VET in Italy

At post-secondary level, the following VET programmes are available:

(a) five-year programmes at technical schools (Istituti tecnici), to prepare for technical and administrative jobs, and at vocational schools (Istituti professionali) to prepare for qualified tasks in the production industry.

(b) three- to four-year VET programmes organised by the regions (Istituti professionali, leFP), WBL: 30%, EQF 4, EQF 5.

(c) a three- to four-year apprenticeship-type scheme or offers qualifications at EQF levels 3 and 4.

- In recent years, several reforms have been carried out to make vocational education and training (VET) more flexible and respond better to labour market needs. VET in Italy is characterised by multilayer governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of Labour and Education define the general framework and policies. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of providing several vocational programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes.

- Compulsory education lasts ten years, up to age 16. To ensure young people do not leave education and training without a qualification, they have the ‘right/duty’ to education and training without a qualification, to labour market needs. VET in Italy is characterised by a three- to four-year apprenticeship-type scheme.

- At upper secondary level, there are several options which all include internships or trainingships:
  - (a) IFS programmes ( Isti tuti formazione voca le ognia superiore) leading to EQF level 4 or higher technical education and training for young people and adults.
  - (b) ITs programmes (Istituti tecnici superiori) leading to EQF level 5 (often non-academic) training at tertiary level in professional areas consistent strategic for the country’s development;
  - (c) pro-leFP and other programmes/courses, which provide theoretical, technical and managerial skills, also through practical work and offer regional qualifications. They usually cater for young unemployed people, migrants and disabled people. VET courses also exist at post-higher education level.

- Higher education and research apprenticeships (apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca) enable 18 to 29 year-olds to acquire qualifications usually offered through school-based programmes at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, including a doctoral degree (EQF levels 4 to 8).

- Professional apprenticeships (apprendistato professionaleizzato e contratto di Master) offer qualifications provided for in collective-bargaining agreements to 18 to 29 year-olds. They last up to three years (five for the crafts sector). Workers affected by restructuring can participate in this scheme to (re)qualify.

- VET courses are offered for at least 12 years or until obtaining a vocational school programmes are considered to be part of the ‘education system’ under the Ministry of Education’s remit.

- VET offerings by the regions are used to be very limited. To address this issue, the State-regions conference agreed on minimum education and training standards (valid at national level). These are linked to national occupational profiles and the corresponding qualifications and programmes included in the qualifications register created in 2011.

- In Italy, the term VET tends to be ‘reserved’ for programmes leading to upper secondary and tertiary levels, including a Bachelor degree (ISCED 6), 2 years, EQF 7.

- Possible progression routes:
  - After high school education for at least 12 years or until obtaining vocational school programmes, 30% WBL.
  - Post-leFP and other programmes/courses, 3 years, EQF 4, EQF 5.
  - National VET qualifications register created in 2011.

- VET courses also exist at post-higher education level.

- To ensure young people do not leave education and training without a qualification, they have the ‘right/duty’ to education and training without a qualification, to labour market needs. VET in Italy is considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee scheme and measures to reduce red tape for enterprises and improve interfirm cooperation reflect the need to link education and training with the labour market. Apprenticeship schemes are considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee scheme.

- Support measures for young people and adults include a reform of the employment services, improved teacher and trainer development, stronger vocational guidance, a citizen’s training logbook which resembles the European skills portfolio, and a legal framework for validating learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

- Challenges/policy developments

Since the outbreak of the economic crisis, unemployment has decreased from 58.7% in 2008 to 53.6% and is generally lower than the EU average across all age groups. Unemployment grew by almost six percentage points for young people. Two young people have been hard hit, as unemployment rate declined since 2008, reaching a staggering 40% in 2013. The share of young people leaving education and training early is steadily decreasing but still high.

- Low returns on education and training do not encourage many people to update and upgrade their skills, although a right to training leave exists.

