
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

PORTUGAL

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Portugal comprises the following main features:

- Permeability (horizontal and vertical) between different VET programmes and between general education and VET programmes;
- All VET programmes grant double (education and professional) certification;
- Participation in upper secondary education has significantly increased;
- Early leaving from education and training has been steadily decreasing, reaching rate levels below the EU-27 average, for the first time.

Distinctive features (1)

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. Accrediting publicly funded VET providers, teachers and trainers, along with their external evaluation, ensures VET quality.

The national qualifications system (SNQ) (2) promotes upper secondary education as the minimum level of attainment. It adopted a governance model based on involvement of different VET providers, sector councils, and social partners, establishing common objectives and instruments.

SNQ is supported by the following tools:

- the national qualifications framework (QNQ) (3) , designed in line with EQF;
- the national catalogue of qualifications (CNQ) (4) , which helps manage and regulate non-tertiary VET qualifications. It aims to develop competence-based qualifications, regulate double certification, aid designing learning programmes, provide a reference framework for RVCC process (5) , promote the transparency and efficiency of public funding, and modularise the training offer;
- the *Qualifica* passport, an instrument for guidance and individual record of qualifications and competences (6) ;
- the National credit system for VET (*Sistema nacional de créditos do EFP*), which allocates credits to VET qualifications.

[1] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Portugal*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8138_en.pdf

[2] Publisher (2007). *Decreto-Lei (Decree-Law) n.º 396/2007, de 31 de Dezembro*

[3] Publisher (2009). *Portaria (Ordinance) n.º 782/2009, de 23 de julho*

[4] <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Home/CNQ/>

[5] Recognition of prior learning – Recognition, validation and certification of competences process (RVCC). Information available only in Portuguese at: <https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/RVCC.html>

[6] <https://www.passaportequalifica.gov.pt/cicLogin.xhtml>

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Challenges and policy responses (7)

High on the policy agenda are the following challenges:

- increasing participation in lifelong learning;
- modernising VET provision by introducing new teaching methods and diversified VET programmes;
- strengthening the alignment of VET with labour market needs;
- upskilling and reskilling vulnerable groups.

Although early leaving from education and training is significantly reduced (8.9% in 2020) it remains a priority. Further, VET should respond to the profound transformations caused by digitalisation and the greening of the economy and society.

The Government, through the Recovery and resilience plan (2021), has identified areas that future policy interventions will focus on. It sets objectives for the education and training system to modernise VET:

- promote quality VET;
- support the transition towards a digital and greener economy by offering learners the necessary skills and competences;
- develop skills for innovation and industrial renewal in liaison with the world of business;
- attract more learners to higher education, particularly from VET.

The plan also aims to expand the network of adult education and training providers in cooperation with the *Qualifica* centres (8) to attract more adult learners to VET programmes.

In the current economic context, where the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic crisis are strong, VET should be a crucial tool in fostering employability, social inclusion and the development of the economy.

[7] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Portugal*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8138_en.pdf

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

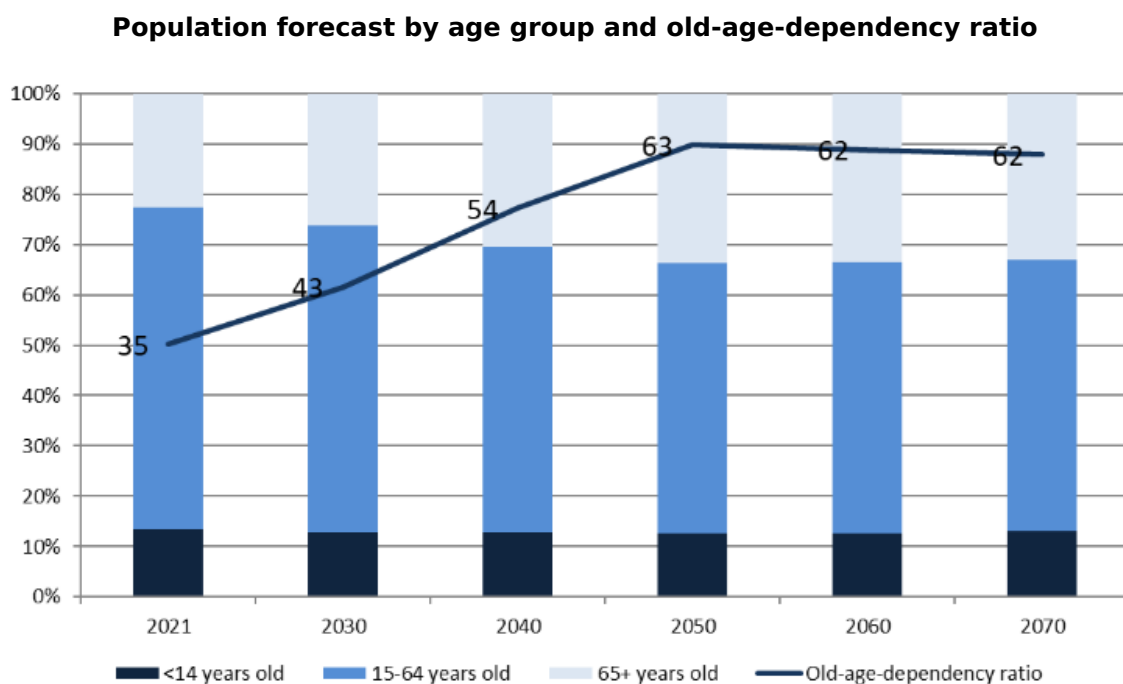
3.1 Demographics

Population in 2020: 10 295 909 (9)

It decreased since 2015 by -0.8% due to negative natural growth (10) .

Population is ageing. According to Eurostat data, Portugal has the fifth highest proportion of elderly in the EU (11) .

An old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 35, in 2021, to 62 in 2070 (12) .

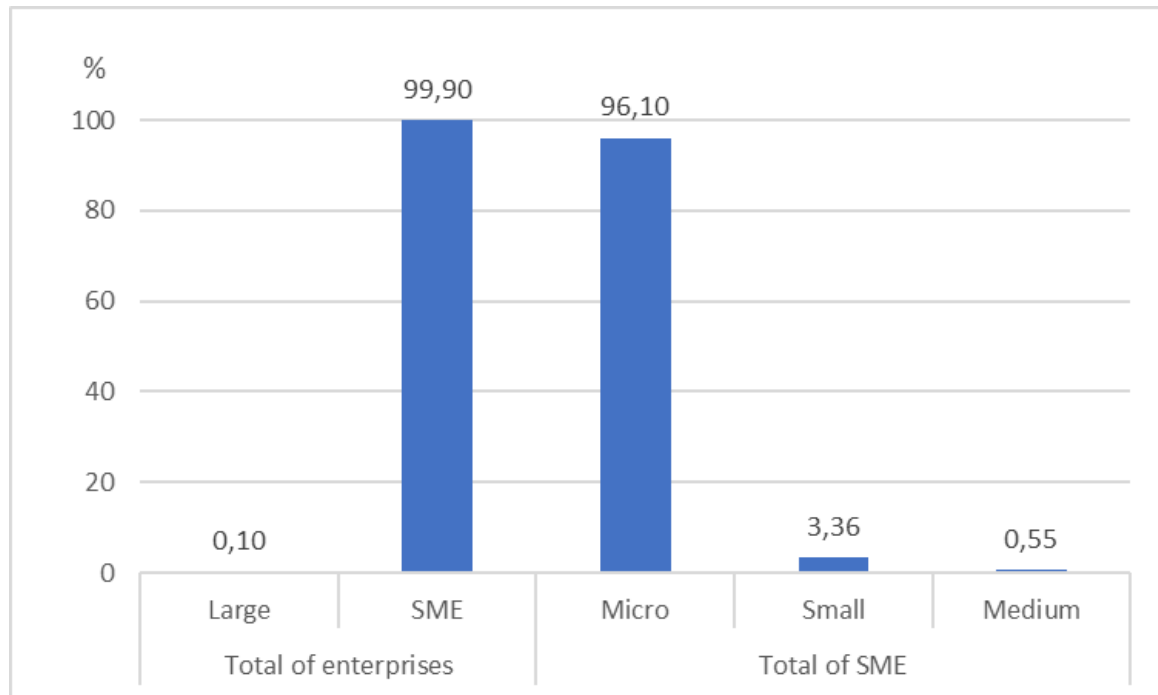


Source: Eurostat, proj_19ndbi [Extracted on 7.5.2021].

3.2 Economics

Most companies are micro and small-sized. In 2019 the share of individual enterprises was 66.5% (13) .

Enterprises by class size (%)



Source: INE, https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0009800&xlang=pt&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2
[Extracted on 8.6.2021].

