

# Dual vocational training in the Catalan education system

## Executive summary

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# DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE CATALAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

## REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Main results

#### The Report

Various conceptual approaches to dual vocational training (VT) coexist at European level. One of the contributions that has obtained greater consensus is that of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), which defines it broadly as that formal education where learning is developed alternatively in the workplace and in the educational institution and which leads to an officially recognized professional qualification (CEDEFOP, 2016). Likewise, it defines apprenticeship (in the strict sense) as a training program in which, in addition to fulfilling the general characteristics of dual VT, the apprentice has the status of employee and receives a remuneration for his/her work, generally under the protection of a contract between the apprentice and the training company.

Although dual VT is a consolidated learning modality in Central European countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Austria, it was implemented for the first time in Catalonia the 2012-2013 course, despite the fact that the first pilot experiences date back to 2008. Resolution ENS/1204/2012, of May 25, on the organization of alternating training in initial VT teachings, organizes "a new model of alternating training", using the preamble wording, articulated through collaboration agreements between companies and organizations where training is carried out and educational centers.

These training experiences can be articulated in two ways: On the one hand, in *simple alternation*, which combines time of training in the educational center and the students' time of activity in the company without an academic recognition of the time spent in the company. And on the other, *alternation with dual training*, in which time of activity in the company entails the academic recognition of the learning achieved by the students.

In the 2014-2016 promotion, 95.8% of the students made a VT program in dual alternation and the remaining 4.2%, in simple alternation. In this promotion, the legal link between the students and the company was a scholarship in 52.3% of the cases and, in the remaining 47.7%, an employment contract. Year after year the weight of the scholarship has grown and the 2016-2017 course represents 81.0%.

Also in 2012, the central Government regulated dual VT in the educational and employment field through Royal Decree 1529/2012, of November 8, which develops the training and apprenticeship contract and establishes the bases of dual VT, which has allowed the implementation of this form of educational modality throughout the State.

Within this context and with the first three graduated promotions (2012-2014, 2013-2015 and 2014-2016), the CTESC, on its own initiative, has decided to make an analysis of this initial deployment in order to detect the points of improvement and to propose solutions. The CTESC considers that the development of dual VT provided for by Law 10/2015, of June 19, on training and professional qualifications, may be a good opportunity to reach consensus and introduce the proposed improvements.

Likewise, and to the extent that the available data allow it, the advantages that are associated with dual VT are contrasted within the set of the initial vocational training<sup>1</sup>. Broadly speaking, these are:

- Improvement of young people's employability

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<sup>1</sup> The initial vocational training is the one that is done in the education system, different from that which is directly related with employment and the labour market.

- Youth unemployment reduction
- Premature school drop out reduction
- Improvement of the relationship between training centers and companies in the field of people's training

Likewise, dual VT benefits companies, as it contributes to the improvement of human resources qualification, since it facilitates the selection and recruitment of talented people and allows to adapt training to the real needs of the company.

However, it should be noted that the performed analysis has been limited by the quantity and the quality of the available data provided by the Department for Education. On the one hand, the same information is not available for the three promotions of students and on the other, it must be taken into account that the primary sources of information only allow a limited descriptive statistical analysis, given the conditions in which data have been collected and recorded to be exploited.

On the basis of this information, although insufficient, the starting hypothesis has been contrasted. That is to say, dual VT has a number of advantages compared to the initial VT set. Thus, although the initial VT is considered the professionalizing training of the education system, it can be stated that dual VT contributes more intensively to improve young people's employability.

In this sense, the data analyzed in the report show how 96.5% of dual VT students are satisfied with the program and that 81.7% of dual VT students of the 2014-2016 promotion consider, in a high or very high degree, that dual vocational training will help them to enter the labour market. Likewise, on the basis of the information about labour insertion of VT graduates for the 2014-2015 academic year (latest available data), we find that the graduate's job placement is higher in dual VT than in the whole of the initial VT: 70.0% vs. 51.1%. In parallel, the conviction that dual VT has improved the employability of graduates (92.9%) is higher than in the initial VT (79.9%).

Given the reduced weight of dual VT in the initial VT as a whole (4.3% in 2015-2016), it can not have a meaningful effect on the unemployment rate reduction, although the available data allow us to affirm that dual VT contributes positively to its decline, since it makes easier the labour insertion of the people who attend it.

Likewise, the relationship between dual VT and the reduction of premature school drop out is not clear from the available information. In spite of this, data show that the percentage of dual VT graduates who continue to study (21.6%) is lower than that of the initial VT group (38.0%). This reduced educational continuity can be motivated precisely by the higher labour insertion that this formative modality presents, which can be an incentive for young people at risk of early school dropout.

The working conditions of dual VT graduates also diverge slightly from those of the graduates in the initial VT as a whole, both in terms of indefinite recruitment and the type of workday and remuneration. Thus, although the majority of contracts of the VT dual graduates are temporary (58.7%), the indefinite recruitment of graduates in dual VT is 37.0%, 10 percentage points above that of the set of the initial VT in the last year (27.3%).

