

The Dual VET reform

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN** SPAIN

Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Approved/Agreed	2023 Implementation
2024 Completed		

ID number 28182

Background

Spain launched the implementation of the Dual modality in VET programmes in 2013 through the introduction of a new regulation in 2012, allowing the possibility to develop dual VET programmes in initial VET. Different implementation experiences have been taking place in the regions since then.

The education and training system in the country was faced with the challenge of bringing young people's skills closer to labour-market needs; consequently, VET qualifications in the education system have been updated with the aid of business. VET had to gain in attractiveness. There was a need to increase the in-company training period so as to bring students closer to employers and provide the former with greater employment opportunities, especially in times of economic crisis and high unemployment.

At the beginning of the reporting period, two VET qualification systems were in place, offered by the education and employment authorities. Both systems were sharing the same consultation bodies, while governance and objectives of the qualifications and programmes were different. All formal qualifications awarded by both authorities were part of the national system for qualifications and vocational education and training (Sistema Nacional de Cualificaciones y Formación Profesional, SNCFP). In 2012, legislation had introduced the possibility for the education system to deliver VET qualifications under the regime of Dual VET. Programmes were piloted and dual VET was in place in all Autonomous Communities by 2014.

Among the challenges identified during the implementation of dual VET was the limited capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to hire trainees; the lack of appropriate training for in-company tutors; and the difference in governance models across regions.

Objectives

VET policy priorities in 2016-20 include the development - progressively - of a State-wide dual VET regulation according to Article No 42bis of the Organic Act on Education; better

coordination among all actors involved in dual VET; improving the quality of the practical training component of VET programmes, both in school-based settings or delivered as dual VET.

Description

Dual VET is being developed in cooperation with the Autonomous Communities. The ministry of education and vocational training (2018), in cooperation with the main stakeholders, is pursuing the regulatory work necessary to develop dual VET at national level, also monitoring and assessing the results of regional pilot experiences so as to meet the needs and characteristics of the Spanish business world.

The initial draft was presented to social partners in May 2018, but the new government wanted to reshape all VET without limiting itself only to issues related to Dual VET. In September 2018, the new government presented to employers and unions a strategic agreement on VET.

The ministry of education and vocational training work is aiming at restructuring the vocational training system to achieve better coordination between education and employment authorities; promoting VET for skills in demand; creating a common VET model through setting nationally-valid basic regulation for dual VET; and improving validation processes and developing an integrated model for guidance in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour.

All education authority VET programmes are established by royal decrees. To support the quality of the work-based learning component of VET programmes, those decrees specify the most updated requirements for facilities (workshops, laboratories) and equipment which education institutions must comply with in order to be authorised to deliver these programmes, including those implemented in the work-based learning (dual VET) model.

Since 2016 all training and apprenticeship contracts must be linked to a VET programme leading to an official qualification issued either by the education authorities (VET diplomas) or the employment authorities (professional certificates, CdPs). Training not leading to qualifications/certificates has since been discontinued, unless it is complementary to the qualification programme undertaken by the apprentice.

Employment authorities have included dual VET and apprenticeships as structural objectives in the 2017-20 Spanish Employment Activation Strategy; legislation in 2018 offers social benefits to IVET learners engaged in dual VET. In December 2018, the Council of ministers approved EUR 46 million (jointly financed by the European Social Fund) to promote Dual VET in regions.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

Working sessions took place to raise awareness among stakeholders of the potential of the dual VET model, to identify and agree on the success factors that set the basis for high quality implementation models of Dual VET aligned to the EQAVET framework.

The General Council for Vocational Training (*Consejo General de Formación Profesional*, CGFP) addressed the situation and reform of dual VET through one of the working groups launched in late 2018, which presented their proposals and reports in 2019. Discussions continue among main stakeholders.

In October 2019, the government updated the strategy for the period 2019-22. A first Strategic plan for vocational training was approved by the Council of Ministers at the

end of 2019, which sets as one of its objectives the development of the Dual VET model.

