

# Reinforcing cooperation between schools and employers

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 CZECHIA

## Timeline

2016 Implementation 2017 Implementation 2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation 2020 Implementation 2021 Implementation

2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation 2024 Implementation

2025 Approved/Agreed

ID number 28094

## Background

Political and economic changes after 1989 had a significant impact on the VET system. State-owned enterprises, formerly the main providers of vocational training and subsequently the employers of their own students, disintegrated into many entities upon privatisation. Newly established small and medium-sized companies were not used to cooperating with schools and even most successors of former state-owned enterprises gradually lost interest in active participation in VET. The links between schools and companies started to deteriorate and the focus of practical training shifted from employers' premises to school workshops.

## Description

The Amendment to the School Act, which came into force in September 2017, obliges schools to develop, with regard to the field of study, efforts to support cooperation with employers towards joint fulfilment of the objectives of secondary education. According to the amendment, schools should involve employers in the education process, particularly through:

- (a) consulting with employers about drafts of school curricula;
- (b) engaging employers in the shaping of conceptual plans for school development;
- (c) ensuring that practical training takes place at authorised workplaces;
- (d) allowing for participation of experts from practice in theoretical training at school; allowing for participation of experts from practice in the *Maturita* examination;
- (e) securing, in cooperation with the employers, continuing education and internships for teaching staff;
- (f) introduction of coordinators to facilitate cooperation between schools and employers.

In reality, most schools and employers were already applying such approaches before the amendment, but these measures are now more systematic.

There were two rounds of calls for proposals to apply for funding, in December 2016 and in

December 2018. Secondary and tertiary professional schools could apply with a view to recruiting coordinators in charge of facilitating the cooperation between schools and companies. The coordinator is responsible for getting in contact with relevant employers and discussing with them their interest in possible cooperation with schools, and the conditions for cooperation. The coordinator also evaluates the cooperation, implements the feedback received from companies, involves schools in new forms of cooperation, organises internships of teachers in companies, and keeps close contact with relevant stakeholders, such as representatives of chambers of commerce and sector councils. 403 upper secondary and tertiary professional schools applied for this scheme in 2016.

In April 2016, the Ministry of Education prepared recommendations on contractual relationships, including a template for the agreement between employers and schools on the content, terms and conditions of practical training. The aim is to unify procedures and practices regarding workplace-based practical training, and to motivate employers to cooperate with schools. Companies should ensure that the tasks assigned to students are closely related to their respective fields of education to prevent students being used for helping with elementary chores and not gaining proper training related to their vocation. The responsibility for provision of both theoretical and practical education at the workplace rests with the school headmaster. The existence of such an Agreement is one of the conditions that employers have to fulfil when applying for tax incentives.

### **2016 Implementation**

### **2017 Implementation**

### **2018 Implementation**

In the 2018 round, 406 upper secondary and tertiary professional schools applied for the grant scheme supporting the position of coordinator. Among the tasks of the coordinator supported by the Ministry of Education scheme is to organise workshops and roundtables with employers in order to facilitate the cooperation or to adapt the school educational programme to the needs of labour market.

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, a publication for coordinators and a video supporting the cooperation of schools and companies were prepared by the National Institute for Education. In late 2019, a guide for involvement of employers in cooperation with schools was prepared by the Confederation of Industry and Moravia-Silesia Region (in the framework of piloting the dual system in the Czech Republic).

### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, the National reference point for quality assurance (EQVET NRP CZ) created a practical guide and checklist of steps for employers, *How to develop successful cooperation between schools and companies*, which was promoted during the European vocational skills week. The criteria for quality and successful cooperation build on the European Council recommendation on the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeship training (2018 / C 153/01) published on 15 March 2018. In the Czech Republic, these criteria include cooperation between schools and companies in the provision of practical training.

