

Spotlight on VET CZECHIA

Vocational education
and training systems
in Europe

2023

VET in Czechia

The main body responsible for initial vocational education and training (IVET) is the [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports](#). Representatives of employers are involved in curriculum development and participate in creation of occupational and qualification standards. Vocational education and training (VET) is provided at lower and upper secondary, as well as tertiary level. IVET is mainly school-based, but work-based learning (WBL) is an integral part of the programme (13-55% of instruction time). WBL may take place at companies' work-sites or in school workshops or facilities.

VET predominantly begins following completion of compulsory education. Lower secondary IVET programmes (European Qualifications Framework, EQF 2) last 2 years and are designed primarily for learners with [special education needs](#). These programmes are completed with a final exam or with a 'VET certificate'.

Upper secondary VET programmes (EQF 3-4) last 3 to 4 years. They include the following options:

- 3-year VET programmes at EQF 3 (completed by a VET examination leading to a VET certificate) enable graduates to enter the labour market directly and perform manual occupations (e.g. bricklayer, hairdresser). Graduates can follow a 2-year follow-up programme (EQF 4) and take a *maturita* examination, which opens an access to higher education;
- 4-year VET programmes (completed with a *maturita* examination, EQF 4) enable graduates to continue learning in higher education or perform mid-level technical, business, service, health and other similar jobs (e.g. construction technician, travel agent);
- 4-year *lyceum* programmes with a high proportion of general subjects (up to 70% of the curricula) prepare their graduates for studies at higher education institutions or entering the labour market;
- programmes offered by conservatories prepare for performance in music, dance, singing and drama activities. Studies are completed with an *absolutorium* (graduate examination, including theoretical vocational subjects, a foreign language and a graduate thesis) (EQF 6), but learners may also take a *maturita* examination (secondary education, EQF 4);
- learners who have already completed upper secondary education have an option to acquire a (second) qualification in another field in the so-called shortened programmes (3-year school-based VET programmes (EQF level 3) and 4-year VET and *lyceum* programmes (EQF level 4) can be offered as shortened programmes, provided that the school director considers that the learner has completed a programme, at the same EQF level, in a relevant field. Shortened programmes do not lead to a higher EQF level).
- Those with *maturita* (EQF 4) can acquire a VET certificate or another *maturita* certificate in a relevant field; those with a VET certificate (EQF 3) can only acquire another VET certificate in a relevant field. Shortened programmes are suitable also for adults and last 1 to 2 years.

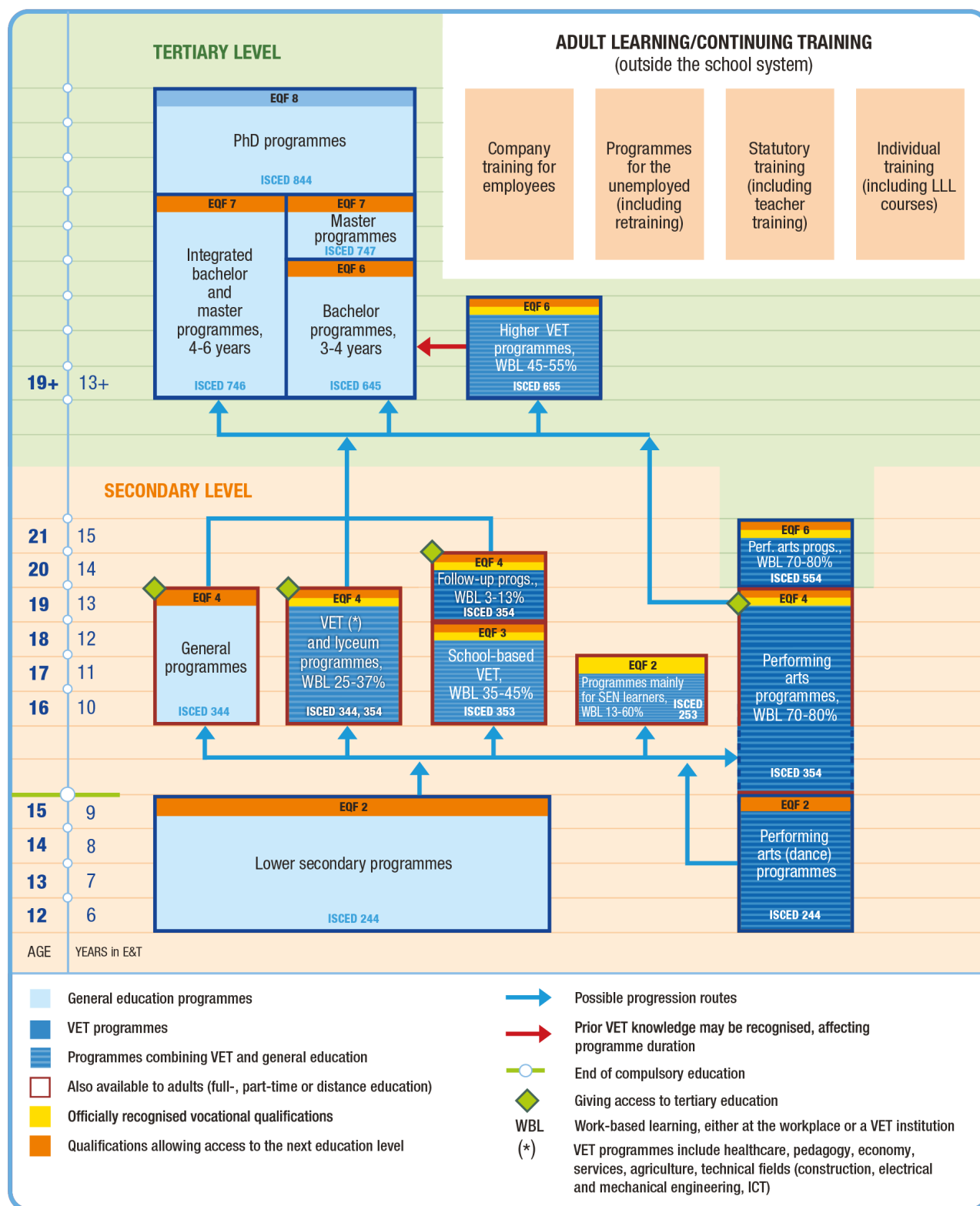
Higher VET programmes offered by tertiary professional schools prepare learners for demanding professional occupations, such as nutritionist. Studies last 3 to 3.5 years and are completed with an *absolutorium* (EQF 6) and a specialist diploma (*diplovaný specialista, DiS*). The programmes are closely aligned to employer skill needs. Although many graduates enter the labour market, access to other higher education programmes is also an option. Graduates who, upon completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at universities, may have some of their subjects and exams from higher VET programmes recognised.

