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ASSOCIATION OF TANZANIA EMPLOYERS

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GUIDELINE FOR EMPLOYERS IN TANZANIA:

EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING OF TRAINEES AND GRADUATES IN INDUSTRY



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Background of Guideline

This guideline is developed as part of a TVET initiative engaging the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE), and the Confederation of Danish Industries (DI), alongside social partners such as the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) and the Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA). The project, launched in June 2021, aims to develop vocational skills for employable young people in Tanzania, focusing on six areas: Fitter mechanics, Domestic and Industrial electrical installation, Food production, Refrigeration & air conditioning, Bakery, and Hotel management. Training is conducted in Dar es Salaam and Morogoro at institutions including Don Bosco Oyster-bay VTC, VETA Dar es Salaam, Kihonda VTC, Mikumi VTC, and Mzinga VTC.

This guideline was developed in response to feedback from 57 employers, social partners, and students, to assist employers in onboarding apprentices and interns, ensuring consistent skills transfer across industries. It provides a structured approach for effective onboarding, emphasizing clear communication, mentorship, and step-by-step learning experiences. The guideline aims to create a supportive work environment that fosters learning, growth, and compliance with relevant regulations, optimizing the onboarding process and contributing to a skilled workforce in Tanzania.



1. INTRODUCTION: HOW DO YOU START WITH YOUR NEW TRAINEE?

“If your company hires apprentices, trainees, or graduates, this guide is for you! It offers quick tips to ensure a great start for you and your new trainee, leading to high productivity, satisfaction, and retention from day one through the probationary period. This guideline refers to all apprentices, interns, and new graduates as trainees, as these guidelines apply to all. A strong trainee program boosts retention, productivity and helps your company shape future employees”

Have you just signed a contract with a trainee or a new young employee? Congratulations! You now have a wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact on their journey, enhancing the entire onboarding process and boosting productivity!

Overall, embracing trainees as part of your talent strategy brings long-term benefits! By providing a supportive environment, your company becomes an attractive destination for enthusiastic talent, enhancing your reputation.

The main success lies in open communication between your company, training institutions, and trainees.

As a supervisor, line manager or HR person, this guideline provides:

- ➔ Techniques for effective communication with apprentices to insure productive collaboration.
- ➔ Insights on creating safe and gender-friendly practices so all trainees feel respected and supported, which can increase retention.

Use these guidelines flexibly or as a comprehensive framework to maximize your trainees' potential and foster a mutually beneficial collaboration.



Let's work together to make the most out of this valuable collaboration!



1. Definition box:

Apprenticeship: A structured, paid training program combining on-the-job and off-the-job learning, leading to a recognized qualification often related to a TVET programme.

Pre-apprenticeship program: A preparatory program to help potential apprentices develop workplace competencies or meet entry requirements for an apprenticeship.

Internship: A formal, temporary work placement integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills development.



3. PREBOARDING

Congratulations on signing the apprenticeship/trainee agreement! From here, making a positive impact during this early stage can set the tone for the entire duration of your working relationship, and even beyond. This process, is what we refer to as pre-boarding.

Preboarding - From signature to first day of work!

Preboarding includes activities and interactions before the official start date to build commitment, excitement, and ensure a smooth transition. Effective preboarding helps apprentices/trainees feel welcome, informed, and prepared, which can significantly enhance their productivity and integration in the company. With simple actions, you can ensure that you and the apprentice get off to the best possible start to your collaboration.

Why Preboarding is Important

- ➔ **Builds Commitment and Excitement:** Engaging with the apprentice early fosters a sense of belonging and enthusiasm.
- ➔ **Facilitates a Smooth Transition:** Providing essential information beforehand helps the apprentice acclimate quickly and reduces first-day anxiety.
- ➔ **Enhances Productivity:** A well-prepared apprentice can start contributing effectively from day one.
- ➔ **Strengthens retentions:** You prevent that your trainee finds another opportunity before they start

Risks of Skipping Preboarding

- ➔ **Increased Anxiety:** Lack of communication and preparation can lead to confusion and stress for the apprentice.
- ➔ **Lower Engagement:** Without early engagement, apprentices may feel undervalued and disconnected.
- ➔ **Delayed Productivity:** Apprentices who are not well-prepared may take longer to become effective in their roles.
- ➔ **Increased Turnover Risk:** Neglecting preboarding can increase chance of turnover, sometimes before the work period starts

As an employer, it can be of great investment to maintain contact with the apprentice you have chosen to employ before their start. This applies almost regardless of how short the time is between signing the training agreement and the first working day in the company.