On the other hand, three out of every four contracts (76.7%) of dual VT graduates are full-time, more than 21 percentage points above those of the general VT (55.3%). Finally, it should be noted that, in the case of dual VT, 49.5% of the medium-grade formative cycle (CFGM) graduates and 52.6% of the high-grade formative cycle (CFGS) graduates earn more than € 1,200. On the other hand, in the set of the initial VT, only 17.9% and 27.0% of the graduates reach this interval, respectively. Possibly this difference is explained by the fact that graduates of dual VT occupy jobs in the most remunerated industrial sector.

The latest comparative advantage of dual VT is that it contributes more to improve the relationship between the training center and the company in the field of people's training. As stated in the report, the implementation of dual VT experiences entails a direct relationship between the training centers and the companies or entities where students make their training stay.

The formal instruments to articulate this relationship are the collaboration agreements and the individual training agreements for each stay. In addition to these instruments, a number of agents intervene in the implementation of dual VT, whose functions are detailed deeply in the report (see chapter 4). These agents include the person doing the center tutoring and the one doing the company tutoring, who have to maintain a close and constant relationship throughout the educational experience, both in terms of organizational and pedagogical aspects.

On the other hand, given the positive overall assessment of companies, it can also be considered that dual VT has contributed to increase the qualification of the human resources of companies and has favoured the selection and attraction of talented people, facilitating a greater adaptation of the training to the needs of the company and improving the bond between it and the training centers. The final result has been the creation of synergies and a cooperative relationship that can favour other actions, such as the use of company facilities by students and by the teaching staff, technical assessment or teachers' training by company experts, training stays for teachers in companies as well as the possibility of providing training in a work environment.

The description of the implementation process that is followed to launch a dual VT experience, the roles assumed by each agent and the quantitative data available on the process have allowed to identify a series of strong and weak points. Much of the considerations and recommendations agreed upon by the members of the CTESC and which are attached below are based on this analysis.

Most of the strengths are based on their potential to adapt to the needs of training centers and companies, on certain elements of flexibility, as well as on their positive relationship with the labour market insertion and the employability of the participating students. Strengthening the relationship between the educational and the productive world in the areas discussed is also considered a strong point that must be fostered.

In spite of this, there are a number of elements that can be improved: the necessary integration in the governance of the system of other actors, such as the most representative social agents, as well as the necessary coordination between the departments responsible for education and work. Other weak points detected refer to organizational issues: the need to simplify administrative procedures, the management tools of dual VT and the treatment of heterogeneous groups, as well as the need for specific human and economic resources.

The development of the Professional Training and Qualification Law is also one of the improvements aimed at. In parallel, the need to provide pedagogical training to the people who hold the company tutoring is confirmed, as well as to provide more spaces for participation to the companies in some of the key stages, such as the concretion of the training activities in the company or the selection of the students that will make the stay. Finally, the need to expand dual VT and to incorporate small and medium-sized businesses is emphasized.

### *The data*

Since this is the first report with data on the initial implementation of dual VT in the Catalan education system, some of the main analyzed data are highlighted below:

- Training in alternation in Catalonia is fundamentally dual (95.8%).

- The graduate's labour insertion is higher in dual VT than in the set of the initial VT, 70.0% and 51.1% respectively in the 2014-2015 course.
- 88.5% of professional families and 66.7% of the qualifications can be taken in dual.
- Most dual training cycles belong to the services sector (58.6%), although the weight of industrial cycles (38.4%) exceeds the set of the initial VT (25.5%).
- Students enrolled in dual VT have gone from 590 the 2012-2013 academic year to 5.075 the 2015-2016 course, which represents 4.3% of the initial VT.
- Three out of four students (74.7%) enrolled in dual VT make their training stay in the company.
- Students graduated in dual VT have gone from 160 the 2012-2013 academic year to 943 the last course with available data (2014-2015).
- More than one in three institutes (36.4%) have made the 2015-2016 course dual.
- The weight of public institutes in dual VT projects is superior to that of the set of the initial VT, 76.2% and 56.6% respectively. However, the participation of private centers has increased, going from 18.8% the 2012-2014 promotion to 23.8% in 2014-2016.
- 1% of Catalan companies with employees and 8% of those with staff of 10 and more employees took part in dual VT in the last year.
- 54% of the companies that collaborate with dual VT are medium-sized, with a staff between 11 and 200 people. However, large companies (more than 200) have a higher weight than in the set of the initial VT (24% vs. 6%).
- With regard to the 2014-2016 promotion, in 52.3% of the cases the legal link between the apprentice and the company is a scholarship and in the remaining 47.7%, a work contract. Year after year the weight of the scholarship has grown and reaches 81.0% in 2016-2017.
- Regarding the first two promotions, the apprentices' average gross salary in proportion to the effective workday with an employment contract has increased in the 2014-2016 promotion and stands at 549.2 euros. On the other hand, the average gratification of the apprentices with scholarships has decreased and in the 2014-2016 promotion it stands at 326.4 euros.

## Considerations and recommendations

Throughout this section a series of considerations and recommendations are made in order to establish a future dual VT model in Catalonia. The exposition is divided into three sections. First of all, some elements are pointed out in relation to the dual VT model in Catalonia and its governance. Next, the reflections focus on its organization and implementation. And finally, the CTESC takes up a stance in view of the expansion of dual VT throughout the territory.

