

Easing permeability for VET learners

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 GREECE

Timeline

2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

ID number 28254

Description

Following the 2016 national strategic framework, the first grade of vocational upper secondary schools (EPAL) is common to all learners. The second grade is where sectoral division takes place, while in the third grade learners opt for a speciality. More specifically, in the first grade of these programmes, students follow orientation courses for 20% of their learning hours and occupation specific courses for 17.2%. General education subjects make up the rest (62.8%) of their learning hours, confirming the introductory character of the first grade as a broad occupational induction to further programme choices. The second grade is organised in nine occupation sectors; the occupation specific courses extend to 70.9% of learning hours and general education subjects make up the rest (29.1%). The final grade of these programmes is organised in 35 occupation domains (specialties) but the proportion of occupation-specific courses to general education subjects remains stable at 70.9% and 29.1% respectively.

As the first grade focuses on the development of basic competences and general education subjects, it becomes easier for learners from the first year of upper secondary general education to switch and join EPAL through enrolling in the second grade of upper secondary vocational education. This reform allows for more permeability between upper secondary general education and EPAL.

The access of EPAL graduates, not only to technological tertiary institutions but also to university departments relevant to their studies, as a quota of 1% of the total number of entrants to these university departments, was reinforced in 2016 and 2017.

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

A law of 26 February 2018 increased the quota of EPAL graduates eligible to access not only technological tertiary institutions but also university departments relevant to their studies from 1% to 5%. In the case of the established in 2018 university of Western

Attica, the percentage was raised to 10%.

2019 Implementation

Law 4610/2019 raised the quota to 10% for most university faculties, however maintaining it at 5% for certain departments: polytechnic, medical, dental, pharmaceutical, veterinary, physics, biology and geology. It also introduced a 20% quota to ASPETE, the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education. The 1% quota for graduates of evening EPAL schools was maintained and extended to all university faculties. EPAL graduates also gained access to a joint team of faculties (universities and military schools) a year after graduation, regardless of their graduation field, by sitting the same examinations as the general education graduates.

2020 Implementation

Law 4763/2020 increased the permeability of VET graduates in higher education, especially for those from EPAL apprenticeship programmes and upper secondary VET (IEK). According to Article 43 of the law, higher education institutions can carry out special admission examinations in three courses for VET graduates in an academic programme relevant to their vocational specialty. The law also introduced vocational training schools (ESK) at EQF level 3.

2021 Implementation

As of the start of the academic year 2021/22, universities organised special admission exams for VET graduates from vocational training institutes (IEK) and apprenticeship classes. VET graduates who took the exams gained entry at the rate of up to 5% of the total first year enrolments per university department.

2022 Implementation

For the school year 2022/23 universities continued to organise special admission exams for IEK and apprenticeship class graduates. ESK started operation in the 2022/23 academic year; their graduates may access the EPAL second year in a specialty relevant to the one they studied in ESK.

2023 Implementation

For the school year 2023/24, universities continued to organise special admission exams for IEK and apprenticeship class graduates. ESK started operation in the 2022/23 academic year; its graduates may access the EPAL second year in a specialty relevant to the one they studied at ESK.

2024 Implementation

In the 2024/25 school year, universities continued to organise special admission examinations for graduates of Vocational Training Institutes (SAEK) (former vocational training institutes IEK) and EPAL apprenticeship classes. Vocational Training Schools (ESK), which began operating in the 2023/24 academic year, offer their graduates the opportunity to enrol directly in the second year of EPAL in a specialty related to their ESK studies.

2025 Implementation

In the 2025/26 academic year, several higher education institutions (HEIs) continued to offer special admission examinations for graduates of vocational training institutes (SAEK, formerly IEK) and EPAL apprenticeship classes. Under current regulations, graduates of IEKs and of the post-secondary year - apprenticeship class who have successfully completed the initial vocational training certification examination and hold a level 5 vocational education and training specialty diploma (or an equivalent qualification) may be admitted by transfer to higher education institution (HEI)

departments in a field related to their diploma. Admission is carried out exclusively through special admission examinations (katataktíries) organised by each HEI, between 1 December and 20 December of each academic year. These examinations consist of essay-type questions in three courses selected from the curriculum of the receiving department.

Examples of universities offering such examinations include:

- (a) University of Macedonia (UowM): The department of computer science announced that applications for the 2024/25 academic year from IEK and EPAL apprenticeship graduates can be submitted between 1–15 November. Admission regulations and the exam syllabus are available on the Department's website.
- (b) University of the Aegean: The department of tourism economics and management announced that applications for admission by IEK and EPAL post-secondary apprenticeship year graduates for the 2025/26 academic year will be evaluated through written placement examinations. Based on a Senate decision, these exams cover 3% of the annual intake and are open to graduates with relevant Level 5 VET Specialty Diplomas.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Adult learners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education
Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Law 4610/2019, Synergies of universities, access to higher education, experimental schools, general State archives and other provisions](#)

[Law 4763/2020 on the National system of VET and lifelong learning](#)

Ministerial Act No F12/9691/D4/2017 on legalisation of professional rights of EPAL qualifications' holders (for specialties of Law 4186/2013)

Ministerial Act No F23/35437/D4/2018 on legalisation of professional rights of EPAL qualifications' holders (for specialties of Law 4386/2016)

Ministry of Education. (2022). The Public vocational training schools are beginning their operation for the first time

From IEK (now SAEK) to University: Complete list of departments

The special admission exams to Universities for SAEK and EPAL Apprenticeship class graduates are held between December 1 and 20 of each academic year

Special admission exams (katataktiries) for SAEK graduates - Aegean University

Special admission exams (katataktiries) for SAEK graduates - University of Western Macedonia

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Reform of the national system of VET and lifelong learning

In December 2020, Law 4763/2020 introduces a legal framework regulating VET and LLL and describing the organisation of each school type, the qualifications and the role of their staff (manager, teachers, career/vocational counsellors).

 GREECE

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2016 Approved/Agreed

National strategic framework for the upgrade of VET and apprenticeship

The framework sets out 10 strategic intervention areas which, in turn, contain certain implementation measures. These 10 areas are to:

 GREECE

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28254>