

Apprenticeship Pulse Results May 2020

Other Publication

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Publication date:

2020-06-04

Permanent link:

<https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000440208>

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Originally published in:

Apprenticeship Pulse – Factsheet



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Apprenticeship Pulse Results May 2020

June 4, 2020

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Although Switzerland was still in shutdown during the first release of the Apprenticeship Pulse in April 2020, the emergency measures taken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic were relaxed in May. This second release of the Apprenticeship Pulse records the effects of the pandemic on Swiss apprentices as containment measures were relaxed in two phases.

As of April 27, 2020, companies with personal services (e.g. hairdressers, beauty salons) were allowed to reopen. In addition, outpatient medical procedures were allowed to resume. On May 11, primary schools restarted, public places were opened, and many businesses including restaurants reopened.

This factsheet gives an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vocational education and training (VET) in May 2020, and compares these results with the situation in April 2020.

We focus on three main groups:

- **Group 1: Future apprentices** searching for positions to start training in August 2020
- **Group 2: Current apprentices** who are training in the companies affected by the pandemic crisis
- **Group 3: Apprentices in their final year** of training who will graduate in August 2020 and enter the labor market.

The Pulse of Apprentices in May 2020

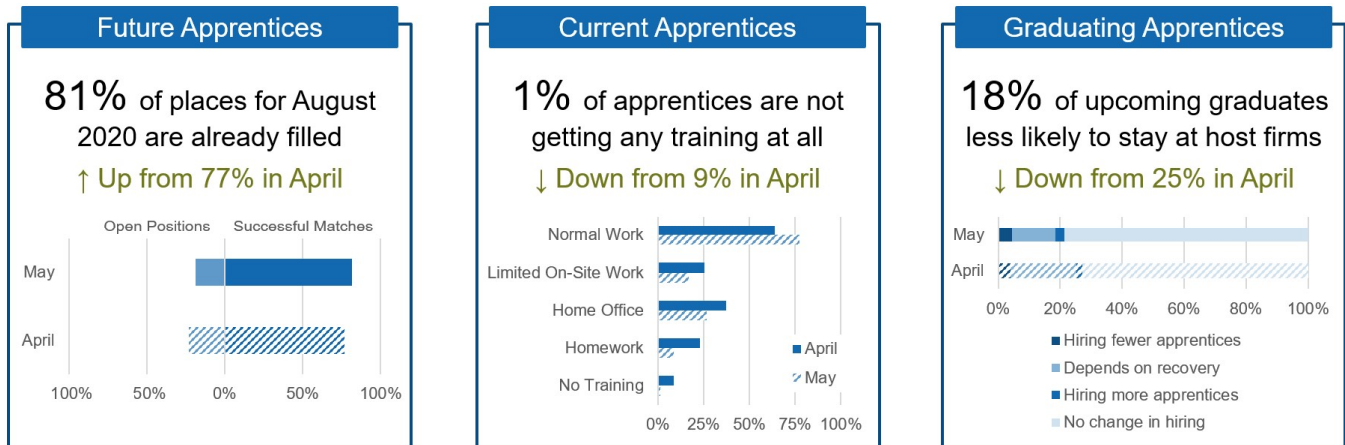


Figure 1: Headlines on the Apprenticeship Pulse in May 2020

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse surveys 04.2020 (April) and 05.2020 (May). The left box shows the main results for future apprentices, the middle box those for current apprentices and the right box those for apprentices in their last year.

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, **future apprentices (Group 1)** started the application process approximately one year before apprenticeships that will start in August 2020. In Latin Switzerland (the French- and Italian-speaking parts), this process starts later, and its beginning aligned with the shutdown in spring of 2020. Due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was feared that many new apprenticeships would be canceled. However, training companies reported in May that only 2.7% (2.8% in April) of apprenticeship places have been cancelled due to the pandemic. 2.1% (5.2% in April) of planned places are still at risk depending on how well businesses recover. A key goal of the application phase for future apprentices is to find an apprenticeship position in a company, and 81% (77% in April) of new apprenticeship positions have been successfully filled. 19% (23% in April) of positions remain open for those who have not yet found a place.