By the end of January 2020, the long-awaited and much-discussed Amendment to the Act on Pedagogical Staff (Act No 563/2004 Coll.) was placed on the agenda of the Chamber of Deputies. Among other things, the amendment responds to the fact that over 6.5% of teaching jobs are held by teachers who do not meet professional qualification requirements set out by the Act on Pedagogical Staff and teach in schools for a definite period of time, being granted the so-called exception. Therefore, in line with the new arrangement, if the headmaster of a school recognises any acquired university education in the field or in the case of the experts from practising their expertise, such an applicant for a teaching job is allowed to perform direct pedagogical activities for a maximum period of three years. During these three years, they are obliged to complete their pedagogical qualifications (known as the 'pedagogical

minimum', typically provided within the lifelong learning programmes higher education institutions).

The aim of the proposal in relation to upper secondary VET schools is primarily to increase the involvement of experts from practice in teaching and to address the major issue related to the shortage of vocational training teachers. The proposal enables teachers of vocational training to obtain required professional qualifications through the existing professional qualification for the activities of an instructor to be carried out at the premises of the practical training provider in line with the Act on the recognition of further education results (179/2006 Coll.). The amendment is expected to be discussed in the Senate in the first quarter of 2021.

Based on the Agreement on the Division of responsibilities for individual areas of initial education (2016), cooperation with employers' representatives was being developed. The pandemic interrupted preparations for the establishment of the VET Council under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

By the end of 2020, works began on fulfilling Key Activity 3.1: Improving the quality of practical training listed on the implementation card Innovation of the system of fields of study, included in the Strategy 2030+.

The measure anticipates development of quality standards and definition of conditions for practical training which is implemented at school-based and company workplaces.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, 1 002 upper secondary and tertiary professional schools (70.6% of the total) implemented projects with simple schemes, supported by the Ministry of Education, for upper secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. VET is supported mainly through projects with simplified reporting with the theme of practitioners/experts from practice being involved in teaching (implemented by 412 upper secondary schools and 52 tertiary professional schools), teachers' internships at employers (implemented by 349 upper secondary schools and 58 tertiary professional schools) and coordinator of cooperation between the school and employer (implemented by 329 upper secondary schools and 45 tertiary professional schools).

In March 2021, the Strategy to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the Czech Republic 2021-27 was approved. The measures of the first strategic objective are aimed at developing the skills of students in line with the labour market requirements, by supporting the establishment and strengthening of appropriate forms of cooperation between the schools and companies and increasing the quality, efficiency and relevance of training for future professions.

### **2022 Implementation**

The Competences 4.0 project, completed in November 2022, produced a methodology and associated guide 'How to set up collaboration between companies and secondary schools - practical steps and methods.'

The Operational Programme Technologies and Applications for Competitiveness (OP TAK), approved at the end of 2021, includes 'Priority 2 Development of entrepreneurship and competitiveness of SMEs'. The call 'Cooperation between schools and companies' is planned for spring 2023. The foreseen activities include the introduction of practical training in companies or project-based learning.

In 2022 the NPI CR promoted a practical guide and checklist of steps for employers entitled "How to develop successful cooperation between schools and companies" (developed by NRP EQAVET in 2020). Courses for practical training instructors were promoted at several events for HR specialist and at educational fairs. Also a practical guide with tax incentives for employers cooperating with schools was updated and promoted.

### **2023 Implementation**

Following the call, Projects with simple scheme for Secondary Schools and Tertiary Professional Schools I, announced in 2022 under the Operational Programme Jan Amos Komenský, 358 secondary schools and 61 tertiary professional schools selected coordinators to enhance cooperation with companies within their projects. In 2023, 102 additional projects were supported under the call for the Operational Programme Technologies and Application for Competitiveness titled Cooperation between schools and companies. The aim of this call is to facilitate practical training for students within companies, specifically targeting small and medium-sized enterprises.

During Q1 2023, the education ministry prepared a substantive proposal for improving the quality of vocational education and training for students, including a proposal to expand the options for the dual system of education in the Czech Republic.