### The dual VT model in Catalonia and its governance

#### *Towards an own dual VT model in Catalonia*

The implementation of dual VT in Catalonia aims to build a more useful VT for both companies and citizens. As reflected in the report, dual VT can contribute to improve young people's employment and at the same time to facilitate transition from the educational to the labour sphere. It aims to be an important tool in order to fight against youth unemployment, a structural problem both in the Catalan labour market and in an important part of the countries of the European Union. In addition, dual VT can become a strategy of pedagogical innovation within a knowledge economy.

Anyway, there are several elements that must be taken into account. A first challenge is to improve the levels of investment and financing. In a context of declining public and private investment, the levels of public investment of the countries of European reference must be achieved, as well as the participation of other actors. There are available funds of the VT share, of the European Social Fund, of the general State budgets and of each autonomous community that have to be coordinated.

Secondly, an effort is needed to improve conceptualization and strategic planning. The implemented dual VT does not respond to a series of basic elements that recommend different institutions, as the European Commission or the European social agents in the last agreements reached, such as the fact that dual VT in Catalonia does not respond to a process of consensus and social dialogue. Other missing elements are the commitment to establish a labour relationship with the apprentice, to recognize the learning acquired in the company or the establishment of pre-established and measurable quality standards and objectives, among others. In a context of crisis, apprenticeship places become scarce, an aspect that requires a planned growth in sectors, territories and companies with a capacity for training and qualification.

In order to have its own dual VT model in Catalonia, it would be advisable that this would be provided with a governance held by the departments which are competent for education, training and work and that the most representative social agents of Catalonia had formal participation in its government.

The dual VT model should be unique in terms of its structure or configuration and, at the same time, dynamic to adapt to the different realities of the productive fabric. As defined by CEDEFOP in its report *Governance and financing of apprenticeships* (CEDEFOP, 2016):

"Dual VT is defined as a formal education and training program where learning is carried out alternately in a workplace and in the educational institution, leading to an officially recognized professional qualification. The term 'apprenticeship' (in the strict sense) applies to programs in which, in addition to the aforementioned features, students have the status of employee and are remunerated for their work and which usually have a contractual relationship between the students and the company".

In addition to the dual VT model, other figures could co-exist, and it will be necessary to measure their possibilities of implementation or improvement, such as alternation without academic recognition, training in the workplace or other types of practices, apprenticeship, etc., which in the future can be defined.

In this sense, the CTESC recommends

1. To bet strongly to develop a quality dual VT model with an integrated vision, since it facilitates the transition from the educational world to the workplace, with the investments that are required.
2. To promote a framework social agreement for dual VT in Catalonia with a bipartite consensus between business and trade union organizations, in the general field of collective bargaining in Catalonia, which should be transferred to the sectorial and company collective bargaining.
3. To specify the dual VT model where the objectives that must be achieved, both quantitative and qualitative, are defined, with the participation and consensus of the social agents and the educational and labor administration.
4. To promote facilitating elements and new organizational initiatives that introduce greater flexibility to the model, in order to promote the participation of companies, and especially micro-enterprises and small businesses, taking into account the heterogeneity of the productive sector and of the territory.
5. To start initiatives that promote links between centers and companies in their environment, providing the centers with higher organizational and management autonomy in order to adapt the training offer to the needs of the specific business network, as well as a management more focused towards the labour market.

### *Governance in dual VT*

Dual VT requires an appropriate governance model to manage the complexity of a training project that needs the complicity of the labour and educational world. Therefore, it is crucial to build a solid structure that accommodates the different key agents, so that they participate in the decision-making with the consequent benefits in the implementation and expansion of dual VT. The report mentions the roles of the Department for Education, the training centers, with special emphasis on the center tutoring, on companies, with special reference to company tutoring, and students. The Catalan experience does not formally recognize the role of social agents, a fact which should be corrected.

Likewise, the dual VT experiences that have been carried out demonstrate a lack of coordination between the administrations which generates confusion and difficulties to the people and companies that constitute the target group.

The normative development in Catalonia can offer possibilities of improvement if the objectives are determined by consensus, in a co-responsible manner and from a joint social and economic vision. Not only quantitative growth is important; it is also necessary to prioritize a model adapted to the Catalan reality with forecasts of qualitative, sustainable growth and added value.

The assumption by the company of its role as a training agent is a key element to guarantee the success of dual VT. This role must also be recognized by other actors in the system. Altogether, it requires a cultural change on the part of the actors, of the system and the productive sector.

In this sense, the CTESC recommends

6. To incorporate the most representative social agents in the governance and the development of the dual VT model.
7. To display immediately Law 10/2015, of June 19, on professional training and qualification and the governing bodies that it envisages. This development must be done in a coordinated way with Law 13/2015, of July 9, on the organization of the employment system and the Public Employment Service of Catalonia.
8. The governing committee of the Professional Training and Qualification System and the Professional Training and Qualifications Council of Catalonia should be the organizations that allow to bring together different stakeholders around the table in the participation process of the decision making.
9. To define the agreement model of the dual VT system, both territorially and sectorially, guaranteeing the coordination of the territorial and sectorial councils.