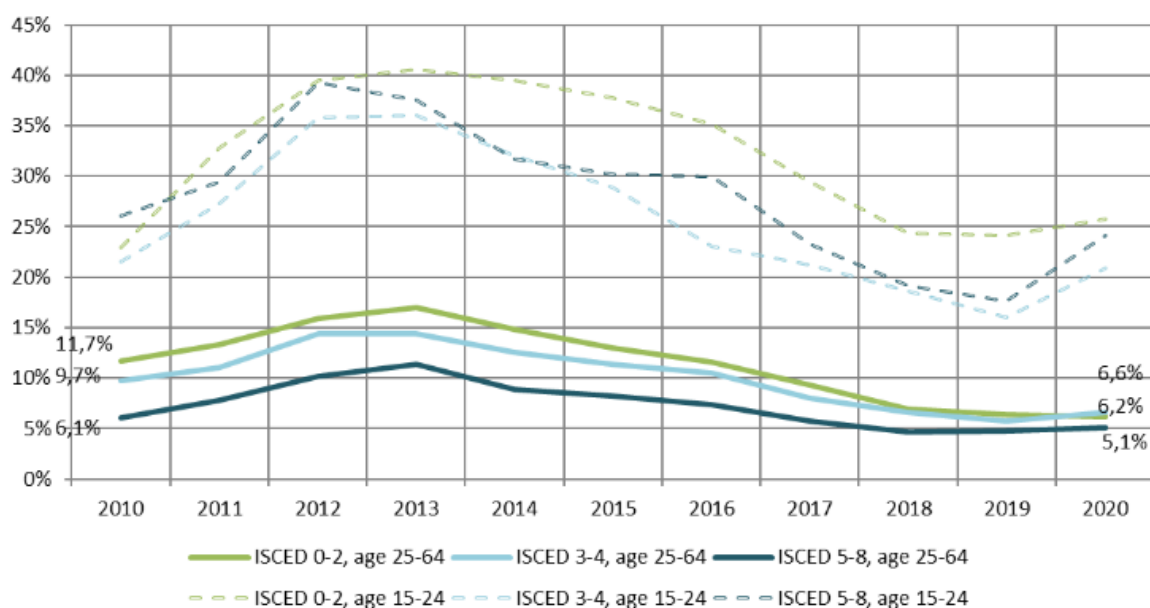
Main economic sectors of the employed population (14) :

- manufacturing;
- commerce;
- human health and social work activities.

3.3 Labour market

Total unemployment (2020) (15) : 5.8%; it has fallen by 4.1 percentage points since 2016.

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2010-20



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

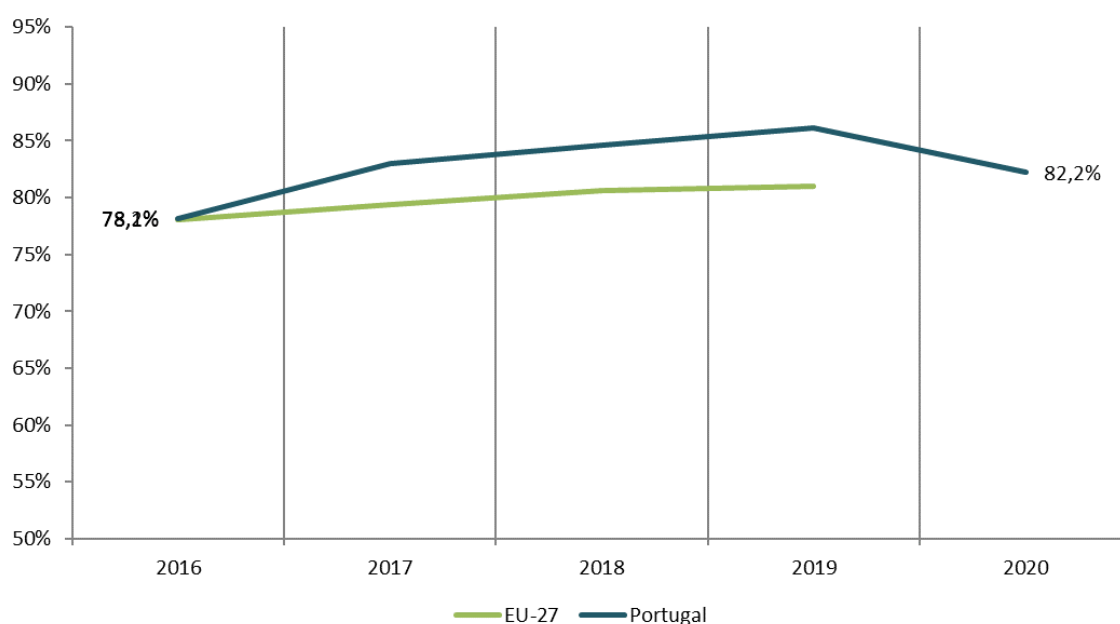
Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [Extracted 6.5.2021].

In 2020, the total unemployment rate (16) as percentage of active population aged 25 to 64 was 5.8%, (EU 27, 6.2%) lower by 4.1 pp compared to 2016.

Youth unemployment (from 15 to 24 years old) was higher, at 22.6% in 2020. In this particular age group, the unemployment rate of upper or post-secondary education graduates was lower than for their peers with a tertiary education qualification. Since the country has started to recover from the previous economic crisis, the total employment rate (age group 20-64) has increased by more than 10 pp, reaching 76.1% in 2019 (EU 73.1%), only decreasing to 74.7% in 2020 due to the pandemic (EU 72.5%) (17) .

Employment rate of recent VET graduates at ISCED levels 3 and 4 increased from 78.2% in 2016 to 82.2% in 2020, higher for in the EU-27 (79.6%), although a small drop was noticed in 2020, due to the effects of the pandemic on the labour market. Since 2018, the employment rate of VET graduates has been higher than for general education graduates.

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
 Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [Extracted 6.5.2021].

The increase in employment of VET graduates aged from 20 to 34 in 2016-20 (+4.0 pp) was higher than the increase in employment of all graduates aged from 20 to 34 (+2.2 pp) in the same period in Portugal (18) .

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- [9] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat, tps00001 and proj_19ndbi [Extracted 7.5.2021].
 - [10] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat, tps00001 and proj_19ndbi [Extracted 7.5.2021].
 - [11] Source: Eurostat. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Population_structure_and_ageing
 - [12] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).
 - [13] INE (2019). [*Empresas em Portugal - 2019*](#)
 - [14] INE (2021). *Employed population by Sex and Economic activity*
https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0009082&xlang=pt&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2
 - [15] Percentage of active population, 25 to 64 years old.
 - [16] Source: Eurostat, une_rt_a [Extracted on 6.5.2021].

- [17] Source: Eurostat, t2020_10 [Extracted 9.8.2021].
- [18] NB: Breaks in series. Eurostat table edat_ifse_24 [extracted 6.5.2021].

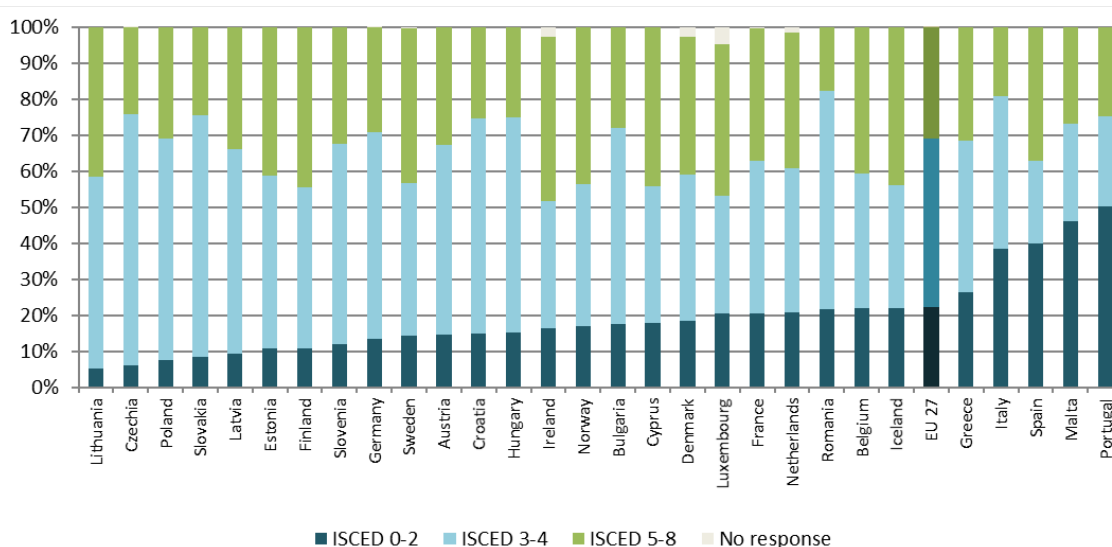
CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Education attainment in Portugal is traditionally lower than the EU average, although it has constantly improved in the last decades. The share of people with low-level or no qualification fell from 73.7% in 2005 to 44.6% in 2020, but is still the highest in EU. The share of those with medium-level qualifications, although significantly increasing, is still the lowest in EU.

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2020



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; low reliability for 'No response' in Iceland, Czechia and Latvia.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_pgaed [Extracted 6.5.2021].