Current apprentices (Group 2) were strongly affected by pandemic containment measures, but 77% (64% in April) were able to stay at work by applying federally mandated protection measures (particularly social dis-

tance and hygiene rules). 17% (25% in April) of apprentices were only at work to a limited extent, and 26% (37% in April) were at least partially working from home. 9% (23% in April) of apprentices received homework instead of practical training. However, 1% (9% in April) of apprentices did not receive any kind of practical training. The May survey shows that the first two phases of reopening the Swiss economy allowed most apprentices to resume the in-company part of their training while maintaining containment measures.

Final-year apprentices (Group 3) will soon be entering the labor market. Usually, some—but not all—apprentices continue to work for at least a short time at their host companies after graduation. Most apprentices (79%, 73% in April) work at companies who do not plan to change their apprentice-hiring strategies due to COVID-19. However, 14% (21% in April) are in companies where the probability of post-graduation employment has decreased and now depends on the future of the business. 4% (same in April) are in companies that have already decided to hire fewer recent graduates due to the pandemic. This means that 18% (25% in April) fewer new entrants to the labor market can count on remaining in their training companies.

Detailed Results for Future Apprentices (Group 1)

Although the average shows that 81% (77% in April) of the training places for August 2020 have already been filled, there are differences among occupational groups (see Figure 2). Apprenticeship places in the fields of Health, Planning/Construction, Information Technology,

and Business/Administration/Tourism have already been largely filled, whereas there are still many vacant apprenticeship places in most construction and technical occupation groups as of May.

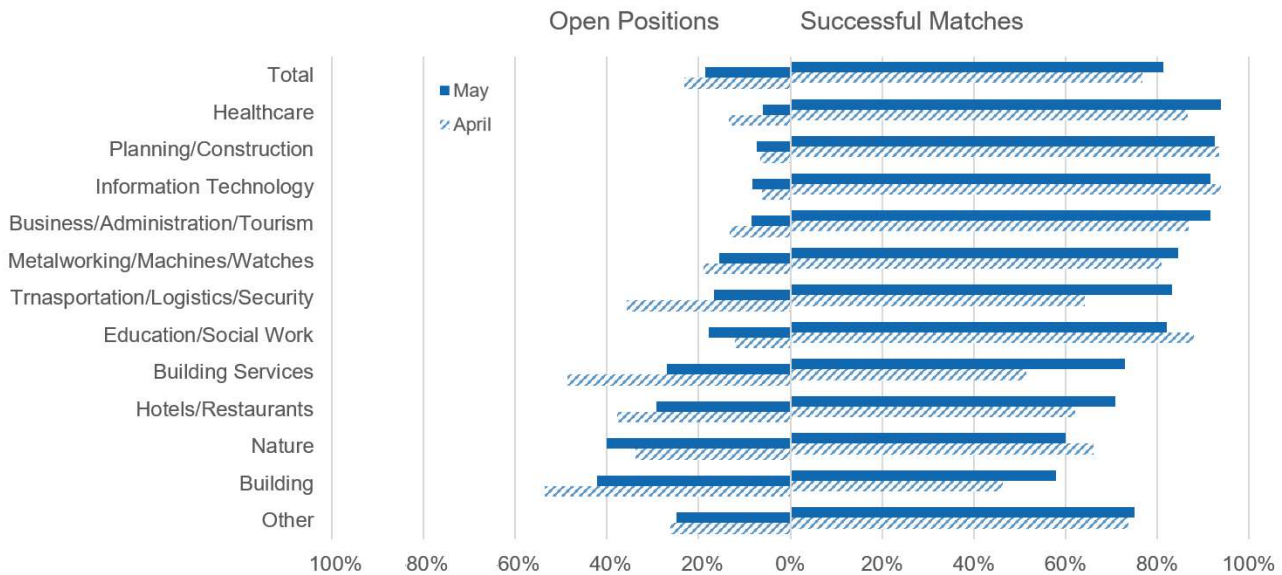


Figure 2: Open and matched apprenticeship places by occupational field.

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse surveys 04.2020 (April) and 05.2020 (May). For each occupational field, the left-hand side of the chart shows how many training places are still open in each occupational field; the right-hand side shows how many are already filled. Blue bars are based on the May survey; hatched bars are based on the April survey.

Detailed Results for Current Apprentices (Group 2)

Only 0.02% (same in April) of existing apprenticeship contracts have been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main impact for current apprentices is on how training is carried out, rather than lost places.

Figure 3 shows the effects of the pandemic on occupational training for each occupational field. As with the effects for future apprentices, these also vary by field.

