

**The European Dual Studies University**

# **Policy White Paper**

**2025**

**“We aim to build the biggest dual education alliance in the world.”**

# **EU4Dual Policy White Paper**

## **2025 edition**

### **Building the future of Dual & Work-Based-Learning education :**

### **Insights and Recommendations from stakeholders**

#DualEducation #Mobility #Research #Business #Universities #Governments  
#TerritorialDevelopment #Employability #WorkBasedLearning

### **Executive Summary**

The EU4Dual project aims to become the global top-quality reference and largest alliance of universities and stakeholders dedicated to promoting and supporting the Dual & Work-Based Learning (WBL) education model.

This white paper synthesizes feedback from industry representatives, local governing representatives, student representatives, other implicated categories of stakeholders and advisory board members to provide actionable recommendations for advancing this educational approach across Europe.

The feedback received highlights the need for alignment between academia and industry, the importance of flexible and adaptive learning models, and the role of government and industry in supporting these initiatives.

This document outlines the short-term steps and long-term vision for achieving these goals.

## **1. Introduction**

The EU4Dual initiative represents a transformative effort to align educational outcomes with labor market needs through Dual & Work-Based Learning. By integrating academic learning with practical work experience, the project seeks to enhance the employability of graduates and address skills shortages in various industries.

## **2. Background**

Dual & Work-Based Learning (WBL) combines theoretical instruction with practical experience in a work environment. This approach benefits students, educational institutions, and employers by providing real-world experience, fostering industry-academia collaboration, and ensuring that curricula are aligned with current and future job market demands.

## Why?

The EU4Dual initiative is driven by the necessity to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world professional experience. This integration is crucial for enhancing employability and addressing the skills shortages in various industries.

## How?

By fostering collaboration between universities, industries, and governments, and through the promotion of mobility, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit within the educational framework.

## What?

Our mission is to create a sustainable and innovative dual education system that aligns educational outcomes with labor market needs, thereby preparing a skilled and adaptable workforce for the future.

## Mission-Vision

Our mission is to use transnational Dual Education, a model involving close collaboration between students, academics and business stakeholders, to help Europe address major societal challenges. The challenges that include climate change, de-carbonisation, digitisation, etc. will pose in society in general and industry in particular and will shape a new landscape of work and profession. The unique profile of our institutions will play a very important role in addressing these challenges.

Our vision is to become the global top-quality reference for Dual Education. We will form the largest integrated Dual- Education institution in the world – a multi-campus, multi-disciplinary institution, committed to close integration between academia, industry and regions. We intend to use our collective expertise to help solve global challenges of industry to society – using Dual Education to make Europe greener, more equitable and more economically successful.

## Guiding principles

- Dual Higher Education (DHE) is a best practice to be shared and enhanced: every activity of our university should embed the values of dual education, and involve collaboration between students, academia and industry, as well as society. We intend to serve both as a laboratory, where new ideas on dual education may be incubated, as well as a global best practice on how this model of education can drive forward development in societies.
- Dual Higher Education should be grown and further developed: we intend to increase the share and quality of dual education in Europe. We do this by growing the scope and quality of the dual education programs within our own university, by collaborating with and possibly admitting new members to our university, and by supporting overall research and development of the entire dual education sector. We will support this quality and growth agenda both individually and in collaboration with our stakeholders, with each member moving forward at their own speed, and within their own context, but always contributing to the overall goal.
- Shared priority setting: as a mission-based organisation, our priorities are set by our stakeholders –the needs of “World of Work” (WoW), and of our regions. These priorities are interpreted and implemented by our staff and students who participate in the institution. The EU4Dual university is run collectively by the leadership of each of our individual institutions, but while strategy is set

collectively, the collective may not impose its will on a minority. While we boost our collective identity, we also maintain our individual identities.

