March 2022

7 April 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 shutdown, 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 a renewed increase in the number of cases, the COVID-19 health pass obligation was extended to many indoor areas (e.g. restaurants, bars, fitness and

Research Partners

Urs Casty
Domenica Mauch

Yousty.ch Professional.ch

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. In March, these measures remained unchanged.

The Pulse of Apprentices in March 2022 – Main Points

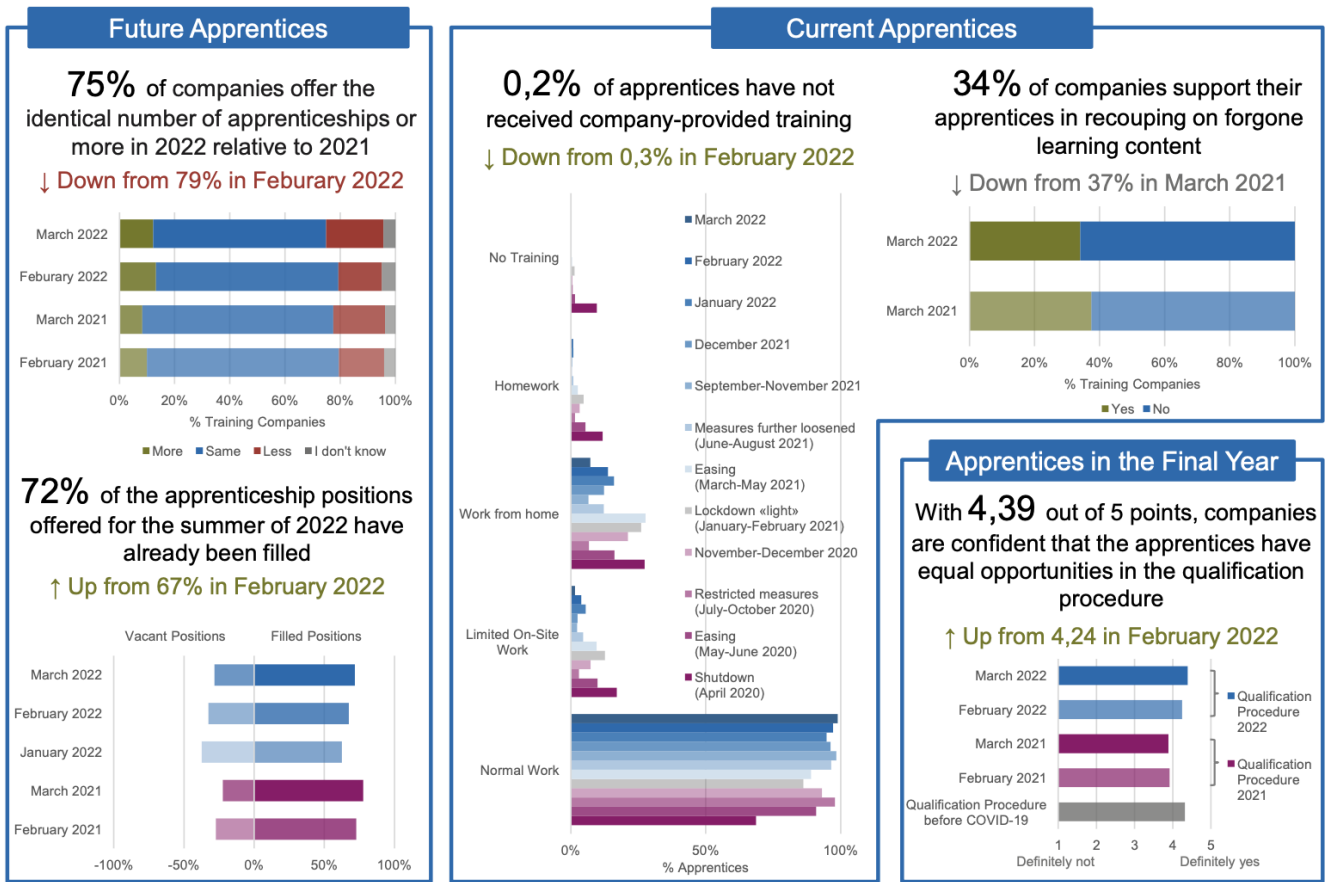


Figure 1: The Headlines on Apprenticeship Pulse in March 2022.