The share of EQF 4 VET graduates continuing towards tertiary education was 65.5% in 2022.

Adults can attend VET programmes in the formal school system. While many programmes permit combination with employment, overall adult participation in VET is low.

The wide variety of continuing VET (CVET) programmes provided outside the formal system is not generally regulated. A system of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes (VNFIL) supports recognising learning outcomes acquired through CVET.

VET in Czechia's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Czechia: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database].

www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/czechia-u3

Distinctive features of VET

VET has always represented a fundamental part of the Czech education system. The share of learners in VET programmes at upper secondary level was 69.1% in 2021 (Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04).

General subjects are a strong component in all types of VET programmes. Their share varies by programme, from 30% to 70% of the instruction time.

A first choice between general and vocational upper secondary educational pathways comes at age 15. By age 17 to 19, most VET learners have acquired a vocational qualification recognised on the labour market.

Despite recent increase, the share of early leavers from education and training remains relatively low (6.2% in 2022), partly due to a wide choice of education pathways and horizontal permeability (Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_14).

While demographic developments reduced the number of young learners in IVET, [schools have become more active in providing CVET programmes for all](#). This allows school teachers developing their skills in teaching adults, but also helps increase young and adult learners' awareness of CVET as an integral part of life.

Graduate tracking has been in place for 20 years.

Challenges and policy responses

One of the main challenges in vocational education and training (VET) is to improve the quality and attractiveness of initial VET (IVET) by encouraging work-based learning (WBL) in companies, supporting the school-to-work transition of graduates.

Legislative measures adopted after 2014 supported cooperation between schools and employers through tax incentives, obligatory participation of employers in VET examinations and *absolutorium* or direct involvement of experts from the business world in instruction at schools.

Better matching of skills supply and labour market demand is another challenge. Several projects targeting better skills matching have been introduced but there is still no such system at national level. Linking IVET programmes with relevant qualifications in the [National register of qualifications](#) (NSK) should support responsiveness and flexibility to labour market needs.

A crucial challenge is the ageing of pedagogical staff. Around [47.8% of vocational school workers are over 50 years old](#).

Despite an increase in average salaries, demanding teaching jobs up to tertiary level are not attractive.

The reform of financing formal education, introduced in January 2020, brought an increased level of centralisation. School funding is no longer based on a per capita approach but on the number of lessons taught.

As a policy response to Covid-19, an amendment to the Education Act, approved in August 2020, introduced obligatory online education in cases of emergency.

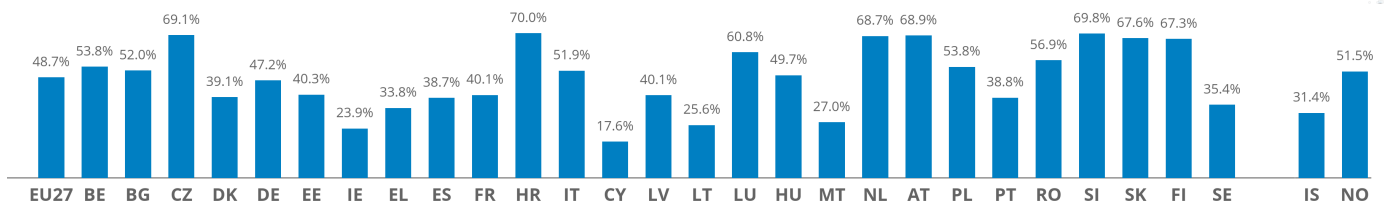
The new [Strategy for the education policy of the Czech Republic 2030+](#) was adopted in autumn 2020.