Pre-boarding tools used by the employer:

There are many ways to keep in touch with your apprentice before they start their company attachment. Here are a few suggestions/tools that can kick-start a better and more effective apprenticeship process for you, and your apprentice.



- **Develop an apprenticeship handbook:** As an employer, it can be valuable to spend some time developing some company-material, that can be handed out to the apprentice as soon as you enter an agreement. Developing such material can prepare the apprentice for attachment and set the expectations from an early start. It will also give them a better understanding of the company. The material is generic and should not be customized for each apprentice.



- **Welcoming letter and material:** As an employer, you can send the apprentice a mail, a personal letter, or give them a call, expressing your enthusiasm about their upcoming arrival. Reaching out to you append providing essential information about your company, rules, expectations.



- **Small social event:** As an employer that hires more than one apprentice at once, you can organize a small welcoming session for your apprentices, before their official start. It could be half an hour with breakfast, or an afternoon soft drink is enough. Spend this opportunity to inform the apprentices about the company, and the expectations for them during the attachment.



- **Early workplace tour:** You can invite your new apprentice for a workplace tour with the person responsible for the apprenticeship or another manager. Especially a good idea if the apprentice has not seen the entire company, e.g., in connection with signing the training agreement.



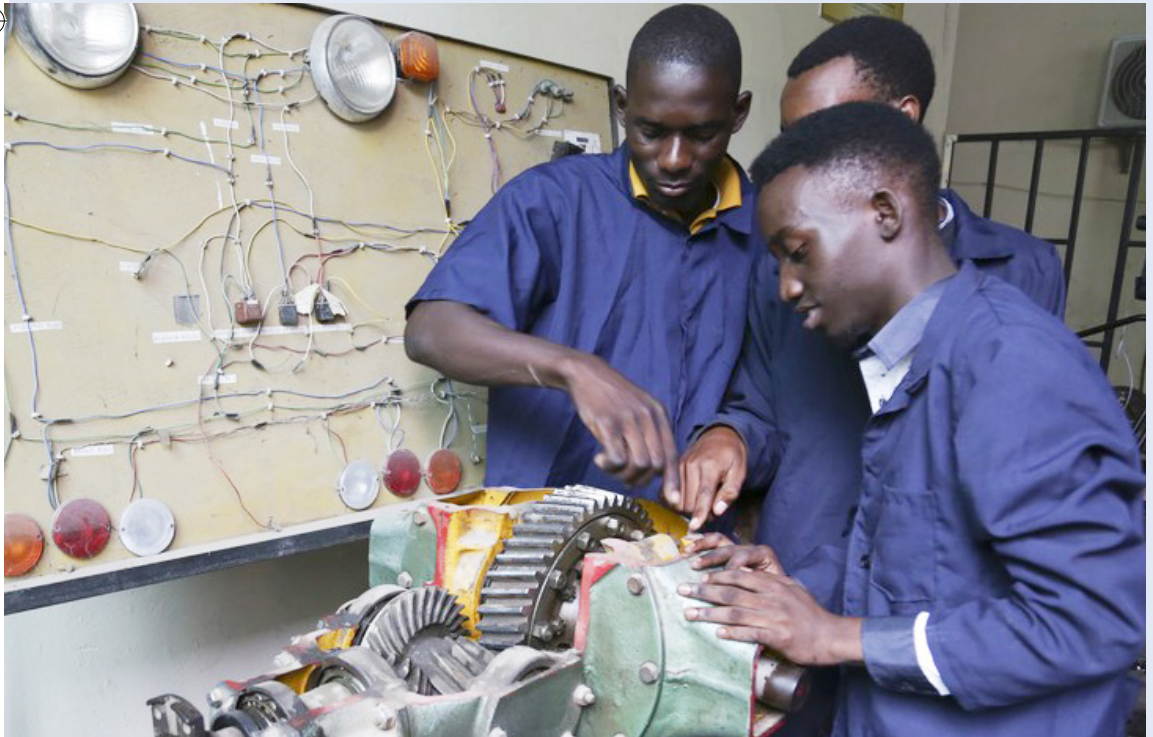
- **Visit to the vocational center:** Plan a visit to the vocational center to visit the apprentice while they are still in training, both to show interest and to promote your company to other future apprentices. This can be done either by supervisors.



- **Prepare trainee-plan:** Prepare the work schemed for the trainee together with your line manager, apprenticeship coordinator, trade union representative, or other relevant colleagues, to be as prepared as possible for the start of the attachment period.



