


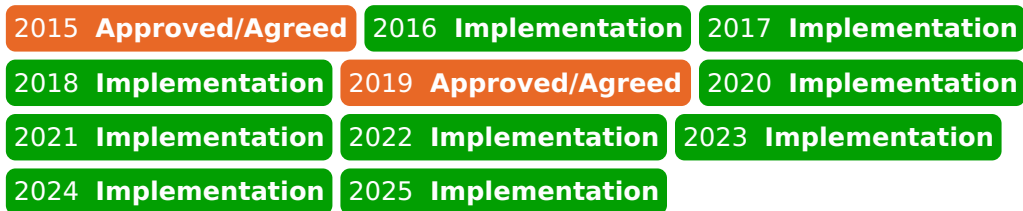
Reducing early school leaving and supporting inclusion in VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 HUNGARY

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 previous Bridging programmes are replaced as from 2020/21 by new types of skills development and orientation programmes for the below target groups:

- (a) a basic competence development programme, the Springboard School Class (*Dobbantó*), targeting young people over 16 (without an upper age limit), who have already dropped out of education and training or are about to leave the system, to stay in education and training. The programmes are offered in three-year vocational schools, enabling them to find the best way to return to the school system and to move on towards a successful career;
- (b) a catch-up programme delivered in school workshops (*műhelyiskola*) introduced from the academic year 2020/21 in VET schools and special vocational schools. The minimum duration for acquiring a partial qualification is six months, with a maximum duration of 24 months, and can cross over academic years. There are no general subjects, and learners are supported by a teacher (mentor) throughout the programme. It is aimed at young people who did not finish basic education and have completed the Springboard programme in a three-year vocational school or finished basic education and are over 16. The programme prepares disadvantaged learners for obtaining a partial qualification, which has to be organised in practical workshop settings (in groups of five learners) or work simulation laboratories in school settings; or at enterprises;
- (c) an optional orientation year is available in three-year vocational schools for those young people who are uncertain in their career choice or who finished their primary school with a lack of competences. The aim is not to repeat the primary school curriculum, but based on an assessment of their competences as a learner, deepen their self-knowledge and provide them with career orientation and guidance. In this programme learners foster basic competences to enter a VET programme and obtain a first IVET qualification.

To achieve its target of reducing early school leaving to less than 10%, Hungary has introduced two projects since 2016: Reducing the number of students leaving VET without a qualification – GINOP 6.2.2 VEKOP/15 and Overall development of VET structures – GINOP 6.2.3 – 17. Vocational training programmes are free of charge for SEN learners. They are also allowed to remain in full-time education regardless of their age. The 2019 reform opened up new opportunities for workers of any age to get an NQR qualification in formal adult education through VET programmes that can be delivered as evening courses or via distance learning.

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.

Within the framework of the priority project GINOP 6.2.2, a survey was conducted, which aimed to (i) identify vulnerable learners at risk of leaving school prematurely by

assessing their essential competences necessary for learning and everyday life and to engage them in a catch-up programme; (ii) identify high-achieving learners and (iii) compare the performance of learners from different regions of the country and the performance of learners in the same class.

In the 2018/19 academic year, a twofold survey was carried out among ninth grade (first grade of upper secondary education) VET learners from 429 VET institutions. A first (paper-based) test was conducted at the start of the school year in 2 061 classes (altogether 45 061 learners), a second (online) survey at the end of the year, in May 2019, in 2 077 classes (38 922 VET learners). The survey included tasks assessing key competences: mother tongue, basic mathematics, thinking and communication, as well as attention and memory. Based on the result of the first assessment, 26% (10 118 learners) of those having participated in the survey attended targeted development programmes throughout the year. In the second test, the performance of learners participating in such programmes improved by 8-10% in the second survey at the end of the year.

The results of the surveys proved that schools have to introduce preventive and corrective development programmes to reduce early school leaving among students starting their upper secondary VET studies. Feedback from these results has helped to specify individual deficiencies, thus the developments can be adapted to learner needs.

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.

Within the GINOP-6.2.2. project, Reducing the number of VET learners leaving education without a vocational qualification (continuing until the end of 2022), the overall target for the development of new curricula and methodologies for the delivery of competence-based training in the new VET system was reached in 2020; 134 VET teachers have participated in training courses for the use of new teaching material (the target was set at 1 000 persons) and have been qualified or certified (the target value for certification is set at 850 persons). Within the project on the development of VET structures (GINOP-6.2.3 -17), 52 digital community creative workshops (DCCWs) have been established.

2021 Implementation

The assessment of ninth grade students' basic competences in the framework of the priority project GINOP-6.2.2, is carried out in the beginning and at the end of the school year. The outcome assessment planned for the beginning of the school year 2019/20 - due to the pandemic - was organised simultaneously with the entrance assessment for the school year 2020/21. The assessments support the creation of learning groups in the framework of project GINOP-6.2.3 and, at the same time, provide input information for further implementation of the project. Within this initiative, there have been some parallel sub-initiatives: development of teaching materials, evaluation of teaching, development of evaluation tools embedded in the professional environment aiming to support basic skills and concrete subjects.

A total of around two thousand learning groups were created. Based on the implemented input and outcome assessments the performance of students who benefited from individual or collective development improved by 8-10%.

With the implementation of the GINOP-6.2.2 and GINOP-6.2.3 projects in the VET centres and VET institutions, the following optional activities were available in 2021 for the prevention of dropping out from schools: mentoring activities for Roma students (especially Roma girls), school activities targeting the termination of peer exclusion and bullying, talent management, programmes supporting useful leisure and learning activities, programmes that motivate school bonding.

During this implementation phase, special attention was dedicated to students at risk of dropping out; the caregivers were regularly informed. Close contact was also maintained with the family and child welfare services, so the exchange of information was continuous regarding children at risk. Their studies were supported by tutoring and individual development.

Interventions targeted the physical, spiritual and mental development of students: the prevention of addiction and bullying (organising presentations performed by health visitors and medical doctors, consultations with family care services and school psychologists) are also ensured. In the framework of projects GINOP-6.2.3-17 and VEKOP-8.6.3-16, in every VET centre at least one institution created and operated one (altogether 63) so-called digital community creative workshop (DCCW) by the end of 2021. DCCWs are special educational spaces, in which project-based education, self-motivated research and customised prototyping takes place. DCCWs have to be open to society and easily accessible for students inside and outside the institution, in order to fulfil activities in the classroom and outside of it, to implement workshops, to run competitions and various learning group activities. DCCWs have to be open for educational and knowledge dissemination purposes to local businesses, partners and higher education institutions.

With respect to school workshop methods and support activities, the Springboard class (basic competences development programme), the sharepoint system and the related operational and educational documentation supporting the class and school workshop, have been completed in the framework of GINOP 6.2.4. project. The KRÉTA (Public education registration and study core system, *Köznevelési Regisztrációs és Tanulmányi Alaprendszer*) school workshop (catch up) module and the development of its operational and educational documentation have also been completed.

2022 Implementation

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 (*műhelyiskola*) 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.

Through the development of a collaboration platform aimed at informing businesses about the school workshop training form, 500 businesses were informed about the possibility of participating in the school workshop programme.

The final on-site audit of the GINOP-6.2.2 project was successfully completed on 6 December 2022. The final site audit of the GINOP-6.2.3 project took place on 31 March 2022.

Overall, nearly 2 000 learning groups have been established. Based on the implemented input and output measures, the mid-year improvements were effective, with an improvement of 8-10% in the performance of the students receiving individual or group development. 63 DCCWs completed. Further trainings for teachers: 1 487 participants attended trainings, 1 483 were certified. 788 participants attended the career guidance and counselling training, 770 persons obtained certificates. From 1

February to 21 March 2022, the training courses ran in parallel in 44 groups, with digital learning materials.

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 (*Műhelyiskola*) 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.

Activities carried out in the framework of GINOP 6.2.4. project:

School workshop and Springboard programme - methodology and support:

- (a) Based on a situation analysis and international best practices, methodological guidelines for the School workshop programme and Springboard programme were developed.
- (b) A proposal for the design, financing, and operation of the School workshop programme was created.
- (c) A professional monitoring system, aligned with the KRÉTA system, was developed to support the educational, professional, and administrative tasks of the School workshop programme.
- (d) A SharePoint system was introduced to facilitate the implementation of the pilot School workshop and Springboard programmes in VET schools. The platform hosts programme guidelines, support documents for teaching staff, measurement tools, and teaching resources.
- (e) Online events were used to inform 574 enterprises about participation opportunities in the School workshop programme.
- (f) A helpdesk was established to provide communication and methodological support for the School workshop programme.

Competence assessment in VET Centres: in the 2022/23 school year, competence assessments were conducted in 41 VET Centres and 5 Agricultural VET Centres as part of the GINOP-6.2.4-VEKOP-16 priority project.

From the school year 2023/24 onwards, competence assessment will continue under the GINOP PLUSZ-5.2.1-23 priority project, Improving measurement assessment, prior-knowledge feedback and interoperability in VET.

2024 Implementation

In December 2023, the 'Professional Support for VET Institutional Development and Disadvantage Compensation' flagship project (GINOP_PLUSZ-5.2.3-23-2023-00001) was launched. The project is implemented under the Széchenyi Plan Plus programme with HUF 6.499 billion (approx. EUR 16.6 million) in European Union funding, co-financed by the Government of Hungary, through a consortium between the National Office of VET and Adult Learning (NOVETAL) and the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Nonprofit Plc. (IKK). The project provides professional coordination, support, and continuous monitoring for the developments carried out by VET centres and/or VET schools in the framework of the standard project GINOP Plusz 5.3.2 'Disadvantage compensation programmes and flexible learning pathways in VET', focusing on learner competence development, the introduction of flexible learning pathways, and disadvantage compensation activities.

Equal Opportunities Programme (ETP)

Launched in 2024, the Equal Opportunities Programme (ETP) aims to support teachers in VET and students at risk of early school leaving. Its primary objective is to prevent early school leaving, help disadvantaged students and those with learning difficulties catch up, and promote successful qualification.

The programme enables VET teachers to mentor 2-5 students, providing them with individual development sessions. Upon successful completion, participating teachers receive a one-time gross payment of HUF 300 000 (approx. EUR 760). The programme is supported by the KRÉTA Early School Leaving (ESL) prediction system, which monitors academic performance and absences to identify early signs of dropout risk, allowing for timely interventions and targeted pedagogical support.

Between 15 October and 30 November 2024, all 41 VET centres participated in the ETP. Out of 355 VET institutions, 338 joined the programme, involving 3 697 teachers who mentored a total of 11 227 students. On average, each teacher supported three students. Among the participating students, 68.7% attended technical schools, 23.8% vocational schools, and 7.5% flexible learning pathways (orientation year, Springboard (*Dobbantó*) programme and school workshop (*Műhelyiskola*)). Teachers applied a wide range of learner-centred pedagogical methods, focusing on the development of learning strategies, enhancing motivation, and individual mentoring sessions.

2025 Implementation

Flexible learning pathways:

Orientation year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of VET centres offering the programme	18	19	18	19	21	21
Number of schools offering the programme	22	25	25	27	29	31
Number of students participating in the programme	248	325	275	236	232	244

Number of VET centres offering the programme	31	33	37	40
Number of schools offering the programme	48	53	62	68
Number of students participating in the programme	702	891	1 460	1 501

In the autumn period, 216 students began their preparation tasks as peer mentors in 24 VET institutions.

In connection with this, a peer mentoring programme was launched in six of the ten VET centres, focusing on preventing school dropout, strengthening student engagement, and supporting the integration of first-year learners. The programme builds on peer proximity, positive role modelling, social connectedness, and the trust-based relationships developed among students. In 2025, a total of 82 mentor teachers received training to support the work of peer mentors.

In 2025, IKK Nonprofit Plc., in cooperation with the *Kilátó* Piarist Career Guidance and Labour Market Development Methodological Centre, launched a pilot programme involving VET schools of 10 VET centres. The Inclusive Institutional Development Pilot Programme aims to strengthen institutional responsibility and promote the creation of an inclusive pedagogical environment, where mentor teachers can effectively support peer helpers participating in school-based peer mentoring initiatives. The overarching goal of the institutional responsibility enhancement programme is to foster whole-school inclusion.

The ETP was relaunched in spring 2025, running from 1 March to 30 April 2025. The objectives and methodological foundations remained unchanged, allowing teachers and students to build upon previous best practices. The evaluation of the 2025 results is currently underway.

The National Teachers' Association conducted a questionnaire-based evaluation of the 2024 Equal Opportunities Programme (ETP). Based on responses from over 7 500 students and teachers, the programme had a positive impact on learners' motivation, academic performance, and soft skills such as self-awareness, stress management, and decision-making.

- (a) situation analysis, development, evaluation, and revision of action plans;
- (b) formation of learner groups for basic skills development;
- (c) development and implementation of School Workshops based on the methodological proposals of the GINOP-6.2.4-VEKOP-16 flagship project (EDIOP);
- (d) development and implementation of the Springboard (Dobbantó) Programme following the methodologies of the GINOP-6.1.10-VEKOP-19 project (EDIOP);
- (e) development of Orientation Programmes and launching orientation classes;
- (f) employment of professionals supporting disadvantage compensation;
- (g) implementation of special support programmes, e.g. for students with special educational needs or disabilities, drug prevention, and health promotion activities.

Key professional activities eligible for funding:

Eligible applicants include VET centres and non-state or church-maintained VET institutions with a cooperation agreement with the state.

The overall budget of the project is HUF 29.021 billion (EUR 76.6 million). The VET centres/VET institutions can apply for a grant of HUF 20-500 million, minimum 40, maximum 114 projects can receive a grant. The projects have to be finished by the end of 2028.

In 2025, the call for proposals under the GINOP (EDIOP) PLUSZ-5.3.2-25 'VET

Disadvantage Compensation Programmes and Flexible Learning Pathways ' project was published. The programme aims to enhance the chances of disadvantaged learners to acquire qualifications by offering personalised learning opportunities, competence development, and the implementation of flexible learning pathways.

Source of data: 2nd Monitoring report of VET Policy Strategy 4.0

Workshop school programme	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of VET centres offering the programme	35	37	39	41
Number of schools offering the programme	64	73	77	98
Number of students participating in the programme	997	1 494	2 348	2 670

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

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

[The VET Act LXXX of 2019 \(entering into force on 1 January 2020\)](#)

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

[Act XXXIII of 2023 on the amendments to the Act resulting from the ex-post impact assessment of the restructuring in VET](#)

[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.](#)

[Flexible learning pathways](#)

[GINOP Plus 5.2.3-23 call for proposal](#)

[GINOP Plus 5.3.2-25 call for proposal](#)

[Inclusive institutional development programme, peer support programme](#)

[GINOP-6.2.4 project](#)

[2nd Monitoring Report of VET Policy Strategy 4.0](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Methodological Renewal of Vocational Education and Examination

The policy introduces a package of measures to renew teaching and assessment methodologies in VET and adult education by embedding project-based learning and examinations into everyday practice.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Internationalisation in VET: development in the Carpathian Basin

The working group of the VET Innovation Council, Vocational training development in the Carpathian Basin, mapped future opportunities. The working group carried out the mapping between 2021-22.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2021 Completed

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

2025 Implementation

Supporting Lifelong Learning (LLL) in the adult education and training framework

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

2025 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

2024 Completed

Mid-term VET policy strategy 4.0

The government has accepted, by government Decision No 1168/2019. (III.28.), the new '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

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

“ ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Reducing early school leaving and supporting inclusion in VET: Hungary. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28281>