



## WBL Champion: how to integrate work-based learning into Italian higher education

The European comparison highlights the strengths of the Italian system, while also underlining the need for stronger integration of Work-Based Learning (WBL) within higher education.

Italy, further efforts are needed to integrate **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** into higher and academic education. This is the finding of the national report developed within the European project [WBL Champion](#), which compares Work-Based Learning systems across four partner countries: Italy, Ireland, Malta and Portugal.

Although Italy has already developed important schemes such as the [School-Work Alternation Programme](#) and [apprenticeships](#), Work-Based Learning (WBL) remains poorly structured at university level, where it is mainly limited to curricular placements.

### National Report: emerging challenges and potential opportunities

The report highlights that Italy has a **solid regulatory framework**, which is, however, rarely implemented in practice. In particular, a number of significant **challenges** have emerged:

- Limited collaboration between universities and businesses in curriculum design;
- Insufficient involvement of employers;
- A mismatch between the skills required by the labour market and the curriculum;
- Insufficient financial resources;
- Poor promotion of WBL opportunities.

In addition to these, there are the issues already highlighted in the [first press release](#), such as low participation by SMEs and a lack of digitalisation.

### Where does Italy stand?

One of the most significant aspects of the report is the comparison with the other partner countries in the project:

- In **Ireland**, for example, WBL is strongly integrated into higher education pathways through national strategies that promote work experience for all students and close cooperation between universities and businesses;



- In **Malta**, the regulatory framework sets out clear and specific guidelines designed to ensure the quality of WBL within academic programmes;
- In **Portugal**, technical and vocational pathways are widely available, but integration with higher education remains inadequate.

Compared with other countries, Italy lags far behind in the implementation of WBL at both school and university level, although there is considerable scope for improvement.

## Shared challenges

The report also highlights a number of **shared challenges** at European level, such as:

- Greater involvement of businesses, particularly SMEs;
- Strengthening digitalisation processes;
- Promoting WBL among students and stakeholders.

These three challenges represent **a strategic opportunity** for Italy. Recent national and European policies, together with investments under the [PNRR](#), are in fact creating a favourable environment for the link between education and employment to emerge stronger.

## WBL Champion: the Erasmus+ project coordinated by VITECO

The **WBL Champion** project, co-funded by the [Erasmus+ programme](#) and coordinated by [VITECO](#), a software house specialising in **e-learning**, aims to:

- Promote Work-Based Learning (WBL);
- Improve the digital skills of HEIs staff;
- Provide innovative, free and user-friendly tools for end-users;
- Adapt vocational education and training to the needs of the labour market.

The project aims to establish an effective framework for the implementation of Work-Based Learning in Europe through the analysis of existing policies and best practices. Work-Based Learning represents a fundamental step for the future of education in Italy and across Europe.

Read the full article here: <https://www.iogroup.eu/wbl-champion-report-ue-criticita-opportunita/>