

VET in Cyprus

Having played a significant role in recovering from the 2012-15 economic crisis, the vocational education and training (VET) system of Cyprus has been further developed, introducing new programmes of studies and upgrading existing ones, to respond better to the needs of the labour market.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has overall responsibility for developing and implementing education policy. The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has overall responsibility for labour and social policy and the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) plays an important role in vocational training.

VET is available at secondary and tertiary education levels.

At upper secondary level, general education programmes (83.3% of students in 2015/16) are offered by lyceums, including evening lyceums; VET programmes (16.7% of students in 2015/16) are offered by technical schools, including evening technical schools. Horizontal and vertical movement across upper secondary education is possible, provided students succeed in specific examinations.

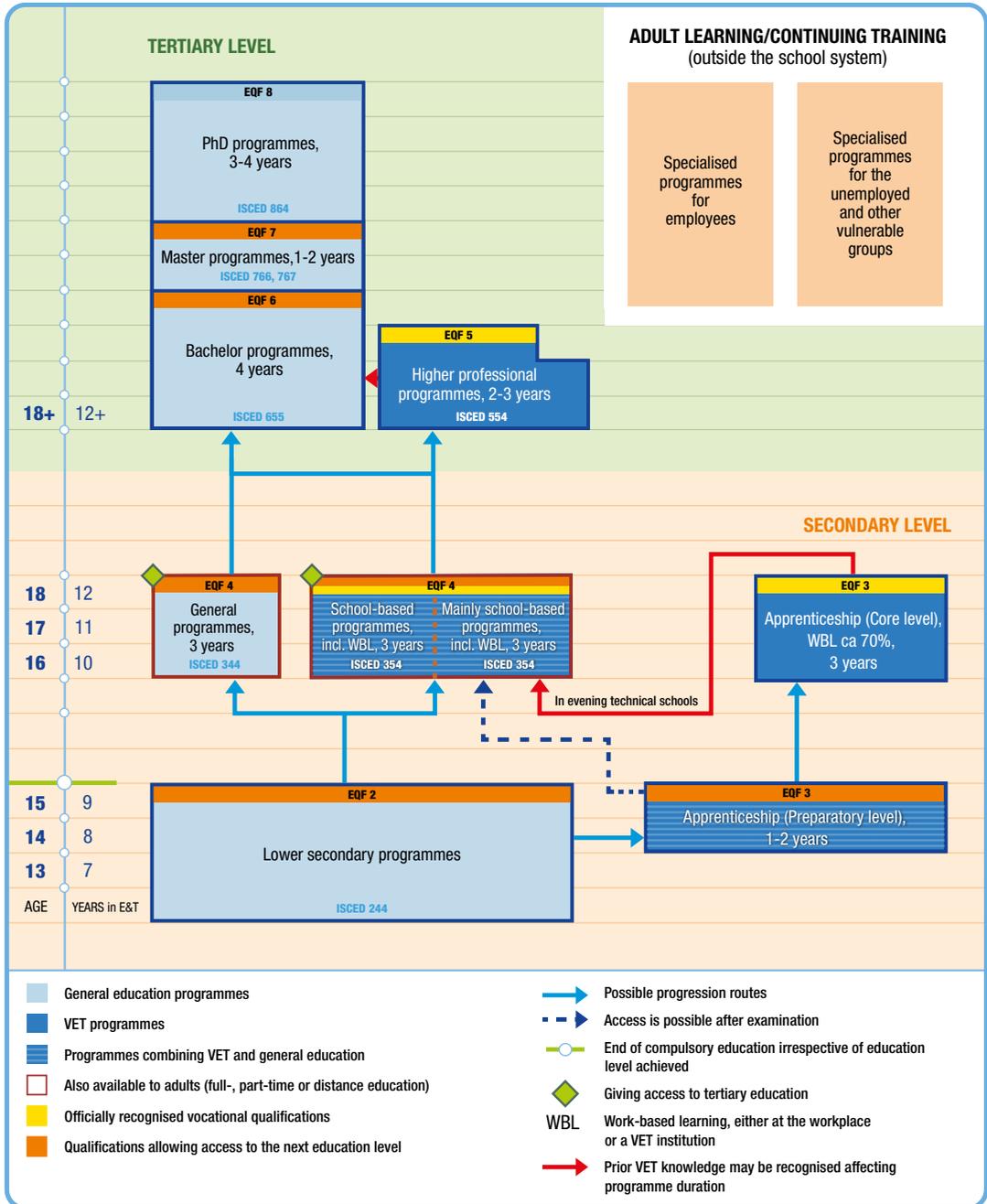
Technical schools offer two types of three-year programme, theoretical and practical, leading to EQF 4 school-leaving certificates, equivalent to those of secondary general education schools. Students select their specialisation in the first year. Graduates are eligible for admission to universities and other tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and abroad. Both streams are mainly school-based: they combine general education subjects with VET subjects and integrate practical training in enterprises at the end of the first and second years. The theoretical stream is for learners who want to continue to higher education and the practical one is for those oriented more towards entering the labour market.

VET is also available through the apprenticeship system, which addresses young people between the ages of 14 and 18. 'Preparatory apprenticeship' (EQF 2) can last up to two school years, depending on the level and age of students. Young people aged between 14 and 16, who have not completed lower secondary programmes, may participate. After completing the preparatory apprenticeship, students can either continue to 'core apprenticeship' or upper secondary programmes, provided they succeed in entrance examinations.

Core apprenticeship lasts for three years. Eligible candidates must be less than 18 years old to apply and must have either completed a lower secondary programme (EQF 2) or preparatory apprenticeship or dropped out of upper secondary programmes. On successful completion, participants may continue with evening technical school programmes, which lead to an EQF 4 certificate, and receive an upper secondary education qualification (school leaving certificate) in two years instead of four. The apprenticeship certificate (EQF 3) allows access to several regulated occupations, provided all other requirements of relevant legislation are met.

VET at tertiary, non-university level is provided at public and private institutes/colleges offering an opportunity to acquire, improve, or upgrade qualifications and skills. Successful completion of these accredited programmes, which may last from two to three years, leads to a diploma or higher diploma awarded by the institution (EQF 5). The public post-secondary institutes of VET were accredited in 2017 by the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education as public schools of higher vocational education and training; they offer accredited two-year programmes leading to a diploma acquisition.

Vocational training for adults is extensively available in Cyprus for the employed, the unemployed, vulnerable groups and adults in general, through a mixture of public and private provision: colleges, training institutions, consultancy firms and enterprises. The employed usually participate in training programmes for job-specific skills to meet company needs. The unemployed and vulnerable groups acquire both horizontal and job-specific skills to improve their employability. Training schemes targeted at these groups combine training with either employment in an enterprise or job placement to acquire work experience. The HRDA provides subsidies through several relevant schemes for employed and unemployed training.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

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