Remarks: Results based on weighted data from the monthly Apprenticeship Pulse surveys from April 2020 to March 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 below 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 **March 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 (February 2022) and the year before (March 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 March survey, which are explained below.

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 March, companies were somewhat more cautious than in the previous month when offering apprenticeship positions. 75% (79% in February) of companies indicated that they were

offering as many or more apprenticeship positions this summer than in the previous year. 12% (13% in February) offer more apprenticeships and 63% (66% in February) offer the same number. The share of companies offering fewer spots for the start of Apprenticeship in 2022 than in 2021 has increased slightly compared to the previous month (21%; 16% in February). On the other hand, 4% (5% in February) still do not know how many positions they will offer this summer.

While some companies have been able to fill many of the apprenticeship positions, they offer for this summer, others are still looking for apprentices. In this regard, The Apprenticeship Pulse tracks the proportion of apprenticeships that are available or already filled for the start of apprenticeships in 2022, with companies making further progress in this process in March. According to the companies surveyed, 72% (67% in February) of the apprenticeship positions offered for the summer of 2022 were already occupied in March,

while 28% (33% in February) were still vacant. However, the occupancy of apprenticeship positions is still one month behind the previous year. In February 2021, for example, companies had already filled 73% of the apprenticeship positions offered for the summer of 2021, and in March 2021 they had already filled 78%¹.

Current apprentices (group 2) are young people who are in the middle of their apprenticeship. Due to the impact of the pandemic, their activities in their training company are partly limited. Their situation has normalized again compared to the previous month: almost all apprentices worked normally at their workplace (99%; 97% in February) and only 0.2% (0.3% in February) did not receive any in-company training in March. In addition, a smaller proportion of apprentices were employed on the job to a limited extent (2%; 4% in February) and, at 7% (14% in February), the proportion of apprentices working from home was half that of the previous month. The proportion of apprentices who had to work at home for the in-company part of their training was almost zero (1% in February)².

However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, apprentices have missed out on learning content, which they will not be able to catch up on during the rest of their training.

For this reason, some companies have undertaken measures to help them fill in the gaps. In this regard, 34% of companies (37% in March 2021) indicated that they support their apprentices in this effort, which is similar to the previous year. This support is particularly important for apprentices who are in their final year and who take their qualification procedure (QP) in the summer.

Apprentices in the final year of their apprenticeship (group 3) are young people who will complete their qualification procedure (QP) in the summer and then enter the job market. Companies with apprentices in their final year³ were even more optimistic in March about equal opportunities in the 2022 qualification procedure. They believed all apprentices would have a fair chance in the forthcoming qualification procedure if it were organised on a regular basis (4.39 on a 5-point scale from 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely yes"; 4.24 in February). The companies even considered the equality of opportunity in the 2022 qualification procedure to be somewhat better than before the crisis (4.32⁴). In March of the previous year, companies rated the equality of opportunity for the QP 2021 as significantly lower (3.89 for the QP 2021).