- **Prepare equipment:** Preparing work clothes, safety shoes, photography for the website, or other small things that need to be in place before the apprentice can start work, can be of great value. By doing this, you not only ensure the safety of the apprentice, but you also express some seriousness to the apprentice.



4. ONBOARDING

Onboarding: *From the first day to the first weeks' time.*

As your trainee begins their journey, it's crucial to foster a supportive and motivating environment from the beginning. Being transparent and offering a clear plan makes the trainee able to get a fast overview. Here's how you can ensure a smooth start and ongoing engagement:

The first day

The apprentice will be preoccupied with making a good impression, excited or perhaps nervous. Take the edge off with these little things:

- Remember when you have agreed that the apprentice will show up for the first time!
- Make sure that all (relevant) colleagues know that the apprentice is coming and can welcome him/her.
- For example, have keys, access cards, mobile phones, weekly schedules, or other relevant items ready to hand out.

The first week

Let the trainee go into their first weekend with a good feeling, both professionally and personally. You can do this, for example, like this:

- Make a first-week plan: To not overload the apprentice with information, provide the apprentice with information about their first days and expectations about the first week from the company's side.
- Give the names of one or two people in the company who can answer questions about practical matters, the training, and/or the company.
- Match the apprentice work with colleagues who are good at teaching.
- The supervisor should set aside 15-20 minutes on for example Fridays to talk about what the apprentice has experienced and learned during the week and give the apprentice feedback on their first-week performance.

The trial period: From start to the end of the trial period

Many apprentices feel under a lot of pressure during the trial period. The company can make the trial period a constructive and educational period by having regular feedback tools, to ensure both parts are aligned throughout the period. Ways to do this include:

- Regular interviews/conversations during the trial period, so that the apprentice knows how things are always going. How often is not crucial. The point is that the apprentice knows THAT feedback will be given and when.
- Present a vocational plan for the whole period. As far as possible, let the apprentice know what he or she will be going through throughout the whole period to ensure transparency and decrease turnover.
- Ask for feedback from the apprentice, to hear about their observations. If the apprentice feels listened to, it creates commitment to the training and the company.

Dialogue and follow-up tools: ensuring fruitful communication with your apprentice during the trial period.

Effective communication is essential for a successful traineeship period. Here's how to establish a constructive dialogue and follow-up structure with your trainee:

Daily short check-ups: *Have you spoken to your apprentice today?*

Most apprentice coordinators talk to their apprentices every day, and this is a very good idea. The trusting dialog can:

- Support good development
- Detect problems before they become too big.
- Make the apprentice feel safe.
- Keep the apprentice in training.

Scheduled follow-up meetings:

Of course, the daily talk is without a fixed framework and time, but there are benefits to having scheduled conversations with structure as well to give feedback. For example, you can better:

- Prepare for scheduled follow-up conversations
- Stick to what was agreed
- Give the trainee feedback or improvement and give them credit for motivation.
- Make sure all the important things are remembered.

Amount of follow-up meetings:

Of course, it is up to you as a company to decide when, how, and how often you want to have a scheduled conversation with the apprentice. Good times and occasions for a follow-up conversation are:

- 2-3 times during the trial period
- *At least* just before the end of the trial period
- Before and/or after each stay at the TVET center
- When moving between departments
- At the start of a new learning year

You can utilize the provided form for each conversation to track progress and ensure adherence to agreements. This systematic approach fosters a conducive learning environment for both trainee and company.



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Conversation topic	Questions to be answered/ answers to be recorded	Here's where we need to work	You are doing well	High level
The quality of your work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professionalism ● Order ● Safety and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the quality of your work in order? ● Do you keep your workplace tidy? ● Do you contribute to a safe working environment? 			
Are you efficient? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your efforts ● Punctuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you perform well at work? ● Can you keep meeting times and appointments? 			
Are you flexible? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transition ● Working together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you work on different tasks and in different conditions? ● Can you work with colleagues to achieve your common goals? 			
Are you committed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest in education ● Initiative and independence ● Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you show your interest in both the schooling and the time spent in the company? ● Can you take decisions yourself? Do you contribute new ideas or ways of doing things? ● Do you understand what the business needs? And do you adapt your work accordingly? 			
Your competences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning at the TVET center ● Final objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did you do at your last TVET center placement? What will happen at the next school stay? ● Are you on track to achieve the final objectives of your education and training? 			

Date:..... Name of apprentice:.....