## Consortium overview

- **9 Universities**
- **40 campuses**
- **74420 students**
- **6691 staff members**
- **18000 Business stakeholders**
- **9 Countries**



## EU4Dual Main Priorities / Missions / Activities



### 1. Provide a Quality Framework for Dual Higher Education

- Establish knowledge exchange on Dual Higher Education (DHE) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) “World of Work” (WoW), the two learning places in DHE (including Tutor Training, Consultancy, an Observatory and a Scientific journal ESJDHE)

### 2. Foster Dual Mobilities

- Promote international mobility programs for students to gain diverse dual experiences.

### 3. Enhance Staff Mobilities

- Encourage academic and industry professionals to engage in exchange programs to share knowledge and best practices.

### 4. Create Joint-Masters

- Develop joint master’s programs that integrate dual education principles, enhancing interdisciplinary and cross-border collaboration.

### 5. Create Industrial Doctorate programmes

- Develop Industrial Doctorate programs focusing on Grand Challenges.

### 6. Offer Lifelong Learning Trainings

- Provide continuous education opportunities to ensure workforce adaptability and skill enhancement throughout their careers.

### 7. Support Business Collaboration

- Facilitate partnerships between academia and industry to align educational programs with real-world needs.

### 8. Support Collaborative Research & Innovation Projects

- Promote joint research initiatives that drive innovation and technological advancement.

### 9. Support Student Entrepreneurship Mobility and Start-Up Creation

- Foster an entrepreneurial mindset among students by supporting mobility programs and start-up initiatives.



### 3. Policy White Paper Objectives

The main objectives of this White Policy Paper are to:

1. Co-construct a shared vision-mission of the alliance and give the overall orientations for the next steps that the 9 partners will have to implement during the remaining years of the EU4Dual program and beyond through a "learning by doing" and experienced-based approach.
2. Co-design the long-term vision for the second phase of EU4Dual and post-2030, aiming to establish the first European Dual University Alliance, enhancing new kinds of mobility opportunities, Dual learning offerings, and strong linkages between academia, industry, governance, and students.
3. Bring up a bottom up & continuous process of stakeholder consultations a sample of very practical recommendations to help European politics to design successful policies specifically tailored to support the design and the implementation of unprecedented Dual programs at our regional level.



### 4. Stakeholders Feedback

This section presents key insights and feedback received from different stakeholder groups involved in the EU4Dual project during specific parallel councils and workshops sessions led during the first Annual Conference organized in Malta (9<sup>th</sup> April 2024) and including new contributions made during the second Annual Conference held in Bask Country (ESTIA, Bidart on April 1st, 2025).



## 4.1 Regional Government Consultative Council (RCC)

### Main Orientations-Challenges:

- **Workplace Well-being:** Emphasize improving well-being in the workplace to retain highly skilled individuals.
- **Demographic and Immigration Challenges:** Dual education can address demographic shifts and integrate immigrants by offering both work and study opportunities.
- **Gender Integration:** Flexible programs can help integrate more women into higher education.
- **Language Barriers:** Improve English proficiency in small companies and increasing number of classes at each local university level to host an increasing number of foreign students.
- **Professional Supervisors:** Train company professionals in regions unfamiliar with the dual model to effectively supervise students.
- **Changing Student Motivations:** Dual education is no longer chosen primarily for financial reasons or as a vocational fallback; increasingly, top academic students are pursuing it to differentiate themselves through practical experience and professional skills.
- **Cultural Shift Required:** There is a strong need to foster a true "dual culture" that is shared by both companies and students. Dual programs must be recognized not only for their practical value but also as a model of academic excellence.
- **Regional Heterogeneity:** Rather than pursuing a unified and homogeneous European model (e.g., like German or French one), regions should focus on building strong, multi-local frameworks adapted to national and regional contexts.
- **Reputation of Dual Education:** Dual education is still not universally seen as a high-quality academic path—especially in public higher education models in some countries. There is a pressing need to elevate its reputation and public perception.
- **Industry Reluctance:** In some regions (e.g., Styrian region, Austria), companies remain hesitant to fully adopt dual models due to "perceived costs". Yet there is a growing awareness that these programs represent long-term investments in talents and innovation.
- **Internationalization Needs:** Some regions are particularly eager to attract international students but lack visibility and established channels. Dual education could be a strategic tool to address this issue.

