

VET in Latvia

Vocational education and training (VET) in Latvia is offered at three ⁽⁴⁾ levels: integrated primary and lower secondary (called ‘basic’ nationally); upper secondary (secondary); and tertiary (professional higher) education. It includes practical training (50% to 65% of curricula) at schools and enterprises. In 2015, an apprenticeship scheme (called ‘work-based learning’ nationally) was introduced with alternating study periods at school and in an enterprise. To acquire a VET qualification at EQF levels 2 to 4, learners take a State qualification exam at the end of the programme.

Basic VET programmes (one to three years, ISCED 254) lead to qualifications at EQF level 2 and involve around 1% of the VET population (2017/18 data). Learners must be at least 15 years old to enrol. Those without completed basic education are admitted to three-year programmes (ISCED 254) that include a compulsory basic general education course.

At upper secondary level, VET enrolls 40% of learners in:

- three-year programmes (ISCED 353) leading to a qualification at EQF level 3 and involving 4% of VET learners. To enrol in higher education graduates should attend an additional one-year bridging programme;
- four-year programmes (ISCED 354) leading to a secondary VET qualification at EQF level 4 and involving 73% of VET learners. Graduates take four State exams in general subjects; if successful, they are also awarded a certificate of general secondary education giving access to higher education;
- one- to two-year programmes (ISCED 351 and 453) leading to a qualification at EQF levels 3 and 4. These programmes are designed for 17 to 29 year-olds with or without completed upper secondary education. They involve 21% of VET learners and focus on vocational skills, so they are shorter.

Professional higher education programmes are provided at two levels:

- first-level college programmes (two to three years; ISCED 554, EQF 5) targeted mainly at the labour market, though graduates can continue

their studies in second-level professional higher education;

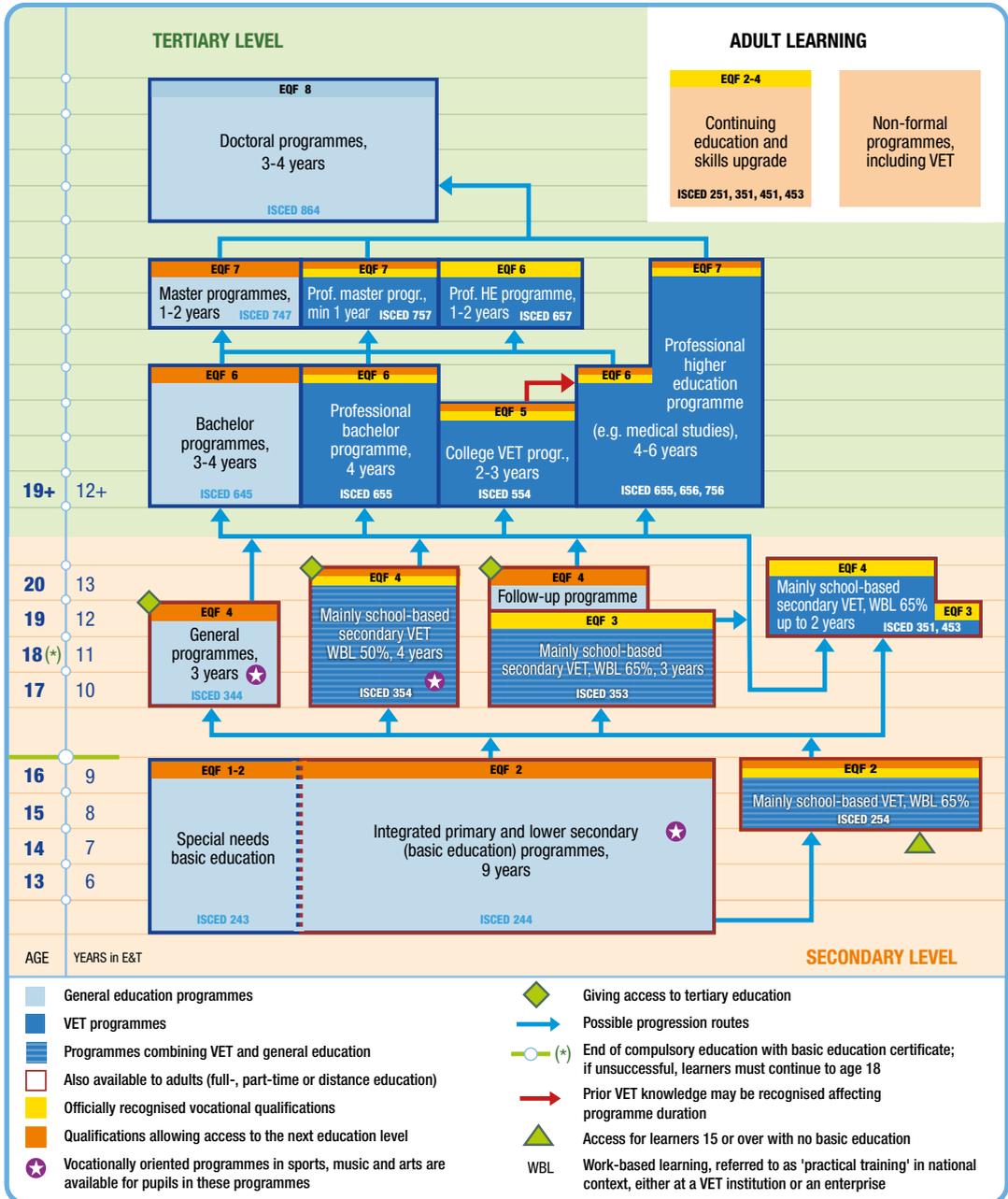
- second-level higher education programmes (two to six years) (ISCED 655, 656, 657, 756 and 757, EQF 6 and 7) leading to a professional qualification and either professional bachelor or master degree or a professional higher education diploma.

Formal continuing VET (CVET) programmes enable adults with education/work experience to obtain a State-recognised professional qualification in 480 to 1 280 hours, depending on the field of study. Shorter professional development programmes (at least 160 hours) enable learners to acquire or upgrade their professional knowledge and skills regardless of their age, education and professional background but do not lead to a qualification.

Craftsmanship exists on a small scale, separate from the rest of the education system.

The Ministry of Education and Science is the main body responsible for the VET legal framework, governance, funding and content. Social dialogue and strategic cooperation are arranged through the national Tripartite Sub-Council for Cooperation in Vocational Education and Employment, founded in 2000 by the State, employer and employee representatives. Since 2011, 12 sectoral expert councils have ensured that vocational education provision is in line with labour market needs; they participate in developing sectoral qualifications frameworks, occupational standards, qualifications requirements, education and training programmes and quality assessment procedures. Since 2015, collegial advisory bodies, including representatives from employers, local governments and the supervising ministry – conventions – have been established at each VET school contributing to strategic development and cooperation with the labour market.

⁽⁴⁾ Arts, culture and sports programmes (referred to as ‘vocationally oriented education programmes’ nationally) are also implemented concurrently with basic and secondary general education, but do not lead to a vocational qualification



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Latvia.



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