



spotlight on VET PORTUGAL

VET in Portugal

Vocational education and training (VET) is under the remit of the ministries of education and labour. The education ministry is responsible for the education sector (from pre-primary to upper secondary level) while the labour ministry has responsibility for apprenticeship programmes, continuing vocational training and active labour market measures. The national qualification system (SNQ) reorganised VET within the remits of the education and employment authorities into a single system.

Permeability between general and VET programmes is ensured. Young people can choose among different types of VET programmes, provided that they meet the admission requirements in terms of age and achieved education. VET is available at lower, upper, and post-secondary levels:

- (a) at lower secondary level, VET programmes (CEF, ISCED-P 254; EQF 2) are school-based and include practical training. They target young people aged 15+, who completed the first cycle of basic education (four years) and who are at risk of early leaving. Progression is possible from CEF to upper secondary education;
- (b) at upper secondary level, all VET programmes lead to a double certification: secondary education certificate and VET qualification, leading to employment or further studies, including higher education (ISCED-P 354, EQF 4).

School-based VET programmes are:

- (i) three-year vocational programmes (nationally referred as professional);
- (ii) one to one and a half-year CEF programmes;
- (iii) three-year art education programmes.

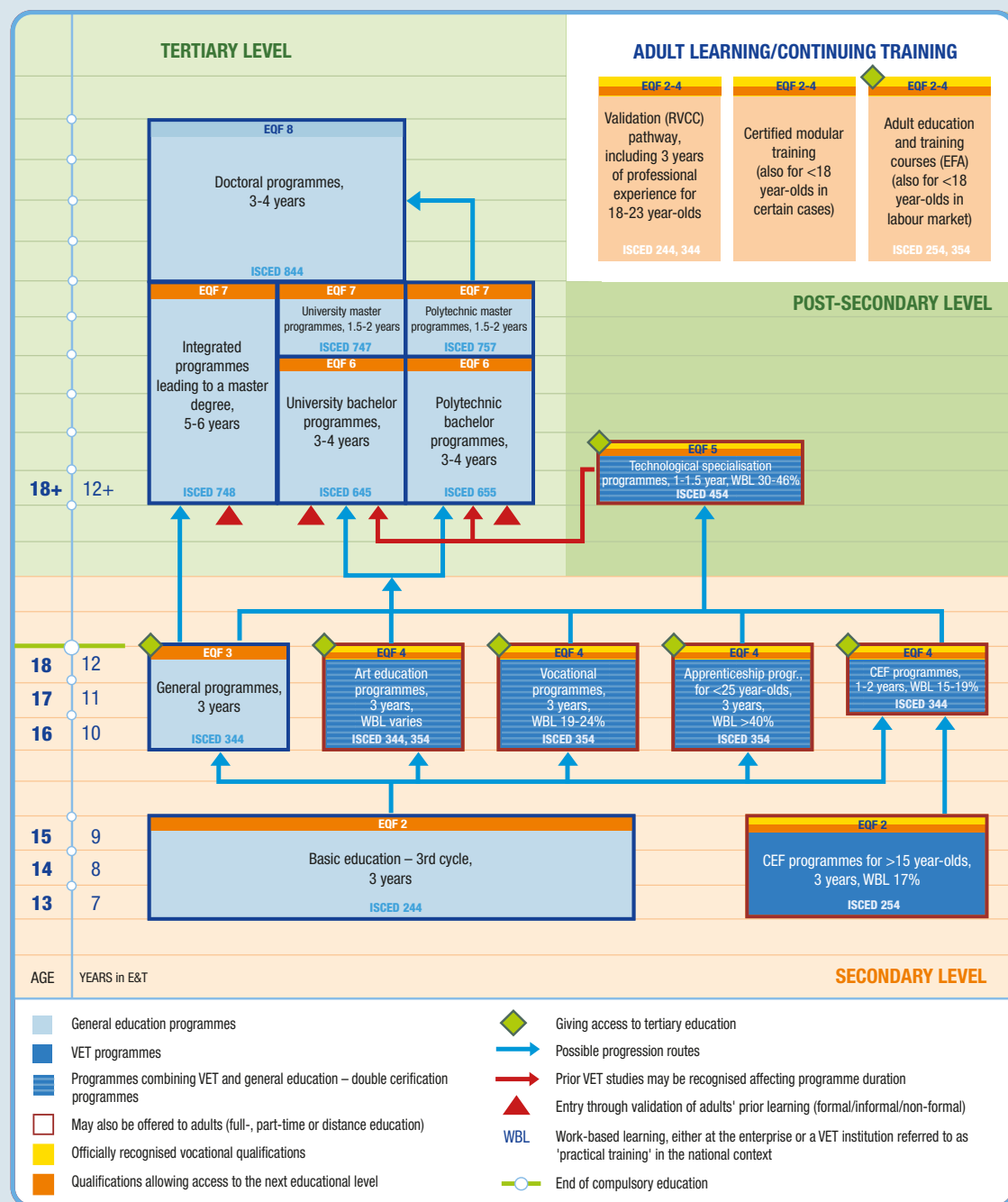
Apprenticeship programmes are for young people up to age 25. Programmes include 40% WBL. A contract between the enterprise and the apprentice must be signed;