4.3 VET learners by level

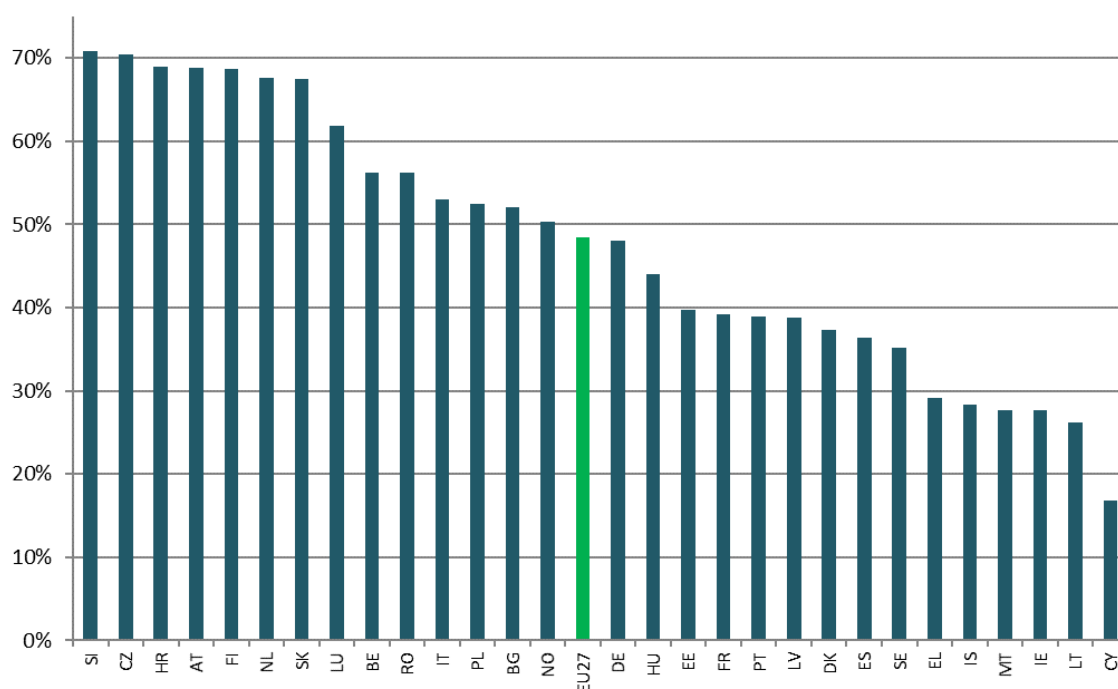
Share of learners in VET by level in 2015-19

	2015	2019	Change 2015-19
Lower secondary	11.3%	6.0%	-5,4 pp
Upper secondary	44.9%	39.0%	-5,9 pp

NB: Data based on ISCED 2011

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [Extracted 6.5.2021].

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper-secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2019



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 6.5.2021].

The number of learners in VET at upper secondary education has been decreasing since 2015 (39% in 2019) and is far from the EU-27 average (48% in 2019), drawing attention to the need to adjust training provision to qualifications priorities.

4.4 Female share

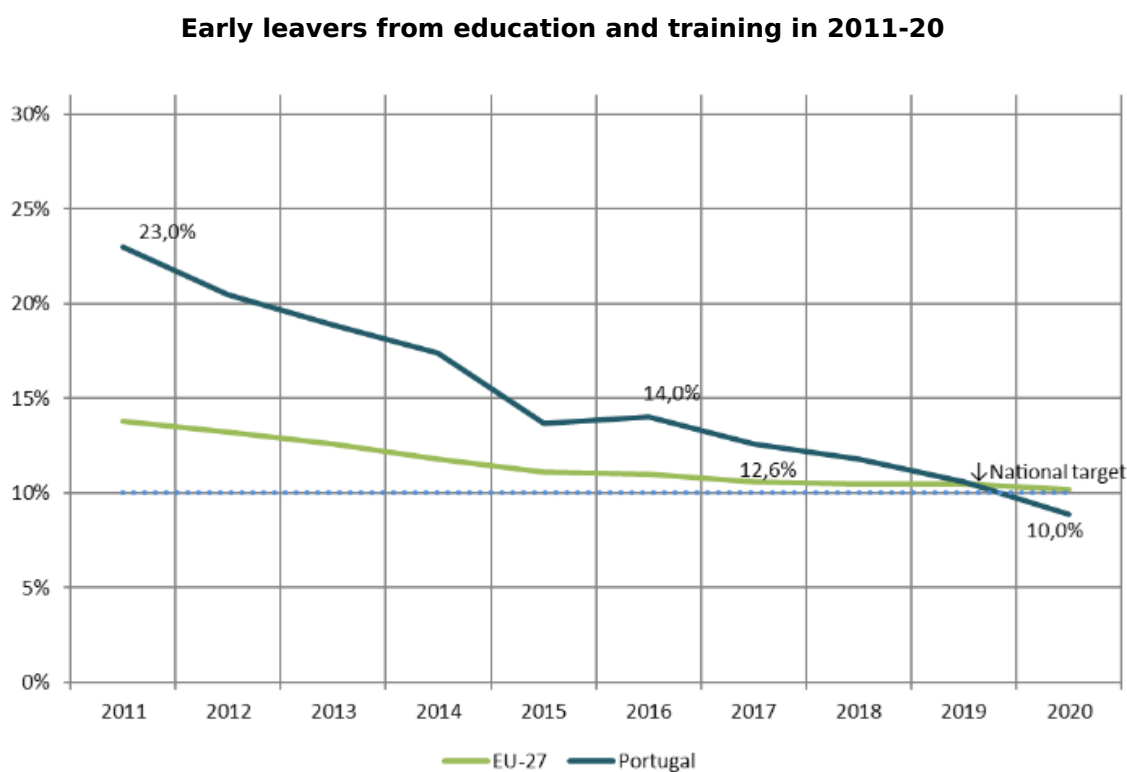
Traditionally, there are more males in VET programmes (58.7%), except in the specialised artistic programmes where, in 2019/20, 71.4% of learners were females (19) .

Among VET programmes, professional programmes have the highest percentage of female learners (33.2%).

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET has an even higher rate of males (64.7%) than upper secondary VET.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

Early leaving from education and training has been steadily falling, from 23% in 2011 to 8.9% in 2020. For the first time, it was below the national target for 2020 (10%) and below the EU-27 average of 9.9%.



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training; break in series.

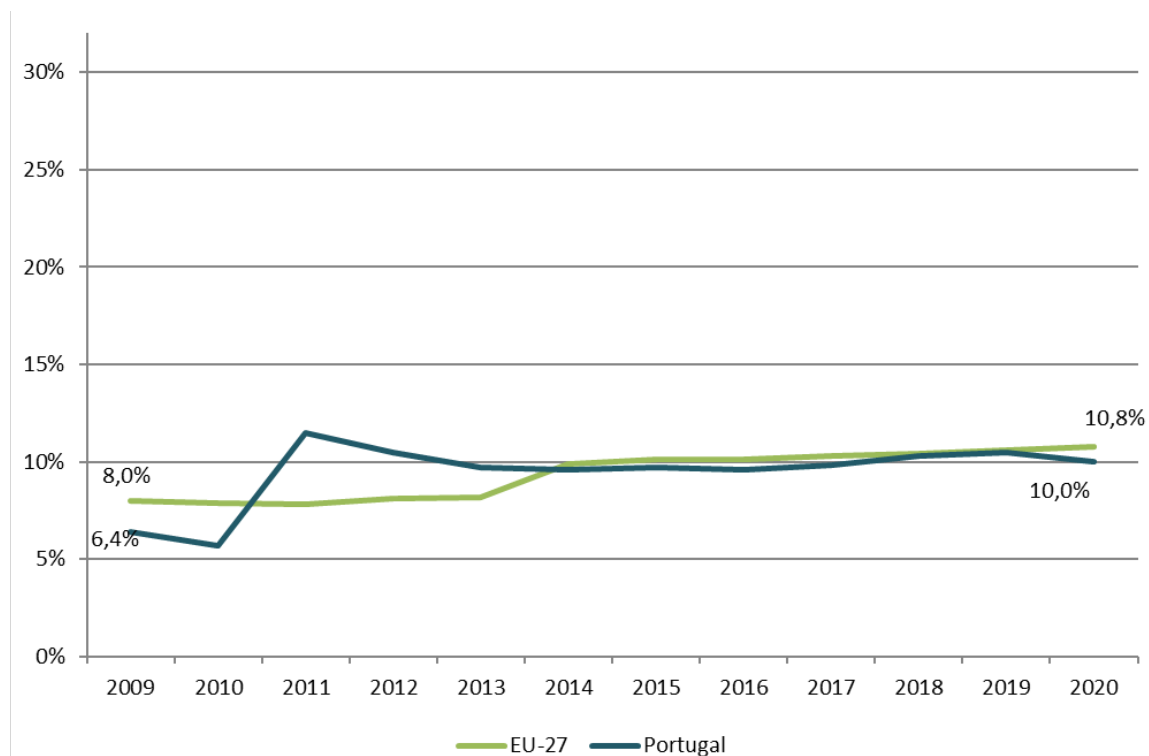
Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 06.05.2021] and European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [accessed 14.11.2018].

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning offers training opportunities for adults, including adult education and training programmes, certified modular training, and recognition of prior learning (recognition, validation and certification of competences process, RVCC).

Participation in lifelong learning in 2009-20



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training.
 Source: Eurostat, trng_ifse_01 [extracted 6.5.2021].

Participation in lifelong learning had been decreasing during the period 2011-13 (economic crisis); since 2014 it has been steady and close to the EU average, at less 0.8 pp in 2020.

Adult participation in VET fell slightly when compared to 2018-19 (1.4 pp). In 2019-20, 40.8% of those enrolled in education and training programmes were undergoing recognition of prior learning at upper secondary education, which represents a rise of 1.4 pp. compared to 2018-19 (39.4%); the education and training programmes for adults (EFA) remain adults' main option (41.7%) (20) .

[19] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/20. <http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>

[20] Recognition of prior learning – Recognition, validation and certification of competences process (RVCC). Information available only in Portuguese at: <https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/RVCC.html>

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0);
- basic education (9 years) organised into three cycles integrating primary and lower secondary education (ISCED level 1 and 2);
- upper secondary education (ISCED level 3);
- post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4);
- tertiary education (ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Early childhood education is optional and covers children from 3 to 6 years old.