### *The evaluation of dual VT by students, companies and training centers*

The available data on the evaluation of the dual VT of the education system are quite positive. 96.5% of the dual VT students of the last promotion, 91.2% of companies and 83.8% of the training centers were very or quite satisfied. In addition, 88.9% of companies were quite or very satisfied with the training with which students arrive to the company. However, there is a significant lack of consolidated data regarding the evaluation of dual VT.

The CTESC recommends

10. To provide systematic information about dual VT, in an open data format, so as to have a set of indicators that allow to track the objectives that must be achieved.
11. To have an up-to-date territorialized map of the dual VT implementation, by number of students and professional families, that could be confronted with the employment needs of the productive sectors.

12. To commission the Catalan Institute for Public Policy Assessment (IVÀLUA) an evaluation of the dual VT, given that this report is a first approach to know the experiences of dual VT in Catalonia.

### *For an integrated system of information, guidance and support*

The lack of an integrated system of information, guidance and accompaniment impacts negatively on the value of vocational training, leaving it as a second option and a network of containment of premature school dropout. VT requires the best skills and abilities, as any other stage. This system is key in order to create a bridge between the compulsory and post-compulsory stage and to articulate a lifelong learning that facilitates people's labour and training transitions.

Similarly, it must be kept in mind that there is a significant bias of gender in the professional families of VT in general that probably dual VT reproduces.

The CTESC recommends

13. To establish an integrated professional guidance system that situates the person's needs, abilities, interests and potential in the center of the system and those of the labour market in the origin and destination of training activities. This system must have the active participation of the social agents.
14. This integrated system of information, guidance and accompaniment must be a structural support to ensure success in education, training, insertion in the labour market and the personal and social development of people to cope with training and labour transitions throughout life, which are increasingly frequent. In addition, it should coordinate and harmonize services from an integrated perspective, with the consequent improvement in effectiveness and efficiency.
15. To encourage families' participation in the system to foster co-responsibility and codecision. Similarly, to promote communication plans for society as a whole to influence, for example, gender stereotypes or the value of VT studies.
16. To promote mechanisms, resources, figures and accompaniment measures for people within the integrated information and guidance system in order to guarantee continuous individual attention and the achievement of the potential initial itineraries. In the case of dual VT, the accompaniment would give continuity to the guidance processes initiated in the compulsory stage and would contribute to the reduction of the premature school dropout rates.
17. To develop an open and inclusive VT dual model that eliminates any type of barrier to continue with the student's educational itinerary, either towards other types of vocational training or towards university studies.

### *Dual VT and the labour insertion*

One of the priority objectives of dual VT must be a higher level of labour insertion than the initial VT set. The job insertion potential provided by dual VT is patently clear in the perception of the students: 81.7% of the students of the 2014-2016 promotion consider that this modality will help them to enter the labour market. This perception is confirmed by the available labour insertion data.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, the labour insertion of the dual VT graduates is higher than that of the initial VT group, 70% and 51.1%, respectively. In addition, the job is adapted to the training taken in 90.6% of cases, the weight of the indefinite contracting is almost 10 percentage points above the set of the initial VT and the full-time contracts accounted for 76.7% of the total, 21 points above the set of the initial VT. Although it can be explained in part by a greater weight of jobs in the industrial sector, the remuneration of the graduates of this modality is higher than that of the total of VT graduates: 49.5% of the graduates of CFGM and 52.6% of the CFGS earn more than 1,200 euros per month, whereas in the set of the initial VT only 17.9% and 27.0% of the graduates, respectively, reach this interval.

Even so, the incipient implementation and the availability of apprenticeship options makes that participation in the programs gets reduced, in general terms, to few people in a group-class. This fact can limit the opportunities to make dual VT to the students that already had greater possibilities of transition to the labour market and exclude the ones that by academic or socio-economic reasons will continue without opting for the potential benefits of this formative modality, which are, between others, to avoid premature school drop-outs and structural youth unemployment.

The employment relationship is also a determining factor according to the recommendations of the international organizations<sup>2</sup> to make feasible, in economic terms, that the involvement of companies in training has an economic return and a decisive influence on the labour market insertion of young people. In this sense, the importance of the terms cost-benefit<sup>3</sup>, cost-effectiveness<sup>4</sup> or ROI (return of investment) is worth noting.

The CTESC recommends

18. To make visible the potentialities of dual VT to the students and, especially, the opportunities for labour insertion in the companies of the territory and the sector.
19. To implement a permanent system for prospecting the current and future needs of professionals by sectors and territories, as well as the competencies associated with these, in the short, medium and long term, as provided for in Law 10/2015 of training and professional qualification. This system should have sufficient provision of analytical tools and prospecting teams in relation to the companies, as well as a knowledge management platform that allows sharing of information among all the agents involved in the process.

## Organization and implementation

### *The aims when implementing dual VT*

Resolutions EDU/2769/2008 and ENS/1204/2012 indicate some of the aims pursued by the Government when implementing dual VT in Catalonia. The initial objectives were to encourage enrollment in some training cycles, such as the industrial ones, betting on the figure of the apprentice, as well as enhancing people's professional qualification throughout their lives. As a result of Resolution ENS/1204/2012, a dual VT model based on a simultaneous, integrated and coordinated process of training and work, in the training center and the company, is progressively set up.