The intention was presented to representatives of the Confederation of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic, who are leaders in the implementation of the dual system of education, as well as during meetings of the Council for Vocational Education, individual sectional school associations organised within the Union of School Associations CZESHA and the working team of the Tripartite for Education and Human Resources.

### **2024 Implementation**

Since October 2024, secondary schools can apply for funds through projects with simplified reporting from the Jan Amos Komenský Operational Programme. The second call also supports the position of coordinator for cooperation between schools and employers, as well as internships with employers.

In July 2024, a plenary meeting of the Tripartite (the Council of Economic and Social Agreement of the Czech Republic) was held to discuss a comprehensive strategy for the development of vocational education. This strategy was prepared by the education ministry based on strategic documents approved by the Government, as well as a strategy formulated by the Union of Entrepreneurs in the Construction Sector (Perspective and Vision for Construction Trades Education 2030). The first part of the strategy for the development of VET summarises the steps that have been, are and will continue to be implemented after 2022. The second part includes measures proposed by the Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of Industry, and other relevant partners. The goal is to make vocational education more attractive, to promote the permeability and flexibility of educational pathways, and to further align initial and further vocational education with the qualification needs of the labour market.

Employers call for the introduction of dual education. Entrepreneurs themselves started testing vocational training in the Moravian-Silesian Region in 2017, then four other regions joined and 34 companies got involved. According to employer recommendations, based on this former pilot testing, vocational training would be expanded to include the possibility of training in companies certified by employers' associations on a voluntary, contractual basis. Dual training aims to combine school vocational training with work experience, with active participation from employers. Employers have supported the trade union's demand for compensation to students for the work performed during their training at companies.

Practical training, or parts of it, is provided at the employers' sites whose competence to provide practical training has been piloted i.e. the employer is certified to provide practical training by employers' representatives with national authority. Negotiations are underway with the Ministry of Labour regarding future reimbursement of certification costs to employer organisations, which could potentially be funded by either the dual training fund or contributions from dual training providers. A substantive proposal has been prepared for an amendment to the Education Act.

### **2025 Approved/Agreed**

The main objective of the amendment to the Education Act approved in June 2025 is to improve the quality of vocational education and training for students undergoing vocational training in the dual education system in the Czech Republic. The change will

be effective as of January 1, 2026. The key objective is to introduce a voluntary branch of the dual education system and participatory management of the vocational education and training system as a whole. The changes in practical education will strengthen the elements of dual education in the current vocational education system and enable companies to accept students for vocational training at their workplaces in full and under the direct guidance of experts from the field. Dual practical training will be carried out on the basis of a contract specifying the content and scope of the dual practical training. The contract will be concluded for a period of at least one school year. Dual practical training will take place at the workplace under the guidance and supervision of persons qualified as instructors, practical training teachers, or vocational training teachers. Details on the requirements of the contract and the rules for the guidance of students and supervision by responsible persons will be laid down by the Ministry in a decree.

The contract may also include an agreement on the provision of a motivational allowance to a student in dual practical training, its amount and conditions of provision, and the student's commitment to conclude an employment contract with a dual provider or a member of the provider's association, for a period of up to 3 years after completing secondary education.

Elements of the dual system introduced by the amendment to the School Act:

Education is delivered in two locations – at school (theoretical instruction) and at a company (practical instruction). These two components are closely linked and complement each other. The possibility of practical training has now been extended to the workplaces of natural and legal persons who are authorised to carry out activities related to the field of education in question and whose eligibility to provide dual practical teaching has been verified by a nationwide employers' organisation (known as a provider organisation).

The school educational programme (ŠVP) is created and implemented in cooperation between the school and the dual education provider. The company actively participates in the content and implementation of practical training and often also in the evaluation of students. If the principal of a secondary school decides to implement practical training with providers of dual practical training, they must always discuss the relevant school educational programmes with the providers of dual practical training in accordance with the law.