- (c) at post-secondary level, VET programmes combine general education, science and technological training with WBL. The technological specialisation programmes (CET, ISCED-P 454; EQF 5) last from one to one and a half years and incorporate 30% to 46% WBL.

Over the past decade, policy developments have aimed at upskilling adults by offering the following programmes:

- (a) adult education and training programmes (EFA, ISCED-P 254 and 354) are training schemes (certain modules or full qualification) for learners who want to complete basic or secondary education and/or obtain a VET qualification at EQF 2 to 4;
- (b) certified modular training is credit-based and allows learners to select an individual path. It addresses people who have not completed basic or secondary education. On successful completion of each module, and assessment by a technical committee, learners obtain a final certificate and diploma at EQF 2 to 4;
- (c) recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC, ISCED-P 244, 344) is a process based on the principle of LLL, which comprises the identification of formal, non-formal and informal competences developed throughout a lifetime. The two RVCC paths (academic and professional) can lead to either a basic or secondary education certificate at EQF levels 2 to 4 or a VET qualification at EQF levels 2 to 4. Adults lacking competences required for a qualification are guided to relevant training programmes to acquire them.

VET in Portugal's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Portugal.

Distinctive features of VET

Key principles of VET provision are the wide range of programmes accessible to young people and adults, the link between VET provision and labour market needs, and flexibility in type and duration of courses for adults. VET learners have the possibility to access programmes at higher levels or higher education. Credits achieved in post-secondary level programmes may be recognised when applying to a higher education programme in the same field of study. Permeability is secured for adults older than 23 by offering them an access to higher education through recognition of previous training and professional experience. Accrediting of publicly funded VET providers and trainers is mandatory and, along with their external evaluations, ensures quality of VET.

The national qualifications system (SNQ) promotes upper secondary education as the minimum level of attainment, expanding IVET options and flexible learning paths for adults. The SNQ adopted a governance model based on involvement of the different VET providers, sector councils, and social partners, establishing common objectives and instruments. Tools that support SNQ are:

- (a) the eight-level national qualifications framework (QNQ), designed in line with EQF;
- (b) the national catalogue of qualifications (CNQ), which helps manage and regulate all qualifications, except those at higher education. It aims to develop competence-based qualifications, regulate double certification, aid designing learning programmes, provide a reference framework for RVCC processes, promote the transparency and efficiency of public funding, and modularise the training offer;
- (c) the individual booklet of competences, which officially registers the competences acquired throughout life (both within and outside the CNQ). This gives employers a tool to assess the competences of job candidates.

Challenges and policy responses

High on the policy agenda are the following challenges:

- (a) further reducing early leaving from education and training and preventing the entry of unqualified young people into the labour market;
- (b) increasing adult educational attainment by widening access to learning through modularisation;
- (c) improving tutor support to learners and reasserting the value of transferable skills in the curricula, in order to tackle education and training failure;
- (d) modernising learning provision through new teaching methods and wider variety of VET courses leading to competence-based qualifications;
- (e) offering initial and continuing VET provision in line with labour market requirements;
- (f) upskilling vulnerable groups and promoting their socio-professional integration.