Similarly, there is an interest to improve training, qualification and personal development of young people who begin their professionalization in a specific field, as well as to establish a greater linkage and co-responsibility among VT centers and companies in the training and qualification process of the apprentices. Finally, it is intended that the dual VT will become a way to incorporate into the labour market those who finish the general education.

The CTESC recommends

20. To improve the information on the dual VT offer, its aims and characteristics, both that facilitated in the information and guidance processes, and during the students' enrollment.
21. To achieve its aims, dual VT must have enough students, which in certain industrial branches does not happen. For this reason, it is necessary to work in order to reward this type of training and to publicize its professional possibilities, such as through academic and professional guidance.

<sup>2</sup> Cedefop (2016) and Ecorys, IES and IRS (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Wolter and Mühlemann (2015).

<sup>4</sup> UEAPME, Business Europe and CEEP (2016).

### *Responsibility of the implantation, modalities and target group*

Currently, the training centers are responsible for the effective implementation of dual VT. The data confirm a greater weight of the public centers, 76.2% of the dual VT total. Even so, the weight of private centers has grown over the years since its introduction.

Resolution ENS/1204/2012 regulates the two modes of training in alternation, the simple and the dual one. The first one is considered as a transitory modality and in fact, its presence is residual, only 4.2% of alternating training is simple.

There are practically no homogeneous groups that take dual VT and one in four enrolled students did not make the training stay in the company. This fact is explained, among other reasons, by a mismatch between the supply and demand in the labour market of some professional families, a lack of stay offers in the company, because a part of the students already work or because they do not meet the established requirements. This lack of homogeneity generates management and teaching difficulties in the training centers. The challenge is important: it is necessary to guarantee the homogeneity of the learnings achieved by the students, not only between those who take dual training and those who do not, but also among the students who do dual in different companies, since the learning they do may not be the same.

The CESC recommends

22. To improve the management and organization of heterogeneous groups (where not all students do dual), both from the point of view of gaining knowledge and of the management of the class group. In addition to a larger provision of resources (staff, dedication, etc.) to optimize their management, it would be advisable that, once the stay in the company is completed, a training period will be held either in the center or in an intermediate institution to complement the qualifications and thus ensure that the knowledge obtained by all students is homogeneous.
23. To opt for the VT modality in simple alternation as an effective alternative for some companies, since it is a way of achieving the concepts learned in the training center and the practice acquired in the workplace.
24. To reach a consensus on training plans in the sectorial collective bargaining as well as on the most efficient way of distributing the activities that must be carried out during the learning period.

### *Specific economic resources*

It must be born in mind that the Department for Education does not have any specific and regular budget for the operation of dual VT. Until now, the allocation of resources to the centres depends on their training offer. When the centres have offered places in dual vocational training in cycles that were already working, they have not received any additional funding and, therefore, they have implemented it with the available human and material resources. On the contrary, the centres that have implemented additional cycles, set out in a dual model from the start, with agreements with companies, have received the necessary staff and equipment.

In this sense, the CTESC recommends

25. To establish an own budget for the specific dual VT implementation.
26. To establish a specific budget item dedicated to promoting innovation within this modality, such as the financing of pilot programs or the promotion of good practices.

### *Duration and content of the training*

International bodies recommend medium and long-term apprenticeship programmes (up to four years), which make possible the apprentice qualification, the minor specialization in the tasks of a specific company (based on a balance of specific and general competencies) and the establishment of cost-benefit parameters that allow the involvement of the company in training in qualitative terms.

The CTESC recommends

27. To make more flexible and speed up curricular adaptations, given that it is a key element to increase the interest of companies for this training modality. For example, that new content can be added to the curriculum if the need is detected.
28. To promote 3 or 4 years long dual VT cycles, along with the possibility of double degrees, specialization degrees or a combination of professional certificates and degrees.
29. To update the regulations that rule the work of minors, such as the Decree of July 26th, 1957, which regulates the work prohibited to women and minors (still in force regarding minors). The restrictions established from the perspective of occupational risks make it difficult for young people under 18 years old to gain access to training stages, which affects especially the CFGM students.
30. To include training for entrepreneurship and social economy in dual VT, as a possible way to promote labour insertion. In particular, it would be possible to develop this training under schemes of optionality and, at the same time, to foresee the constitution of professional teams oriented to make emerge the students' entrepreneurial initiatives based on three pillars: knowledge, marketing and management. The training stages could incorporate competences in intraentrepreneurship.
31. To strengthen competences related to languages, technology and information technology, as well as transversal competences such as analytical capacity or adaptation to changes, without forgetting the key competences of lifelong learning.

### *Management instruments of the dual VT*

In the everyday management of dual VT the qBID acquires considerable relevance, that is to say, the management platform created to develop training in the work centres and to which the agents currently involved in the dual VT education system have access. This platform allows monitoring, document management and collection of ratings. The improvement of qBID is one of the common aspects of the improvement proposals of students, training centres and companies.

