

# Vocational Courses

## Cursos Profissionais

POLICY INSTRUMENT

 Portugal

## Description

Country

 **Portugal**

**Description of the initiative**

The vocational courses are work-linked initial vocational education and training (VET) courses provided in schools of secondary education, targeting young people

**Focus area**

### KEY TRAINING POLICY MEASURE

*The vocational courses have three main goals: to contribute to the development of young people's personal and professional skills; to develop training offers related to the local and regional labour market needs and; to enable the students to continue to post-secondary education or higher education. It confers a double certification (secondary and professional) awarding at EQF level 4. The vocational courses initiative is a secondary level education programme characterized by a strong connection with the professional world. Being in close cooperation with the local business sector, it takes into account the students' profile by focusing the learning process on the development of competencies for a specific profession.*

**Link**

[https://anqep.gov.pt/np4/cursos\\_profissionais.html](https://anqep.gov.pt/np4/cursos_profissionais.html)

**Implementation level**

NATIONAL

**Legal base**

Ministerial order

**Starting period**

1989 - present

**Perspective**

The LMSI tool used is the Qualification Needs Anticipation System (SANQ), which aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of skills supply and demand. It uses statistical information on labour market retrospective dynamics (last 5 years) and anticipation of skills needs. The system entails an employer survey on recruitment intentions and skills needs and proceeds to a qualitative analysis of skills

demand. The SANQ has a direct impact on the provision of vocational education and training in the public and private schools/training centres. Grounded on the criteria and priorities produced by the SANQ, the institutional VET actors define the training offer that includes the vocational courses.

#### Policy area

TRAINING

#### Funding

FUNDED BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

FUNDED BY THE EU

*The professional courses are financed by European funds (through the ESF) and the national state budget*

## Skill mismatch

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#### Skill mismatch target

SKILL SHORTAGES (EMPLOYERS CANNOT FILL THEIR VACANCIES DUE TO A LACK OF SKILLS IN THE LABOUR MARKET)

#### Skills matching focus

MATCH YOUNG GRADUATES' SKILLS TO LABOUR MARKET

*The planning of the Portuguese VET network is carried out according to the Qualification Needs Anticipation System (SANQ), which through a strong connection with the professional world and its demand it provides young people relevant skills for a smoother Labour Market transition.*

ADDRESS SECTORAL OR OCCUPATIONAL SKILL SHORTAGES

*The planning of the Vocational Courses networking is done according to the Qualification Needs Anticipation System (SANQ) directives which in turn are strongly leveraged by the Portuguese labour market's specific sectoral and occupational skills needs and shortages.*

## Methods

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#### Methods

OTHER

*The LMSI tool used is the Qualification Needs Anticipation System (SANQ), which aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of skills supply and demand - quantitative analysis uses statistical information on labour market retrospective dynamics (last 5 years) and an employer survey on recruitment intentions and skills needs; and qualitative analysis of skills demand. The VET actors define the training offer, including the vocational*

*courses, based on SANQ criteria and priorities.*

**Use of skills intelligence**

Please select the most important options and explain how the labour market information (LMI) has been used (maximum 50 words)

**DESIGNING STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION**

*The LMI is used to either design new occupational standards and accreditation or to update existing ones, which in turn are operationalised through strategic VET network planning. The Vocational Courses are the outcome of LMI information.*

**INFORMING DECISIONS ON COURSE FUNDING/PROVISION**

*The LMI is used to inform decisions on VET planning, where the Vocational Courses provision is included.*

## Stakeholders

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**Main responsible body**

**NATIONAL AGENCY**

*Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP)*

**Other involved organisations**

**NATIONAL MINISTRY**

**REGIONAL MINISTRY**

**TRAINING PROVIDERS**

**Beneficiaries**

**OTHER**

*Young people under the age of 20, who have completed the 9th grade or equivalent education. The programme is intended to provide beneficiaries with more practical teaching (on-the-job training), oriented to labour market integration after completion or to continue their studies to post-secondary or higher education.*

## Sustainability

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**Success factors**

The professional schools have a curriculum with modular organisation, unlike generalist education. The professional schools have an education model that is successful in the involvement of students within the learning process, increasing educational attainment and levels of qualification. The diversification of

educational actors involved in professional schools allowed for higher visibility of VET and involvement of actors with influence in the local labour markets.

### **Barriers**

The professional courses were almost all co-financed by ESF in its origin, and reported organisational and financial difficulties coming from the financing scheme's limitations regarding the concept and scope of professional schools. Currently, the courses that are only co-financed by ESF in some regions and schools complain that authorized courses are below the needed to meet the demands of youngsters and local employers, at least in some professional areas and regions.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

ANQEP ensures the monitoring, evaluation and regulation of the provision of vocational education and training of dual certification. An assessment of the relevance of qualifications is published each year, based on a retrospective analysis of employment and evolution and a perspective of qualification needs. The unit of analysis for employment is the National Qualification of Professions at four-digit level and the National Code of Qualifications at six-digit level. The relevance assessment is a quantitative composite indicator that varies between one (not relevant) and ten (maximum relevance).

### **Updates**

**YES**

*The programme was created in 1989 as an innovative experience originated by civil society initiatives, including social partners, employment associations, and local development initiatives. The creation of professional schools was a successful strategy as part of education reform and an evaluation of previous VET experiences at the secondary level. In 2005, the government included professional courses in regular secondary schools. The LMSI became very important in regulating the growth of professional courses.*

### **Effectiveness**

The more recent evaluation with results of the instrument, dated 2020, draws on data covering the period 2017/18. There was a 22% increase in student numbers from 113,749 (2011/12) to 138,591 (2017/18). The participation rate in double certification courses in secondary education oriented to young people, in the Continent, was 42%. The Vocational Courses represent the majority of these offerings, with 80% of students enrolled.

### **Sustainability**

It is expected the Vocational Courses to remain as the key instrument of the Portuguese VET for young people at the secondary level. Having started as an innovative experience more than 30 years ago, they became mainstream and are now the model for all schools' VET courses. They may face new financial constraints after 2020, depending on the strategy adopted for the co-financing of ESF to Portuguese education and training policy.

## **Other instruments in Portugal**

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- [National Initiative in Digital Skills e.2030](#)  
INCoDe.2030
  - [Qualification Needs Anticipation System](#)  
Sistema de Antecipação de Necessidades de Qualificações (SANQ)
  - [Sectoral Councils for Qualifications](#)  
Conselhos Sectoriais para a Qualificação (CSQ)