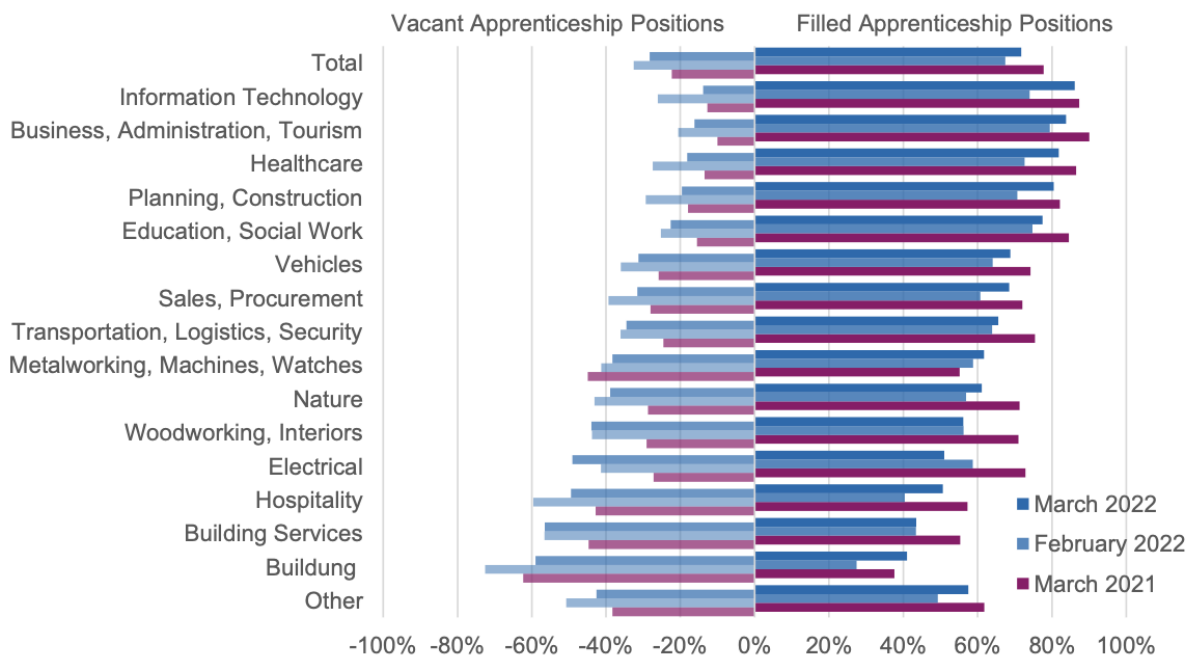


Figure 2: Apprenticeship positions to be filled and filled by occupational category and in comparison to the previous month and year. Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys of March 2022, February 2022 and March 2021. The left-hand side of the graph shows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

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 (tbbk-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 Only companies with apprentices in their final year answered the questions about the qualification procedure.

⁴ This result 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 wishing to start their apprenticeship in the summer, the outlook is slightly less positive than in the previous month: 12% (13% in February) of companies offer more apprenticeship positions for the start of Apprenticeship in 2022 than for 2021, and 63% (66% in February) offer the same number. The proportion of companies that are reducing their offer of apprenticeship positions for the summer of 2022 compared to 2021 has also increased slightly (21%; 16% in February). 4% (5% in February) are still uncertain about the number of apprenticeships they will offer. A year ago, the situation was similar: In March 2021, the proportion of companies wishing to offer fewer apprenticeship positions for the start of apprenticeship in 2021 compared to 2020 was also slightly higher than the previous month (19% in March 2021; 16% in February 2021). In addition, in March 2021, the proportion of companies that offered more apprenticeship positions for the summer of 2021 was slightly lower (8%), while those wishing to offer the same number of positions were slightly higher (69%).

In the market for apprenticeship positions, the supply of companies and the demand of future apprentices meet. In March, 72% (67% in February) of the apprenticeship positions offered for August 2022 were already occupied, while 28% (33% in February) were still vacant. This means that, although companies have taken another step forward in their recruitment process, they are still about one month behind the year 2021. For example, the share of occupied apprenticeship positions for the summer of 2021 was already 78% in March 2021, while in February 2021 it was at a similar level as in March 2022 (73%).

This year-on-year lag is somewhat larger in Latin Switzerland (49% in March 2022; 58% in March 2021) than in German-speaking Switzerland (74% in March 2022; 79% in March 2021). However, companies in the German-speaking part of Switzerland started the recruitment process later and were able to catch up compared to the previous month⁵. It appears that the recruitment process in both language regions is still slightly less advanced than it was at the same time last year.

	Apprentices at work		Apprentices at home		
	Normal Work	Limited On-Site Work	Work from Home	Homework	No workplace training
Total	99%	2%	7%	0%	0.2%
Building	99%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Education/Social Work	100%	0%	1%	3%	0%
Electrical	99%	1%	3%	1%	0%
Vehicles	98%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Hospitality	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Building Services	99%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Healthcare	100%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Woodworking/Interiors	99%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Information Technology	98%	4%	25%	1%	0%
Metalworking/Machines/Watches	100%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Nature	100%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Planning/Construction	98%	0%	9%	0%	0%
Sales/Procurement	99%	1%	8%	0%	0%
Transportation/Logistics/Security	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business/Administration/Tourism	98%	3%	14%	0%	0%
Other	98%	2%	3%	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 March 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 "Vehicles" occupational field, it must be borne in mind that the weighting procedure used gives more weight to some company data than to others.

