

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 contracted dual learners, 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, 8 469 in dual companies 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

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.](#)

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

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

[Act No 61/2015 on VET \[Zákon c. 61/2015 Z. z. o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave\]](#)

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

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

[Vitáloš, M., Zeman, J. \(2022\). Implementácia systému duálneho vzdelávania na Slovensku. \[Implementation of the dual VET system in Slovakia \].](#)

[Spending review analysing school expenditures](#)

Related policy developments

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

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

2024 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

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

2024 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

2024 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

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

2024 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

2024 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

2024 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

2024 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

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Introducing dual VET: Slovakia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

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