- Therefore, Italy’s objective is to strengthen VET to support its enterprises and citizens. The recent policy package with its focus on the youth guarantee scheme and measures to reduce red tape for enterprises and improve interfirm cooperation reflect the need to link education and training with the labour market. Apprenticeship schemes are considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee scheme.

- Support measures for young people and adults include a reform of the employment services, improved teacher and trainer development, stronger vocational guidance, a citizen’s training logbook which resembles the European skills portfolio, and a legal framework for validating learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.
In recent years, several reforms have been carried out to make vocational education and training (VET) more flexible and respond better to labour market needs. VET in Italy is characterised by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of Labour and Education define the general framework and policies. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of providing several vocational programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes.

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. To ensure young people do not leave education and training without a qualification, they have the 'lightshirt' (dottoriblu) to accomplish at least 12 years before they are 18. The choice between general education and VET is usually made at age 14.

At upper secondary level, the following VET programmes are available:

(a) five-year programmes at technical schools (istituti tecnici), to prepare for technical and professional jobs, and at vocational schools (istituti professionali), to prepare for career-oriented qualifications in tasks in the production industries (fields of national interest). They lead to the 'diploma professionale', IeFP.

(b) ITS programmes (istituti tecnici superiori) and technical higher education (Istituto di formazione professionale, IeFP). These programmes primarily under the Ministry of Education’s remit.

(c) IFTS programmes (istituti formazione tecnico superiore) which include internships or traineeships for 15-25 year-olds, 3-4 years. Apprenticeship includes both basic, transversal and technical-occupation-specific skills and include on-the-job training.

(d) post-IeFP and other programmes/courses, which provide theoretical, technical and managerial skills, also through practical work and offer regional qualifications. They usually cater for young unemployed people, migrants and disabled people.

VET courses also exist at post-secondary level.

Higher education and research apprenticeships (apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca) enable 18 to 29 year-olds to acquire qualifications usually offered through school-based programmes at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, including a doctoral degree (EQF levels 4 to 8).

Professional apprenticeships (apprendistato professionale e contratto di diritto) with collective-bargaining agreements to 18 to 29 year-olds. They last up to three years (five for the crafts sector). Workers affected by restructuring can participate in these schemes to (re)qualify.

VET for adults is offered by a range of providers, including schools, universities, private companies and social partners.

VET courses also exist at post-secondary level.

In Italy, the term VET tends to be ‘reserved’ for programmes which include internships or traineeships.

VET is usually catered for young unemployed people, migrants and disabled people.

The State-regions conference agreed on minimum education and training standards (valid at national level). These are linked to national occupational profiles and the corresponding qualifications and programmes included in the qualifications register created in 2011.

This helps make the wide variety of VET managed by the regions more transparent and more flexible, allowing learners to switch between different types of VET and from general education to VET (and vice versa) and preventing early leaving.

VET offers the regions used to be very dispersed in terms of economic structure and labour market situation. VET has not been an important pillar of the youth guarantee scheme and measures to redress the balance of the policy mix towards VET to support its enterprises and citizens. New policy developments focusing on the VET is crucial to integrate, achieve a better integration of education and training into the labour market. Apprenticeships schemes are considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee.

Support measures for young people and adults include a reform of the employment services, improved teacher and trainer development, stronger vocational guidance, a citizen’s training logbook which resembles the European skills portfolio, and a legal framework for validating learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal contexts.

Since the outbreak of the economic crisis, unemployment rates have doubled since 2008, reaching a staggering 15% in 2013. The share of young people leaving education and training early is steadily decreasing but still high.

The country is characterised by regional disparities in terms of economic structure and labour market situation. Unemployment due to lack of jobs, in particular in the south, and skills mismatches are considered an important barrier to coexistence. Low returns on education and training do not encourage many people to update and upgrade their skills, although a right to training leaves exists.