Conversation topic	Help questions for the apprentice coordinator (formulated as questions for the apprentice)
Quality	<p>Professionalism: Are you satisfied with how you perform your tasks? Are your colleagues satisfied? Do you think you can do what you should be able to do? Can you point out anything you are lacking?</p> <p>Order: What does it look like where you work? Do you help to keep it clean and tidy?</p> <p>Safety and security: Do you know our safety rules? Do you comply with them? Do you see others complying with them? What do you do if you see colleagues breaking the safety rules?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Performance: Is your work performance stable? Do you contribute to achieving the agreed objectives? Do you keep appointments? Do you ask for help when you need it? Are you making good use of time and materials? Are you satisfied with your own performance? Are your colleagues satisfied with your performance?</p> <p>Punctuality: Do you arrive on time? Do you meet deadlines?</p>
Flexibility	<p>Transition: Is it easy for you to start a new task before you have finished the one you are currently working on? How do you feel about urgent tasks?</p> <p>Working together: How do you work with colleagues? What do you think of their efforts? And how do you think they think about yours? Do you know how to work according to the instructions you are given?</p>
Commitment	<p>Interest: Are you interested in improving your skills in your profession? Both at TVET center and in the company?</p> <p>Initiative and independence: Do you go the extra mile to improve your skills - something you don't have to do, but do on your own initiative? Can you plan and carry out your own work tasks?</p> <p>Communication: Do you speak up if you have your own opinion on how a task should be done, for example? How do you communicate with those you work with? Is there anything that is difficult to understand? Do you understand the purpose of your tasks? Do you feel listened to?</p>

Competences

TVET center placements: how did your last TVET center placement go? Are you satisfied with your results? What was the most interesting thing you learned? What will happen in the next TVET center placement? Is there anything special we should prepare you for?

Final goal: Are you satisfied with what you can do now in relation to what you need to achieve before the apprenticeship test? Are you satisfied with your own performance? Is there anything you would like help to improve?



5. Fostering a Great Work Environment

As part of onboarding trainees, it's vital to cultivate an inclusive and equitable workplace, addressing both physical and psychological aspects. An inclusive work environment not only enhances employee well-being but also contributes to increased productivity and organizational success, for both female and male trainees.

The physical working environment

- Make sure all your employees have work clothes and shoes in the right sizes.
- Make sure there is good lighting everywhere.
- Make assistive devices readily accessible with clear usage instructions.
- Maintain clean toilet and shower facilities, and insures the door is lockable and there should be a waste bin available.
- All employees should have a locker available to store their work clothes. A cleaning place should also be available.

The psychological working environment

- Investigate employee wellbeing via updated WPA surveys (workplace assessment)
- React to the results you receive from the WPA.
- Clearly define guidelines for addressing harassment, sexism, and abusive behavior.
- Clarify action plans for dealing with employee dissatisfaction.
- Incorporate individual employee appraisals into your annual plan.
- Support activities that create good relationships between employees.
- Establish an anonymous whistleblower scheme to get advice and guidance.

End of the trial period:

As the trial period ends, provide clear information about the continuation of the training agreement. Discuss whether the apprenticeship

will transition into formal employment or pursue further training opportunities. Open communication at this stage fosters trust and helps apprentices make informed decisions about their future. **So give proper and clear information before the trial period is over: Will the training agreement continue after the trial period?**

How to onboard (Summed up) -



PRE-BOARD YOUR NEW APPRENTICE:

- **Reach out to them before they start:** Send a mail, invite for lunch, social event, or give them a call, to make them feel welcomed and to increase their commitment before they even start!



HAND OUT COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

Let the apprentice be informed in good time: as part of the pre-boarding process, develop some communication material that includes information about the company, company rules, dress codes, etc. to prepare the apprentice and align expectations before start.



PREPARE YOUR COLLEAGUES FOR THE NEW APPRENTICE

- **Let everyone be informed:** send out an email to the relevant colleagues in the company with short info about the apprentice/apprentices that will start, so everyone is aware. That way, you make sure your apprentice gets the best start!



MAKE A FIRST WEEK PLAN:

Give your new apprentice an overview: Spend the first 1-2 hours on day 1 going through the first-week plan. The plan should include which persons/departments the apprentice will be linked to every day, and what their task should be (observing/assisting, etc).

**FOLLOW UP ON DAY 5:**

Align expectations based on feedback from the first week: End the Friday with a 20-minute conversation on what the apprentice has learned during the first week and give them feedback on their performance. Use the feedback tool in the guideline for this.