Compulsory education lasts 12 school years and starts at the age of 6. It comprises basic education and upper secondary education. Basic education lasts 9 years until age 15 (including some VET programmes). It comprises three cycles; the 4-year first cycle and the 2-year second cycle are considered primary education, while the 3-year third cycle corresponds to lower secondary education.

Secondary education (upper secondary) comprises general and VET programmes (years 10 to 12). Graduates of these 3-year programmes may access tertiary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Horizontal and vertical permeability is an important element of the education and training system, ensuring links not only among different VET programmes, but also between general and vocational education.

In 2017, the Students' profile at the end of compulsory education (21) was introduced for programmes under the responsibility of the education ministry, promoting transversal and interdisciplinary competences that interrelate and mobilise a solid set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Tertiary education is provided by universities and polytechnics. Preconditions to enter tertiary education include successful completion of an upper secondary programme or a similar qualification at the same level, admission exams and specific requirements for each study field. Since 2020, besides the general conditions for access to tertiary education, specific access conditions (22) were introduced for upper secondary VET graduates. They take into account the score of VET graduates in the final evaluation and aptitude tests, as well as specific tests carried out by each institution to assess if candidates have the necessary knowledge and competences to undertake a particular tertiary education programme. Higher education institutions can also determine a special quota for VET graduates.

Universities and polytechnic schools lead to a first-cycle degree (*licenciatura*) and a second-cycle degree (*mestrado*). They also provide master programmes, integrating the first two cycles (*mestrado*) and PhD degrees (*doutoramento*).

Polytechnic institutions also offer short-cycle programmes, called higher professional technical programmes (*cursos técnicos superiores profissionais*, CTeSP). CTeSP graduates acquire a diploma of higher professional technician, but not a post-secondary non-tertiary certificate nor a higher education degree (23) .

All VET programmes lead to double certification (education and professional certification):

- at lower secondary level, education and training programmes targeting those aged 15+ who are at risk of early leaving; these programmes are school-based and include practical training;
- at upper secondary level, there are four types of school-based VET programme combining general or sociocultural training components, science and technological training with work-based learning (WBL);
- at post-secondary non-tertiary level, technological specialisation programmes last from 1 to 1.5 years and incorporate WBL.

At tertiary level, 2-year higher professional technical courses are offered by polytechnics (including internship).

The following programmes exist for adult qualifications:

- adult education and training programmes targeting learners who want to complete lower or upper secondary education and/or obtain a professional qualification;
- certified modular training;
- recognition of prior learning (recognition, validation and certification of competences, RVCC).

The two RVCC paths (education and professional) can lead to either a lower or upper secondary education certificate or a professional certificate (24) .

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- [21] Students' profile at the end of compulsory education [*Perfil dos alunos à saída da escolaridade obrigatória*]:
https://cidadania.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/pdfs/studentsprofileen_0.pdf
- [22] [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 11/2020, de 2 de abril](#)
- [23] No 2 of the Article 4 of [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 65/2018 de 16 de agosto](#) and the mission of HE institutions is reinforced by No 1 of the Article 2 of [Decreto-Lei n.º 27/2021 de 16 de abril](#).
- [24] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Portugal*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8138_en.pdf

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship programmes are aimed young people aged up to 25. Programmes include 40% WBL. A training contract between the apprentice and the enterprise (WBL provider) must be signed (25) . Curricula are organised in training components: sociocultural, scientific, technological and practical training in a work environment (WBL) (26) .

A double certification including an education and professional certification at EQF level 4 (ISCED 354) is granted upon successful completion of the programme.

[25] Based on Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Portugal*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8138_en.pdf

[26] https://www.refernet.pt/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Apprenticeship_programmes.pdf

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The central government has overall responsibility for VET. The education ministry is responsible for school-based programmes, the higher education ministry for tertiary education, and the labour ministry for apprenticeship programmes, continuing vocational training and carrying out active labour market measures.

The national qualifications system (27) (*sistema nacional de qualificações*, SNQ), launched in 2007 and revised in January 2017, is the framework for VET. It integrated the existing qualification subsystems and has improved the quality of qualifications and eased access and progression in the labour market.

It is in line with the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European qualifications' framework for lifelong learning (28) .

The SNQ is coordinated by ANQEP (29) and comprises the main VET stakeholders. It has established common objectives, instruments, and complementary tools supporting the implementation of:

- National qualifications framework (*Quadro Nacional de Qualificações*, QNQ) (30) ;
- National qualifications catalogue (31) : a strategic tool to manage and regulate non-higher VET;
- National credit system for VET (*Sistema nacional de créditos do EFP*);
- System for anticipating qualification needs (*sistema de antecipação de necessidades de qualificação*, SANQ)
- *Qualifica* passport: guidance and registration tool (32) of individuals' qualifications and competences.

Social partners are active in VET. They participate in advisory and social coordination bodies (tripartite composition) and also have a seat on administrations, general councils and monitoring committees of the official bodies responsible for implementing, monitoring and funding VET. On 28 July 2021, an Agreement for professional training and qualification (33) was signed by the government and the social partners. It aims at framing the regulation and governance of the vocational training system, particularly for continuing training.

[27] [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 14/2017, de 26 de janeiro](#)

[28] <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9620-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

[29] Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino profissional (National Agency for Qualification and VET).

[30] Quadro Nacional de Qualificações (QNQ) <https://www.dgert.gov.pt/qnq-quadro-nacional-de-qualificacoes>.

[31] Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações (CNQ):
<http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Home/CNQ/>

[32] The Qualifica Passport is a technological tool for recording qualifications and skills acquired or developed throughout life and for guiding towards learning paths. By capitalising the learning results already achieved and the competences acquired by adult, the Qualifica Passport simulates several possible qualification paths for obtaining new qualifications and/or school and professional progression.

https://www.passaportequalifica.gov.pt/faq/perguntasFrequentes.xhtml;jsessionid=1g20aKCTKBdJ5IQsFJZUUTUd4Mjn0jWyNUtUN-bpd_ksXd3uuxFd!-1906387818

[33]

https://www.anqep.gov.pt/np4/?newsId=692&fileName=20210728_mtsss_acordo_documento.pdf;

<https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=acordo-de-formacao-profissional-e-qualificacao-assinado-entre-governo-e-parceiros-sociais>

<https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=acordo-de-formacao-profissional-e-qualificacao-assinado-entre-governo-e-parceiros-sociais>

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

VET is almost fully funded through the State budget, the social security budget and the European Social Fund (ESF). Municipalities and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores participate in the funding of VET.

In 2018, Portugal spent 4.5% of GDP on education and this represented 10.5% of total public expenditure, close to the EU averages (4.6% and 9.9% respectively). Public spending on education increased by 1.3% between 2017 and 2018 in real terms. Spending on secondary education represented 1.8% of GDP, 1.5% of GDP went on pre-primary and primary and 0.6% on tertiary education. 72% of spending went on compensation of employees, well above the EU average of 65%, while the 3% spending on gross capital formation is low (EU-27 7%) (34) .

Public expenditure on education, EU28 and Portugal, 2015-18 (%)

	Year-on-year real change (%)				Share of total public expenditure (%)				Share of GDP (%)			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
EU27	0.7	0.5	1.4	1.8	9.9	10.0	9.9	9.9	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.6
PT	-2.6	-4.2	-0.6	1.6	10.5	10.7	10.1	10.5	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.5

Source: European Commission (2020). *Education and training monitor 2020*.

<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/en/chapters/chapter3.html#ch3-2>

(Figure 60)

[34] European Commission (2020). *Education and training monitor 2020*.
<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/countries/portugal.html>

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In VET, there are:

- VET teachers;
- school-based trainers (nationally referred as trainers);
- trainers in companies (nationally referred as tutors);
- technicians in guidance, recognition and validation of competences (35) ;
- social and personal mediators.

VET teachers should be graduates of an initial teacher training programme at tertiary level, such as teacher and trainer training and education sciences programmes. Since 2014, new VET teachers also should hold a master degree (36) . Learners at these programmes should pass knowledge and competences exams and undergo subsequent supervised practice. To become teachers in the public sector, applicants must go through a nationwide public recruitment procedure, based on academic qualifications and work experience. VET teachers usually teach the general/sociocultural and scientific components of VET programmes.

The school-based trainer profession, for those working within the SNQ, is regulated by law (37) . Initial pedagogical training is compulsory, with a minimum duration of 90 hours. It includes 10-hour modules and is flexible and responsive addressing each candidate's needs.

The requirements to become a trainer are:

- an initial pedagogical training certification (38) and a master degree (EQF level 7); or
- a qualification at least at the same level of the programme they work for; and
- 5 years of proven professional experience in a relevant field.

Trainers can also teach the sociocultural and scientific components of VET programmes, provided that they hold the same qualifications as VET teachers.

Trainers in companies are often employees; enterprises should select them according to their professional and pedagogical competences; there is still no specific regulation for their role. They should work with each learner's individual activity plan; support learners' integration and guidance in the working environment; assess whether they have achieved the expected learning outcomes; and communicate with the VET institution. Each one can be responsible for up to five learners.

Trainers can certify their pedagogical competences acquired through formal, non-formal and informal ways via the recognition, validation and certification of competences of trainers (RVCC-For) process (39) .

Technicians in guidance, recognition and validation of competences work in *Qualifica* centres (40) . They must have a higher education degree and experience in one of the following areas: education or professional guidance, and methodologies for monitoring the learning development of young people and adults (41) . They are responsible for hosting RVCC candidates, providing information and guidance; they are also responsible for the diagnosis of their needs.

