


# Introducing dual VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

## Timeline



ID number 28560

## Background

Introducing dual VET and reinforcing work-based learning were among the recommendations that Slovakia received in 2012 and 2014 in the framework of the EU's economic policy coordination. This process has been supported by bilateral collaborations with Austria, Germany, and Switzerland and through the ESF projects Development of secondary VET, implemented in 2013-15, and Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET, implemented in 2016-20.

VET programmes were typically offered by secondary VET schools at secondary (ISCED levels 253, 353, 354) and post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED levels 454 and 554) levels. Depending on the school and programme, the share of work-based learning varied between 0 and 80%. During the workplace practical training, learners had the status of students, not employees. No genuine apprenticeship system was in place. However, a certificate of apprenticeship, confirming the occupational area the person is qualified for, could be obtained upon completion of a VET programme. Financial incentives properly stimulating small businesses to invest in the quality of practical training were missing. Introducing dual VET to large companies and SMEs was a challenge.

Slovakia joined the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) in 2014.

## Objectives

The main objective of the Slovak version of dual VET is to increase the share of in-company training based on individual contracts between learners and companies responsible for a practical component of VET. In contrast to other forms of work-based learning already in place, companies may adjust training to their needs within the curricular framework agreed with the VET school.

## Description

The Act on VET was amended in March 2015 (61/2015). Its main objectives were to introduce a dual VET scheme and tax incentives for enterprises to provide training. The reform entered into force in September 2015 and made available upper secondary VET delivery in three forms:

- (a) school-based programmes with practical training (mainly) in school workshops;
- (b) mixed scheme, with school-based learning along with in-company training within the framework of school-company agreements (contracts) based on previous legislation;
- (c) dual VET combining in-company training and school-based learning, where learners (or their parents) have contracts with enterprises for training, while companies and schools have agreements for VET theory provision.

Dual VET is mainly offered at ISCED levels 353 and 354, the latter granting higher education access. VET schools are responsible for curriculum programming as well as issuing certifications. Learners have student (not employee) status. The new scheme was expected to attract more employers and offer quality training. The dual system has been in place since the 2015/16 school year. The first dual VET students (96) graduated in 2018. Enrolment in dual VET has been gradually increasing. However, in 2018/19, only 3% of learners starting upper secondary level were enrolled in dual VET. The 2016-20 ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET has a target of reaching 12 000 dual VET learners by 2020.

Dual VET was originally offered in sectors such as mechanical and electrical engineering where most learners were predominantly male. With the retail sector joining the dual system, more females entered dual VET. Although no future job contract is explicitly envisaged by law, employment in the company (or at least in the sector) is expected. Some companies offer learners a pre-contract on future employment.

#### **2015 Implementation**

#### **2016 Implementation**

#### **2017 Implementation**

#### **2018 Implementation**

A reform of the 2015 legislation was undertaken to make dual VET more attractive. In March 2017, a working group was appointed to prepare an amendment of the 2015 Act on VET (presented to stakeholders on 17 January 2018). The amendment of the Act on VET was adopted by the Parliament on 14 June 2018. Main changes include:

- (a) lifting the remuneration ceiling for learners' productive work, but at the same time recognising only remuneration up to 100% of minimum wage as tax deductible;
- (b) abolishing negative incentives (cuts in school budgets) for schools making agreements with companies on outsourcing practical training within dual VET;
- (c) reducing the administration burden for companies entering dual VET;
- (d) harmonising curricula for dual learners and non-dual learners receiving the same qualification;
- (e) expanding the period for entering dual VET to 31 January of the respective school year;
- (f) additional generous fiscal incentives for companies.

#### **2019 Implementation**

The number of dual learners is gradually increasing benefiting from the 2018 amendment of the Act on VET. In the 2019/20 school year, a share of dual learners increased to 6.4% of newly enrolled VET students.

#### **2020 Implementation**

Currently, almost 8 500 students participate in dual VET in about 200 schools and more than 1 000 company facilities. There are 2 430 certified company facilities in

total, but the provision of dual VET has been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET has been prolonged until September 2021 to support training companies and contribute to attracting students to dual VET.

### **2021 Implementation**

The ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET was completed in September 2021. The final conference was held on 21 November 2021.

As of 15 September 2021, according to the information system of the education ministry (RIS), there were 8 580 students in dual VET (7.06% of 121 470 VET school students), of which 2 221 were in the first, 2 734 in the second, 2 581 in the third, and 1 044 in the fourth year of training. The law allows signing of the learning contract during the school year, therefore, the number of dual learners changes with time. Up to 50% of the time devoted to practical education of dual learners can be offered by schools and school trainers. Therefore, the number of secondary VET school learners who signed a learning contract with a company is higher than the number of learners trained in the company, as presented by the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (SCSTI) data. The total numbers of pupils in dual VET who had practical training in companies as of 15 September are available from the SCSTI. The total number of dual learners with practical training in companies increased slightly to 6 851 at the beginning of the 2021/22 school year (5.64% of all VET school students).