In most occupational fields, apprentices worked mostly or almost completely normally (with protective measures). The apprentices in the fields of Education/Social Work, Health, Sales/Purchasing, and Transportation/Logistics/Security were mainly able to continue working despite the pandemic. On the other hand, apprentices in the fields of Business/Administration/Tourism and Information Technology were strongly affected by the pandemic. Most apprentices in IT were not at work but were able to work from home. Although

apprentices in other strongly-affected fields were also able to work from home, work occasionally on-site, or substitute with homework, this was not as possible in other fields. In May, apprentices in the fields of Construction and Business/Administration/Tourism were most likely to receive no practical training at all, although all occupation groups increased dramatically from the shutdown phase in April.

22% (29% in April) of training companies have already taken extra measures to ensure that apprentices can catch up on any material they have missed. However, companies still expect that some losses cannot be made up. When asked if non-final-year apprentices can make up all lost content before the end of their training, companies responded 4.18 (4.15 in April) out of 5, where 5 indicates that they will make up all lost content.

	On-Site Work		Offsite Work		
	Normal Work	Limited On-Site Work	Home Office	Homework	No Training
Total	77%	17%	26%	9%	1%
Education/Social Work	96%	5%	3%	5%	0%
Healthcare	95%	20%	1%	6%	0%
Sales/Purchasing	94%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Transportation/Logistics/Security	93%	9%	1%	7%	1%
Vehicles	93%	7%	6%	1%	0%
Nature	93%	2%	2%	0%	1%
Woodworking/Interiors	87%	13%	13%	5%	1%
Metalworking/Machines/Watches	86%	21%	17%	20%	0%
Building Services	84%	8%	4%	5%	0%
Restaurants/Hotels	82%	11%	1%	8%	2%
Electronics	77%	30%	25%	14%	1%
Construction	76%	9%	12%	2%	3%
Planning/Construction	68%	13%	57%	8%	0%
Business/Administration/Tourism	66%	25%	59%	16%	3%
Information Technology	29%	13%	81%	5%	0%
Other	74%	20%	29%	11%	2%

Figure 3: Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the training of apprentices by occupational field

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse survey 05.2020 (May). The table shows for each measure and occupational field the shares (%) of apprentices out of all apprentices covered by the surveyed training companies in the respective occupational field (multiple calculations possible); occupational fields with fewer than 50 training companies are not listed but are summarized under "Other".

Detailed Results for Final-Year Apprentices (Group 3)

Apprentices in their final year of training face two challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis: first, they will have to face modified final examinations, and second they will be confronted with a challenging labor market upon graduation.

The training companies surveyed believe that the pandemic will have a moderate influence on graduating apprentices' final school grades (3.4 out of 5, same in April, on a scale of 1 "no influence" to 5 "very strong influence"). Companies assume that apprentices' knowledge and skills may suffer from lost school time. The training companies also expect a weaker influence on apprentices' practical grades, with a mean of 2.7 (2.9 in April) on the same scale.

In May, 79% (73% in April) of apprentices worked in companies that had not yet changed their hiring plans for graduated apprentices. Future Apprenticeship Pulse surveys will show how this indicator changes over time,

but companies are making an effort to support their graduates: 73% (57% in April) of apprentices work in companies that are implementing new measures to support their job searches after graduation.

As shown in Figure 4, there is again variation among occupational fields with regard to post-graduation hiring plans. Apprentices face the largest uncertainty in the fields of Healthcare (34%), followed by Hotels/Restaurants (29%), Business/Administration/Tourism (21%). In most occupational fields, fewer apprentices than usual will be retained this year. This applies especially to apprentices in the fields of Woodworking/Interiors (14%), Metalworking/Machines/Watches (9%), Planning/Construction (8%) and Transportation/Logistics/Security (7%). The most stable occupational field is Sales/Purchasing, in which 96% of apprentices are in companies that have not changed their hiring practices.

