

High professional technical programmes

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 PORTUGAL

Timeline

2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 43316

Background

In order to improve the qualification levels of the Portuguese population, it is necessary to strengthen the education and training system, which will leverage the productive potential of the economy and contribute to reducing socioeconomic and geographic inequalities. The VET Agreement foresees the political design of an integrated and consistent strategy to boost VET supply, valuing the role of vocational training as a mechanism to promote social, professional and academic mobility. Considering lifelong learning as a strategic priority for the next decade, Portugal has defined a set of reforms, investments and measures to increase the participation of the population in initial and continuing training.

Objectives

- (a) Promoting a closer link between the polytechnic network and the training and business dynamics in the different territories and regions.
- (b) Reinforcing the vocational training dimension in higher education.
- (c) Encouraging the diversification of the training supply and lifelong learning.
- (d) Increasing cooperation between higher education institutions, the public vocational training service and the associations and companies of different sectors, in order to qualify and re-qualify professionals in strategic sectors.

Description

High professional technical programmes (CTESP) correspond to a short cycle linked to the Bologna Process, provided exclusively by polytechnic higher education institutions, within the first cycle of higher education. These courses have a study cycle of 120 ECTS, which includes a set of curricular units organised in the components of general and scientific training, technical training and on-the-job training. It confers a qualification equivalent to level 5 of the national qualification framework.

The creation of CTESP, as well as the establishment of their study plans, is preceded, compulsorily, by consultation or collection of information from the employers and business and socio-professional associations of the region where the higher education institution is located. For on-the-job training and the integration of students into a workplace, higher education institutions sign agreements or other forms of partnership with companies or other employers, business and socio-professional associations, or other organisations that

best fit the specificity of the training provided, and the requirements of the professional profiles targeted.

Graduates of a CTESP may pursue higher education studies, with up to 50% of the training undertaken being credited. Eligible for these courses, regardless of their employment status, are students who have completed upper secondary education or its legal equivalent. Also eligible are those who have passed the special entrance tests to assess their ability to attend higher education for people over 23 and holders of a technological specialisation diploma, a technical higher education diploma or a higher education degree who wish to retrain.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, 61 private and public education institutions delivered 987 CTESP, in a wide range of sectors: administrative practices and corporate communication; arts and design in ceramics and glass; assistive products in health; automotive technology; bio agriculture; civil defence; cooking and food production; digital media design; digital technologies for agroindustry; environment and safety; environment; cultural heritage and sustainable tourism; game design and digital animation; gerontology; industrial maintenance; quality management; sales management and marketing; sports and nature tourism; and viticulture and oenology.

The applications for the creation of higher technical professional courses for entry into operation in the academic year 2022/23 were submitted between 10 January 2022 and 28 February 2022, through an online application.

2023 Implementation

In the 2023/24 academic year, there were 1 014 CTESP. In that year, 11 867 new students enrolled for the first time, mainly choosing the fields of Information and communication technologies (22%), Business, administration and law (22%), and Engineering, manufacturing, and construction (18%).

2024 Implementation

For 2024/25, the number of available CTESP increased to 1 030. In these courses, more than 23 000 places were guaranteed for internships in companies and other employing entities.

2025 Implementation

For 2025/26, the number of available CTESP increased to 1 124.

A study was underway to assess the ten-year impact of the High professional technical programmes (CTESP). Its purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of this public policy, identify constraints and good practices, and inform strategic decision-making regarding its future development. The study was expected to be completed in 2026.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (until April 2024)
- Directorate General of Higher Education (DGES) (until September 2025)
- Polytechnic higher education institutions
- Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MECI) (since April 2024)
- Institute for Higher Education (IES) (since September 2025)

Target group

Learners

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

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Decree-Law \(Decreto-Lei\) No 74/2006 of 24 March 2006](#)

[Decree-Law \(Decreto-Lei\) No 63/2016 of 13 September 2016](#)

[Decree-Law \(Decreto-Lei\) No 65/2018 of 16 August 2018](#)

[Dispatch \(Despacho\) No 742/2022 of 18 January 2022](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

VET agreement

The VET agreement is to be a common ground of a tripartite understanding, between the government and the social partners, in the following areas of intervention:

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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