- **Need for Coordination Structures:** The council emphasized the importance of appointing a general secretary to structure & guide the dynamic of the RGCC.

## Support Needs:

- **Realistic View of Technology:** Reduce the gap between academic and real-world applications by involving business professionals in the classrooms.
- **Program Flexibility:** Adapt programs to new business needs swiftly, using dual models and micro-credentials.
- **SME Support:** Simplify administrative burdens for SMEs and promote cooperation with NGOs and social enterprises.
- **Public and Structural Support:** Some national governments have reduced lately the fundings available for dual education (e.g., France). There must be at the opposite a clear call for more consistent financial support and recognition at both national and regional levels.
- **Mentorship Structures:** Regions highlighted the opportunity to develop the role of "industrial mentors" within companies to support dual students while they are getting hosted into companies.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Model Benchmarking:** There is a desire to compare how each region structures and funds dual education—who pays, how, and for how long—and to share best practices transparently.
- **Support for Industrial PhD Programs:** Interest was expressed in developing or strengthening industrial PhD programs, though implementation authority often rests at national levels (e.g., the CIFRE framework in France). These programs need to be made more accessible, especially to SMEs.
- **Micro-Credentials and Flexibility:** Lifelong learning (LLL) and micro-credential systems are emerging as strategic priorities, though implementation is still nascent in several regions.

## Engagement:

- **Lifelong Learning:** Governments should set up funding schemes such as Individual Learning Accounts.
- **Commitment to Collaboration:** Despite delays in formal structures, several members reaffirmed their commitment to sharing contacts and defining joint regional priorities. The intention is to meet more regularly and take initiative without waiting for central governance decisions.
- **Institutional Innovation:** Participants acknowledged that we are witnessing a new moment of transition, involving new types of companies, students, and institutions. Dual education sits at the heart of this shift and should be leveraged as a powerful, flexible tool for regional innovation.
- **Strategic Investment in Talent:** Efforts should focus on extending dual programs to smaller companies, many of which are currently disconnected from the model but could benefit significantly from its potential.

### 4.2.1 Industry Consultative Council (ICC)

## Main Orientations-Challenges:

- **Synchronization with Academia:** Align curricula with industry needs and promote Lifelong Learning (LLL).
- **Skills Development:** Focus on high-level skills and address skills shortages due to demographic changes.



- **Future Trends:** Prepare individuals for uncertain futures with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and emphasize broad personal and professional development over just certifications.
- **Synchronization with Academia:** Continue aligning curricula with industry needs and promote Lifelong Learning (LLL). The development of joint master's programs must incorporate industry input and respond directly to real industrial challenges.
- **Skills Development and Sectoral Adaptability:** Skills are evolving faster than accreditation systems. Universities and companies must co-develop agile, sector-specific responses.
- **Awareness of Dual Education:** Many companies remain unaware of the dual model and its benefits. A concerted effort is needed to raise awareness and promote its value across different sectors and countries.
- **Attracting and Engaging Talent:** EU4Dual should support companies in identifying talent needs early and building long-term engagement through industrial ambassadors and structural partnerships.
- **Structural Disparities in Europe:** In some countries (e.g., Poland), true dual education is not yet implemented. This creates asymmetries in participation and expectations.
- **Emerging Roles – Industry Professionals as Teachers:** In some contexts (e.g., Portugal), professionals are legally certified to teach in academic settings, raising strategic and business model questions for companies considering this path.

