

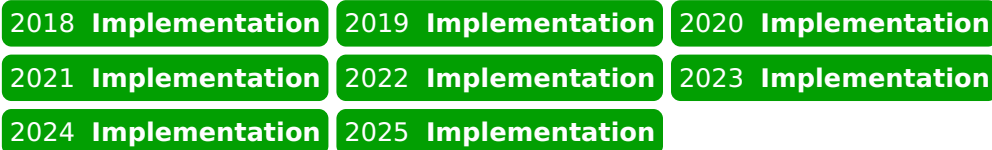
Review of the national catalogue of occupational standards

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SPAIN

Timeline



ID number 28687

Description

During the fourth quarter of 2018, the National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL) carried out a review of the entire national catalogue of occupational standards. It aimed to set up a 2019 work plan that would accommodate the need for updating occupational standards and (where appropriate) designing new ones which could have greater significance or impact on employment.

The INCUAL is responsible for defining, updating and adapting the Spanish national catalogue of occupational standards (*Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales*, CNCP) to the evolution of the labour market. INCUAL is the technical body of the General Council of Vocational Training, (*Consejo General de Formación Profesional*, CGFP), the organisation that advises the government on VET issues.

The resulting INCUAL work plan for 2019 addressed 192 actions, which varied from designing new occupational standards to redefining learning outcomes.

From March 2018 to January 2019, 19 CVET occupational standards were updated and four new ones developed. 68 professional certificate programmes (repertoire of professional certificates) were submitted to the General Council for Vocational Training. Sustained interaction with companies ensured responsiveness to labour market needs. A total of 13 VET diplomas (six in basic VET, two intermediate and five in higher VET levels) were also updated and 15 new diplomas designed, also based on cooperation between education institutions and sectors.

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

The review process continued, with a special focus on emerging sectors, such as Industry 4.0, the circular economy, or 5G communication networks. Six new occupational standards were added to the CNCP, eight old ones were removed, and 36 were updated, resulting in a total of 664 occupational standards available in 2019. Many others are in the pipeline.

As envisaged in previous legislation, a new VET provision, the so-called specialisation

courses (*cursos de especialización*), has been developed. These are short courses targeting intermediate and higher VET graduates to broaden occupation-specific skills and acquire digital skills in line with the emerging needs of the economy. New ones are being approved, such as digitisation of industrial maintenance, cybersecurity in operating technology environments, cybersecurity in information technology environments, and smart manufacturing.

A new basic VET diploma and some others at the higher VET level were published in 2019, and new ones are expected to see the light in the coming years.

The Government approved a new regulation for the Observatory for the National Qualifications Institute at the end of 2019. This regulation aims to allow active and rapid identification of necessary changes in qualifications, increasing the effectiveness of this institute.

2020 Implementation

With the formation of a new government at the beginning of 2020, there was a change in governance that affected vocational training for employment. All training within the national system of qualifications, be it initial VET or training specifically aimed at unemployed and employed workers (when linked to professional certificates), becomes the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

Progress in revising and updating the qualifications included in the national catalogue of occupational standards continued and new occupational standards, qualifications and specialisation courses have been developed. Specifically, throughout 2020, 21 regulatory projects (Ministerial Order or Royal Decree) have been published in the official gazette, updating 136 occupational standards (20 new, 45 updated and 71 partially modified). Also:

- (a) a new VET qualification has been published (technician in wood processing and transformation); the curriculum for the qualification of intermediate level VET for technician in guiding in the natural environment and leisure time (approved in Royal Decree 402/2020, of 25 February).
- (b) four new specialisation courses for higher VET level graduates have been developed: cybersecurity in the operating technology environment; cybersecurity in the information technology environment; digitalisation of industrial maintenance and intelligent manufacturing. Another specialisation course has been approved for intermediate VET level in artisan bakery and pastry making;
- (c) the units of competences related to (foreign) language skills which are included in the occupational standards of the national catalogue of qualifications (as well as their respective training modules) have been modified/adjusted to the common levels established in the Common European framework of reference for languages.

