

Developing competences of teachers, trainers and heads of schools

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 ESTONIA

Timeline

2022 Design

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

ID number 44309

Background

Teachers and trainers are key actors in planning, providing feedback and supporting the teaching and learning process. Heads of vocational education and training (VET) institutions should create a learning culture and environment that supports learning and wellbeing, skilfully managing and implementing changes. To guarantee high-quality education and training, and diverse learning environments, initial teacher training and professional development opportunities must remain of high quality.

In relation to the supply and quality of teachers, trainers and heads of schools, there are several challenges.

- (a) The supply of teachers and trainers, and support specialists is insufficient. The teaching community is ageing, and the retainment rate of new teachers is low.
- (b) An increasingly larger share of new VET teachers does not meet the qualification requirements: in 2010-20, only 60% of them complied.
- (c) The skills of teachers, vocational teachers, supervisors, trainers and school heads in diversifying the learning process and environment and their readiness to introduce educational innovations is uneven; the potential of digital solutions is not fully exploited.
- (d) The readiness of VET institutions to manage a multilingual and multicultural learning environment and to support students with a mother tongue other than Estonian is insufficient.

The following strengths of the Estonian VET system help to meet the challenges: the great autonomy of teachers and school heads, efficient and active networks of teachers and heads of schools, and high-quality digital infrastructure of VET institutions.

Objectives

To ensure the supply of teachers and trainers, and support specialists.

To empower teachers, heads of schools and other staff in VET to provide quality education and training.

Description

In order to develop the competences of teachers, trainers and heads of school, the following measures are foreseen:

- (a) building the capacity of schools to develop the content of VET, including curriculum development and in-service training for vocational teachers;
- (b) pedagogical-methodological in-service training courses (including special pedagogy and andragogy) for VET teachers, in-service training in digital pedagogy for vocational teachers;
- (c) field-related training for vocational teachers, training for school teams and support specialists, in-service training for heads of schools;
- (d) training for school and company traineeship instructors under the VET and higher education development programme PRÕM+;
- (e) didactics training for IT practitioners from the IT Academy in VET;
- (f) support for Erasmus+ placements abroad for vocational teachers;
- (g) training in content and language integrated learning for VET teachers;
- (h) in-service training in language teaching methodology for VET teachers;
- (i) Estonian language training for VET teachers whose native language is other than Estonian;
- (j) counselling for school teams on teaching in a multilingual and multicultural learning environment and supporting pupils whose native language is other than Estonian.

2022 Design

In 2022, the framework (conditions for granting support from EU structural funds) for developing competences of teachers, trainers and heads of school was being developed, including field-related training for vocational teachers, continuous professional development (CPD) on general pedagogy/teaching methods, and development activities for the heads of VET institutions.

The new IT Academy programme and traineeship system development programme had been prepared (but not yet adopted) to continue developing digital competences for VET teachers and trainers and to ensure training of school and company instructors.

In 2022, the inter-university Teachers' Academy was established to increase the universities' capacity to (re)train teachers and education leaders, and to provide high-level research in the field of education sciences.

Transition to Estonian as the only language of instruction by 2030 required reinforced and expanded provision of Estonian language training for teachers. In 2022, the framework (conditions for granting support from EU structural funds) was created to develop language training in general education and VET, including content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and Estonian as a second language for VET teachers and trainers.

In-service training of teachers and heads of education institutions, development of teacher training and didactics in universities and co-operation between education institutions (including networks of VET teachers) continued. In cooperation with universities, the development of pre- and in-service teacher training continued with the aim to provide flexible forms of study and state-of-the-art learning solutions for different target groups, including working teachers and those who do not meet the qualification requirements.

2023 Implementation

Two ESF measures were adopted that include VET teachers and trainers CPD: VET and higher education development programme PRÕM+ (in-service training on digital pedagogy, field-specific training, and training for school and company traineeship instructors), and 'Teacher succession and development, learning approach, and learning environments' (general training in pedagogy and didactics as well as support for school teams and specialists, leadership training for school principals). Additionally, didactics training for IT practitioners from the IT Academy in VET and Erasmus+

placements for vocational teachers abroad are supported.

2024 Implementation

New phase of CPD for VET teachers and trainers was launched. From the measure 'Succession and development of teachers', specific training for vocational teachers and trainers is planned, in addition to general training in pedagogy and didactics as well as support for school teams and specialists, leadership training for school principals.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research
- Education and Youth Board

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Adult educators

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Action plan for the transition to Estonian-medium education 2022-30](#)

Related policy developments

2023 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

2021 Completed

Teacher and school leadership education programme 2015-21

The programme was adopted in 2015 and addresses teachers and school leaders at all levels and types of education, including VET. It has devoted resources to teacher training, including digital competences and innovative approaches in VET. The following actions have been taken:

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2022 Completed

Digital focus programme 2016-22

The first digital focus programme was implemented in 2016-18. By 2018, the incorporation of digital culture into education and learning activities was considered complete, but not yet systemised. The activities continued during the second programme period in 2019-22.

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Developing competences of teachers, trainers and heads of schools: Estonia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

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