## Support Needs:

- **Ecosystem Convergence:** Advocate for dual education across all systems to bridge academia-industry gaps.
- **Access to Skilled Interns:** Develop a European scheme for dual education to provide companies with skilled interns.
- **Retention Tool:** Use EU4Dual as a tool to retain individuals in the education system through advanced degrees.
- **Mobility and Collaboration:** Promote international collaboration and mobility to enhance cultural competencies and communication skills.
- **Support Program for SMEs:** SMEs need tailored training and consultancy programs to engage with universities, along with a best practice toolkit and ambassador initiatives to enhance visibility and understanding of dual education.
- **Bridging Academic–Business Gaps:** Improve communication, align course content with company expectations, and facilitate smoother onboarding of industry experts into academia.
- **Policy and Legislative Frameworks:** Develop legislative mechanisms that support certification of professionals who teach and provide incentives to companies supplying expertise to universities.
- **Pan-European Expansion Support:** EU4Dual is expected to help businesses to expand their academic collaborations across Europe, including potential new regions such as Portugal, Spain, and Mexico.
- **Data and Feedback Loops:** Work packages need actionable data from industry on skill gaps and expectations, which should directly inform academic content development and continuous improvement processes.

## Engagement:

- **Program Contributions:** Share experiences and insights from industry to shape program contents.
- **Collaboration Initiatives:** Foster closer collaboration between industry and universities through internships, apprenticeships, LLL training opportunities, and shared strategic expertise or initiatives.

- **Industry Club Concept:** Establish a structured platform for industry stakeholders to engage with EU4Dual in a tiered and targeted way—based on company size, sector, and maturity.
- **Storytelling & Best Practice Sharing:** Highlight successful dual education cases in an accessible, practical format. Stories should serve as tools for consulting and onboarding new partners, particularly SMEs.
- **Strategic Integration of Industry in Academia:** Foster a culture of mutual benefit between universities and companies through co-designed curricula, joint research, and cross-sector mentorships.
- **Resilience and Labour Market Awareness:** Promote a culture of adaptability in the face of industry transformation. Acknowledge the human element in workforce planning and dual education success.
- **Networking and Visibility:** Leverage EU4Dual as a European gateway for partnership building, skills foresight, and fostering innovation.

## 4.2.2 Business Outreach Committee (BOC) Contributions

### Main Orientations – Challenges

- **Beyond Technical Skills:** Stakeholders emphasized that students need more than just academic or technical training; they must develop practical competencies such as teamwork, problem-solving, and understanding workplace dynamics and socioeconomical cultures. These are critical for integration into the labor market.
- **Workforce and Innovation Alignment:** The university must fulfill a dual mission—knowledge development and acquisition—and this must extend to professionals already in the field, not only new graduates.
- **Innovation Ecosystem Development:** The vision of creating a pan-European network of innovation hubs was reinforced. These hubs should:
  - Promote regional and cross-border mobility.
  - Enable apprenticeships in different European contexts.
  - Act as catalysts for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and industrial engagement.
- **Disparities in SME Engagement:** Many SMEs lack the financial and organizational structure to implement dual education. Dedicated guidance and structural tools are required to onboard them effectively.
- **Sustainability through Structure:** Building long-term university–industry relationships require phases of development: identification of needs, co-designed projects, faculty exchange, and formal partnerships. A coherent, ecosystem-based approach is essential.
- **Questioning ICC Value:** Some partners raised questions about the added value of the ICC (Industry Consultative Council), prompting a need to clarify its concrete contributions to dual education, especially in terms of agility and European-level coordination.

### Support Needs

- **Practical Toolkits and Handbooks:** A generic guide for SMEs should be developed, including good practices for hosting dual students, organizational integration strategies, and support materials for HR and academic mentors.
- **Talent Readiness and HR Collaboration:** Universities should lead talent-attraction campaigns and play a role in shaping company HR strategies. This includes enabling reskilling and upskilling through tailored programs.