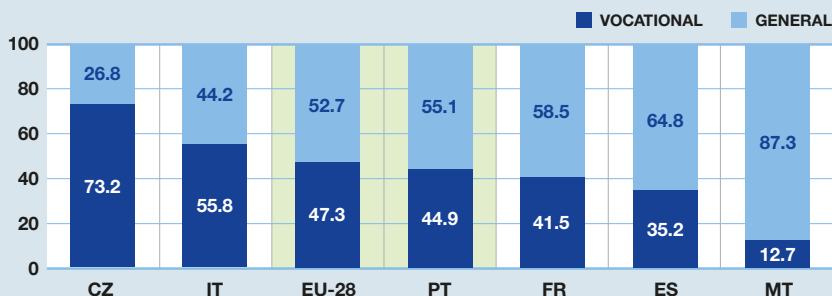
Policy initiatives have resulted in an increase in upper secondary VET programmes, ensuring that VET programmes lead to double certification, and boosting the RVCC system development. National authorities are also implementing measures for adults through the *Qualifica* programme and assuring the continuity of LLL policies, through the reinforcement of specialised *Qualifica* centres, launched in 2016. This network of centres assumes similar functions to the previous ones (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional*, CQEP); they target young people (aged 15 or older), provide guidance, counselling especially for NEETs and validation activities (RVCC processes) to low-skilled adults, as well as increasing proximity to target populations.



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, 2015

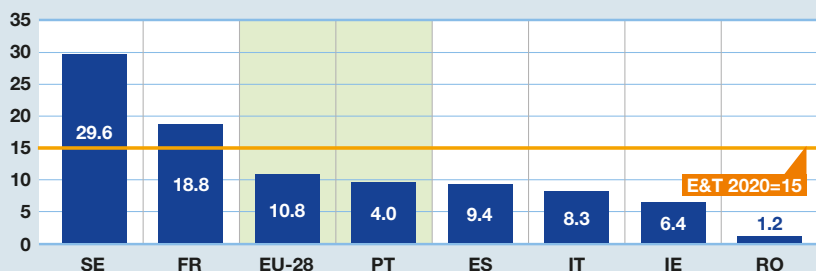


NB: EU-28 value is based on estimated Eurostat values.

Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 1.8.2017.

Lifelong learning

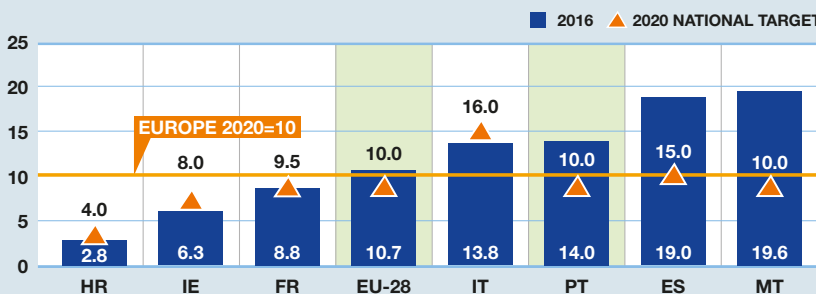
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2016



Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 1.8.2017.

Early leavers from education and training

% of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training during the last four weeks prior to the survey, 2016

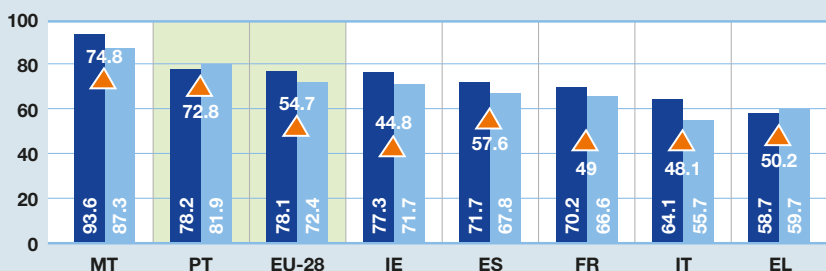


NB: Low reliability for HR 2016 value.

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 1.8.2017.

Employment rates of young graduates

% of 20 to 34 years old no longer in education and training, 2016



■ Upper vocational secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)

■ Upper general secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)

▲ Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 1.8.2017.

Further information

- Cedefop ReferNet Portugal (2016). *VET in Europe – Country report*.
https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_PT.pdf
- Eurydice (2017). *Eurypedia: European encyclopaedia on national education systems: Portugal*.
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