⁵ In addition, the values for Latin Switzerland are subject to greater variation than those for German-speaking Switzerland due to the small sample size.

The different professional categories are also more or less advanced in filling their positions. Figure 2 shows that the occupational groups "IT" (86%; 74% in February), "Business, Administration, Tourism" (84%; 79% in February), "Healthcare" (82%; 73% in February) and "Planning, Construction" (80%; 71% in February) have made the most progress in recruitment in March, and that at least 80% of the apprenticeship positions offered for 2020 have already been filled. The occupational fields of "Building" (41%; February: 27%) and "Hospitality" (51%; February: 40%) were also able to make up some ground. However, together with the category "Building Services" (43%; identical to February) they are still at the bottom of the list and have only been able to fill less than or just half of their apprenticeship positions. In March of last year, companies had already allocated slightly more apprenticeship positions for the summer start in almost all occupational fields.

However, it is not always easy for companies to find suitable apprentices to fill vacancies. The companies reported that recruiting suitable apprentices is slightly more difficult this year than before the pandemic (value of -0.29 on a scale of -2 "much more difficult" to 2 "much easier"). A year ago, companies were also finding it slightly more difficult to find suitable apprentices than before the crisis, and they rated recruitment to be as difficult as it was in March of this year (-0.28 in March 2021).

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. Compared to the previous month, the situation has returned to normal. 99% (97% in February) of the apprentices were able to work normally on site, and both, the proportion of apprentices who were present on site to a limited extent (2%; 4% in January) and who were working from home (7%; 14% in February) have halved compared to the previous month. In addition, the proportion of apprentices with homework for the in-company part of the training was almost zero (1% in February) and 0.2% (0.3% in February) did not receive in-company training. Figure 3 also shows that a return to normality is visible in the different occupational categories: In the category "IT", almost all apprentices worked on-site again (98%; 87% in February), while 4% (9% in February) were working on a limited basis and 25% (41% in February) were working from home. In the category "Business, Administration, Tourism", 98% (96% in February) of the apprentices were already working normally in the company, 3% (4% in February) were working on-site to a limited extent and 14% (21% in February) were working from home. The categories "Planning, Construction" (9%; 12% in February) and "Sales, Procurement" (8%; 12% in February) also had fewer apprentices working from home than in the previous month.