- **Resource Platforms and Knowledge Sharing:** A central knowledge repository or “skills database” is needed to consolidate resources, project models, and effective practices.
- **Flexible Learning for Industry:** Programs such as microcredentials, teacher exchanges, and modular training formats must be developed to align with industry needs and timelines.
- **Policy Harmonization:** Clear and consistent rules across the EU4Dual alliance for company participation are required, supported by a transparent value matrix illustrating business benefits.

## Engagement

- **Innovation Challenge Format:** The 24-Hour Innovation Challenge, where companies submit real problems for students to solve collaboratively, was highlighted as a successful engagement model. It enhances experiential learning and strengthens the industry-academia interface.
- **Joint Council Initiatives:** Coordination between BOC and ICC (e.g., joint meetings, shared sessions) ensures unified messaging and action across business and institutional actors.
- **Long-Term Advisory Structures:** The BOC is planning the creation of a dedicated advisory group of teachers, and the publication of a one-pager presenting all EU4Dual business-facing products.
- **Collaborative Project Sharing:** Actions include opening second-year student projects at ESTIA to consortium partners and external stakeholders, expanding innovation challenges, and internationalizing initiatives events like “Bask Invest”.
- **Strategic Tasks to perform:**
  - Share success stories, identify business leads, and map initiatives.
  - Formalize teacher advisory group, product summaries, and open collaborative platforms

### 4.3 Student Council



## Main Orientations – Challenges

- **Gain relevant work experience:** Students are motivated by the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world settings from the beginning of their studies.
- **Financial independence:** Receiving a salary during studies is a key factor for many students.
- **Enhanced employability:** Integrated work experience significantly improves CVs and job prospects.
- **Smooth transition into working life:** Mentorship from companies facilitates a progressive entry into the professional world.

- **Clarified career paths:** Interactions with professionals help students define their post-graduation goals.
- **Intense academic workload:** Condensed theoretical phases create strong academic pressure.
- **Time conflict between study and work:** Work obligations reduce the time available for study and exam preparation.
- **Performance-related stress:** Academic progress sometimes determines the maintenance of salary.
- **High expectations:** Students are expected to perform well both at university and in the workplace, generating pressure and stress.
- **Reduced social life:** The intensity of balancing study and work leaves little room for personal life.
- **Post-graduation job insecurity:** The lack of employment guarantees increases competition among students.
- **Cross-country inequalities:** The dual model varies widely among partner countries, leading to uneven student experiences.

## Support Needs

- **Improved financial support:** Higher salaries or scholarships would help avoid the need for additional jobs.
- **Workplace readiness training:** Students request training on company culture, labor rights, contracts, salaries, and taxation.
- **Better thesis coordination:** There is a need for alignment between academic and company expectations for final theses.
- **Fair workload recognition:** ECTS allocations should more accurately reflect students' actual workload.
- **Acknowledgment within companies:** Students want their contributions and roles to be valued by their employers.
- **Job guarantees:** Offering post-graduation employment would reduce pressure and improve student retention.
- **Industry-relevant academic content:** Course material should remain aligned with professional and industry needs.
- **Expert lectures:** Sessions delivered by professionals from the field are considered especially enriching.
- **Ongoing university–company dialogue:** Mechanisms such as monthly newsletters and joint projects could improve coordination and mutual understanding.

## Engagement

- **Professional networking opportunities:** Meeting professionals during studies helps guide career choices and open future opportunities.
- **University-led employer events:** Job fairs, company presentations, and similar events promote early engagement with the job market.
- **Career support services:** CV workshops and interview preparation sessions are highly appreciated.
- **Sustained university–company communication:** Ongoing engagement throughout the program helps ensure alignment and adaptability.
- **Peer support networks:** Students benefit from formal and informal support groups both at university and in the workplace.
- **Access to international networks:** Opportunities to connect with or work abroad through company networks are valued.



- **Holistic development approach:** Students expect dual programs to support not only academic success but also personal growth.

