

# Developing work-based learning and practical training

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 ESTONIA

## Timeline

2022 Design 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation  
2025 Implementation

ID number 44315

## Background

Incentives and conditions of collaboration between education institutions and the labour market are insufficient and the potential of work-based learning (WBL) is not fully exploited. Employer contribution to VET and continuing training is inadequate.

Fewer people continue their education after completing general secondary education. To a significant degree, the population's labour market potential is not fulfilled due to high drop-out rates from vocational and higher education and general upper secondary schools for adults. The share of people without professional qualification, low education attainment and outdated skills is high.

Formal education, in-service training and retraining do not adequately match the development needs of society and the labour market. Few in-service training and retraining opportunities are provided to people with lower- and higher-level qualifications in the growth areas of smart specialisation and areas in need of priority development in society, including green skills.

This implies that individuals must be prepared for career transitions and for continuous (re)training throughout lives, and that the VET and adult education systems are able to respond quickly to changing skills needs. Flexible and practical upskilling opportunities and WBL are becoming increasingly important.

## Objectives

To support the development of competences that create more added value, to improve continuing training and retraining opportunities, including WBL, to respond swiftly to the development needs of the world of labour and ensure that people are equipped with the right knowledge and skills for employment.

## Description

Developing WBL and practical training includes the following measures:

- (a) VET and higher education development programme PRÕM+, empowering professional

associations and enterprises to provide WBL and apprenticeships and expand WBL;  
(b) quality assurance of WBL and practical training.

### 2022 Design

VET and higher education development programme PRÖM+ supporting traineeship, quality assurance and WBL development, was being drafted by the education ministry. Further development of WBL focuses on younger learners and initial education (so far, most WBL learners have been adults).

See also policy development on VET quality assurance in related policy developments.

### 2023 Implementation

VET and higher education development programme PRÖM+ (follow-up of the former PRÖM programme) was adopted by the education ministry. The programme supports traineeships and WBL, incl. training courses, seminars, and counselling of VET providers, and promotion of practical learning.

PRÖM+ programme finances WBL provision, supporting VET centres and enterprises to create WBL opportunities through 3000 additional training places in sectors of national priority and economic growth, based on employer needs and readiness. At least 30% of the training places target young people up to the age of 26 without professional qualifications.

### 2024 Implementation

After a temporary decline during a roll-out phase of the new PRÖM+ programme, as of 2024, the number of WBL placements increased again. Nearly half of WBL learners were enrolled in the health and well-being sector addressing the high labour demand in this field.

### 2025 Implementation

In 2025, the creation of additional WBL placements continued under PRÖM+, and the number of learners participating in WBL has increased again. Young people made up 16% of all WBL learners. Engaging youth remained a challenge, as employers tend to use WBL mainly for upskilling current staff. To reach the goal that at least 30% of WBL placements are filled by young people under 26 without a professional qualification, provision of EQF level 3 VET and level 4 initial and continuing VET that mainly target young learners was expanded. The health and well-being sector still accounted for about one-third of WBL enrolments, while participation in STEM programmes increased notably.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people (15-29 years old)  
Adult learners

### Education professionals

Teachers  
Trainers

## Entities providing VET

Companies  
VET providers (all kinds)

## Thematic categories

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

### Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[Regulation on the procedure for implementing work-based learning](#)

[VET and higher education development programme PROM+](#)

## Related policy developments

**2022 Completed**

### Developing work-based learning / apprenticeships (until 2022)

Work-based learning is developed under the Labour market and education cooperation programme.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2025 Implementation

## Education Strategy 2021-35

The education strategy applies an integrated approach to the development of the education system to make better use of Estonia's high-quality education for the benefit of people, society and the economy.

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2025 Pilot

## VET quality assurance

A working group was set up to review the national approach to quality assurance. The group was composed of representatives of the education ministry, employer and employee organisations, VET schools and other partners.

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### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2022 Completed

## Labour market and education cooperation programme

The programme was adopted in 2015. It sets out a roadmap and offers a framework for increasing the qualification levels of the labour force, decreasing the structural labour shortage and enhancing the employability of graduates by responding better to changes in labour demand.

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Developing work-based learning and practical training: Estonia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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