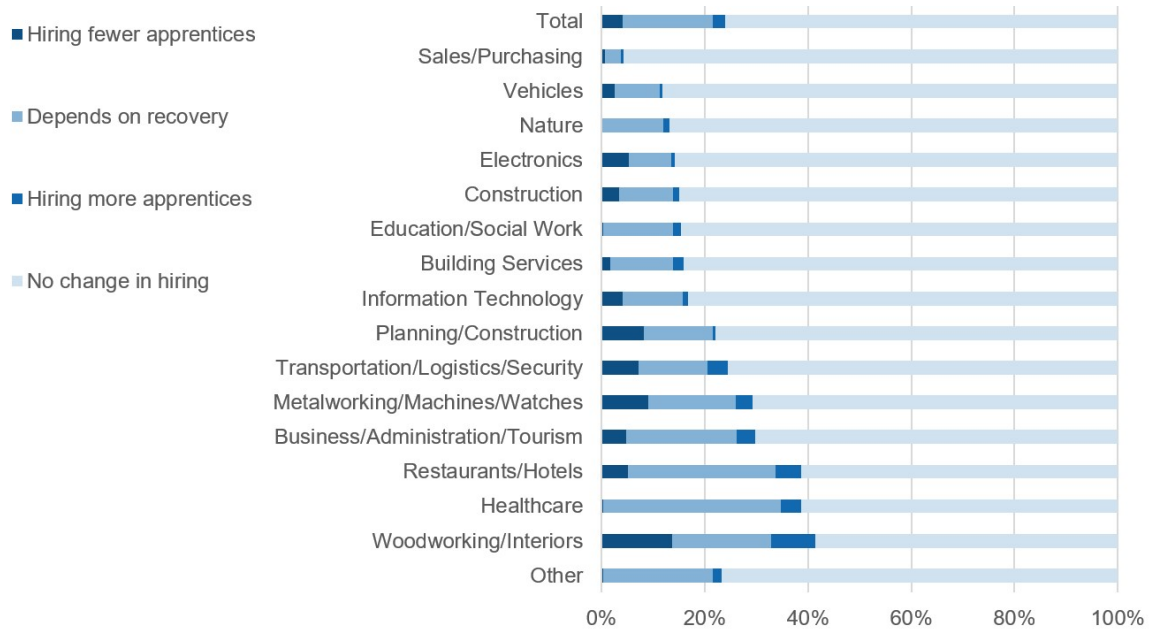


Figure 4: Post-graduation apprentice hiring by occupational field.

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse survey 05.2020 (May). The chart shows the share of apprentices out of all apprentices covered by the training companies surveyed for each possible practice of continuing vocational training.

Effects on Apprentices and Training Companies

Surveyed training companies were affected to varying degrees by the COVID-19 pandemic during the re-opening phases. Figure 5 shows that 96% (92% in April) of apprentices are in companies affected by federal containment measures, while only 1% (3% in April) of apprentices work in companies that had to be closed temporarily due to emergency legislation.

41% (56% in April) of apprentices worked in companies that had extra protection measures specifically for apprentices (e.g. working from home, reorganization of apprentices' work) and 19% (25% in April) work in

companies where both staff and apprentices are on short-time work. 22% (18% in April) of apprentices work in companies where only the staff, not apprentices, are on short-time work.

3% of apprentices (same in April) work in training companies that are dependent on financial assistance due to the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. bank loans, rent deferment). 0.2% of apprentices (0.5% in April) are threatened with having to give up their position due to situations like bankruptcy.