Social and personal mediators work in institutions providing EFA programmes/courses (42) . Trainers or guidance professionals, holders of higher education qualifications and training to

perform the role of mediator or relevant experience on adult education and training can fulfil the tasks of a mediator (43) . They are responsible for recruiting and selecting learners and supporting them with personal, social and pedagogical issues; they also participate in the analysis and evaluation of each learner's profile and help them identify the most appropriate adult education and training offer.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

VET teacher continuing professional development (CPD) is mandatory for their career progression (44) . CPD can take the form of training courses, workshops, internships and accredited projects by the authority body (45) . According to the legislation (46) , CPD includes inclusive education, teacher training on the implementation of curricula of basic and secondary education and digital training. It can be provided by higher education institutions, training centres run by school associations (47) , non-profit scientific associations, the education ministry, and public or accredited private and cooperative associations. To be promoted, teachers should attend at least four-fifths of the total number of hours of compulsory training that is required for each position.

School-based trainer CPD is also ruled by the 2011 legislation (48) . Trainers that want to teach sociocultural and scientific components of VET programmes included in the SNQ are required to hold the same qualifications as teachers.

CPD is provided by IEFP (49) and is based on specific modular standards of competences with flexible duration.

They can be:

- pedagogical modules aiming to improve, deepen or diversify trainers' competences including pedagogical, organisational and ethical issues;
- scientific and/or technological modules aiming to update trainers' knowledge and skills in line with labour market needs;
- operational research modules aiming to improve training standards and methods, that can be implemented in different contexts, including WBL.

Trainer CPD is organised into 10-hour units (or multiples of 10 hours), structured according to each training standard. Seminars, technical meetings, workshops or similar events may have a shorter duration.

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- [35] Recognition of prior learning – Recognition, validation and certification of competences process (RVCC).
- [36] The requirements for general and vocational education teachers are the same.
- [37] [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 214/2011, de 30 de maio](#)
- [38] This certification can be acquired through the completion of an initial pedagogical training at tertiary level; recognition, validation and certification of pedagogical competences acquired through prior experience; and recognition of an equivalent degree, for example higher education diploma or certificate including pedagogical training compatible with the skill referential of the position.
- [39] More information at: <https://netforce.iefp.pt/pt-PT/WPG/Home/RVCC>
- [40] *Qualifica* centres target people over 18 years old who are seeking a qualification and, exceptionally, young NEETs; they initiate and develop RVCC. See also general theme 15.
- [41] [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 232/2016, de 29 de agosto](#)

- [42] Adult education and training (EFA) programmes target learners who want to complete lower or upper secondary education and/or obtain a professional qualification at EQF 2 to 4.
- [43] [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 230/2008, de 7 de março](#)
- [44] [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\)n.º 22/2014, de 11 de fevereiro](#)
- [45] Conselho Científico-Pedagógico da Formação Contínua (CCPFC).
<https://dre.pt/application/file/a/158176148>
- [46] [Despacho \(Dispatch\) n.º 779/2019, de 18 de janeiro](#)) modified by [Despacho n.º 2053/2021, de 24 de fevereiro](#)
- [47] Schools association training centres (*Centros de Formação de Associação de Escolas*, CFAE).
- [48] [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 213/2011, de 30 de maio](#)
- [49] Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

The system for anticipating qualification needs (SANQ) was launched in 2015 and is supervised by ANQEP (50) . Its methodology evaluates the relevance of qualifications to the labour market and monitors trends regarding the skills of the human resources supply. Thus, it allows shaping the criteria for defining the network of education and training programmes and its priority thematic areas of focus.

SANQ has been progressively improved, due to the diversified data analysed and the contributions of DGEstE (51) and an important and representative number of regional and local authorities.

ANQEP, in cooperation with DGEstE, defines the priority thematic areas that the education and training programmes should focus on. It is up to the local authorities to participate cooperatively in defining the thematic areas of the education and training programmes that will be implemented. IEFP and *Qualifica* centres should also be involved in this process. Schools are responsible for presenting proposals through the integrated information and management system for education and training offers.

The 2017 legislation (52) strengthened the role of SANQ in promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational education and training by anticipating qualification needs and introducing mechanisms that contribute to quality assurance. SANQ especially influences the number and selection of professional and CEF programmes, their design and education and training area of focus.

VET programmes and courses promoted by IEFP's employment and vocational training centres are also influenced by SANQ results. IEFP cooperates with its regional delegations to develop annual lists of thematic priorities (53) to address labour market needs. The list of regional and local priorities for VET 2020-21 (54) identifies the opportunity areas in line with the country economic priorities.

Identifying developments related to skill needs is also the responsibility of the sector councils for qualification (CSQ). These are technical and consultative working groups, coordinated by ANQEP, ensuring the active participation of stakeholders. They propose the inclusion, exclusion and update of the qualifications available in the CNQ.

In 2020, and for the first time, the National Institute for Statistics, in collaboration with ANQEP and DGEstE (55) , launched a survey on the identification of skills needs in enterprises (56) . The survey aimed to identify areas of improvement essential for the development of education, training and employment in Portugal.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (57) .

10.2 Designing qualifications

As a strategic tool of the National qualifications system, the National qualifications catalogue (CNQ) (58) includes and regulates non-higher qualifications under the responsibility of ANQEP. ANQEP is responsible for designing VET qualifications in cooperation with sectoral councils for qualification (CSQ).

The design methodology of qualifications (revised in June 2020) is in line with the European recommendations on education and training, focusing on transparency and recognition of qualifications at European and international levels. It satisfies the CNQ objectives through the structuring of qualifications into competence units, which are based on, and described in, learning outcomes and potential to obtain credits.

Using this methodology, ANQEP plans a wide range of sectoral studies to identify the needs for qualifications and competences, and to develop qualifications standards to be included in the CNQ.

The CNQ was launched in 2008. Its objectives comprise developing qualifications standards and defining the necessary key competences to foster personal and social development and the competitiveness of the economy, strengthening transparency of qualifications and easing the recognition and validation of competences. CNQ qualifications are structured by certification level and training areas. In October 2020, the CNQ included 390 qualifications in 47 areas of education and training with 7 427 training units of short duration.

Each CNQ qualification standard is composed of:

- a professional profile, including the work tasks linked to the qualifications and the necessary knowledge and skills to perform them;
- a training framework, defining the content and the competences that a learner should develop to get the double (education and professional) certification. The framework consists of a basic training component (school-based) and a technological training component structured in autonomously certifiable units of 25- to 50-hours duration, promoting flexibility and permeability among different qualifications the same area of education and training;
- a framework for RVCC (59) , fostering the recognition of prior formal or informal learning, easing the acquisition of an education and/or a professional certificate.

CSQ are advisory bodies created within the SNQ framework, supporting ANQEP in updating the CNQ. They have as main task the identification of strategic and essential skills and competences for the different sectors of the economy in response to labour market needs. They also ensure the active and regular participation of relevant stakeholders by including representatives of ministries, social partners, enterprise representatives and training providers.

CSQ usually:

- (a) identify the developments in their sector and skill needs;
- (b) suggest specific updates for the CNQ;
- (c) analyse and advise on proposals for updating and revising CNQ received from third parties;
- (d) support the design of qualifications;
- (e) ease cooperation among the different stakeholders of each economic sector.

There are 18 CSQs. The two most recent were set in 2020, focusing on the areas of defence and security, and economy and sea.

[50] Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional (National Agency for Qualification and VET).

[51] Direção-Geral dos Estabelecimentos Escolares (Directorate-General for Schools).

[52] [Decreto-Lei \(Decree-Law\) n.º 14/2017, de 26 de janeiro](#)

[53] One of the sources used in the preparation of this list are SANQ data.

- [54] More information at IEF: https://www.iefp.pt/documents/10181/227378/2019-12-12_%C3%81reas+e+saidas+priorit%C3%A1rias+%28Anos+2020-2021%29.pdf/64755994-80d4-4918-beb2-0578ef13601c
- [55] Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência (Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics)
- [56] More information at INE: https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_destaques&DESTAQUESdest_boui=415476762&DESTAQUEStema=55579&DESTAQUES
- [57] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast>
- [58] <https://catalogo.angep.gov.pt/>
- [59] Recognition of prior learning – Recognition, validation and certification of competences process (RVCC).
- [60] Direção-Geral do Emprego e das Relações de Trabalho (Directorate-General for Employment and Industrial Relations)

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The accreditation of VET providers (*certificação de entidades formadoras*) falls under the responsibility of DGERT (60) . It aims to promote the quality and credibility of the training providers operating within the SNQ (61) , but outside the education system, especially private training companies. The accreditation aims to certify that a VET provider can develop and carry out all the stages of the training cycle in the education and training areas they focus on.

The accreditation process is voluntary and includes the evaluation of applicants against a quality standard and a technical assessment of their structure and organisation. VET providers should meet specific quality requirements, which refer to:

- internal structure and organisation (human resources and infrastructure) of the provider;
- development and implementation of training programmes (planning, design, organisation, implementation and assessment);
- assessment of outcomes and continuous improvement (post-training follow up, annual assessment of results, constant improvement measures).

Initially, VET providers should define the training or education programme which will be under evaluation. Then they self-evaluate its structure and practices against the quality standards. Subsequently, providers submit an electronic request for accreditation to DGERT, which can then carry out evaluation (technical, documentary or audit-supported) to certify that providers can develop such a training programme in a specific thematic area. At the final stage, DGERT accredits successful candidates. If an already accredited VET provider wishes to extend the scope of accreditation to other education and training areas, it can submit another accreditation request (62) .