2021 Implementation

Throughout 2021, 14 new occupational standards were developed and published, 76 were updated, 13 modified, and three deleted, affecting 17 sectoral branches. At the end of 2021, the national catalogue comprised 739 occupational standards.

In addition to these occupational standards, which are the core elements for the design of VET qualifications, one new intermediate level VET diploma was approved in the reporting period, and the curricula for two other higher VET level diplomas were set. Eight new specialisation courses were published in 2021.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the revision of the national catalogue continued: 78 new standards were approved and 47 updated/modified, making a total of 125 'new' standards, while nine were removed. Most of the new ones are linked to the 11 strategic sectors identified in the plan for the modernisation of VET. This plan, led by the education ministry, aims to

ensure that occupational standards and programmes remain relevant to the needs of the different sectors and to help individuals enter and stay employable in the labour market.

The process of reviewing and modernising formal VET qualification programmes and new occupational standards paid special attention to digital and green skills, especially in the new specialisation courses available to VET graduates to complement the knowledge and skills acquired.

The new or updated occupational standards included in the catalogue regarding digitalisation and innovation were: installation and maintenance of connected devices and systems, IoT; energy audit; digitalisation applied to the professional environment; data management and training in AI systems based on machine learning; management of the installation, deployment and operation of Artificial Intelligence systems based on machine learning; collaborative work methodology for modelling and information management of construction projects (BIM); implementation and management of industrial maintenance digitisation projects; development and management of smart manufacturing projects in industry; maintenance of hybrid and electric vehicles; planning and maintenance control of electrical, electronic and computer systems of railway rolling stock; maintenance and safety supervision in hybrid and electric vehicle systems.

Along with these new standards, during 2022, a list of intermediate (Installation of structures and aeronautical systems; Processing and processing of wood) and higher level (aeromechanical maintenance of aircraft with turbine engine, additive manufacturing) VET diplomas, specialisation courses (installation and maintenance of Internet-connected systems (IoT); Composite materials in the aerospace industry; maintenance and safety in hybrid and electric vehicle systems; remotely piloted aircraft-drones; collaborative robotics energy audit,) and professional certificates (service of delivery and home collection; physical activities and sports) have been published.

As stated in Spain's NIP, the network of centres of excellence in innovation and the network of national reference centres have been assigned to review the occupational standards coordinated by the education ministry. The aim is to promote innovation and quality in order to improve the position of Spanish companies in global value chains, achieve green development, and promote talent, specifically in the sectors selected for their relevance to the growth of the Spanish economy. The eleven emerging sectors are: new advanced information technology; automated machine tools and robotics; aeronautical equipment; modern railway transport equipment; energy-based vehicles and new equipment; agricultural machinery; new materials; biopharmaceuticals and advanced medical products; consumer chain: manufacturers and distributors; hospitality and tourism; personal care services.

The Organic Act 3/2022 established the national catalogue of professional skills as one of the key elements in transforming the Spanish VET system. The law modified the former Spanish national catalogue of occupational standards and created the new national catalogue of professional skills (*Catálogo Nacional de Estándares de Competencias Profesionales*) to align its terminology with that used in other European Union countries. The modified national catalogue adapts to the new single VET system, which incorporates new 'micro-training' (grades A and B) and thus requires smaller references for occupational standards, continuing to be organised by professional branches and three levels related to professional skills complexity. The new organisation aims to favour the transparency of occupational standards in international and, particularly, European contexts.

2023 Implementation

Royal Decree 659/2023, of July 18, which developed the organisation of the Spanish VET System, was published. It established that all new VET programmes and their design shall always be linked to the new national catalogue of professional skills, which will modify some aspects of the existing national catalogue. However, the organisation of the former Spanish national catalogue of occupational standards still remained in

force pending the regulatory development of the provisions in the Organic Act 3/2022 for the national catalogue of professional skills.