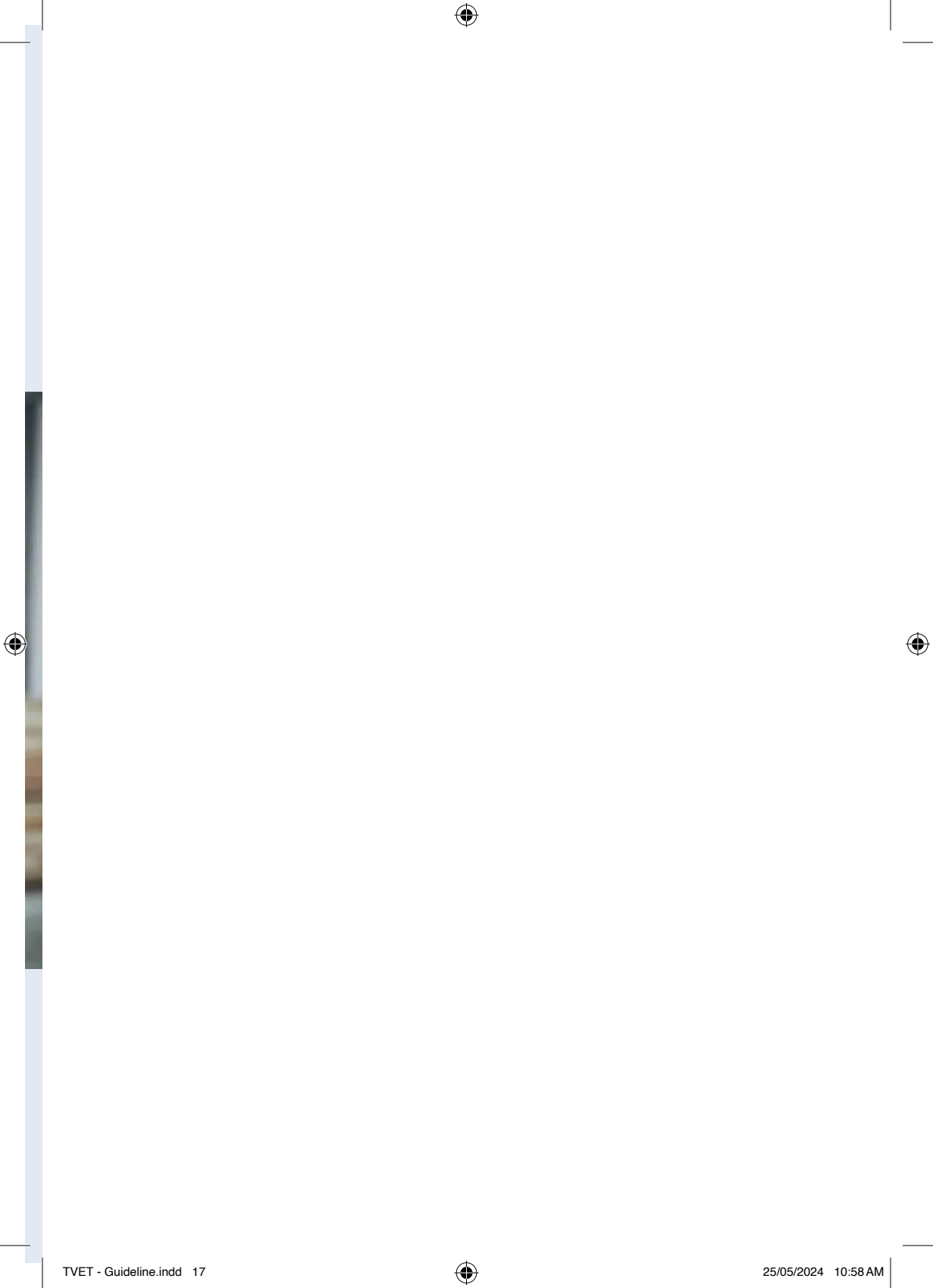
**MAKE A VOCATIONAL PLAN FOR THE TOTAL PERIOD**

Structure the attachment period: After the first week, present a vocational plan for the rest of the period. The plan can include information about departments, tasks, etc. However, keep the plan flexible and adjustable.

PLAN 3-4 FEEDBACK CONVERSATION DURING PLACEMENT

Give feedback throughout to keep expectations aligned: Use the interview tools provided in the guideline for feedback conversations, that will keep the apprentice on track, and strengthen the collaboration. Depending on the length of attachment, conduct 3-4 feedback interviews.







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