DGERT performs regular audits using performance indicators and evaluating the results of VET provider training activity. Only successful VET providers maintain their accreditation.

As of August 2021, there are 2777 certified VET providers.

Accredited VET providers enjoy specific benefits, such as:

- quality accreditation;
- training diploma recognised within the national qualifications system;
- access to national or community public funding programmes for vocational training;
- tax benefits for them or their clients.

Another national approach to improving quality assurance in VET, promoted by professional schools and some other VET providers, has been devised using the EQAVET framework. VET providers have been aligning their quality assurance approaches to the EQAVET framework and the overall objective is that, when the quality assurance approach is fully implemented, all VET providers can adopt it and be awarded a quality label based on EQAVET quality criteria and indicative descriptors. On 31 May 2021, there were 409 quality labels awarded, mainly to VET professional schools.

[61] [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 208/2013, de 26 de junho.](#)

[62] More information at Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/portugal-certification-training-providers>

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (recognition, validation and certification of competences process, RVCC) aims to identify the formal, non-formal and informal competences that individuals have developed.

It comprises two paths, education and professional, each based on different set of standards:

- (a) the key competences standards (for education validation);
- (b) the professional competence standards (for professional validation).

The RVCC process also utilises a set of specifically designed evaluation tools. Candidates following the education path can obtain a certificate of basic or secondary general education (EQF levels 1 to 3). The professional path leads to a professional certification. If candidates also hold the corresponding academic certificate, they obtain a double certification at EQF level 2 or 4. Candidates can follow the education and professional paths simultaneously if they wish to acquire a double certification.

Individuals can initiate a RVCC process at a *Qualifica* centre at any time of the year. As of August 2021, there are 310 centres supervised by ANQEP spread across the country. The RVCC process is open to candidates who are at least 18 years old. Candidates younger than 23 should provide verification from a social security office, proving that they have at least 3 years of professional experience. To complete the RVCC process, learners should participate in at least 50 training hours to acquire the necessary competences. They can also undertake 25-hour training to get ready for the final evaluation. Both RVCC paths mainly involve face-to-face procedures and training, although distance learning is also an option.

A main evaluation tool of the RVCC process is the reflective learning portfolio (*portefólio reflexivo*). This records candidates' competences, displaying a critical evaluation of their knowledge, competences and experience, including all relevant supporting documentation.

Candidates are evaluated by a jury, appointed by a *Qualifica* centre, which certifies their competences. The evaluation can be written, oral or practical or combine these methods to assess the acquired key competences (education path), or professional competences (professional path). Candidates can also obtain a partial certification enabling them to attend the missing training components to acquire full certification. Certifications acquired through the RVCC process are equal to any other, enabling learners to continue their studies.

In 2019/2020 (63) , participation in RVCC processes was 45.7% when compared with all adults enrolled in VET offers.

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, please visit Cedefop's European database (64) .

[63] DGEEC (2021), *Estatísticas da educação* 2019/2020, page 52 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>).

[64] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/european-database-on-validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

Allowances, grants and scholarships target inactive or unemployed learners. The Operational programme for human capital (*Programa Operacional Capital Humano*, POCH) and the Operational programme for social inclusion and employment (*Programa Operacional Inclusão Social e Emprego*, POISE) include financial support for VET learners. Learners receive these financial support incentives through VET providers.

Incentives for VET learners can take the form of:

- professionalisation scholarship: aims to support learners during the WBL period (subject to attendance);
- study material (*bolsa de material de estudo*): set according to the learner's economic needs and corresponds to a value established by the school social support (*ação social escolar*);
- training grant: awarded to unemployed people who are at least 23 years old. The age limit does not apply to NEETs who are not beneficiaries of a professionalisation scholarship, or to people who are at risk of social exclusion or with disabilities
- travel allowance: covers the cost of travelling by public transport. When learners cannot use public transport, they are entitled to a transport allowance. This is provided when the learner does not receive an accommodation subsidy;
- accommodation subsidies: provided to learners living more than 50 km from the premises of the VET provider, or to those that cannot use public transport to reach the premises of the VET provider;
- food/meals subsidies: learners receive the same amount as stipulated for public officials whenever the training is equal to or longer than 3 hours;
- social support to learners with dependants: covers the expenses of taking care of learners' dependants while they are attending training;
- personal accident insurance: expenses for personal accident insurance for young people, unemployed and inactive trainees attending VET programmes or employees who attend training on their own initiative.

VET support for employed adults is carried out by enterprises under the monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme for competitiveness and internationalisation (POCI/COMPETE 2020). IEFP also offers social support programmes if EU funding is not available.

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

The most important source of funding for VET programmes and VET providers, including enterprises, is the Operational programme for human capital (*Programa Operacional Capital Humano*, POCH), complemented by some actions of the Operational programme for employment and social inclusion (*Programa Operacional Inclusão Social e Emprego*, POISE).

These operational programmes fall under Portugal 2020 (65) , a partnership agreement adopted between Portugal and the European Commission, which brings together the work of the five European structural and investment funds, including ESF. Employers may receive financial support for staff training or to cover costs when training takes place during normal working hours and is carried out by an external VET provider.

The government provides financial support to enterprises that set employment contracts with unemployed people including professional training (66) . Enterprises providing professional training to workers also enjoy exemption from or reduction in employer contributions for social security.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government launched an exceptional training plan to enable employers to promote the professional qualification of their employees. The initiative aims to help companies to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, ensuring their viability and employees to maintain their employment contracts.

[65] <https://portugal2020.pt/>

[66] More information at: <https://www.iefp.pt/apoios-a-contratacao>

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

Formal guidance is provided by professionals at schools (psychology and guidance services), IEFP (67) (public employment services) and *Qualifica* Centres (68) .

Guidance provided by public services is free of charge.

All public schools provide guidance services to learners from age 5 to the end of compulsory education. School psychology and guidance services mainly focus on the psycho-pedagogical field, fostering school community relationships among learners and teachers, and on lifelong guidance. School psychologists work in an integrated way, cooperating closely with teachers, parents and other stakeholders. They use different types of activities, including extracurricular: individual/group sessions, study visits, and job placements (69) . They aim to reduce early leaving from education and training, attract more learners to VET programmes, and match VET learners' skills and competences with labour market needs.

IEFP supervises a network of accredited professional integration offices (*Gabinetes de inserção profissional*, GIP). GIPs support the unemployed to (re)enter labour market. IEFP uses a guidance intervention model for the unemployed that includes two main elements: the profiling system and the personal employment plan (PEP). PEP aims to improve the employability profile of the unemployed and ease their (re)integration into the labour market, either through finding a job or through becoming self-employed or creating an enterprise. IEFP also runs an online guidance platform (70) , which provides information, allows user interaction and career management. Guidance professionals, teachers and parents are also target groups of the platform

Qualifica centres provide information, counselling and guidance services to adults (whether unemployed or not) regarding education and training provision, the labour market, skills mismatches and professional opportunities. They also carry out the *Qualifica* programme, aiming to improve the education and training levels of the population and raise employability.

Their main objectives are to:

- identify which VET programme better serves each learner's needs and expectations;
- offer a RVCC process for each applicant;
- boost lifelong learning awareness among young people, adults, and employers.

Non-formal guidance, in the form of actions and tools raising awareness of vocational guidance and VET provision, also plays an important role. Vocational fairs, such as *Futurália* and *Qualifica* were held nationwide. They aim to promote education and training programmes at secondary or higher level, enabling young people and families to learn more about VET. Web portals, such as Worldskills Portugal (71) and *Qualifica* (72) , also present online information about VET

Please also see:

- guidance and outreach Portugal national report (73) ;
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit (74) ;
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices (75) .