## 4.4 Advisory Board

### Main Orientations-Challenges:

- **Internationalisation and Mobility:** Foster responsible professional mobility and design effective vocational training policies.
- **Values and Long-term Thinking:** Emphasize deep societal values and long-term strategic thinking in education.
- **Comprehensive Strategies:** Develop strategies that integrate local, regional, national, and international levels.

### Support Needs:

- **Recognition Systems:** Implement systems for recognizing prior education and work-based experience, especially for immigrants.
- **Innovative Processes:** Develop new strategies to address societal and industrial needs.
- **Equal Representation:** Ensure equal representation of academic and industry professionals in education.

### Engagement:

- **Dream and Ambition:** Collaborate with international partners, including universities in Northern Africa, to foster innovation.
- **Practical Focus:** Ground initiatives in realistic, impactful outcomes and improve storytelling to make the project more attractive.

## 4.5 Future Lab Workshop - Stakeholders Feedback

### Main Orientations – Challenges

- **Redefining Dual Excellence:** focus on redesigning the student experience in Dual study programs through a Design Thinking approach, revealing that students expect much more than administrative coordination between academia and industry—they seek a truly integrated and transformative experience.
- **Students at the Center:** The process placed students at the heart of exploration, encouraging empathy-driven innovation to meet their evolving needs.
- **Need for Real-World Insight Before Enrollment:** The idea of immersing prospective students in company environments before they formally begin their studies was repeatedly suggested as a way to raise awareness and motivation.
- **Coaching Culture:** Participants noted a strong need for structured, well-trained coaching systems both in academia and industry, particularly in the first year.

- **Bridging Academia and the World of Work:** The need to strengthen the interface between Academic Learning (AC) and the World of Work (WoW) was reinforced as the cornerstone of a meaningful dual experience.

## Support Needs

- **Early Industry Exposure:** Encourage "pre-experiences" in the workplace before enrollment to foster realistic expectations and deeper engagement.
- **Gamified Learning Environments:** Introduce game-based methodologies in both academic and company settings to enhance motivation, autonomy, and contextual application.
- **Coach Development and Training:** Identify, certify, and prepare industry professionals to act as mentors. Focus on soft skills, empathy, and dual-system fluency.
- **AI Integration for Student Support:** Use AI tools to provide personalized support, track progress, and enhance the overall student journey.
- **Mental Health Support for students :** provide a coaching for students in order to tackle the intense workload of a Dual study programme.
- **Visibility and Orientation:** Provide accurate and engaging information about dual programs to high school students through interactive formats.

## Engagement

- **Alumni Networks:** Strengthen the connection with alumni to reinforce a sense of belonging and long-term value. Alumni could also serve as ambassadors and mentors.
- **Student Empowerment:** Encourage autonomous thinking and decision-making as core learning outcomes. Students should see themselves as co-creators of their learning path.
- **Design Thinking for Education:** Institutionalize creative and user-centered innovation practices like those used in the Future Lab to foster co-construction and responsiveness.
- **Cross-Stakeholder Collaboration:** The Future Lab team expressed interest in continued exchange with the Student Council (SC), Industry Consultative Council (ICC), and Regional Governing Consultative Council (RCC) to ensure alignment and mutual enrichment.

## 5. Policy Recommendations

Based on all those stakeholders' feedback, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

### 5.1 Enhancing Curriculum Relevance

- Develop curricula in close collaboration with industry partners to ensure they meet current and future job market needs.
- Incorporate flexible learning modules that can be updated regularly to reflect technological and industry changes.

### 5.2 Strengthening Partnerships

- Establish formal partnerships between universities and industries to facilitate student placements and collaborative projects.

- Create incentives for companies to participate in Dual & WBL programs, such as tax breaks or grants.

### **5.3 Supporting Infrastructure Development**

- Allocate funding for the development of state-of-the-art training facilities and digital learning platforms.
- Encourage regional development initiatives that integrate Dual & WBL programs to address local labor market needs.