The company is entitled to the State budget contribution, reimbursed by the State Institute of Vocational Education after the end of the school year, if it provides dual training for learner in its premises at least in the amount of 200 hours during the school year. For the year 2020/21, it concerned 7 035 dual learners, of which 2 806 were in the first, 2 782 in the second and 1 447 in the third year.

Professional or employer organisations are legally responsible for assessing the fulfilment of the conditions for the provision of practical training at the company's premises. Training premises are certified in 1 627 companies. The certification procedure includes an assessment of capacity conditions by setting the maximum number of learners per day. This means that the maximum capacity for the provision of dual VET in companies is 33 878 places. The data on the demand from companies for dual learners is not available but it cannot exceed this limit.

Not all VET programmes are suitable for dual VET as set by the law, and many learners enjoy work-based learning outside the dual form. Secondary health schools opposed the proposal for legislation to back dual VET in the health programmes; they prefer current form of training that is based on work-based learning outside regulations of dual VET.

### **2022 Implementation**

As of 15 September 2022, there were 9 347 learners in dual VET (7.63% of the 122 495 full-time learners in VET), of whom 2 248 were in their first, 2 914 in their second, 2 459 in their third, 1 721 in their fourth and 5 in their fifth year of training. Of the 9 347 learners 18% were enrolled in a programme offering only a 'maturita' school-leaving certificate, and 61% in a programme offering both a 'maturita' school-leaving certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship. Only 19% of learners were enrolled in ISCED 353 programmes offering a certificate of apprenticeship. The rest (2%) of the learners were in programmes at lower and higher qualification levels.

### **2023 Implementation**

Despite strong criticism from the Supreme Audit Office regarding the slow implementation of dual VET and the failure to meet targets for the number of dual learners and company involvement in dual VET, no corrective interventions were applied. The originally set target of 12 thousand dual learners by the government in 2017 remains unachieved, despite expansion to programmes that were not originally

considered crucial for dual VET. According to the Regional Information System (RIS) data, as of 15 September 2023, there were 9 848 contracted dual learners, of which 8 302 received practical training in companies, while the rest received training in schools as legislation allows to offer up to 50% of practical training at schools within dual VET. At the same time, the RIS data indicate a strong share of VET learners trained in schools and companies outside the dual VET system. 114 311 learners were in practical training in total (full-time and part-time), of which 65 416 in school workshops, 34 125 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 793 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, 8 302 in dual companies and 4 675 in other forms not identified by statistics. Among full-time learners, 106 694 participated in practical training, of which 63 051 in school workshops, 30 044 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 756 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, 8 302 in dual companies and 3 541 in other forms not identified by statistics.

### **2024 Implementation**

According to the Regional Information System (RIS) data, as of 15 September 2024, there were 11 327 learners in dual VET (10 352 with already valid contract), of which 8 469 received practical training in companies, while the rest trained in schools as legislation allows up to 50% of practical training within dual VET to take place in schools. RIS data also highlight a significant share of VET learners receiving practical training in schools and companies outside the dual VET system. 122 228 learners participated in practical training in total (both full-time and part-time), of which 70 880 in school workshops, 36 449 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 246 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, and 5 184 in other forms not identified by statistics. For full-time learners only, 112 921 participated in practical training, of which 68 361 in school workshops, 30 961 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 221 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, 8 469 in dual companies and 3 909 in other forms not identified by statistics.

A monitoring report from the independent monitoring commission regarding the National programme for the development of education (NPDE) highlighted the slow progress in implementing dual VET and the missing support for cooperation between schools and companies concerning WBL outside the dual VET framework. The fifth of seven strategic objectives outlined in the 2024-26 Implementation plan of the NPDE proposes expanding the possibility of offering practical training through new forms of work-based learning, alongside the existing dual VET model. This reflects a high potential for providing WBL in diverse forms agreed between schools and companies that can be more flexible than dual VET under current regulations. While the limits of the provision of dual VET seem to have been reached, the provision of WBL by companies outside the dual VET framework - which currently affects about four times more learners than dual VET - could increase if supported financially by the State, similarly to dual VET.

A spending review published in November 2024, analysing school expenditures, indicates that graduates from dual VET are significantly less vulnerable to early leaving and have higher wages. However, it questioned the financial incentives supporting dual VET, arguing that while they were justified in the early phase of implementation, their continued necessity should be reassessed.

### **2025 Implementation**

According to the Regional Information System (RIS) data, as of 15 September 2025, there were 12 382 learners in dual VET (11055 with already valid contracts), of which 9 469 received practical training in companies, while the rest were trained under the control of schools, as legislation allows this up to 50% of practical training within dual VET. RIS data also highlight a significant share of VET learners receiving practical training in schools and companies outside the dual VET system. 129 382 learners participated in practical training in total (both full-time and part-time), of which 77 249

in school workshops, 36 188 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 292 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, 9 469 in dual companies, and 5 184 in other forms not identified by statistics.