The systematic review of the national catalogue of occupational standards continued throughout 2023 and was made in collaboration with stakeholders and companies involved in the process (technological and construction hubs, collaboration of leading companies from other professional sectors and social partners). The result of the revision and updating of occupational standards in 2023 was as follows: 30 new occupational standards were developed, 22 were updated, 6 were modified, and 10 of them were deleted. These 58 modifications to the national catalogue were introduced through the publication of 4 regulatory projects (Royal Decrees) in the Official State Gazette. The productive sectors in which these actions took place were: hospitality and tourism, personal image, installation and maintenance, safety and environment, physical activities and sports, agricultural, personal image, commerce and marketing, mechanical manufacturing, information technology and communications, sociocultural and community services, transportation and vehicle maintenance, arts and crafts, building and civil engineering, electricity and electronics, energy and water and chemistry.

In addition to these actions, 13 Royal Decrees were published throughout 2023 to create or update new VET diplomas, professional certificates or specialisation courses. In this process, the 11 emerging sectors identified by the education ministry, especially the digital and green sectoral branches, continued to receive special attention.

2024 Implementation

The Spanish national catalogue of occupational standards organisation remained in force pending the regulatory development of Organic Law 3/2022.

The systematic review of the national catalogue of occupational standards continued, ensuring that the Spanish VET system remained flexible, future-oriented, and closely tied to the evolving needs of the economy, positioning both students and workers for long-term success.

In 2024, 325 modifications to the national catalogue of occupational standards were made, which were published in 12 regulatory projects (Royal Decrees and Ministerial Orders): nine new occupational standards, 191 updated, 125 modified, and two deleted. At the end of 2024, the national catalogue comprised 783 occupational standards and 26 sector branches.

The design of VET diplomas continued by publishing 14 Royal Decrees to create and update the training provision and curricula, encompassing eight specialisation courses, two diplomas and six professional certificates. Besides these, four VET diplomas were modified.

The commitment to digitalisation, sustainability and emerging technologies, and the 11 emerging sectors identified by the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports, was materialised in this continuous process of reviewing and updating occupational standards and VET curricula.

By the end of 2024, VET provision included 588 professional certificates, 191 VET diploma programmes (34 Basic VET programmes, 65 Intermediate VET programmes, 92 Higher VET programmes) and 26 Specialisation courses.

Since 2020, more than 30 new VET diploma programmes have been added to the VET offer by updating existing occupational standards and creating some new ones linked to emerging sectors.

In the last five years, the education ministry has created 215 new occupational standards, bringing the total number of qualifications in the catalogue to 783. In addition, it has designed 43 new diplomas, specialisation courses and professional certificates.

2025 Implementation

The revision of the national catalogue and the development of new qualifications and standards of competences continued.

By the end of 2025, VET provision included 969 professional certificates, 29 specialisation courses and 184 VET diploma programmes.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports
- Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (until 2023)
- National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

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
Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation
Integrating green transition and sustainability in VET curricula and programmes
Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

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

Sustainability - a green link in VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Organic Act 3/2022, of March 31, 2002, on the organisation and integration of vocational training](#)

[Royal Decree 659/2023, of July 18, which develops the organisation of the Vocational Training System](#)

[The national catalogue of occupational standards](#)

[VET diplomas, specialisation courses and professional certificates](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Promoting innovation and excellence through specific VET centres

Since September 2017, several collaboration agreements between the State Public Employment Service (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, SEPE), the education ministry, and 11 Autonomous Regions have been approved.

 SPAIN

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Curricula update supporting key competences

A 2015 Ministerial Decree ECD/65/2015 provides for the revision and update of key competences in curricula. The Decree describes the relationship between competences,

content and evaluation criteria for primary, compulsory and secondary education.

 SPAIN

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Strategic boost to VET

The new government, in power since June 2018, reorganised the administration. The change of name in the education administration state, now the Education and Vocational Training ministry (previously Education, Culture and Sports), reflects the new strategy to promote VET.

 SPAIN

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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