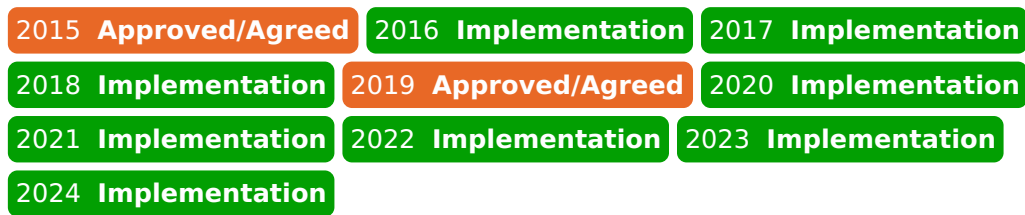


# Improving the permeability and flexibility of VET



## Timeline



**ID number 28281**

## Background

Many VET learners leave vocational grammar schools after their final exam without any technical qualifications (46%). Many learners in vocational schools do not wish to find a job in the specialisation they have studied/acquired in VET. With a dropout rate during the course of 12%, the VET system is considered inflexible and not providing learners with at least a partial qualification suitable for the labour market.

## Objectives

The policies are aimed at reducing the number of early leavers from vocational education and at people with no qualifications through a VET system that is flexible, provides quality and relevant training quickly can adapt to the technological changes of the fourth industrial revolution. In continuing training, the aim is to renew and strengthen the skills, competences and knowledge of adult workers.

## Description

The 2015 reform of the 2011 Act on VET enabled graduates of three-year VET programmes to automatically continue their studies in the same school for two additional years and to take the upper secondary school leaving examination (*matura*), which is the entry requirement for higher education. It also introduced the possibility of obtaining two State-recognised VET qualifications free of charge in vocational schools and higher vocational schools, instead of only one as previously. As a result, the number of participants in adult education has increased fourfold in the period 2015-18. In addition, the reform allowed VET schools to prepare SEN pupils for VET qualifications and the possibility of attaining partial qualifications. Since September 2016, the new vocational Bridge programme has provided early school leavers, and those on the verge of dropping out, with an alternative learning route and a chance to return to VET. Programme participants receive a grant for the duration of their studies. An important development provided by the Act CXCV of 2017 is the possibility provided to VET students of attaining a sectoral qualification in parallel to the

vocational grammar school leaving certificate. Students who wish to obtain the sectoral qualification follow optional modules, the content of which is tailored to the needs of the sector. In addition, vocational grammar schools have become more flexible since 2018 as they allow students in grades 9 to 12 to follow training, which strengthens their professional competences.

The reformed VET system, introduced by the VET Act of 2019 provides flexibility and permeability across the labour market and the school system. It is possible to enter into vocational education and into vocational training at any age, only the legal status of students involved in VET (the relationship with the training institution) varies according to age. Anyone who has not yet reached age 25 can acquire even a second occupation involved in a full time school-based VET programme with a student legal status. Vocational education and vocational training over the age of 25 is possible only within the framework of adult legal status. Students under 25 involved in distance learning, part time or blended school-based VET programmes also have an adult legal status. In order to ensure sufficient flexibility, vocational education is generally offered for adults in the form of evening courses with short duration. If the adult in training works in the field of the occupation being trained, he/she can spend the specialised vocational education at his/her employer, regardless whether if it is registered as a dual partner or not.

Where school-based formal adult education is provided for participants whose legal status is set as adult:

- (a) the timeframe dedicated to the education of a vocational occupation can be reduced to quarter of the duration of the full time IVET programmes;
- (b) the number of hours can be reduced by not more than 40% of the number of hours in the full time IVET programmes.

The VET Act, effective from 1 January 2020, devotes a separate chapter to regulating the recognition of previous studies and practical experiences. As defined in the professional programme of the vocational institutions:

- (a) prior studies in a VET, public or HE institution shall be counted in the fulfilment of a given vocational occupation with a same content;
- (b) practical time spent in an employment relationship in the same specialisation before the start of vocational training shall be counted in the period of the specialised vocational education;
- (c) the study requirements for a given vocational occupation can be fulfilled in a shorter time than envisaged by the law.

#### **2015 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2016 Implementation**

#### **2017 Implementation**

#### **2018 Implementation**

#### **2019 Approved/Agreed**

In both upper secondary VET programmes, the five-year Technicums and three-year vocational schools, sectoral foundation education in the vocational curriculum is foreseen by the Act LXXX of 2019 on VET in the first years of each programme (in Technicums in grades nine and ten in parallel to the general subject curriculum; in vocational schools in grade nine). Therefore, at the end of the sectoral foundation education there is interoperability between the two types of schools without any delta exam. The sectoral foundation education ends with a sectoral basic exam. In some sectors, this is suitable to fulfil simple jobs. The professional training offers possibilities for graduates of grammar schools and also for those young people who have given up their studies at universities. The two-year training of the technicum and the three-year vocational school serve this option. The core essence of the reforms implemented by the VET Act of 2019 is that the VET system offers flexible learning routes and permeability.

Technicians (graduates of the Technicum five-year programme with a HuQF/EQF level 5 technician certificate) can continue their higher education studies (BProf/Bachelor of Profession), with the possibility to recognise their pre-acquired (prior) knowledge, based on the regulations set by the institutions of higher education. It will be a challenge for higher education institutions and technicum schools to harmonise the respective qualifications standards and programme requirements. In dual VET, there is also a need for synchronisation: the learner who started dual training at secondary level at a given company should have the possibility to continue at higher education level at the same company. To reach this goal, further cooperation is needed with the respective companies and VET and HE institutions.

## 2020 Implementation

In September 2020, several VET training programmes were introduced to reduce ESL. The *Springboard class*, for those who did not finish elementary school, ensures basic competence development and is followed by a catch-up programme delivered in *school workshops*. The latter programme introduced a new approach in VET: learners are supported by a master and a teaching mentor throughout the programme until the acquisition of a partial IVET qualification, while the programme duration itself is flexible (six months to two years) depending on individual learning needs and with no compulsory general subjects. Both programmes started after a piloting phase in 2020. The experience so far shows that the school workshop offers an efficient and niche opportunity for learners at risk of dropping out to improve their chances.

Hungary does not have a nationwide skills assessment and validation system based on uniform principles and procedures; however, several prior developments and pilots were implemented in the 2018-21 period.

In order to promote effective permeability, a consistent validation/recognition system across all education levels and the labour market is considered as an important prerequisite. In the framework of the project entitled Improving the quality and content of 21st century vocational training and adult education (GINOP - 6.2.4) pilots related to the introduction of a nationwide validation system were completed in 2020; due to the negative impacts of COVID-19, the validation system has not yet been finalised. However, recognition and validation procedures have been implemented sporadically.

In the formal school-based VET and adult education there are some legal provisions related to validation laid down in the VET Act of 2019: for example, the director of the VET institution decides on exemption of a student/person involved in the training or his/her exemption from certain subjects and their knowledge measurement. He/she also decides on the inclusion of prior acquired knowledge and practice.

The COVID-19 pandemic stressed the need for more flexible validation and skills assessment, providing quicker solutions, such as the practice of accepting micro-certificates issued after completing a Massive Open Online Course or certificates issued by formal education and training institutions in Europass.

The Education Authority (Oktatási Hivatal) operates the national coordination point of the European Qualification Framework and, like NOVETAL, addresses policy issues regarding validation of prior learning in the field of general and higher education, cooperating for example with the Credit Transfer Committees (Kreditátviteli Bizottság) of the higher education institutions.

## 2021 Implementation

In the 2021/22 school year, the 41 VET centres have already started or plan to start vocational education for adults in 114 occupations linked to 23 sectors.