Dual education providers assume a significant part of the responsibility for the professional training of future employees. This includes providing quality spaces for teaching, instructors of practical training, and often financial support for students (productive work). Verification of eligibility to provide dual education is demonstrated by a certificate, which is issued for a period of 6 years after the certification conditions have been met. The certificate can also be revoked if the conditions are not met.

The dual provider organisation may issue certificates after publishing the quality standard for dual practical training for the given field of education. The dual provider organisation shall publish the quality standard for dual practical training in a manner allowing remote access after discussing it with the ministry.

Contractual relationships: contractual relationships are between the school and certified company and between the certified company and the student.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic
- National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic

## **Target group**

## **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

## **Education professionals**

Teachers

## **Entities providing VET**

Companies

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

VET providers (all kinds)

# **Thematic categories**

## **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

## **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences**

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

## **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

# **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[Guide for employers prepared within the Competence 4.0. project \(published on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs\)](#)

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[Publication for coordinators prepared by National Institute for Education](#)

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[Video supporting the cooperation of schools and companies, prepared by National Institute for Education](#)

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[Recommendation of the Ministry of Education on contractual relationships between employers and schools \(2016\)](#)

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[NRP EQAVET CZ website](#)

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[Website of National Pedagogical Institute with courses for instructors of practical training](#)

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[Amendment to the School Act \(2025\) effective from January 2026](#)

## **Related policy developments**

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Strategy to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the Czech Republic 2021-27**

Strengthening cooperation between companies, especially SMEs and schools, will be implemented by means of promoting and organising joint events. The strategy also promotes organising of students' work placements and internships in businesses.

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

### **Subsystem**

CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Innovation of the fields of study system**

By 2023, the VET system will be structured to focus on the common professional basis within the relevant group of fields of study. This innovation will allow for a gradual choice of career paths and will able learners to postpone early specialisation.

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

### **Subsystem**

IVET

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**2023 Completed**

## **Long-term plan for education and the development of the education system of the Czech Republic (2019-23)**

The Long-term plan for education and the development of the education system of the Czech Republic (the Long-term plan) covers the entire system of regional education (pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional education).

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

### **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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2025 **Approved/Agreed**

## Quality standards for company and school-based workplaces for practical training

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports focuses on expanding options for students to get practical training in a real work environment with the use of elements of the dual system of VET.

 CZECHIA

### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### Subsystem

IVET

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2022 **Completed**

## Mapping future competences as part of systemic measures for defining labour market requirements - Competences 4.0 project

In the framework of the Competence 4.0 project (2019-22; Operational programme Employment, Ministry of Industry and Social Affairs), the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, Czech Chamber of Commerce and the consultancy company TREXIMA jointly participate in mapping new future competences.

 CZECHIA

### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2025 **Implementation**

## Strategy for education policy of the Czech Republic until 2030+ (Strategy 2030+)

The preparation of the Strategy 2030+ built on maximum transparency and openness. It comprised a series of expert and public consultations and roundtables on the visions and objectives of education policy and its implementation.

 CZECHIA

### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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**2020 Completed**

## **Modernisation of initial VET (the MOV project, 2017-20)**

The national project MOV (Modernisation of VET) aims at improving the quality of VET through modernising initial VET. The MOV project was launched on 1 May 2017.

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### **Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Completed**

## **Adjusting curricula to labour market needs**

Proposals for legislative and institutional changes aiming to improve the transition from school to labour market by extending the duration of in-company training; in EQF 4 programmes, workplace internship usually takes two weeks only, hence the proposal for extension to eight weeks.

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2022 Completed**

## **Piloting dual training**

A memorandum on piloting elements of dual training was signed by the Ministry of Education, Moravia-Silesia Region and the Confederation of Industry in October 2017. The piloting phase started in September 2018 in cooperation with four upper secondary VET schools and three companies.

 CZECHIA

### **Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Reinforcing cooperation between schools and employers: Czechia. 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/28094>