From 119 963 full-time learners participating in practical training, 74 458 were provided practical training in school workshops, 30 805 in companies contracted by schools outside the dual VET system, 1 272 in specialised school-type training facilities suitable for offering work-based learning, 9 469 in dual companies, and 3 959 in other forms not identified by statistics. Thus, about three times more learners (25.68%) were offered practical training in companies outside the dual VET compared to dual companies (7.89%). A dominant share of full-time learners received practical training in school workshops (62.87%). These data refer to learners with a clearly identified status as of 15 September. It is possible that the rest of the learners are also offered work-based learning (WBL), and it is also possible that learners in school workshops will be provided with practical training in companies during other periods of study.

A final version of the spending review on primary and secondary education was published in June 2025, containing two types of measures: U-type aimed at increasing efficiency and R-type aimed at improving governance. Measure R10 suggests conducting a survey of the dual education costs and taking its results into account when setting further financial support for dual education. It envisages a systematic collection of data on the dual education costs on the employers' site (training companies and employer representatives that are all financially supported from the state budget). The report points out that there are two approaches to workplace-based learning: a dual system introduced 10 years ago and heavily supported from the state budget, and the second one that emerged in the 1990s without direct support from the state budget and based on commercial contracts between schools and companies. The former still affects less than 10% of VET learners, while the latter, according to the report, affected 33% of VET learners in 2023. The report also stressed that businesses abroad are more involved in financing dual VET than businesses in Slovakia. The aforementioned Measure R10 could also contribute to more effective support of WBL and higher cost efficiency of allocation of funds in support of WBL.

Lawmakers expect to increase the share of dual learners by introducing two changes approved on 21 October 2025. Introducing the so-called agentic dual education (§ 24c) of the Act on VET (61/2025) could attract small companies and small traders to the provision of practical education, taking over an administrative burden. It could be very helpful for these partners, as they have, as a rule, no administrative capacities. But, it remains open whether they will be able to attract new learners and parents, as they do not offer employment but a more flexible provision of practical education.

Companies involved in dual VET are empowered to block a learner from leaving the partner school for another school. The amendment of the Education Act (245/2008), (§ 35) explicitly makes the decision on moving this learner to another school 'invalid without the agreement' of the company offering practical education.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
Trainers

School leaders

### **Entities providing VET**

Companies  
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)  
VET providers (all kinds)

### **Other stakeholders**

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Coordinating VET and other policies  
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

## **Subsystem**

IVET

## **Further reading**

[Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia \(2015\). New vocational education and training \(VET\) act adopted.](#)

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[Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia \(2016\). Balancing general and vocational components in Slovak secondary VET](#)

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[Cedefop ReferNet Slovakia \(2018\). Making dual VET more attractive](#)

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[Act No 61/2015 on VET](#)

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[The Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET project final conference](#)

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[2024-26 Implementation plan of the National programme for the development of education \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Spending review analysing school expenditures \(in Slovak\)](#)

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[Final version of the spending review analysing school expenditures \(in Slovak\)](#)

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## **Related policy developments**

**2025 Implementation**

### **Amendments to the Act on VET (61/2015)**

Strengthening the position of 'sectoral assignees' and the Employer Council for VET over the VET system as a whole from 2021 induced a debate over creating a new institution covering the VET system as a whole.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2020 Completed**

## Review of expenditure on groups at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Overall, the spending review proposes a series of measures regarding social inclusion, data collection and methodology development, the management of systems not sensitive to additional funding, as well as three austerity measures. Many were related to education.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2021 Completed**

## Initial training for in-company trainers

In-company trainer training may be offered by various parties, provided that it is recognised by the professional or employer organisations in charge (nationally referred to as sectoral assignees).

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Requirements for trainers in companies

According to the 2015 Act on VET, in-company trainers should have certificates that are equivalent to, or of a higher level than, certificates offered to learners by programmes they are involved in. These certificates must be in the same or similar field of study.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2021 Completed**

## Teacher CPD on dual VET

To familiarise VET teachers and trainers with dual VET, short credit-awarding courses were designed within the 2013-15 ESF project Development of secondary VET.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## The Employer council for dual VET

An umbrella body, the Employer Council for dual VET, was set up in 2016 aiming to strengthen cooperation between respective sectoral assignees involved in dual VET. The Council is partially financed from the State budget.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## National programme for the development of education

On 27 June 2018, the government approved the National programme for the development of education (NPDE). The NPDE was adopted, with 106 measures to be fulfilled until 2027. Some measures related to regional schooling and higher education are relevant also to VET.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action

plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2018 Completed**

## Learning Slovakia strategy paper

In September 2017, the education ministry published the Learning Slovakia strategy paper, following a public discussion on a draft version from March 2017.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Information and support structures for dual VET

The 2016-20 ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET provides support through its web portals. Eight contact points (officially called Dual points) have also been set up within this project.

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Incentives for IVET learners

Stimuli based on the 2015 VET Act are more comprehensive and generous than in the past, including:

 SLOVAKIA

**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Incentives for companies to offer dual VET

To encourage enterprise involvement in dual VET, the VET Act (61/2015) had introduced corporate tax reliefs for training companies:

 SLOVAKIA

#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Incentives for VET schools to provide practical training

In December 2016, a call was launched to invite proposals for the modernisation of the equipment and premises of school-based practical training (VET schools' workshops and specialised facilities, e.g. libraries).

 SLOVAKIA

#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28560>