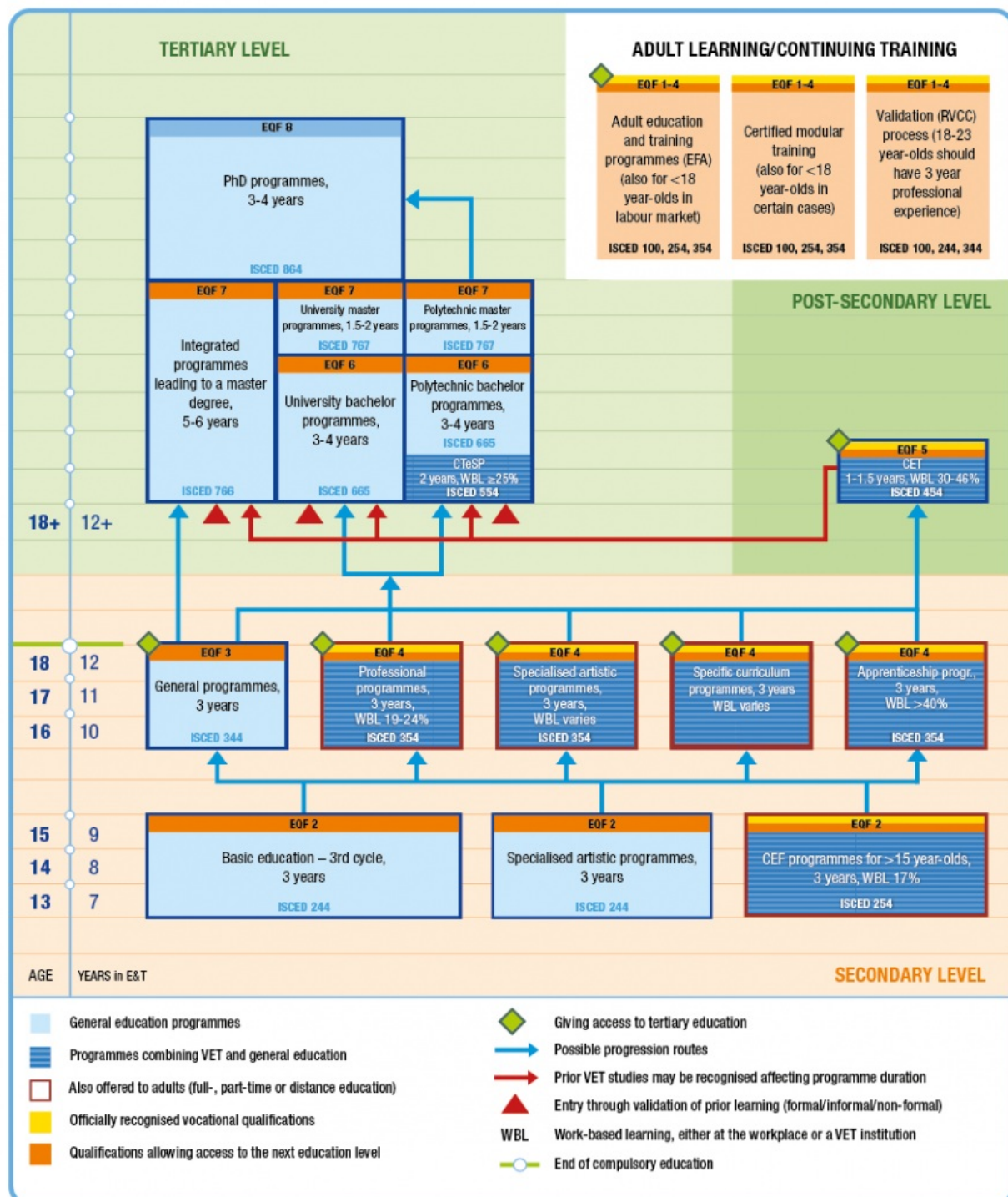
[67] Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

[68] *Qualifica* centres target people over 18 years old who are seeking a qualification and,

exceptionally, young NEETs; they initiate and develop recognition, validation and certification of competences process (RVCC).

- [69] Cedefop (2020). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Portugal. CareersNet national records. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidancesystems-and-practices-portugal>
- [70] More information at: <https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/web/guest/sobre-orientacao-profissional>
- [71] More information at: <https://worldskillsportugal.iefp.pt/>
- [72] More information at: <https://www.qualifica.gov.pt/#/>
- [73] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives/guidance-outreach>
- [74] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere>
- [75] <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices>

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Portugal, 2022.

VET Programme Types

EQF 2
CEF programmes for >15 year-olds, 3 years, WBL 17% ISCED 254

Education and training programmes for young people (Cursos de educação e formação de jovens, CEF) including four types of initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 254

EQF level	2	ISCED-P 2011 level	254
Usual entry grade	7	Usual completion grade	9
Usual entry age	15 (minimum)	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 (76) . 18	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Exempt of fees for learners under compulsory education.	Is it available for adults?	 The legislation does not set an age limit, but only young adults (up to the age of 21) attend it.

ECVET or other credits	Depending on the programme, the minimum number of credits is 120 (77) .
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	CEF programmes comprise four training components: sociocultural, scientific, technological and practical, including a minimum of 210 hours of work-based learning (WBL) each year.
Main providers	- network of public, private and cooperative schools; - professional schools; - IEFP (78) vocational training centres (directly and jointly managed); - accredited training providers; linked with community entities, including local authorities, enterprises or business organisations, other social partners and local or regional associations, set up by protocols aimed at maximising physical structures and human and material resources.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	17%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	The aim of CEF programmes is to reduce the high number of early school leavers. Learners must be aged 15 or more and without a lower secondary education qualification.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must have completed only the first cycle of basic education (4 years) and be at least 15 years old.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Learners' assessment is carried out per subject/area and per training component. Assessment is formative and summative and includes a final test comprising a professional performance presentation in front of a jury, with one or more practical works related with the most relevant knowledge and skills included in the programme profile.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Successful completion of a CEF leads to a double certification: an education certificate (third cycle of lower secondary education certificate at EQF level 2 ISCED 254) and a professional qualification. A learner who only completes the 2nd cycle of basic education receives a certificate of EQF level 1 and a professional qualification.
Examples of qualifications	Training is offered in various fields, such as crafts, computer sciences, environmental protection, accounting, management, beauty care, domestic services, therapy and rehabilitation, electronics, food industry, metallurgy.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Progression is allowed to upper secondary education and to higher level CEF programmes after meeting certain requirements.

Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 Two of the four training components of CEF programmes is the sociocultural (including Portuguese; foreigner language; ICT) and the scientific (including applied sciences, including mathematics).
Key competences	 Two of the four training components of CEF programmes is the sociocultural (including Portuguese; foreigner language; ICT) and the scientific (with applied sciences, including mathematics).
Application of learning outcomes approach	The methodology of designing qualifications was launched in April 2021, in which qualifications are structured in units of competence and based on learning outcomes. The process to apply the learning outcomes approach is ongoing.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	7.2% of all VET learners in lower and upper secondary education were in these programmes (79)

[77] Article 5 of [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 47/2017, de 1 de fevereiro](#)

[78] Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

[79] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/2020 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>).

EQF 4
Professional programmes, 3 years, WBL 19-24% ISCED 354

Professional programmes (Cursos profissionais) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3 (from 3 100 to 3 440 hours)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 (80) . 18	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Exempt of fees for learners under compulsory education.	Is it available for adults?	 The legislation does not set an age limit, but only young adults (up to the age of 25) participate.

ECVET or other credits Depending on the programme, the minimum number of credits is 180 (81) .

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	These programmes combine the following training components: • sociocultural, scientific and technological training (school-based components); • work-based learning (WBL) in the form of a traineeship carried out in enterprises or other organisations.
Main providers	Programmes are offered by professional, public (upper secondary) or private schools.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	19% – 24%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The technological training component includes subjects of technological, technical and practical nature provided at school. It also includes in-company practice foreseen in an agreement between the school and the enterprise and has a minimum duration of 600 hours up to a maximum of 840 hours. The learner's work plan, once signed, is considered an integral part of the training contract (different from a labour contract).
Main target groups	These programmes target learners that want to follow a more practical and labour market-oriented programme.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	To enrol in these programmes, learners need to be between 15 and 18 years old (with exceptions foreseen by legislation) and to have completed lower secondary education.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The programme has formative and summative assessment and includes a presentation of a project called Proof of professional aptitude (<i>Prova de Aptidão Profissional, PAP</i>) in front of a jury.
Diplomas/certificates provided	They lead to a double certification: a professional qualification and a 12th year school leaving diploma.
Examples of qualifications	Training fields include applied arts, business administration, computer sciences, electronics, engineering, energy, construction and architecture, food industries, health services, tourism and hospitality.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can pursue further studies in technological specialisation programmes, access higher education, upon the fulfilment of requirements foreseen in the regulations, or enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	✓ These programmes include three general education subjects (common for all training fields): Portuguese, foreign languages and physics.

Key competences	 These programmes include three general education subjects (common for all training fields): Portuguese, foreign languages and physics.
Application of learning outcomes approach	The methodology of designing qualifications was launched in April 2021, in which qualifications are structured in units of competence and based on learning outcomes. The process to apply the learning outcomes approach is ongoing.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	73.5% (82) of all VET learners in lower and upper secondary education were in these programmes.

[81] Article 6 of the [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 47/2017, de 1 de fevereiro](#)

[82] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/2020 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>)

EQF 4

Specialised artistic programmes,

3 years,

WBL varies

ISCED 344, 354

Specialised artistic programmes (Cursos artísticos especializados) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 344, 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	344, 354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3 (from 2152 to 3730 hours according to the training field)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 (83) .	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Exempt of fees for learners under compulsory education.	Is it available for adults?	 The legislation does not set an age limit, but only young adults (up to the age of 21) participate.
ECVET or other credits	Depending on the programme, the minimum number of credits is 180 (84) .		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	These programmes combine: • education, science and technological training (school-based components); • work-based learning (WBL) in the form of a traineeship carried out in enterprises or other organisations.		

Main providers	Programmes are offered by public, private or cooperative schools.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Information not available
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The technical-artistic component includes practical training at school and in-company practice. It is mandatory only in the third year of the programme (12th year of schooling). It is preferentially performed at the workplace, in workshops, companies or other organisations, through the transmission of know-how, by taking on occasional jobs or via an internship. It can be performed via the simulation of a set of professional activities relevant to the programme profile, developed in similar conditions to a real-world working context, integrated in the school subject of the technical-artistic training component called Project and technologies.
Main target groups	These programmes target learners who want to have a career in the artistic field of their choice and develop their capacities and talent or to take further studies/training in one of the fields.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 15 years old and have completed the third cycle of lower secondary education (9th year of schooling).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Assessment is formative and summative, including a final test (<i>Prova de Aptidão Artística</i> , PAA) that comprises a professional performance presentation in front of a jury, with one or more practical assessments related to the most relevant knowledge and skills included in the programme profile.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Successful completion of an art education programme leads to a double certification: a professional qualification and a 12th year school leaving diploma.
Examples of qualifications	The programme in the field of visual arts includes communication design, product design, and artistic production. The programme in the audio-visual field includes audio-visual communication.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Progression is possible to technological specialisation programmes (EQF level 5) or higher education (university or polytechnic), provided that learners meet the access requirements.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 These programmes have a general and a scientific training component.