The CTESC recommends

- 32. To simplify and streamline procedures related to dual VT, both in companies and training centres.
- 33. To adapt the qBID as a management tool of the dual VT used by the centre, by companies and students, so that it becomes a tool of a simpler and more intuitive use.
- 34. It would be necessary to rethink this platform as a means of communication between all the actors involved, surpassing the vision of academic management and with the active participation of social agents.

### *Support and monitoring in learning*

One of the challenges of the dual VT is the support and follow-up in learning, which are especially important in a context where students distribute their presence between the training centre and the company. The role of the centre tutoring with a global vision of the student's itinerary is crucial. This section monopolizes the second most important group of the students' improvement proposals.

The CTESC recommends

- 35. To improve the support that the centre provides to the students, especially in terms of the supervision of the modules in dual, the activities that are done in the workplace, the hours of work and the job that the student develops.
- 36. To inform exhaustively the students on the main characteristics of the dual VT regarding especially the students' selection, the activities to be carried out in the workplace, the school and work schedules, the working conditions, retribution and evaluation.
- 37. To ensure the continuous training of teachers in training centres, for example through stays in companies.

### *Students' selection*

The Department for Education establishes that the students' selection in order to make the training stay in the company must have a training component for students and that the allocation criteria should be public and known by them. Consequently, the centres establish unilaterally and/or with the participation of the companies the selection criteria of the students that will make the training stay in the company. When the selection process is shared, a better fit between the students and the company is achieved, the relationship between the different agents improves and facilitates the apprentice's future professional incorporation into the company. In fact, the weight of the criteria set jointly with the company is 42.1%, followed by those determined by the centre (24.1%) and those of the companies (19.9%). In general, dual VT is configured as a kind of "prize" for the best.

The CTESC recommends

- 38. To guarantee the active participation of companies in the students' selection process.

### *Training stay in the company*

The training stay in the company is one of the distinctive elements of dual VT. This process requires maximum information and transparency, which must be addressed to all company personnel and, specifically, to the workers' legal representation. The characteristics of this stay are detailed in the collaboration agreement signed by the training centre and the company. In addition to this agreement, the Department requires the signature of individual training agreements in order to formalize the apprentice's stay in alternation; they must be signed by the three parties: the centres, the company and the students.

The stay in the company can be conditioned by the geographical area where the company is located as well as by its size. In fact, large companies usually have a specific department to organize these experiences, people who do full-time company tutoring, the figure of the instructor, mechanisms to involve the entire workforce and to guarantee the rotation of the students by the company, among others. The scenario is very different for SMEs, with less capacity and less resources to allocate to training. This change of scenario refers especially to people who do business tutoring, which have to reconcile their labour tasks with the training ones.

Regarding the legal link between students and the company, the report notes an increasing trend in the use of the scholarship, compared to the contract, which amounts to 81% of cases in the 2016-2017 academic year. We could highlight two reasons: the administrative difficulties involved in managing a labour contract, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the economic costs, in terms of remuneration and social security contributions, which are lower in the case of the scholarship.

Undoubtedly, it is a field that must be taken into consideration, if we think carefully about the considerable number of improvement proposals made by the centres, the companies and the students.

In this area, the CTESC recommends

39. To encourage the employment relationship of working students in dual VT so that the employment contract is established as a common element to all students, as opposed to the scholarship.
40. To have a more adequate contract, given that the training and learning contract generates a lot of complexity for its formalization.
41. In order to involve the students, increase their commitment and achieve a good educational result, it would be good that the planned activities could have the following characteristics:
  - a) That they provide the maximum opportunities for the improvement of qualification and professional experience and that they are as close as possible to the labour reality.
  - b) If the training plan requires it, to guarantee, where appropriate, the rotation in different jobs of the company, to enrich the students' professional experience.
42. To guarantee the alternation between the training centre and the company during the whole learning itinerary, under criteria of rationalization and conciliation.
43. That the centre and company tutors ensure that they avoid tasks of little value for learning.
44. To facilitate the mobility of students, through aid to travel and accommodation.

### Company tutoring

Company tutoring is considered the key element that makes the dual VT a successful experience for students who opt for this modality.

Company tutoring has to face the challenge of combining labour tasks with the students' training tasks. 74% of the students of the 2014-2016 promotion are very or quite satisfied with this figure. Still, 12% are not.

The company tutor must receive an initial basic training imparted by the centres (12 hours, of which four are face-to-face). However, 6.5% of the companies state that the tutors of their organization have not received it. This training and its organization are the items on which companies, comparatively, show a lower satisfaction; between 7.9% and 9.9% are unsatisfied and 14.1% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. In addition, it becomes the second area with most improvement proposals.

It should be noted that company tutors do not receive any additional compensation for the task performed, which suggests that they have a certain predisposition towards training and that they see in this activity a motivation and a personal recognition.