The Government gave the green light to EUR 34 044 460, jointly financed by the European Social Fund, for Dual VET. The distribution criteria used for this amount have been the special, island and outermost territories, the number of students in basic and intermediate VET levels, the number of centres that offer both types of VET programme, the number of technology and industrial companies, the number of companies participating in Dual VET programmes in 2016/17, the number of centres that offer Dual VET programmes 2016/17, the rate of early school leavers and the gender gap in technology and industrial sector branches.

2020 Implementation

The governance of the VET qualification system was reshuffled by the new cabinet emerging after the December 2019 general elections, with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training now responsible for the whole VET qualification system (integrating the education and the labour remits) while the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy is responsible for schemes and training programmes not linked to the national VET qualification system. The year 2020 was a transition period for some of these competences.

Dual vocational training is still a minor option in the national education and employment training systems; in IVET it represents around 3% of all VET learners and engages a low percentage of SMEs. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is drafting a new regulation on VET and the dual modality. Different measures are being considered to make the participation of SMEs and micro-SMEs more attractive. In 2020, the ministry of education and vocational training developed several initiatives in this area:

- (a) the plan for the modernisation of VET (*Plan de Modernización de la Formación Profesional*) announced in July 2020 aims at guaranteeing quality training and skills for all (sound technical skills, as well as digital, analytical, and predictive skills). Dual VET as one of its 11 strategic areas to engage, through flexible delivery, small and medium-sized enterprises, business and trade union organisations, as well as education authorities, and the participation of (micro) SMEs in the vocational training ecosystem.
- (b) meetings with the main employer and trade unions organisations to consolidate an alliance on dual VET have focused also on the relationship model between the company and the apprentice or the (possible) integration of apprentices in the workers representative participation bodies in the company;
- (c) setting up a working group with EU services and the Bertelsmann Foundation for the identification of essential factors for quality provision in dual VET system, aligned with the framework of the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeship, that could be fed into new regulations currently in the pipeline;
- (d) a virtual forum 'a new law for education and vocational training' launched at the end of 2020, organising working groups with VET stakeholders (public authorities, social partners, teachers, and learners). Creation of an online mailbox (on the MoE website and at the dedicated site) for citizens to leave their suggestions and contributions.

2021 Implementation

A series of public webinars on the VET reform started in February 2021, including discussions on the delivery of dual VET.

The public consultation on the draft Organic Act on the organisation of the system of qualifications and vocational training (draft law on VET) ended in January 2021, and its legal processing started. It passed Congress at the end of December and is pending approval by the Senate.

This draft law on VET establishes a single, modular and flexible offer of formal vocational training structured in training itineraries that allow progression through five

ascending grades (A, B, C, D and E), ranging from smaller units or microtraining (grade A) to VET programmes and specialisation courses (grades D and E). In-company training is foreseen for the programmes leading to professional certificates (grade C) and VET diplomas (grade D).

The regulation promotes co-responsibility between VET centres and local enterprises, working together to deliver the curriculum. It also clarifies the role and responsibilities of in-company tutors and regulates the relationship between vocational training and university education, facilitating the design of training itineraries that ease the transition between the two systems and in both directions. The text considers promoting new models of collaboration, sharing projects or exchanging resources and spaces to generate knowledge transfer and share good practices.

The education ministry working group with EU services and the Bertelsmann Foundation concluded its work in December with the publication of *Good practice in dual vocational training in Spain: 14 European quality indicators, 102 regional examples*. These examples of good practice refer to some of the key elements included in the draft Organic Act on VET, such as the figures of the school tutor and the company tutor, the shared spaces between schools and companies, the personalisation of the training programme for each student, the specific training for teachers or the rotation of students through different companies.

The education ministry's territorial cooperation programmes for VET were endowed with EUR 11 416 130 and aimed at actions related to dual vocational training, such as collaborative projects to support SMEs and micro-SMEs in their participation in these courses, the creation of new places or aid for the mobility of students and teachers.

The State Public Employment Service continued to manage the authorisation of the training activity for the training and apprenticeship contracts through a computer-based application available to all regional PES services. This type of contract was modified in 2021, within the framework of the modification of the Workers' Statute for the 21st century.