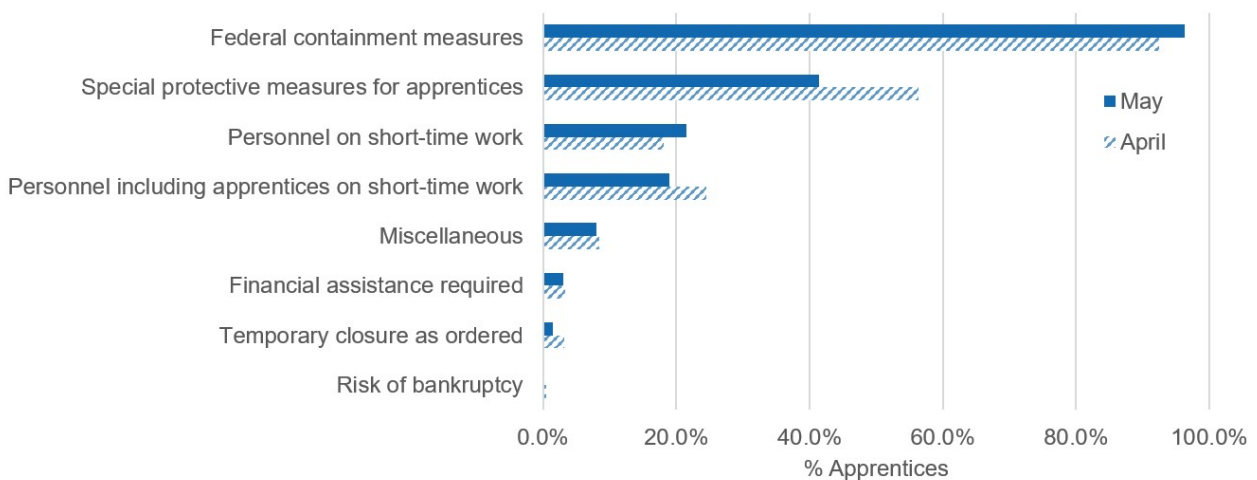


Figure 5: How the COVID-19 pandemic affects apprentices and their training companies.

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse surveys 04.2020 (April) and 05.2020 (May). The chart shows the proportions of apprentices (in %) of all apprentices covered by the surveyed training companies for each effect of the pandemic.

Data and Representativeness

1,326 training companies (1,050) in April) of various sizes from all cantons and occupational fields took part in the Apprenticeship Pulse survey in May of 2020. The questions were answered by individuals with different roles, including vocational trainers, HR specialists, and managing directors. We contacted a total of 44,660 training companies for the survey, the response rate is 3% (2.4% in April). However, it should be noted that the survey was not only sent directly to this list of training companies but also was distributed via other channels, so the response rate is not exact.

The German-speaking part of Switzerland is represented better than the other two language regions, and large companies tend to be overrepresented compared to SMEs.

The companies surveyed represented a total of **15,353 apprentices** (13,139 in April) in a wide range of occupational fields. The most strongly represented fields are Information Technology, Transportation/Logistics/Security, Electrical, and Metalworking/Machines/Watches.

Figure 6 shows that the companies surveyed cover a little over 1% of all training companies in Switzerland.

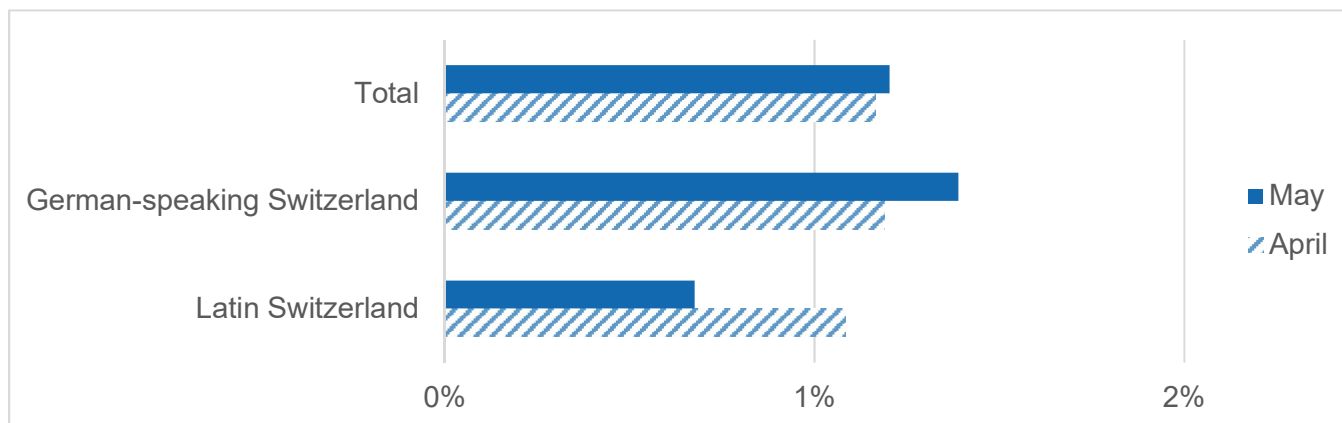


Figure 6: Representativeness of the Apprenticeship Pulse surveys by language region

Notes: Results based on data from the Apprenticeship Pulse surveys 04.2020 (April) and 05.2020 (May). The chart shows the share of training companies covered by the survey for each language region. In the May survey, for example, German-speaking Switzerland (1.4% of training enterprises) is better covered than French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland (0.7% together).

Further information (in German and French) at www.lehrstellenpuls.ch.

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