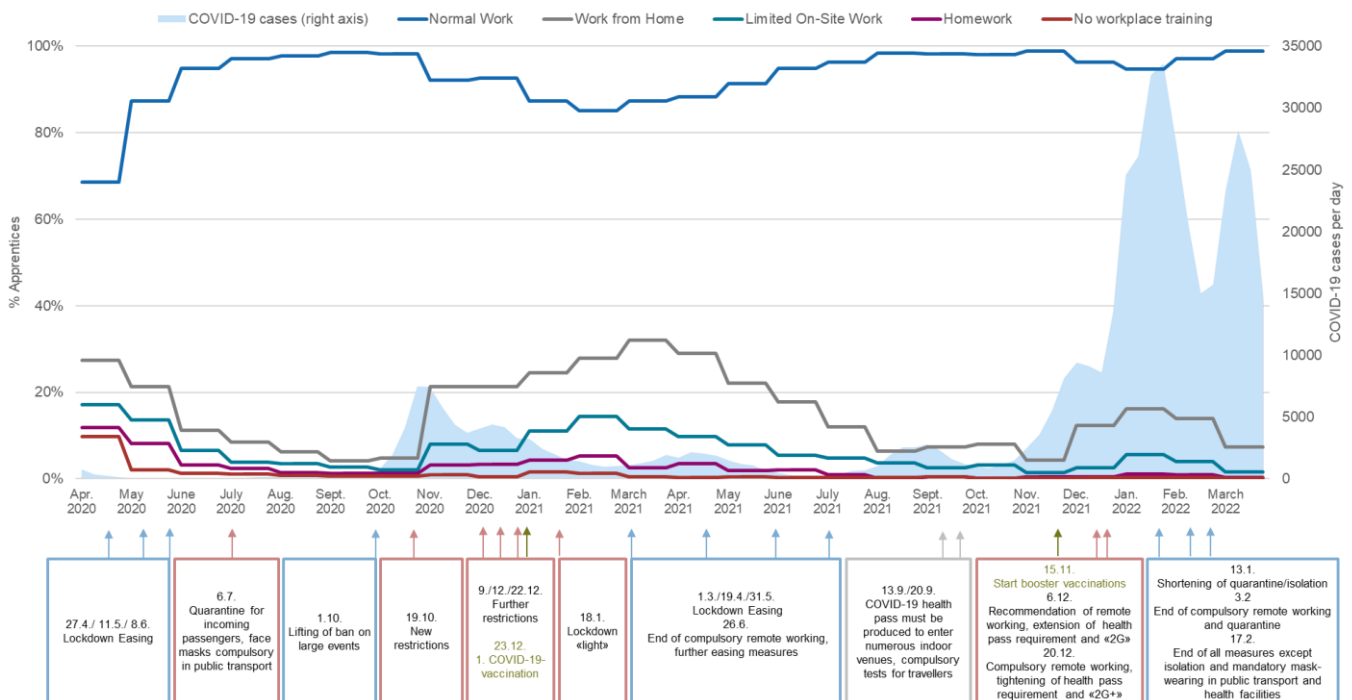


Figure 4: Catching up on missed content due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between April 2020 and March 2022. The graph shows, on the left vertical axis, whether companies believe that apprentices will not (1) or definitely (5) 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 March 2022.

Figure 4 shows the temporal evolution of the different activities of the apprentices in relation to the daily COVID-19 cases and the actions of the authorities. The situation of apprentices has normalized again, both in comparison with the previous month and with the situation one year earlier. In March 2021, the proportion of apprentices working normally was 87%, the proportion working in a limited way was 11% and the proportion of apprentices working from home was even 32%.

Quarantine/Isolation measures

Due to the protection rules defined to avoid COVID-19 infections, apprentices are sometimes forced to go into temporary quarantine or isolation during their training. In this context, despite the removal of contact quarantine on February 3, companies continued to be heavily affected by these absences due to the high number of cases: 37% (identical to February) of companies indicated that they had apprentices in quarantine/isolation in the four weeks preceding the survey. In addition, the proportion of companies with vocational trainers (26%; 21% in February) and other employees (68%; 59% in February) in quarantine/isolation has increased.

The proportion of people in quarantine/isolation reflects this. In the average company, 12% (13% in February) of apprentices, 9% (7% in February) of vocational trainers and 13% (11% in February) of other employees were in quarantine/isolation. However, companies still consider apprenticeships to be relatively unaffected by quarantine/isolation measures (1.73 on a scale of 1 "slightly

affected" to 5 "strongly affected"; 1.74 in February).

Impact on practical and theoretical knowledge

According to the companies, the practical and theoretical knowledge of apprentices has deteriorated somewhat as a result of the changes brought due to the pandemic. They rated the loss of practical knowledge of apprentices to be similarly high as two months ago and one year ago (-0.24 on a scale of -2 "much worse knowledge" to 2 "much better knowledge"; -0.26 in January, -0.27 in March 2021)⁶. The left side of Figure 5 shows that companies attribute changes in practical knowledge to both difficulties in transmitting learning content while working from home (41%; 39% in January) and to learning content forgone due to quarantine/isolation measures (39%; 36% in January). A year ago, in March 2021, more weight was given to working from home (53%) and less weights was given quarantine/isolation measures (21%). Regarding the lack of theoretical knowledge of apprentices, companies also considered the situation to be similar to that of two years ago, or even slightly better (-0.25 on a scale of -2 "much worse knowledge" to 2 "much better knowledge"; -0.28 in January). In this regard, companies were still less optimistic (-0.36) in March 2021. The right-hand side of Figure 5 shows that the difficulty of conveying distance learning content is still the main cause of the lack of theoretical knowledge for most of the companies (54%; 52% in January). In March 2021, however, this cause was held more responsible for theoretical knowledge loss of the apprentices (67%).

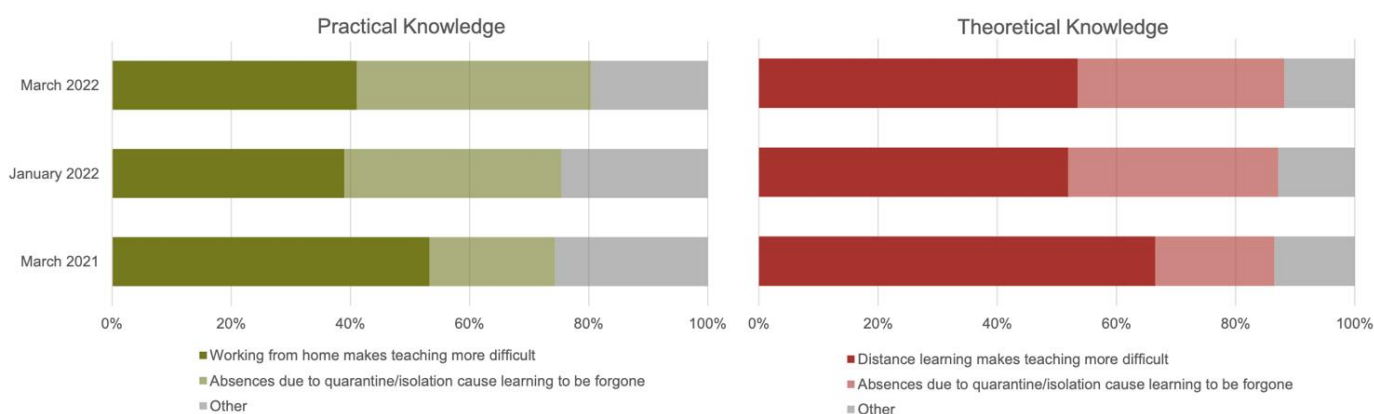


Figure 5: Reasons explaining lower practical and theoretical knowledge of apprentices.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the March 2021, January 2022, and March 2022 Apprenticeship Pulse surveys. The graphs show, for each month and separately for practical and theoretical knowledge, the shares of the different reasons for modifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic in an average training company.

⁶ The Questions on practical and theoretical knowledge are only asked every two months.

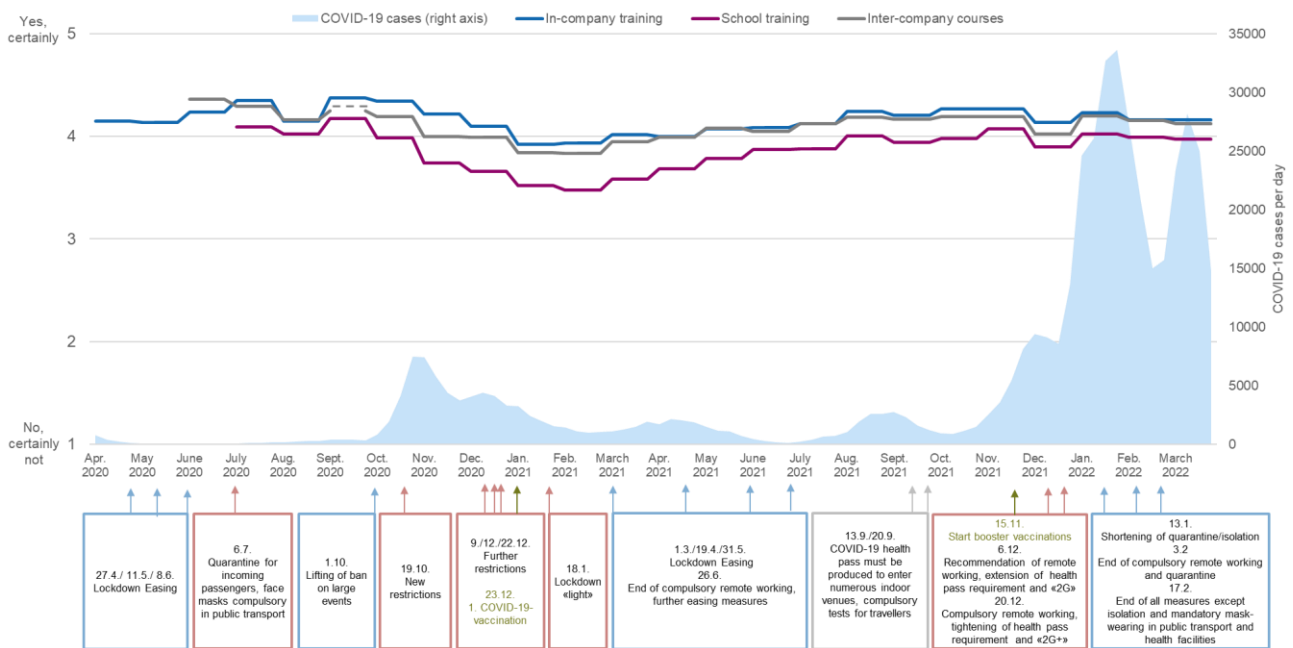


Figure 6: Catching up on missed content due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Catching up on missed content

Figure 6 shows the effects of the pandemic on apprentice skill acquisition and compares the results with changes in the number of infections and actions taken over time. In March 2022, companies were as optimistic as the previous month that apprentices could still catch up in in-company training (4.16 on a scale of 5 for "can definitely be caught up"; identical to February), in-school training (3.97; 3.99 in February), and in inter-company courses (4.12; 4.16 in February).

34% (37% in March 2021) of companies have taken measures to help apprentices overcome their shortcomings, which is almost the same as last year. 27% of the companies apply the selected measures to all apprentices, 2% limit themselves to supporting those in the first year of apprenticeship, and 6% only those in the final year of training. Figure 7 shows the different measures taken by companies to help apprentices catch up on forgone learning content during the rest of the apprenticeship. Most companies report that apprentices are supervised more intensively by trainers (76%; 70% in March 2021) and that they have more time in the company to learn (59%; 63% in March 2021). Thus, this year, companies are putting more emphasis on the supervision of apprentices and, in return, a little less on personal learning time. This is also reflected in the fact that fewer companies allow apprentices more time to study at home (5%; 21% in March 2021). Other measures included catching up on inter-company

course learning content (17%; identical to March 2021) and school learning content (14%; identical to March 2021), additional inter-company skills courses (13%; 10% in March 2021), and own online solutions for forgone school learning content (3%; 2% in March 2021).

While a relatively high proportion of companies already support their apprentices with measures, the desire for additional external support was rather low (9%; 13% in March 2021). 7% of companies wished for support for all apprentices, 1% only for apprentices in their final year, and the proportion that only wished for support for apprentices in their first year of apprenticeship was almost zero. Fittingly, in general, the companies see the greatest need for apprentices to catch up on the learning content forgone in school, those companies with an additional need for support also most frequently wanted support for catching up on forgone school learning content (72%). Also frequently mentioned was the desire for psychological and social offers to motivate the apprentices (47%) and the wish for offers for catching up on forgone learning content of inter-company courses (37%). Other wishes were subsidies (26%), offers for catching up on forgone in-company learning content (23%) and a tutoring hotline (18%).

Apprentices in the final year (group 3)

Companies with apprentices in their final year were even slightly more optimistic than last month and believe that it is possible that the qualification procedure

can be carried out normally this year despite the pandemic (4.65 points on a scale of 1 "certainly not" to 5 "certainly"; 4.56 in February). Given the fact that almost all measures were removed on February 17, this high level of confidence was to be expected. A year ago, firms were more skeptical that the QP would be held on a regular basis in 2021 (4.24 in March 2021), a situation that reflects the situation that prevailed at the time.

In addition, companies were optimistic that this year all

apprentices will have a fair chance if the qualification process is held on a regular basis (4.39 points on a scale of 1 "definitely not" to 5 "definitely"; 4.24 in February). Companies rated the equality of opportunity to be slightly better for the QP 2022 compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic (4.32). In March 2021, companies were slightly less confident in this regard (3.89). Thus, the situation of apprentices in their final year has further improved with respect to equal opportunity in the QP.

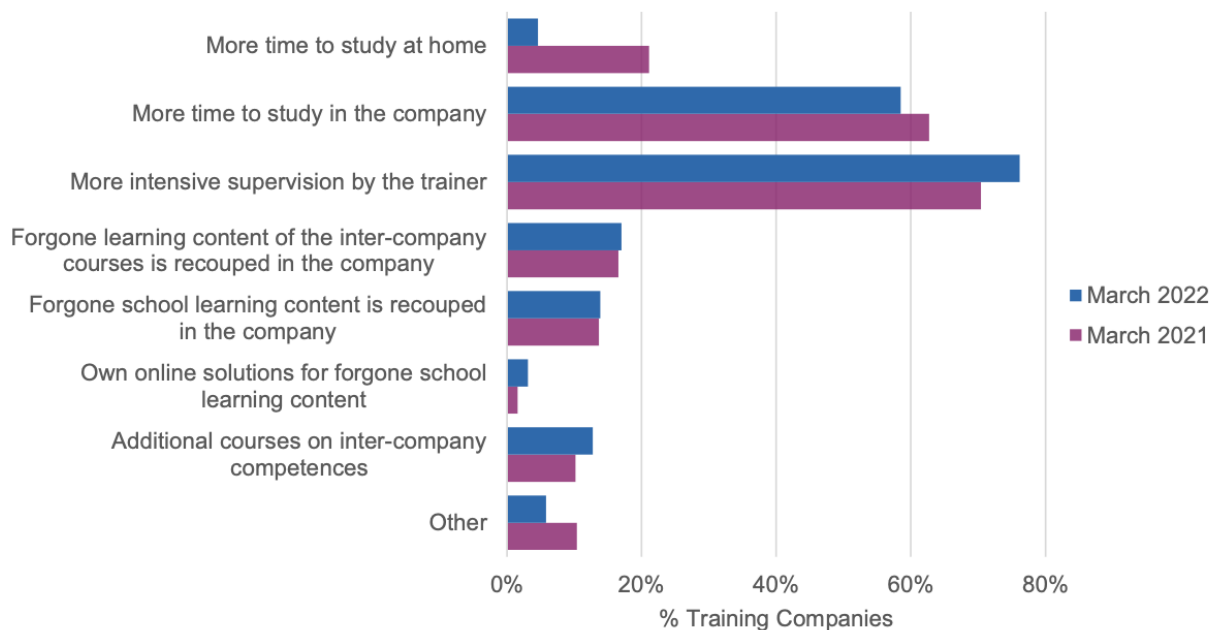


Figure 7: Reasons against a regular organization of the 2022 qualification procedure and for a reduction in equal opportunities.

Remarks: The results are based on weighted data from the monthly "Apprenticeship Pulse" surveys conducted between March 2021 and March 2022. The figure shows the reasons why companies think that a regular qualification process 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.

Data and representativeness

1984 training companies (2059 in February) of various sizes, from all cantons and occupational groups, took part in the Apprenticeship Pulse in March 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 4.24% in March (4.61% in February). The return rate calculation is not exact, however, as the survey was also distributed through other channels. The companies surveyed offered a total of 16,960⁷ apprenticeship positions (17,193 in February) in various regions and occupational categories. In March, they covered 2.17% (2.25% in February) of all

training companies in Switzerland. Coverage was better in German-speaking Switzerland (2.65%) than in Latin Switzerland (0.52%). The best represented categories were "IT" (6.15%), "Planning, Construction" (5.10%), "Transport, Logistics, Security" (4.90%), "Metalworking, Machines, Watches" (4.85%) and "Electrical Engineering" (4.70%), while "Sales, Procurement" (1.62%), "Vehicles" (1.62%) and "Nature" (2.00%) were rather underrepresented. The weighting procedure used⁸, however, corrects for differences in representation 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)
- Coordination and Documentation Forest Education (Codoc)
- 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 →