Key competences	 These programmes have a general and a scientific training component.
Application of learning outcomes approach	The methodology of designing qualifications was launched in April 2021, in which qualifications are structured in units of competence and based on learning outcomes. The process to apply the learning outcomes approach is ongoing.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	1.7% (85) of all VET learners in lower and upper secondary education were in these programmes.

[84] Article 6 of [Portaria \(Ordinance\) nº 47/2017, de 1 de fevereiro](#)

[85] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/2020 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>).

EQF 4
Specific curriculum programmes, 3 years, WBL varies

Specific curriculum programmes (Cursos com planos próprios) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 (86) .	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Exempt of fees for learners under compulsory education.	Is it available for adults?	 The legislation does not set an age limit, but only young adults (up to the age of 21) participate.

ECVET or other credits Information not available.

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) These programmes combine:

1. general, science and technological training (school-based components);
2. work-based learning (WBL) in the form of a traineeship carried out in enterprises or other organisations.

Main providers Programmes are offered by private and cooperative schools.

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	It varies according to the fields of study and schools.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	It varies according to the fields of study and schools.
Main target groups	These programmes target young learners.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 15 years old and completed the third cycle of lower secondary education (9th year of schooling).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Assessment is formative and summative, including a final test (<i>Prova de Aptidão Profissional</i> or <i>Prova de Aptidão Artística</i> , PAA) that comprises a professional performance presentation in front of a jury, with one or more practical assessments related to the most relevant knowledge and skills included in the programme profile.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Successful completion of a specific curriculum programme leads to a double certification: a professional qualification and a 12th year school leaving diploma.
Examples of qualifications	There are programmes in various areas of education and training, from industry and technology, services, commerce and transport, to agriculture and the environment, as well as visual and audio-visual arts.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Progression is possible to technological specialisation programmes (EQF level 5) or higher education (university or polytechnic), provided that learners meet the access requirements.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✗
General education subjects	✓ These programmes have a general and a scientific training component.
Key competences	✓ These programmes have a general and a scientific training component.
Application of learning outcomes approach	The methodology of designing qualifications was launched in April 2021, in which qualifications are structured in units of competence and based on learning outcomes. The process to apply the learning outcomes approach is ongoing.

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners**

2.2% (87) of all VET learners in lower and upper secondary education were in these programmes.

[87] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/2020 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>).

EQF 4
Apprenticeship programmes, 3 years, WBL >40% ISCED 354

Apprenticeship programmes (Cursos de aprendizagem). Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3 (maximum of 3 700 hours)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 In 2009, compulsory education was extended to 12 years of schooling, between the age of 6 and 18 (88) . 18		
Is it initial VET?	 18		
Is it offered free of charge?	 Exempt of fees for learners under compulsory education.		
Is it part of formal education and training system?	 18		
Is it continuing VET?	 18		
Is it available for adults?	 The legislation set the age limit to 25.		
ECVET or other credits	Depending on the programme, the minimum of credits is 180 (89) .		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	These programmes comprise school-based sociocultural, scientific and technological training and WBL in an enterprise.		
Main providers	These programmes are provided by IEFP (90) vocational training centres or private providers (e.g. employers' associations, companies, trade unions) under protocols with IEFP.		

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	> 40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• in-company practice
Main target groups	These programmes target learners up to 25 years old.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners should have successfully completed the 9th year of schooling (the third cycle of basic education/lower secondary education or a CEF programmes).
Assessment of learning outcomes	The assessment is formative and summative. The final evaluation test (<i>Prova de Avaliação Final</i> , PAF) constitutes an integrated set of practical activities at the end of the training programme that helps a jury assess the competences acquired during training.
Diplomas/certificates provided	A double certification – a professional qualification and a 12th year school leaving diploma at EQF level 4 (ISCED 354) – is granted upon successful completion of the programme.
Examples of qualifications	Priority areas of training include audio-visual and media production, computer sciences, trade, construction and repair of motor vehicles, electricity and energy, electronics and automation, hospitality and catering, manufacturing of textiles, clothing, footwear and leather, metallurgy and technologies of chemical processing.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	After being awarded the double certification, learners can continue their studies at: • post-secondary non-tertiary, or • tertiary education as long as they meet the relevant requirements set by the higher education establishment for the respective field of study.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	 These programmes include sociocultural and scientific training.
Key competences	 These programmes include sociocultural and scientific training.
Application of learning outcomes approach	The methodology of designing qualifications was launched in April 2021, in which qualifications are structured in units of competence and based on learning outcomes. The process to apply the learning outcomes approach is ongoing.

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	13.1% (91) of all VET learners in lower and upper secondary education were in these programmes.
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- [89] Article 6 of the [Portaria \(Ordinance\) n.º 47/2017, de 1 de fevereiro](#)
- [90] Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).
- [91] DGEEC (2021). Estatísticas da educação 2019/2020 (<http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/eef/2020/>).

EQF 5
CET
1-1.5 years,
WBL 30-46%
ISCED 454

Technological specialisation programmes (Cursos de especialização tecnológica, CET) leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 454.

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	454
Usual entry grade	12+	Usual entry age	18
Length of a programme (years)	1 to 1.5 years (from 1 200 to 1 560 hours)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	It depends on the training provider. Whenever the training provider applies for public funding the CET programmes are free of charge.		Is it available for adults? ✓
ECVET or other credits	Through agreements with higher tertiary institutions CET graduates are credited 60 to 90 ECTS points.		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	CET programmes comprise general, scientific and technological training components and WBL: • general and scientific: aims at developing attitudes and behaviours appropriate for higher level qualification professionals, adaptability to the labour and corporate world; and improving, if needed, the scientific knowledge related to the specific technological field of study; • technological: integrates areas of a technological nature oriented to the understanding of practical activities and to the resolution of problems in the professional practice; • WBL: aims at applying the acquired knowledge and know-how to the practical activities of the respective professional profile; and performing tasks under guidance, using the techniques, equipment and materials that are integrated in the production processes of goods or services. The WBL can adopt different types of practical training in a real work context, namely internships, and is developed through partnership.
Main providers	These programmes are provided by public, private and cooperative schools, vocational training centres direct or jointly managed by IEFP (92) , technological schools and other training providers certified by the labour ministry.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	30% to 46%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	CET programmes are available for young people and adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	To enter CET programmes learners must have: • an upper secondary qualification (EQF level 4); • or successfully completed all school subjects of the 10th and 11th years and have been enrolled in the 12th year but not completed it; • or a professional qualification at EQF level 3 or 4; • or a specialisation technological certificate or a higher education degree and wishing to have a professional requalification.
Assessment of learning outcomes	To complete a CET programme, learners need to pass formative and summative assessments according to the professional competences that the technological specialisation diploma certifies. A CET graduate is the one who has been approved in all their training components including the practical part.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive a qualification at EQF level 5 (ISCED 454) and a technological specialisation diploma called <i>Diploma de Especialização Tecnológica</i> (DET).

Examples of qualifications	Training is offered in various fields such as computer science, trade, electronics and automation, and tourism and recreation.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The CET diploma allows learners to apply to higher education through a special admission procedure determined by a broader regulatory framework, provided that they meet the entry requirements set by each academic institution.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 These programmes comprise general and scientific training components.
Key competences	 These programmes comprise general and scientific training components.
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[92] Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training).

EQF 5
CTeSP
2 years,
WBL =/> 25%
ISCED 554

Higher professional technical programmes (Cursos técnicos superiores profissionais, CTeSP) leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554.

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554 (93)
Usual entry grade	12+	Usual entry age	18
Length of a programme (years)	2 (four academic semesters)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	Not applicable
Is it offered free of charge?	 In public higher education the value of the fees is set according to each programme and with a minimum amount corresponding to 1.3 of the national minimum wage and a maximum calculated on the basis of the consumer price index (94) .	Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	Graduates are credited 120 ECTS points (practical training lasts at least one semester and grants 30 ECTS points).		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	These programmes comprise school-based general, scientific and technical components, and practical training which takes place through an internship.		
Main providers	These programmes are provided by polytechnic institutions.		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>= 25%		

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• internship
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	To enter CTeSP programmes learners must have: • an upper secondary qualification (EQF level 3 or 4); • succeeded in the special contest for those who want to attend higher education and are over 23 years old (95) ; • a CET or CTeSP diploma (EQF level 5) or a higher education degree, if they wish a professional requalification.
Assessment of learning outcomes	To complete a CTeSP programme, learners need to succeed in the final examinations of the subjects and achieve the number of ECTS required.
Diplomas/certificates provided	These programmes lead to a diploma of higher professional technician (not a higher education degree).
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	CTeSP graduates can access the first cycle of higher education programmes or integrated master programmes through specific application procedures, leading to a higher education degree.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 These programmes comprise general and scientific training components.
Key competences	 These comprise general and scientific training components.
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[95] <https://www.dges.gov.pt/pt/pagina/maiores-de-23-anos> and <https://www.dges.gov.pt/pt/pagina/concurso-especial-para-estudantes-aprovados-nas-provas-especialmente-adequadas-destinadas>

References

- [8] *Qualifica centres* target people over 18 years old who are seeking a qualification and, exceptionally, young NEETs; they initiate and develop RVCC. See also general theme 15.