Czechia

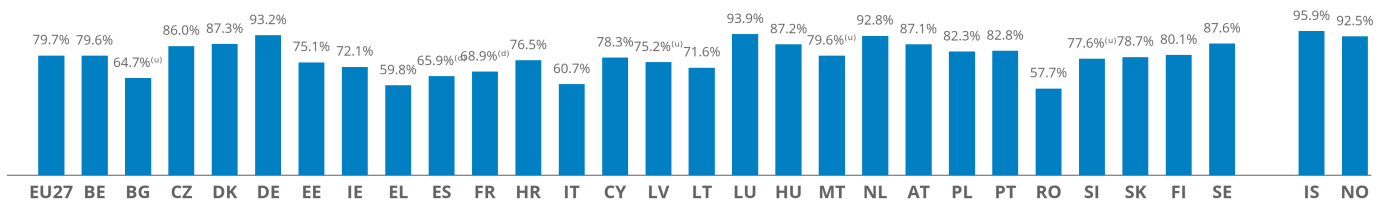
Education and training in figures

IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2021



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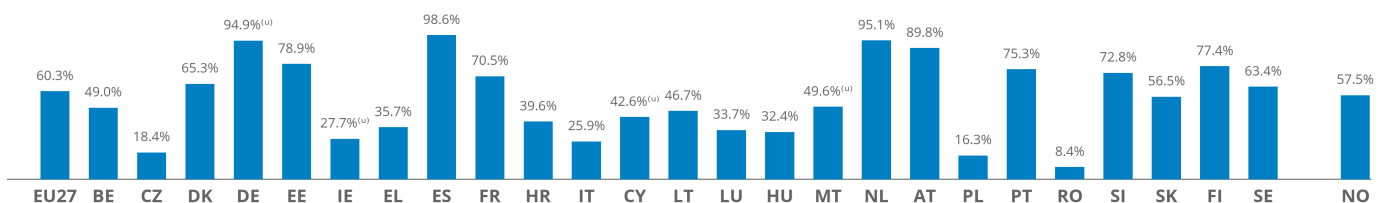
Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%), 2022



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Notes: Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia: (u) low reliability, Czechia: (b) break in time series, Spain and France: (d) definition differs

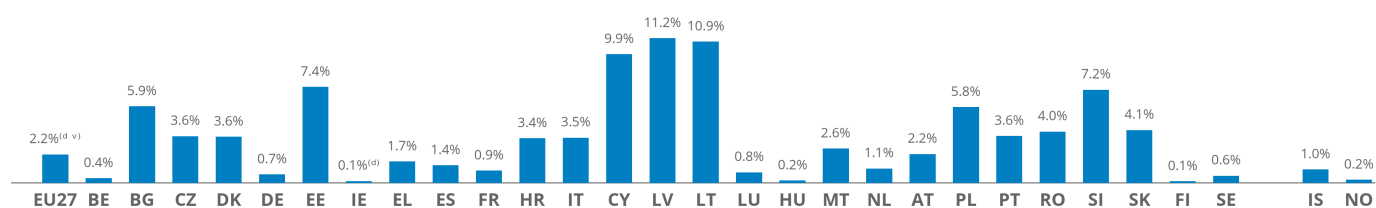
Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%), 2022



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Notes: Germany, Ireland and Cyprus: (u) low reliability

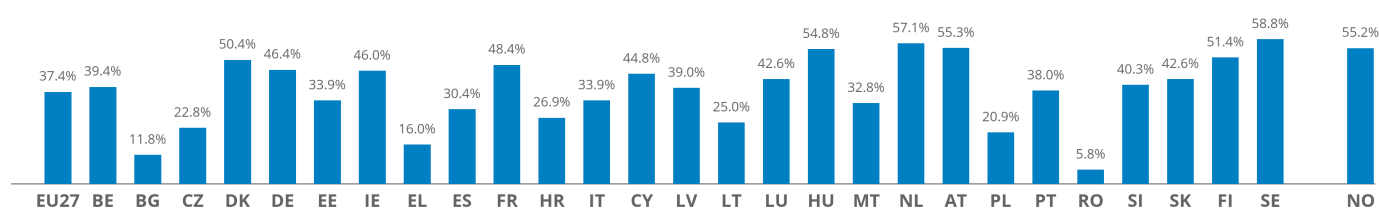
IVET learners who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%), 2021



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Notes: EU27: (d) definition differs (v) Cedefop estimate, Ireland: (d) definition differs, Croatia, