



spotlight on VET
SPAIN

VET in Spain

Modernising vocational education and training (VET) and making it more flexible as support to lifelong learning and employability are at the heart of Spanish education and employment policies. VET plays a significant role in upskilling the workforce and in helping young people acquire qualifications that respond to labour market needs.

VET is mainly the responsibility of education and employment authorities. The national system for qualifications and vocational training is the umbrella for VET programmes, leading to formal qualifications awarded by either the education or employment authorities. The General Council for Vocational Training is the national government advisory body on VET policy; it comprises representatives of national and regional public authorities as well as social partners, such as enterprise organisations and trade unions.

Stakeholders are involved in designing all VET qualifications in the education system and in developing occupational standards in all sectors of the economy, creating a national register (*catálogo nacional de cualificaciones profesionales*, CNCP). This serves as reference when designing or updating VET qualifications and programmes to ensure they are relevant to labour market needs.

Education authority VET was reformed in 2013 and, from 2014/15, offers basic, intermediate and higher VET qualifications (VET diplomas, ISCED 3 to 5). Programmes last two years (2 000 hours), with training in a company (minimum 20%) and at a VET school (maximum 80%). Work-based learning takes place mainly in workshops, labs, simulations or at the workplace; 30% of the learning is devoted to applied theory. The reform also opens up the opportunity to acquire IVET qualifications through dual track schemes (with or without a labour contract). In such cases, duration is up to three years.

Basic VET programmes are offered in the last year of compulsory education, when learners are 15. They allow students at risk of leaving education without qualifications the possibility to remain in education and training. After completing the two-year programme, students may move on to intermediate VET and/or take the end of compulsory education exams (ESO) opening up the general education path. Intermediate VET programmes usually begin at age 16, after the end of compulsory

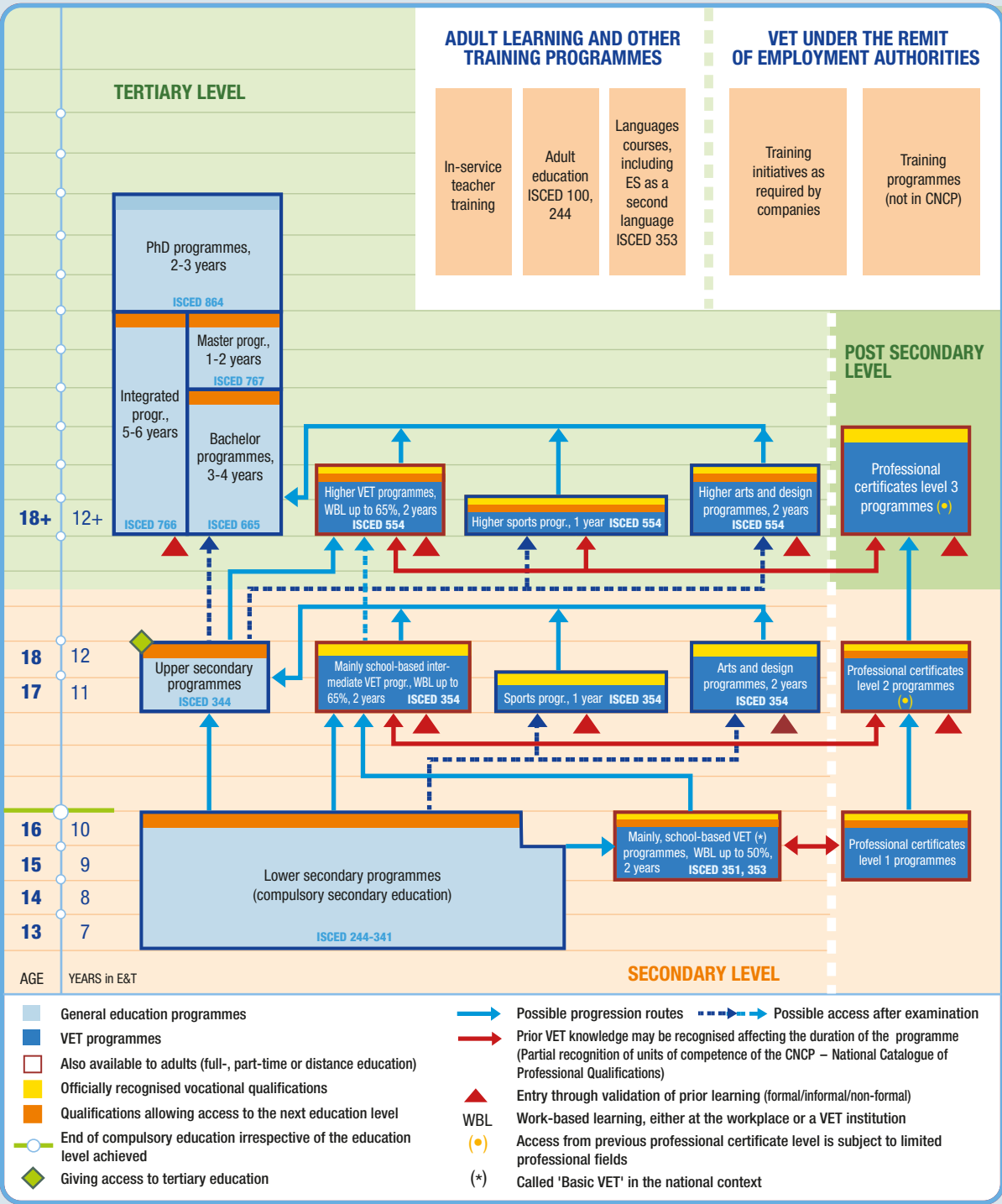
education, and allow access to higher level VET via an admission procedure.