Therefore, Italy’s objective is to strengthen VET to support its enterprises and citizens. The recent policy package with its focus on the youth guarantee scheme and measures to ensure red tape for enterprises and policy inter-inform cooperation reflect the need to link education and training better with the labour market. Apprenticeship schemes are considered an important pillar of the youth guarantee.
**VET in Italy**

In recent years, several reforms have been carried out to make vocational education and training (VET) more flexible and respond better to labour market needs. VET in Italy is characterized by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of Labour and Education define the general framework and policies. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of providing several vocational programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes.

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. To ensure young people do not leave education and training without a qualification, they have the ‘right/duty’ (diritto/dovere) to accomplish at least 12 years before they are 18. The choice between general education and VET is usually made at age 14.

At upper secondary level, the following VET programmes are available:

- **five-year programmes at technical schools (istituti tecnici)**, to prepare for technical and administrative jobs, and at vocational schools (istituti professionali) to prepare for carrying out qualified tasks in the production industry (fields of national interest). They combine general education and VET. Graduates have access to higher education and acquire qualifications at EQF level 4; they can then move on to pursue higher technical education and training.
- **three- to four-year VET programmes** are available: (a) ITS programmes (istituti tecnici e formativi tecnico-scientifico superiori) leading to EQF level 4 after higher technical education and training for young people and adults; (b) ITS programmes (istrutti tecnici superiori) leading to EQF level 5 (after non-academic training at tertiary level in professional areas consistent with the country’s development); (c) post-ITS and other programmes/courses, which provide theoretical, technical and managerial skills, also through practical work and offer regional qualifications. They usually cater for young unemployed people, migrants and disabled people.

VET courses also exist at post-secondary level.

Higher education and research apprenticeships (apprendistato di alta formazione e ricerca) enable 18 to 29 year-olds to acquire qualifications usually offered through school-based programmes at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, including a doctoral degree (EQF levels 4 to 8).

Professional apprenticeships (apprendistato professionale e contratto di volontariato) offer qualifications provided for in collective-bargaining agreements to 18 to 29 year-olds. They last up to three years (five for the crafts sector). Workers affected by restructuring can participate in these schemes to (re)qualify. VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. This includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure that the low-skilled have progression opportunities.

Continuing vocational training (CVT) to meet enterprise, sectoral and regional needs is supported by joint interprofessional funds managed by the regions. For lifelong learning, training is also provided by free universities or universities for the third age, voluntary associations, NGOs, etc.

### Distinctive features of VET

In Italy, the term VET tends to be ‘reserved’ for programmes that include internships or trainships:

- IFTS programmes (istituti formativi tecnico scientifico superiori) leading to EQF level 4 after higher technical education and training for young people and adults;
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### Challenges/ policy developments

Since the outbreak of the economic crisis, employment and training rates decreased from 58.7% to 50.4%, and is generally lower than the EU average across all age groups. Unemployment grew by almost six percentage points, as young people have been hit hardest, as their unemployment rate doubled since 2008, reaching a staggering 40% in 2013. The share of young people leaving education and training early is steadily decreasing but still high.

The country is characterised by regional disparities in terms of economic structure and labour market situation. Unemployment due to lack of jobs, in particular in the south, and skills shortages are common in states and craft sectors. Local economies need to develop more than ever small and medium firms, which are the backbone of the Italian economy. 

Labour’s and the regions’ and autonomous provinces’ remit is to regulate professional apprenticeships. They support joint interprofessional funds, which finance learning in line with company needs and apprenticeships.

### VET in Italy’s education and training system

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Education and training in figures

Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2013

Tertiary education by type
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning, 2013

Further information


Early leavers from education and training
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012
Further information

- ISFOL ReferNet Italy (2014). L’evoluzione del sistema di istruzione e formazione professionale in Italia ([Development of the VET system in Italy]). http://isfoloa.isfol.it/bitstream/123456789/786/5/ISFOL_rapportoIFP2013_figprofessionale.pdf

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