The government, trade unions and employers reached an agreement to modify the labour regulation in December 2021, resulting in Royal Decree-Law 32/2021 on labour reform. It was validated by Congress in February 2022. This reform is part of component 23: New public policies for a dynamic, resilient and inclusive labour market of the national recovery and resilience plan. Royal Decree-Law 32/2021 modifies Article 11 of the Workers' Statute (WS) and abolishes the existing contractual modalities, such as the contract for training and apprenticeship, and creates a new training contract with two modalities: contract for alternance training (*Contrato de formación en alternancia*); contract for professional practice according to the qualification level (*Contrato formativo para la obtención de la práctica profesional adecuada al nivel de estudios*).

- (a) Contract for alternance training (Art. 11.2 WS): its purpose is to make paid work activity compatible with the corresponding training processes in vocational training, university studies or the catalogue of training specialities of the national employment system. The contract duration can range between 3 months and 2 years depending on the training programme. Exceptionally, several contracts for alternance training may be formalised with several companies, based on the same vocational programme (either formal VET leading to VET diplomas/professional certificates or programmes linked to training specialities under the labour remit) when these contracts respond to different activities linked to the training programme, without exceeding the maximum of 2 years in total. The effective working day must not exceed 65% in the first year or 85% in the second year; the remuneration may not be less than 60% in the first year or 75% in the second year or less than the minimum wage proportional to the working day.
- (b) Contract for professional practice (Art. 11.3 WS): it may be signed up to 3 years after obtaining the qualification (5 years in the case of people with disabilities). Duration is between 6 months and 1 year. The remuneration is according to the collective agreement for that job, and there must be a practical training plan and tutorial follow-up. At the end of the contract, the employee is entitled to

certification of work experience.

2022 Approved/Agreed

The Organic Act 3/2022, published in April 2022, established the dual nature of vocational education and training (VET) in Spain. It is part of a wider modernisation effort aimed at strengthening the link between education and employment. It introduced a structured VET system with various grades, from micro accreditations (Grade A) to specialisation courses (Grade E), including professional certificates (Grade C) and formal vocational training diplomas (Grade D). Its implementation schedule was still pending.

According to art. 55.1, all vocational training courses for grades C and D, linked to the national catalogue of professional skills, shall have dual nature and include a period of training in a company or similar establishment. The offer of specialisation courses of grade E can be dual under certain conditions (Art. 52.1). The offer of A and B grade courses may or not be dual, depending on the characteristics of each course.

Other issues included in Organic Act 3/2022, pending regulatory development, were:

- (a) involvement of companies in each sector, including SMEs and micro-SMEs, in the VET ecosystem;
- (b) co-responsibility of the vocational training centres and the enterprises or similar bodies involved in VET;
- (c) extending the duration of the workplace training module in VET programmes;
- (d) creating a specific type of contract, different from the existing ones, to qualify early leavers aged 16 to 20, linking entry into the labour market with an intermediate VET qualification.

Reforms incorporated into the VET system, according to the Organic Act 3/2022 were:

- (a) the dual character no longer considers only the time spent in the company but also the quality of the in-company training and the learning outcomes acquired. However, the minimum duration of in-company training is set at 25% of the total duration of the training programme;
- (b) all Grade C and D programmes have a dual character, with a percentage of between 25% and 50% of training in the company in two modalities:
 - (i) general, if the in-company training is between 25% and 35% of the total duration of the programme and between 10 - 20% of the learning outcomes of the curriculum. It is not contractually binding;
 - (ii) intensive if the in-company training is between 35% and 50% of the total duration of the programme and more than 30% of the learning outcomes of the curriculum contractually bound.

In the new regulatory framework, companies are able to participate in the following aspects:

- (a) identifying the evolution of professional profiles;
- (b) providing spaces and facilities for work-based training;
- (c) participating in the in-company training of VET students;
- (d) providing professional training periods for VET teachers;
- (e) promoting the role of the in-company senior professional for collaboration in the training;
- (f) designing professional competence standards and training programmes.

These actions are part of Spain's NIP.

