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ENTERPRISE MENTORING VOUCHER MECHANISM: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE, STATISTICAL EVIDENCE AND PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This thesis examines the enterprise mentoring voucher as a policy instrument for linking workplace-based training, employer participation and independent competency assessment. The analysis draws on evidence from Germany, Switzerland, France and Singapore. Germany's dual training model demonstrates the advantages of sustained employer–trainee interaction, while the Bildungsgutschein illustrates the limits of a training subsidy without a mentoring component. Evidence from the Swiss randomized field experiment reveals low voucher take-up and no statistically significant short-term effects on wages or employment. France's Personal Training Account (CPF) and Singapore's SkillsFuture Credit show that broad financial access alone does not guarantee balanced participation or strong labor-market outcomes. Based on these findings, the thesis argues that Uzbekistan should design a targeted mentoring voucher that finances practical training at enterprises and links reimbursement to independently verified competencies. Such a mechanism could strengthen the education–employment connection, reduce skills mismatch and support the institutional development of the national qualifications system.



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Keywords: mentoring voucher, dual education, competency assessment, training voucher, Bildungsgutschein, CPF, SkillsFuture, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

A persistent challenge in modern labor markets is the gap between theoretical education and the practical skills demanded by employers. When training is weakly connected to real workplaces, graduates may possess formal qualifications but lack job-specific competencies. Enterprise-based mentoring can reduce this mismatch by allowing learners to acquire practical skills under the supervision of experienced employees while employers directly observe and shape their performance. A voucher mechanism can add a financial incentive by compensating part of the cost of workplace training and mentoring.

The enterprise mentoring voucher considered in this study differs from a conventional education voucher. It combines two elements: financing of practical training under a qualified mentor at an enterprise and independent verification of the competencies acquired at the end of the training period. This design makes the voucher not only an access instrument but also a results-oriented quality assurance mechanism. The purpose of this thesis is to summarize international experience, identify the recurring weaknesses of conventional voucher schemes, and outline an institutionally appropriate model for Uzbekistan.

International Experience and Statistical Evidence

Germany provides one of the strongest institutional examples of enterprise-based vocational training. In 2024, around 1.2 million apprentices were enrolled in 327 officially recognized occupations within the dual vocational education and training system. Apprentices spend a substantial share of their training time at enterprises under qualified instructors (Ausbilder), while the remainder is



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delivered in vocational schools. According to the source material, approximately 68% of graduates receive an offer of permanent employment from the enterprise where they trained. Germany also operates the Bildungsgutschein program, which can cover the full cost of eligible vocational retraining for unemployed adults. However, unlike the dual system, the voucher itself does not necessarily include a structured workplace mentoring relationship.

Switzerland offers particularly valuable causal evidence. In a randomized field experiment conducted in 2006, 2,437 adults received education vouchers worth CHF 200, 750 or 1,500. Only 18.4% of recipients used the vouchers. The program increased participation in training, but after one year it did not produce statistically significant effects on wages, employment or subsequent education. The experiment also showed that lower-educated groups, which could potentially benefit most from additional training, were among the least likely to use the vouchers. In addition, part of the publicly financed training displaced training that employers would otherwise have funded themselves, creating a crowding-out effect.

France and Singapore demonstrate that even large-scale, digitally accessible financing mechanisms can experience participation and targeting problems. In France, the Personal Training Account (Compte personnel de formation, CPF) enabled about 1.39 million people to enter training in 2024, four percent more than in 2023. Survey evidence cited in the source indicates that 55% of participants reported achieving at least one training objective. At the same time, only around 24% of employer-provided funds were used for training purchases during 2020–2024, compared with roughly 71% of voluntary employee contributions. Singapore’s SkillsFuture Credit has also achieved uneven take-up: since 2016, approximately 37% of eligible citizens have used the credit, while



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usage among people under 30 has been markedly lower than among middle-aged groups.

Table 1. Selected evidence on training and mentoring voucher mechanisms

Country / Program	Selected Indicator	Main Policy Lesson
Germany – Dual VET	~1.2 million apprentices; 327 occupations; ~68% retained by training enterprise	Workplace mentoring creates a direct employer–trainee link and supports transition to employment.
Switzerland – Voucher RCT	2,437 participants; voucher use 18.4%; no significant short-term wage/employment effect	Removing the price barrier alone does not ensure take-up or labor-market impact.
France – CPF	1.39 million users in 2024; 55% reported at least one objective achieved	Large-scale access should be complemented by outcome measurement and better alignment of funding.
Singapore – SkillsFuture Credit	~37% cumulative use since 2016; lower use among younger citizens	Universal credit can produce uneven participation across demographic groups.

Implications for Uzbekistan

The comparative evidence suggests a clear distinction between a purely financial voucher and a mentoring-based voucher. Financial support can increase access to training, but it does not automatically guarantee high participation, employer engagement, independently verified learning outcomes, or improved employment. The stronger institutional model is therefore one that combines financial support with workplace mentoring and competency assessment. For Uzbekistan, this is especially relevant because the national labor market faces a continuing demand for qualified workers, a large share of young people entering



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employment, and a need to strengthen the practical orientation of education and training.

The proposed enterprise mentoring voucher for Uzbekistan should be targeted rather than universal. Priority could be given to sectors with the most visible skills shortages, including industry, information technology, logistics and other technically intensive activities. The voucher would reimburse eligible mentoring and practical training costs only when the enterprise provides training according to an approved competency profile and the participant completes an independent assessment. This approach would align financial support with measurable results rather than with course attendance alone.

A second design principle is additionality. Public funding should supplement, rather than replace, training that enterprises already finance from their own resources. Co-financing requirements, minimum enterprise contributions, or rules distinguishing new training from routine internal training can reduce the risk of crowding out employer expenditure. A third principle is quality assurance: mentors and assessors should meet defined qualification standards, while training providers or participating enterprises should be accredited or certified under transparent criteria.

The mechanism can also be linked to Uzbekistan's evolving national qualifications framework. The source material emphasizes the relevance of the XALIKK-2020 classification, competency matrices, and the regulatory framework established by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 287 of 15 May 2020 and Resolution No. 369 of 17 June 2025. Connecting the voucher to standardized competency profiles would help integrate the “industry–enterprise–university” chain and make the acquired skills more transparent for employers, education institutions and public authorities.



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Conclusion

International experience demonstrates that training vouchers are most effective when they are embedded in a broader institutional structure rather than treated as stand-alone financial subsidies. The Swiss evidence shows that a voucher can increase participation in training without generating measurable short-term employment or wage effects, while the French and Singaporean cases reveal persistent problems of uneven use and weak alignment between allocated funds and actual demand. Germany's dual training model illustrates the added value of continuous workplace mentoring and direct employer participation.

For Uzbekistan, an enterprise mentoring voucher should therefore integrate three elements: targeted financial support, structured workplace mentoring and independent competency assessment. If implemented with sectoral targeting, co-financing rules, mentor accreditation and measurable outcome indicators, the mechanism could become a practical instrument for reducing skills mismatch, strengthening the transition from education to employment and supporting the modernization of the national qualifications system.

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