### **5.4 Ensuring Quality and Innovation**

- Implement quality assurance frameworks to monitor and evaluate Dual & WBL programs.
- Promote the exchange of best practices and innovative teaching methods across and beyond the EU4Dual network.

### **5.5 Fostering Sustainability**

- Establish mechanisms for the continuous evaluation and improvement of Dual & WBL programs.
- Secure long-term funding and policy support to ensure the sustainability and scalability of these initiatives.

### **5.6 Reconceptualizing Dual Education as a Societal and Strategic Lever**

- Reposition Dual Higher Education as a tool to address major societal transitions—green, digital, demographic, and social inclusion—beyond employability alone.
- Encourage each program to explicitly contribute to at least one major European or regional mission (e.g. energy transition, industrial sovereignty, rural revitalization).
- Make dual education a driver of inclusive prosperity and territorial cohesion by anchoring it in regional development strategies.

### **5.7 Designing Learner-Centered, Flexible, and Empowering Experiences**

- Place the learner at the center of the system by fostering autonomy, flexibility, and personalization.
- Support holistic development of students through coaching, mentoring, well-being systems, and inclusive pedagogies (notably for first-generation students and women).
- Promote early and immersive exposure to the workplace—including "pre-dual experiences"—to ensure meaningful career orientation.
- Recognize prior experience and informal learning in admission, validation, and progression processes (e.g. VAE, micro-credentials, modular certifications).

## 5.8 Structuring Regional and Transnational Dual Ecosystems

- Establish regional innovation hubs co-governed by universities, public authorities, and businesses to anchor dual education locally.
- Ensure strategic and operational continuity via dedicated coordination structures (e.g. Regional Secretaries, Industry Clubs, Joint Mentorship Committees).
- Leverage EU4Dual's scale to enable cross-border placements, joint master's programs, and shared teaching resources.
- Address disparities between countries by creating minimum common standards while preserving local adaptation.

## 5.9 Integrating Industry and the World of Work into Academia

- Recognise industry professionals as co-educators by developing formal certification schemes and status (e.g. visiting lecturer, industrial mentor).
- Incentivise the involvement of SMEs through practical handbooks, legal templates, and simplified contracts.
- Expand collaborative formats such as the "24h Innovation Challenge" to all campuses as flagship initiatives for dual engagement.
- Support co-designed projects that include research, teaching, innovation, and community service components.

## 5.10 Ensuring Quality, Attractiveness, and Long-Term Engagement

- Implement a transnational quality assurance framework co-developed with stakeholders and focused on bringing a real impact: learning outcomes, well-being, employability, inclusion.
- Develop a European observatory for dual education with benchmarks, data dashboards, and policy watch functions.
- Invest in storytelling, communication, and alumni engagement to elevate the attractiveness and reputation of dual pathways.
- Create financial incentives (e.g. individual learning accounts, Erasmus-style grants for work placements) to democratize access.

## 5.11 Enabling Lifelong Learning and Agile Transitions

- Position dual education at the heart of lifelong learning ecosystems—responding to upskilling, reskilling, and career transitions.
- Promote agile, stackable, and modular programs compatible with work constraints, especially for adult learners.
- Accelerate the deployment of digital and AI-powered learning companions to personalize support and improve retention.



- Support industrial doctorates and innovation fellowships to foster talent pipelines within R&I ecosystems.

## 5.12 Institutionalizing a Living Policy Framework

- Treat this White Paper as a living, iterative tool updated annually through stakeholder feedback loops and field experimentation.
- Create pilot zones and policy labs within the EU4Dual alliance to test new legal, academic, or governance models for dual education.
- Co-develop legislative proposals with EU and national authorities based on the outcomes and lessons of local and transnational initiatives.
- Embed “learning by doing” into the governance culture of the EU4Dual alliance itself—scaling only what has been collectively tested and validated.