2023 Implementation

The Royal Decree 278/2023, of 11 April, established the schedule for the implementation of Organic Act 3/2022 as follows:

- (a) before 1 September 2023, the education authorities have to begin the gradual

offers of Grade A and B, under the terms provided for in the legislation;

(b) in the 2023/24 school year, the education authorities have to offer Grade D and, where appropriate, E on a dual basis (general and intensive regimes) according to the regulation, considering the following transition periods: until 31 December 2024 for adapting the in-company training period; and until 31 December 2028, for moving from the scholarship system to the training contract in the case of the intensive regime.

In July, Royal Decree 659/2023 was published, developing the organisation of the Spanish VET system. It implements and details the guidelines established by Organic Act 3/2022, ensuring that the vocational training system is accessible, flexible and adapted to the needs of the labour market.

In the academic year 2023/24, the education authorities began to offer Grades D and, where appropriate, E, on a dual basis, in the general and intensive regimes. This decision does not affect the transitional periods set for adapting the in-company training phase (until 31 December 31 2024) and the transition from the scholarship system to training contracts in the intensive regime (until 31 December 2028).

Since November 2023, the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports is responsible for proposing and executing the government's policy on vocational training in the education system and for employment (Royal Decree 829/2023 of 20 November on the restructuring of ministerial departments).

2024 Completed

Since 2018, the number of learners in dual VET has increased by 102.68%, from 26 340 students in the 2018/19 academic year to 53 385 in the 2023/24 academic year.

From the academic year 2024/25, 100% of the training grades are considered Dual VET and thus the reform was implemented according to the calendar established by the Organic Act.

VET students are registered for Social Security contributions as of 1 January 2024, as assimilated to employees, allowing them to begin their contribution career, generating future rights and increasing coverage in the event of an accident.

The data available before the end of 2024 show that 322 192 new students have been registered with Social Security since the beginning of 2024. By 2025, this measure is expected to reach more than one million young people, the total number of vocational training students.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports
- Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (until 2023)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Economy
- State Public Employment Service (SEPE)
- Autonomous Public Employment Services

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies
Optimising VET funding
Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation
Acquiring key competences
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European and international dimensions of VET

Mobility of learners and staff

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Cedefop ReferNet \(2018\). VET takes the lead in the Ministry of Education](#)

[Action plan for youth employment 2019-21 \[Plan de Choque por el Empleo Juvenil 2019-2021\]](#)

[Plan for the modernisation of VET \[Plan para la modernización de la formación profesional\]](#)

[Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Good practices in dual vocational training in Spain. 14 European quality indicators, 102 regional examples](#)

[Organic Act 5/2002 of 19 June, on qualifications and vocational education and training \[Ley](#)

Royal Decree-Law 32/2021, on urgent measures for labour reform [Real Decreto-ley 32/2021, de 28 de diciembre, de medidas urgentes para la reforma laboral, la garantía de la estabilidad en el empleo y la transformación del mercado de trabajo]

Organic Act 3/2022, of 31 March, on the organisation and integration of Vocational Training [Ley Orgánica 3/2022, de 31 de marzo, de ordenación e integración de la Formación Profesional]

Royal Decree 659/2023, of July 18, which develops the organisation of the Vocational Training System [Real Decreto 659/2023, de 18 de julio, por el que se desarrolla la ordenación del Sistema de Formación Profesional]

Royal Decree 829/2023 of 20 November on the restructuring of ministerial departments

Related policy developments

2021 Completed

Action plan for youth employment

The Action plan for youth employment (2019-21) includes initiatives in relation to vocational training aimed at enabling young people under 30 years of age to acquire competences or professional experience, upgrade their qualifications and increase their employability.



Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Strategic boost to VET

The new government, in power since June 2018, reorganised the administration. The change of name in the education administration state, now the Education and Vocational Training ministry (previously Education, Culture and Sports), reflects the new strategy to promote VET.



Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Promotional actions to support WBL

The education ministry has contributed to promote work-based learning by supporting VET skills competitions at national (Spainskills), European (EuroSkills) and international levels (WorldSkills).

**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2023 Completed

The Spanish Employment activation strategies

Employment authorities have reflected the policy priority given to dual VET and apprenticeships, including them as structural objectives in the 2017-20 Spanish employment activation strategy approved in December 2017.

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“...” Cite as

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