

Strengthening VET in Iceland - VET working group's proposals

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** ICELAND

Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

ID number 28306

Background

The 2014 white paper on education reform by the education ministry pointed to the need for further developing practical training, underlining the extreme variability of workplace training in upper secondary VET (from 3 to 126 weeks depending on the programme) and the low share of apprenticeship in upper secondary VET. At the beginning of the reporting period, workplace training was carried out subject to two contracts: the first one between the employer and the student, defining salary and working hours as well as their respective rights and obligations; the second one between the employer and the school, dealing with the training content. Companies offering training places could apply and receive financial support to cope with training costs. Social partners participated in the occupational councils with the role of advising on the curricula for all VET programmes.

Objectives

To improve and strengthen VET and make it more attractive.

Description

For 2015-17, the main emphasis in the education ministry was the elaboration of proposals that a specific working group delivered in 2015. The main ideas of the working group were:

- (a) the school should be responsible for the training of learners throughout their studies, including the workplace training;
- (b) the basic education at the commencement of VET needs to be broader and more subjects need to be offered for those who have not yet decided what they would like to study;
- (c) to develop further the possibility of VET learners starting VET at the workplace rather than only at school;
- (d) the logbook system needs to be improved and with it the assessments of learning outcomes throughout the studies;

- (e) the education offered should be more relevant to the needs of the labour market;
- (f) the Icelandic national qualifications framework (ISQF) should be finalised;
- (g) VET in the countryside needs to be improved;
- (h) workplace training should not happen at just one place of work but at several;
- (i) better continuing training in relation to the workplace needs to be ensured;
- (j) more funding to the workplace training fund is needed;
- (k) VET at university level needs to be investigated further;
- (l) the governance of VET needs must be improved;
- (m) compulsory school learners should be given more insights on the possibilities of VET.

In a formal consultation process, the social partners were asked to present their views on these proposals. Since 2015, many of the proposals that the working group delivered in 2015 have been worked on and progress has been made.

2015 Implementation
2016 Implementation
2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation In 2018, it was already possible for most VET students to start their education at a VET workplace rather than only at school. This does not apply to all VET subjects as of today, but significant work towards doing so has commenced. Progress has been made on improving the logbook system and stakeholders aimed to have it already up and running by autumn 2018. Work has commenced on aspects of offering some VET subjects at tertiary level. The relevant ministries and stakeholders are cooperating on this issue in a working group. Work on improving the governance and the needs of VET education in Iceland has started and it is on the schedule of the relevant stakeholders to work on this intensively in the autumn of 2018. On raising awareness and advertising the importance and the opportunity of VET education among compulsory school students, it is worth noting that this issue has been put in the forefront within the education ministry with the new minister, who took office in January 2018.
2019 Implementation The digital logbook is planned to be finished and fully implemented by autumn 2022. The plan is to launch the new digital logbook gradually with four different trades in 2020. On implementation, the system will also function as a venue for schools to assist learners in finding apprenticeship work placements and for workplaces to advertise their apprenticeships. Also, the Directorate of Education was entrusted with coordinating the occupational councils. Measures to ease progression from upper secondary VET to tertiary education were put into action by stakeholders. An effort to increase awareness of the importance of VET is continuing.
2020 Implementation This proposal is operational and on schedule. The digital logbook will be gradually implemented in autumn 2021. At the end of 2020, 10 VET programmes were in the system.
2021 Implementation Since 2021, a designated project manager oversees each occupational council. This includes scheduling regular meetings (once per month usually), documentation, financial services, and other tasks. The occupational councils have almost completed reviewing the qualifications required for each trade, with only a handful remaining, an important contribution to implementing the new digital logbook in VET training. As of Spring 2022, there are now 28 study programmes already in the logbook. Development of the system is in its final

phase. The digital logbook is being introduced to users, and they are using it within the study programmes mentioned.

All documents referring to meetings and decisions of the occupational councils are now stored in the electronic filing system of the Directorate of Education, a significant improvement from before where the documents were stored by different service providers.

Among the ideas behind this initiative was the aim to make the schools responsible for the work placement of the VET learners. In the years before, when a student was unable to find a work placement, the system then in place would perceive these individuals as having dropped out, which was not necessarily the case. Therefore, it was hard to estimate the real dropout rate among VET learners.

The new digital logbook would allow learners and schools to improve the learning process by replacing the old one.

2022 Implementation

As of Spring 2023, there are now 35 study programmes in the logbook. Development of the system is mostly completed but, as most programmes of this type, it needs to be developed and maintained constantly. For that purpose, a revision council of users has been set up. The digital logbook is still being introduced to users on a mass scale.

A comprehensive statistical overview of VET learners taking part in workplace training is now being implemented.

2023 Implementation

The digital logbook is constantly in good progress. It is hosted and maintained by the new Directorate of Education and School Services, widely used by all relevant stakeholders.

2025 Implementation

The digital logbook continues to function as an integral part of vocational education and training (VET) in Iceland. It is now fully embedded across most study programmes and continues to be maintained and updated by the Directorate of Education and School Services in close cooperation with the occupational councils. Regular feedback from users—both schools and learners—has contributed to ongoing improvements in functionality and usability.

The system is now considered an established tool for monitoring and supporting workplace training, ensuring stronger links between schools and employers. Work continues on refining data collection and analysis features to enhance the monitoring of learners' progress and outcomes within VET programmes.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (until 2021)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

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

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[The white paper - English summary](#)

[Digital logbook](#)

[ReferNet Iceland, & Cedefop \(2025, January 8\). Iceland: competence requirement on sustainability added to VET job descriptions. National news on VET.](#)

[ReferNet Iceland; Cedefop \(2021\). Iceland: digital logbook becomes operational. National news on VET.](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Coordination of the work of occupational councils

The occupational councils provide the education minister with guidance on vocational education at the upper secondary school level. The councils are responsible for defining job descriptions and competence requirements and provide reviews of upper secondary qualifications.

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Digital logbook for VET learners

In 2019, the Directorate of Education hired a special project manager to develop and coordinate the digital logbook for VET learners, which would serve as an important quality management tool for apprenticeships and increase the attractiveness of VET.

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28306>