Tertiary or higher education comprises university studies and higher-level VET programmes. Qualifications in the Spanish higher education qualifications framework (MECES) have been linked to the European higher education qualifications framework (EHEA-QF). The opportunity for credit transfer allows higher VET graduates to progress to university and university graduates to do complementary studies in higher VET (around 120 ECTS per higher VET diploma). There are VET programmes in arts and design and in sports (ISCED-P 354 and 554).

Those older than 16 can also attend employment authority VET programmes, with qualifications at three different levels (professional certificates) corresponding to an occupational profile. Access requirements and duration vary according to the learning outcomes to be achieved at each level (from 200 to 1 110 hours). A compulsory, on-the-job training module is included in the training programmes of all three levels. Applicants to VET programmes at level 2 or 3 who do not meet entry requirements should follow a compulsory training module on basic/key skills (communication in mother tongue, in a foreign language and/or in maths). These programmes can be considered initial or continuing VET, depending on learner background and professional experience.

CVET allows people to upgrade their skills and acquire formal qualifications from either the education or labour awarding bodies. It may be financed by private contributions (company and workers) or public funds (active labour market policies). CVET includes a wide range of courses designed for different needs and skill profiles. Training is offered by public or private institutions accredited as providers for professional certificates and other accredited VET training centres.

VET in the Spanish education and training system



Distinctive features of VET

The Spanish constitution provides the right to education and retraining, which public authorities have to promote. Two different vocational qualifications systems have been developed by the education and labour authorities: they share the same consultation bodies but the governance and objectives of their VET qualifications and programmes differ.

As the occupational standards in the CNCP apply to both qualifications systems, mutual recognition of some parts of the training is possible. There are also common regulations for validating skills acquired through work experience and expanding the dual principle. VET programmes are modularised and include compulsory workplace learning at the end of, or during, studies. Learners need to pass all modules to obtain the relevant qualification. However, modularisation allows partial certification and re-engagement from a lifelong learning perspective.

Regional authorities may initiate public calls for validation of non-formal and informal learning, depending on local or sectoral labour market needs. These procedures empower citizens to engage in further learning and acquire full qualifications. Demand for recognition may be driven by company needs, social partner requests or minimum qualification requirements from sectoral regulatory bodies.

Adults with no qualification may have their skills recognised or acquire a formal qualification through training. Key competences tests for advanced VET programmes and professional certificate access have been developed. Online or virtual learning environments and platforms are being developed to ease access to VET programmes.

The recently introduced basic VET and easier access to intermediate VET have opened up progression routes for youngsters and adults with low or no qualifications.

The dual principle has been implemented nationally to increase VET attractiveness and support young people in transition to the labour market. Participants in dual training programmes (16 to 25 year-olds or up to 30 until youth unemployment decreases) may sign an apprenticeship contract (one to three years) and get at least the minimum wage. At least 25% (first year) or 15% (subsequent years) of the training is devoted to acquiring new skills in a specialised training centre or in the company. Dual training schemes may also be based on an agreement between the company, the school and the learner. Participants have the status of student (no age limit applies) and may benefit from a scholarship, depending on the autonomous communities.

Challenges and policy responses

In response to the significant increase in youth unemployment in recent years, current VET policy focuses on:

- reducing early leaving from education and training;
- improving citizens' qualification levels and employability;
- implementing the dual principle (apprenticeship-type training);
- implementing e-learning and appropriate assessment criteria and quality assurance;
- evaluating the VET system to improve its quality and efficiency;
- improving VET attractiveness, engaging companies in VET and maintaining its labour market relevance;
- aligning VET qualifications with labour market needs and skills forecasts and with sectoral needs;
- developing a comprehensive national qualifications framework and improving implementation of the other European tools and principles to promote labour and training mobility and support lifelong learning.

The 2013 education reform aims to improve VET standards and make VET more attractive to young people, meeting their interests and encouraging them to progress in their qualification by introducing flexible learning paths in secondary education and VET programmes.