## 6. Conclusion

The 2025 edition of the EU4Dual White Policy Paper stands as a foundational and strategic reference document for European Dual Higher Education policy. It builds on the initial work of 2024 but now integrates the full diversity of perspectives collected from all stakeholder councils and workshops over the past year—including regional governments, industry leaders, students, advisory bodies, and experimental labs.

This updated document no longer reflects a preliminary vision. It is now grounded in practice, in dialogue, and in real-time co-construction with those actively shaping the future of dual and work-based learning (WBL) across Europe.

It reaffirms that Dual Higher Education is not merely an educational modality but rather a systemic and societal strategy, capable of responding to the most urgent European priorities: the green and digital transitions, inclusive territorial development, labor market resilience, lifelong learning, and the empowerment of future generations.

The multiple stakeholder contributions gathered and synthesized in this paper converge around several critical priorities:

- the need to place **learners at the center** of dual pathways, offering flexibility, coaching, recognition and equity;
- the strategic importance of **industry-academia partnerships**, with SMEs playing a greater role in talent development;
- the opportunity to **anchor dual education in regional innovation ecosystems** while ensuring transnational mobility and cohesion;
- the demand for **concrete tools, flexible models, and agile governance frameworks** to scale impact sustainably;
- the urgency of making dual education a **central pillar of the European education and employment agenda**.

The EU4Dual Alliance commits to transforming this White Paper into a **living policy tool**—revisited, refined and revalidated each year through active stakeholder engagement and implementation feedback. In doing so, the alliance embraces a true **learning-by-doing** approach, translating vision into actionable policies, pilots, and systemic reforms.

That feedback received from industry representatives, local governing representatives, student representatives and advisory board members of EU4Dual project provides a better understanding and a common comprehensive roadmap for enhancing Dual & Work-Based Learning pathways at European level through the first “products” offered and tested by this unprecedented Alliance of Universities.

By implementing or starting to work on this first list of recommendations, the project can significantly contribute to the development of a better skilled and adaptable European workforce, capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly changing job market at European and World level in order to ensure the competitiveness of European Union into the worldwide economy.

This Policy Paper will serve as a compass for:

- guiding the next stages of the EU4Dual project (2025–2026) and further,
- shaping proposals for the post-2030 EU education framework,
- informing national reforms and EU-level policy dialogue,
- and inspiring other sectors and regions seeking to deploy dual education as a catalyst for inclusive, green and resilient futures.

The EU4Dual vision—to build the largest, most integrated, and most mission-driven Dual Higher Education alliance in the world—is now supported by a collective roadmap, co-created with those who live, lead and learn dual education every day.

This is only the beginning.

#### **Important Note:**

This “EU4Dual White Policy Paper 2025” is the second version of the document, incorporating feedback and insights gathered during the meetings of the stakeholders’ councils and workshops at the first and second Annual Conferences of the EU4Dual Alliance (held on 9 April 2024 in Malta and 1 April 2025 in France).

While these initial contributions are essential and will continue to guide the actions and projects developed until the end of the project—and beyond the launch of the alliance’s legal entity—it is important to recognize that the numerous meetings, activities, and interactions planned with stakeholders throughout the coming year will generate new experiences, feedback, and insights. These will further enrich the “learning by doing” approach that underpins the EU4Dual project strategy and its ongoing activities.

Moreover, all aggregated knowledge and input will be used to update this “living document.” We are committed to publishing at least one further revised version of the EU4Dual White Policy Paper in 2026.

*Working document proposed and co-validated with the present members of the EU4Dual Business Outreach Committee (BOC) during the BOC monthly meeting organized on 05.09.25*



## About the EU4Dual Project

EU4Dual is the global top-quality reference for Dual Education. We form the largest integrated Dual- Education institution in the world – a multi-campus, multi-disciplinary institution, committed to close integration between academia, industry and regions. We use our collective expertise to help solve global challenges of industry to society – using Dual Education to make Europe greener, more equitable and more economically successful.