

VET in the Netherlands

Study results and advice from school determine the type of secondary education that learners follow after leaving primary education at age 12. In 2017, in the third year of secondary education, 53% of students followed lower secondary pre-vocational programmes (VMBO). Almost half of VMBO students are in vocationally oriented programmes; the rest follow general programmes offered by VMBO schools. VMBO is the main route to upper secondary vocational education and training (VET).

Apart from lower secondary pre-VET programmes, there are also general programmes that prepare students for higher education: integrated lower and upper secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO).

Some 45% of students in the third year of secondary education took part in one of these programmes in 2017.

Labour-oriented practical training (*praktijk-onderwijs*) is available for learners not capable of entering pre-vocational education.

Upper secondary VET

Learners aged 16 or above can enter upper secondary VET (MBO). Three structural elements determine provision of MBO programmes, with differentiation according to:

- level: upper secondary vocational education has four levels leading to EQF levels 1 to 4. Student admission to a level depends on the diploma obtained in prior education. Admission to level 1 programmes is limited to learners without a prior qualification at lower secondary level. It is possible to progress within upper secondary VET and the highest level (leading to EQF 4) gives access to higher professional bachelor programmes offered by universities of applied sciences;
- area of study: upper secondary VET programmes are available in four areas ('sectors'): green/agriculture, technology, economics and care/welfare;
- learning pathway: upper secondary VET offers two equivalent pathways: a school-based (BOL) and a dual (BBL). In the school-based pathway, work placements in companies make up 20% to 60% of study time. In the dual pathway (apprenticeship), students combine work-based learning (at least 60% of study time) with school-

based instruction; this often involves learning at work four days a week and one day at school.

In upper secondary VET, the desired outcomes of qualifications are defined in the national qualifications system. Occupational standards cover one qualification profile or several interrelated ones. Social partners and education institutions represented in sectoral committees have a legal responsibility to develop and maintain these standards. Once approved by the education ministry, schools – in cooperation with enterprises providing work-based learning – develop curricula based on the qualification profiles.

Post-secondary VET

Specialised programmes (EQF 4) are open to graduates of MBO programmes (EQF levels 3 to 4). Their duration is one year.

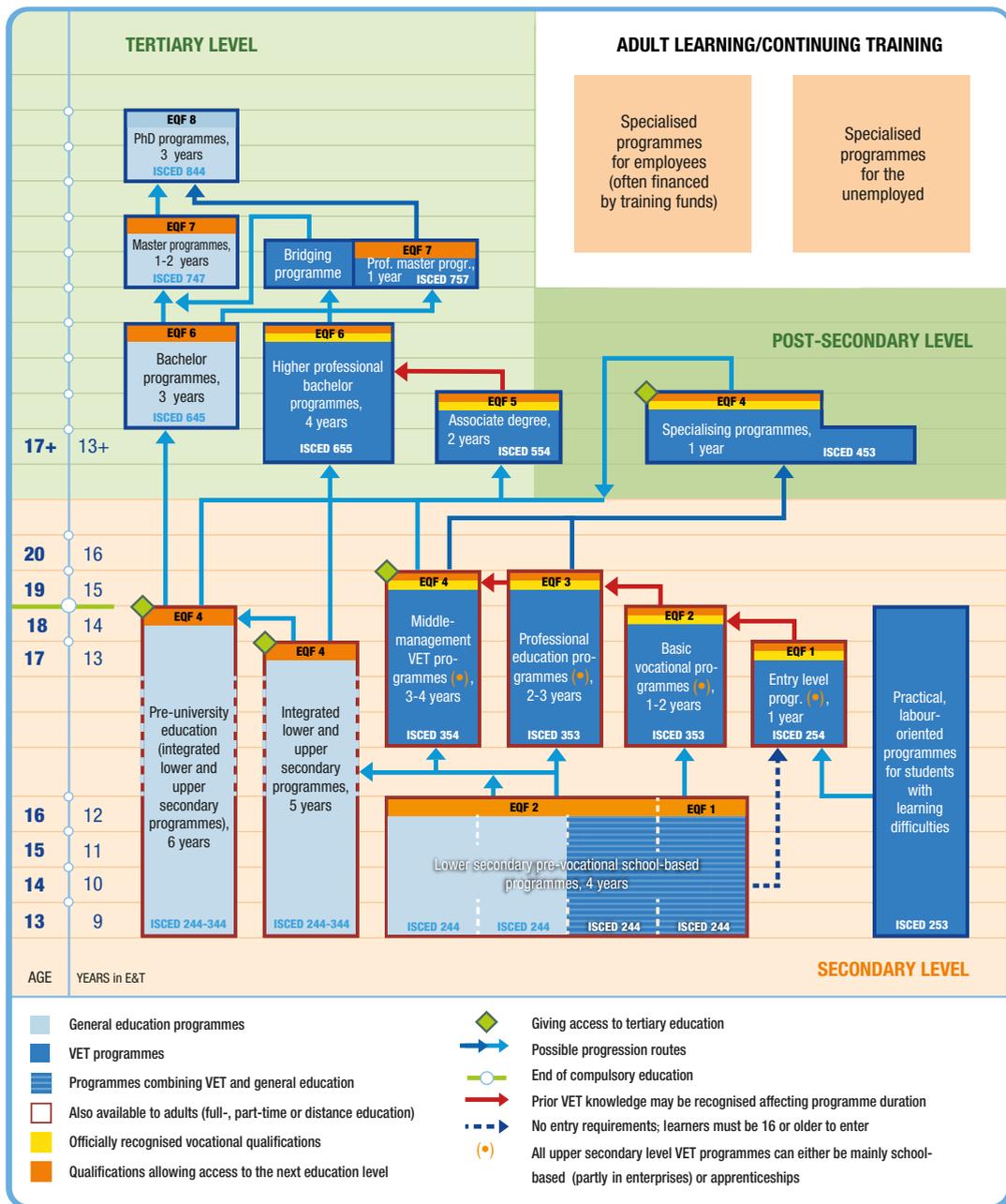
Tertiary VET

Higher professional bachelor programmes (HBO) are open to all EQF level 4 graduates. Around 39% of graduates of middle management VET programmes enter HBO programmes; 61% enter the job market. HBO programmes last four years. On completion, they can give access to a professional master degree programme, an option not yet extensively used.

Two-year associate degree programmes (short-cycle higher education, EQF 5), also open to all EQF level 4 graduates, have recently been developed. Graduates can continue to HBO programmes; their remaining study load is subject to exemptions granted by each programme.

Continuing VET

There is no institutional framework for continuing VET (CVET): provision is market-driven with many suppliers. Dual VET (the BBL pathway) can also function as CVET for adults. Social partners stimulate CVET through sectoral training and development funds. In 2017, there were 85 such funds. Most approach and finance training from an employability perspective. They help employees progress in their careers, sometimes even in other sectors, offer special arrangements for older workers, and support the development of effective human resource management policies at sector level. Most funds also support projects that help young people find employment or take initiatives to sustain or expand apprenticeship places.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

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