Government Decree 380/2021 (30.VI.) extended the scope of those entitled to free participation in VET under Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, which now includes:

- (a) Hungarian citizens,
- (b) persons with the right of free movement and residence,

- (c) a stateless person, refugee, protected person, asylum-seeker, accepted person, immigrant, settled person living on the territory of Hungary,
- (d) foreign nationals subject to the same treatment as Hungarian citizens on the basis of an international agreement,
- (e) citizens of countries in which Hungarian citizens may receive the higher education services of the respective state on the basis of reciprocity,
- (f) persons who are subject to the Act on Hungarians Living in Neighbouring States (hereinafter referred to as the Preferential Treatment Act) but who do not have Hungarian citizenship or the right of free movement and residence,
- (g) third-country nationals as defined in the Act on the Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals - who declared themselves to be of Hungarian nationality - provided that they are not subject to the Preferential Treatment Act and do not have Hungarian citizenship,
- (h) a third-country national holding a permit issued for the purpose of employment and residence requiring a high level qualification,
- (i) a third-country national holding a single (merged) permit.

## 2022 Implementation

As of 1 January 2022, 31 594 adults have participated in vocational education (in 317 schools affiliated to 41 VET Centres) between September and December 2021, having acquired 116 vocational occupations in 23 sectors. Due to the flexibility of the training programme, they were able to take part in an abbreviated training programme because prior knowledge has been taken into account and by taking advantage of the possibility of online learning.

In the framework of the prior knowledge assessment, the GINOP 6.2.4 project has carried out primary validation pilot and developed a theoretical document and a methodological guide for training experts in the field of validation.

In the framework of the GINOP- 6.1.10 project, the followings were carried out related to alternative learning pathways:

- (a) professional support for the operation of the School workshop (*muhelyiskola*) and Springboard (*dobbantó*) programmes, based on the methodologies developed in the framework of GINOP 6.2.4, respective further trainings;
- (b) professional support tasks related to the operation of the orientation year.

The support materials include the creation of teaching materials and elaboration of teaching methodologies, organisation of further trainings and workshops giving possibility to share experiences and good practices.

In 2022, the structure of the VET Career Tracking System (*Szakképzési Pályakövetési Rendszer*) was developed. The first data linking was launched in January 2022. The first results of the data linking made possible to examine the indicator set by the EU Council (at least 82% of young people leaving VET should be in employment) for students who graduated in the school year 2020/21.

The questionnaire module of the career tracking survey reached more than 11,000 learners from 442 VET institutions during April-May 2022. The questionnaire had three target groups: students in grade 9, those aged 16 or over in the school year 2021/22 and graduates, who gave their reasons for choosing VET, their satisfaction with the training and their future plans after finishing their studies. The results show that students mainly choose VET training programmes which cover their fields of interest, and offer good labour market opportunities. Two thirds of graduates want to continue their studies or work in their own field of studies.

As part of the career tracking system, the labour market and educational career path of all VET and adult education leavers will be tracked anonymously for 9 years.

## 2023 Implementation

According to the VET Act as amended in 2023 (Government Decree 292 of 2023),

participation in the Springboard (*Dobbantó*) programme is now possible from the age of 15 (previously 16), with no upper age limit. The programme is open to students who have reached the age of 15 by the last day of the previous school year and have not completed primary education. Participants can join the programme at any time during the school year. The aim of this provision is to direct students who are at risk of leaving school early to the Springboard programme before they reach the compulsory school age of 16, while still under their mandatory schooling. Successful completion of the Springboard programme does not lead to a qualification but allows participation in the School workshop (*Muhelyiskola*) programme, an upper secondary VET programme, which leads to a partial qualification and the completion of primary education.

Based on the amendment to the VET Act (Government Decree 292 of 2023), individuals who acquire a partial qualification in a School workshop programme and wish to continue their studies to obtain a full vocational qualification may do so at a VET school without a special admission procedure. A partial qualification is a subset of a vocational qualification. The Programme and Outcome Requirements (*KKKs*) determine whether a vocational qualification includes a partial qualification (not all do). Partial qualifications enable learners to acquire the competences necessary for at least one job, while full vocational qualifications allow them to perform multiple jobs included in the Hungarian Standard Classification of Occupations (FEOR). Both VET schools and adult training providers may offer training for partial qualifications.