Given its importance, the CTESC recommends

45. To define and establish, by regulation and with the consensus of the social agents, the requisites and resources necessary to carry out the tasks assigned to the company tutoring.
46. To improve the training received by company tutors from the following items:
  - a) Insofar as possible, to prioritize that it can be imparted in working hours, to increase its acceptance.
  - b) To increase the visibility of the Administration or the departments involved in training, a factor that would favour its social recognition, without detriment to the participation of the centres and the centre's tutors.
  - c) To do the training before the students make the training stay in the company.
  - d) Whenever possible, to increase the hours of training.
  - e) In the training syllabus, to include pedagogical content as well as management and evaluation contents.
  - f) To prepare a guide or a manual between the actors involved and the social agents and distribute it as a useful tool to facilitate the training, management and evaluation function of those people who are in charge of the business tutoring.
47. To facilitate the work carried out by company and training centres tutors so that they have enough time to complete their tutoring tasks with full capacity, for example, establishing a maximum ratio of students by tutoring.

### *Learning evaluation*

The learning evaluation is a joint task between the tutoring of the company, the one of the centre and the teaching team of the training centre. All in all, centre tutoring acquires a leading role. To be able to do this task correctly, it is necessary to have sufficient hours of dedication.

In this area, the CTESC recommends

48. To establish criteria for continuous evaluation of the skills acquired in the company. These criteria should be defined jointly with the departments involved, the centres and the companies. The result of this process would contribute to strengthen the pedagogical relationship between the centre and the company.
49. That the students' evaluation by the company tutoring has a binding nature or a specific weight in the final evaluation.
50. To evaluate the possibility of doing, in a general way, a formal evaluation of the acquired learning once finished their stay in the company, a responsibility that should be shared between the company and the training centre. Apart from measuring the general achievement of the objectives, it would allow to evaluate the students' transversal competences and the specific competences that have been consolidated during the training stay.

### *Relationship between the company or entity and the training centre*

The improvement of the relationship between the company or entity and the training centre is fundamental for the proper functioning of dual VT. In fact, the main bulk of the improvement proposals by students, training centres and companies refer to this point. The formal instrument to articulate this link is the collaboration agreement, with the corresponding follow-up commission.

The CTESC recommends

51. To define, in a consensual way, between the Administration and the social agents the criteria for the ratification of the companies that participate in dual VT experiences.
52. To promote the relationship between the training centre and the company in a way that improves coordination, tutoring, monitoring and evaluation of the students who participate in dual VT.
53. That the coordination between the centre and the company ensures an adequate distribution of the students workloads throughout the entire training process: classes, practices, meetings, homework, assignments and examinations.
54. That the training centres that develop dual VT or choose to do so have resources and organizational structures updated for the growing collaboration with the company (dual VT, simple alternation, practices, innovation, entrepreneurship, among other possibilities). The structural figures of coordination with the company and the tutoring ones must have a dedication in the teaching schedule and a recognition (with merits for professional promotion and salary supplements) that encourage the assumed responsibility, expand the possibilities of extension and growth, guarantee standards of maximum quality, foster training and permanent updating and constitute basic requirements to face the potential and necessary links with the productive fabric.

### *The accompaniment of the Administration to the centres*

Currently, the support provided by the Department for Education to the centres is surely one of the aspects that require to go more deeply into it, since it is the worst valued item by the training centres, although 75% are satisfied. The second most important group of improvement proposals by the centres refers to this section.

The CTESC recommends

- 55. To provide legal support in the negotiation and labour advice to companies, especially in terms of hiring.
- 56. To provide tools to make the real follow-up of the student's training stay in the company.
- 57. To strengthen the dual VT network with the aim of sharing experiences, good practices and favouring the communication of the actors involved.

### **The expansion of dual VT in Catalonia**

#### *Still incipient implementation of dual VT*

The CTESC considers that, if dual VT should have a real impact on the VT system, its proportional weight within the set of the VT must be important, both in terms of the total volume of young people that it forms and the group of companies that participate in it. Today, the data are still low: students of dual VT represent 4.3% of the total VT.

Dual VT is still a fairly incipient reality within the VT training offer in Catalonia. Most centres do not offer this possibility (only a little more than a third of institutes have done dual VT and 1 out of 5 groups offer it). In these first years, the implementation of this training modality has been basically in the hands of public institutes. However, in the latest promotions, there is a growing participation of private centres.

However, it is also true that 88.5% of the professional families and 66.7% of the degrees can be taken under this modality at some point in the territory. Contrary to what could be perceived, currently the majority of dual VT training cycles belong to the service sector (58.6%), while industrial cycles represent 38.4% of the total offered cycles. Nonetheless, the weight of industrial cycles exceeds that of the whole VT. On the other hand, the dual VT training cycles are more distributed in the territory, not so concentrated in the Barcelona delegation, if it is compared with the total VT cycles.

Anyway, it is necessary to keep in mind that dual VT must always obey initial demands, which may be the needs of companies and sectors, the needs of the territory and the needs of people.

The CTESC recommends

- 58. To enhance, bring closer and make dual VT known as an ideal training and learning modality for the transition from the education world to the world of labour, addressed to the productive sector as well as to the students and to the society in general. In this sense, the intermediate institutions (business organizations, associations, unions, trade union organizations, chambers of commerce and other institutions linked to the VT world) have a fundamental role and can contribute effectively to disseminate it.
- 59. To establish strategic incentives, based on social dialogue, to boost the participation in dual VT of certain productive sectors, especially in growing sectors. These incentives could be put in relation, for example, to the costs of stopping machines to facilitate learning or with the hours that people who do business tutoring devote to training. On the other hand, it would also be advisable to provide aid in times of crisis, with a lower demand for apprentices. To strengthen the dual VT network with the aim of sharing experiences, good practices and favouring the communication of the actors involved.