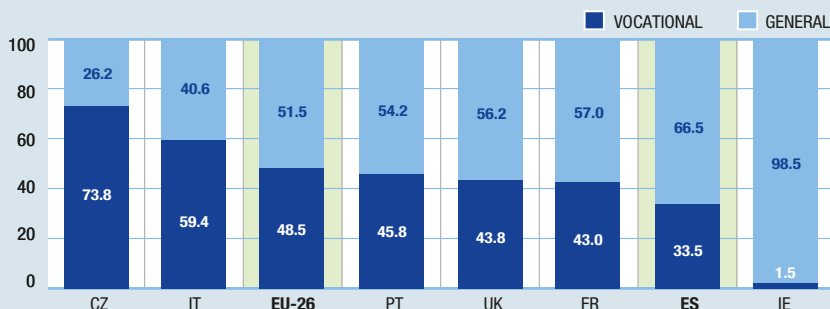
VET is also the main pillar of the national strategy for entrepreneurship and youth employment (2013-16) and the Spanish strategy for employment activation (2014-16). Several VET-related short-term measures are being implemented at national and regional levels. The effectiveness, efficiency and quality of VET under the remit of the employment authorities are assessed annually. However, assessment results need to inform decision-making on VET offers.

Reform in 2015 aims to increase CVET quality and improve management of public funds dedicated to training for employment to prevent fraud. This is to be guaranteed through accreditation of VET providers and by offering training leading to formal qualifications. Monitoring training outcomes, including transition to employment, will also support training quality; a common training database is being developed for this. Social partners and regional authorities participate in CVET quality assurance.



Education and training in figures

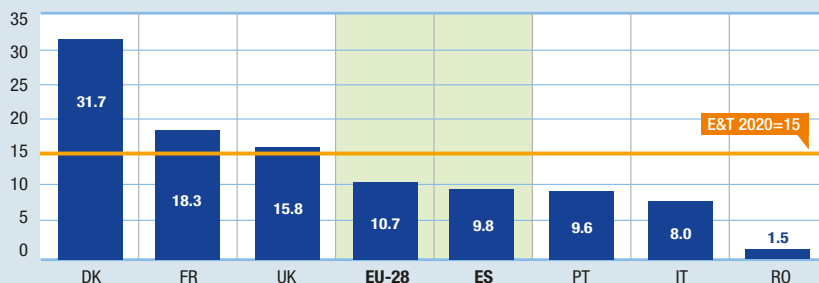
Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2013



NB: 48.5% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2013 based on available country data (26 countries); while there are programmes with a vocational dimension in Ireland at ISCED level 3, these are considered general programmes.

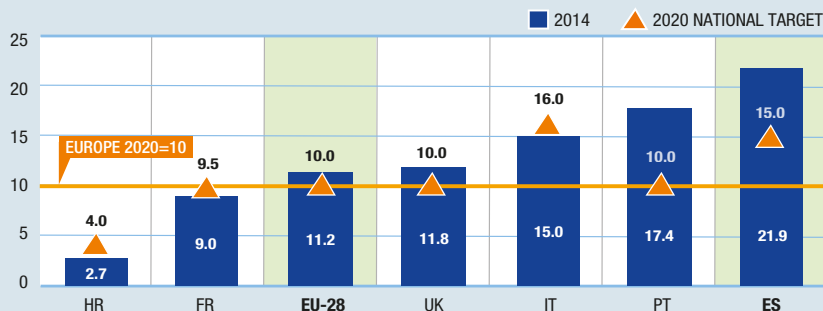
Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 22.7.2015.

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2014



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 22.7.2015.

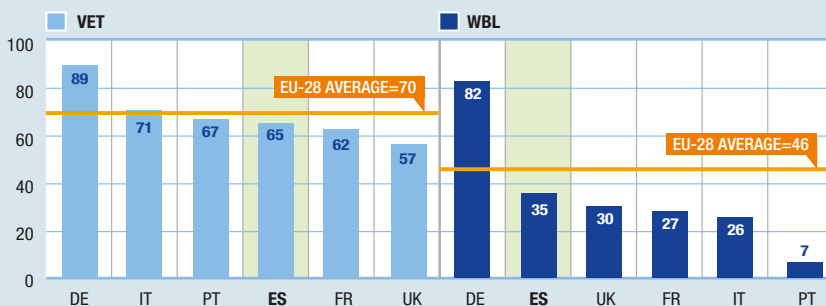
Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2014



NB: Break in time series in all countries; low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in ES.

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 22.7.2015.

Share of employees (aged 24 to 65) with medium-level education (ISCED 3-4) who obtained a vocational qualification, and whose highest level of education involved some learning in a workplace (% , 2014)



NB: VET: survey respondents described their highest qualification as vocational;

WBL: studies involved some learning at a workplace (e.g. apprenticeships, internships, other forms of work-based learning). Results may differ from those reported in national statistics and international surveys, as the online data collection method used does not always lead to fully representative findings.

Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey, 2014.



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Further information

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www.sepe.es	State Public Employment Service (SEPE)
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www.fundaciontripartita.org	Tripartite Foundation for Employment Training (FTFE)

This Spotlight is based on input from Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal – SEPE (Cedefop ReferNet Spain 2015).



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