Under the above-mentioned amendment to the VET Act, participants in school-based adult education are exempt from the basic sectoral examination if:

- a. they have a partial qualification and are studying for a vocational qualification that includes it; or
- b. they are enrolled in school-based specialised vocational education through validation of prior knowledge or practice, and the prior knowledge credited includes the requirements of the basic sectoral examination.

Additionally, if a vocational qualification listed in the Register of vocational qualifications is acquired through school-based adult education, the timing of sectoral foundation education may be freely determined by the VET institution in its professional programme.

Under the amendment to the VET Act (Act XXXIII of 2023), specialised vocational education for adults can be shortened to up to one-quarter of the duration of specialised vocational education for IVET students. Furthermore, for adults, the number of compulsory lessons can be reduced by up to:

- (a) 40% of the number of compulsory lessons for IVET students during specialised vocational education; and
- (b) 50% of the number of compulsory lessons for IVET students during sectoral foundation education, with up to half of these lessons delivered through closed electronic distance learning.

## 2024 Implementation

Flexible education and training opportunities tailored to the training needs of adults, including in-company training and work-based learning, are being implemented within school-based VET and vocational training courses offered by adult training providers. Surveys show that the most popular upskilling and reskilling programmes among Hungarian adults take place at their workplace (either through employer-provided training or in case of programmes linked to qualifications in the Register of Vocational Occupations. This applies regardless of whether the workplace is registered as a dual training placement).

In 2024, the number of companies registering as dual training placements has significantly increased, allowing them to train their own employees while benefiting from tax reliefs.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Culture and Innovation
- National Office for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning (NOVETAL)

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Adult learners

### Education professionals

Adult educators

### Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

## Thematic categories

### Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

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

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

### Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

Paragraph No 21 of Act LXVI/2015 that amended Act CLXXXVII/2011 on vocational education and training

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Government Decision No 1168/2019 (came into force on 1 January 2020) on the VET 4.0 strategy

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The VET Act LXXX of 2019 (entering into force on 1 January 2020)

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Government Decree No 12/2020 on the implementation of the VET Act (published on 7 February 2020)

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The certified technician training is planned to be launched in Technicums from the 2021/22 academic year

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Act XXXIII of 2023 on the amendments to the Act resulting from the ex-post impact assessment of the restructuring in VET

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Government Decree 292/2023 (VII. 6.) on the amendments to the Government Decree 12/2020 on the implementation of the VET Act resulting from the ex-post impact assessment of the restructuring in VET, Entry into force: 1 July 2023.

## Related policy developments

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### 2024 Implementation

#### IVET programmes and institution types implemented according to the Act LXXX of 2019 on VET

Hungary from the school year 2020/21 introduced the following IVET programmes, and changed the name (types) of the existing IVET institutions as follows:

Five-year technological programmes (*Technicums*)

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##### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

##### Subsystem

IVET

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### 2024 Implementation

#### Adult education and training in the VET Act LXXX of 2019

The VET Act of 2019 differentiates vocational education and vocational training. Vocational education can be provided within the IVET framework on the basis of programme and outcome requirements (KKKs) and in formal school-based adult education.

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##### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

##### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2024 Implementation

## Updating the Register of Vocational Qualifications

According to VET Act LXXX of 2019, the name of the national qualifications register has changed to the register of basic occupations (*szakmajegyzék*), which includes a list of basic qualifications qualifying holders to perform a wide range of activities within a certain economic sector.

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### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2024 Implementation

## Mid-term VET policy strategy 4.0

The government has accepted, by government Decision No 1168/2019. (III.28.), the new strategy *mid-term VET policy strategy for the renewal of VET and adult education (AE), the VET system's answer to the challenges of the fourth Industrial Revolution*.

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2020 Completed

## Referencing the Hungarian national qualifications framework (HuQF) to EQF

The HuQF was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in February 2015.

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### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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