60. To make visible the dual VT benefits, both for students, companies and training centres, as well as to assess the economic and social return of this training and learning initiative.
61. To foster initiatives that promote prestige and recognition of the VT qualification both in the educational and labour fields, as a way to promote a greater implementation of dual VT.
62. To promote greater participation, in dual VT, of the gender that is least represented in professional families.
63. To implement mechanisms so that age is not an impediment to attend dual VT, since this should allow the requalification and the labour insertion of people throughout life.
64. To adapt the dual VT offer to the demand of both the productive sector and students in all those professional families and degrees in which it is possible, by the characteristics of the training curriculum.

### *To involve a larger number of companies*

Without a doubt, it is necessary to have a larger number of companies involved in order to be able to make dual VT grow. There is a considerable margin, given that 1% of companies with employees and 8% of those with 10 or more employees have participated in dual VT during the 2015-2016 course. Even so, the number of companies that have participated has grown remarkably; it has gone from the 645 companies in the 2014-2015 academic year to the 2,500 in the 2015-2016 years, possibly due to the involvement of companies with smaller staff, especially small companies.

The centres carry out the search for these companies, often with difficulties to find them, given the lack of time and available resources and because an important part of the business world still does not know the characteristics of this modality. Some centres turn to social agents to inform companies about dual VT.

With the aim of improving the attractiveness of dual VT for businesses, the CTESC recommends

65. To promote the apprentices' incorporation in companies through commitments and clauses in collective bargaining.
66. To promote a training culture through campaigns aimed at companies and recognition strategies for participating companies.
67. To equip the system with a service to attract companies in coordination with social agents that directly and/or through the training centres could detect potential companies that can be incorporated as training agents throughout Catalonia. This service could develop strategies and communication tools of the service to highlight the strengths of participating as an active agent in dual VT.

### *Incorporation of microenterprises and small businesses in dual VT*

The dual VT expansion in Catalonia necessarily involves the incorporation of SMEs as training agents, given the reality of the business fabric of the country. As indicated above, SMEs have less capacity and fewer resources to allocate to dual VT.

That is why the CTESC considers necessary to provide them with a specific treatment. One way to work is cooperation between companies. This option allows reducing costs, provides wider transversal training to students and favours mutual learning, in case they belong to the same value chain and/or are not in direct competition in the market.

The German case with four typologies of formative collaboration is noteworthy: principal and associated company, on-demand training, training consortium and training association (Bertelsmann Foundation,

2017).<sup>5</sup> The four models are adapted to different situations of the business reality of that country. In our country, we also have successful experiences as the higher degree of Production Programming in Mechanical Manufacturing speciality Precision Turning, an initiative of the Association of Precision Turners and Mechanizers of Catalonia (ADEC).<sup>6</sup>

On the contrary, the main obstacles are related to the fear of losing competitive advantages, with organizational and management costs and with some regulatory limitations.

In this sense, the CTESC recommends

68. To design support and accompaniment mechanisms, as well as to encourage coordination and cooperation of microenterprises and small businesses to pool services, such as company tutoring, training itineraries for apprentices in various companies and joint training for their workers.
69. The system should promote and organize cooperation channels among SMEs, such as outsourcing of part of the training, a search service for companies to do collaborative training and establishing resources and financial incentives, especially to create new places of collaborative dual VT.
70. To find ways to overcome the reluctance to collaborate with other companies, such as confidentiality contracts.
71. It would be necessary to make a series of adaptations of the legal framework to facilitate the training stays of the same apprentice in different companies. One option to analyze would be to modify the legal regulation of the contract for training and apprenticeship so that it foresees this possibility and thus give legal coverage to the completion of the training stay in different companies.

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<sup>5</sup> In a synthetic way, the modality "Main and associated company" means that a company signs as a "main company" the training agreement and is responsible for the program, but it has the collaboration of one or more companies in the execution of the curriculum provided in the training stay. In the "Training by charge", the cost of training is born by the company, that signs the training contract while training is done in one entity providing training. The "Training consortium" is an association of several companies with the aim of forming the apprentice in a rotating way. The training load is distributed equally among the participating companies, while the training contract corresponds to the company of origin that assumes all the salary. Finally, and in the mode "Training Association", it is the association that pays the apprentice's salary; in addition, it also assumes the organizational burden.

<sup>6</sup> It stands out for the leadership of this small business association. The role of the ADECAT implies vision, promotion of curricular adaptation and diffusion of the project. One of the most innovative elements of the experience is that, in order to ensure homogenization of learning and to train professionals who receive learning that meets the needs of the entire sector, not only the company with whom it has the legal link, it is decided that a part of this training is assumed by the technical partners. In this way, all the apprentices, in certain stages of the training stay, meet at the facilities of the technical partners where they receive the same training on machinery, tools, etc.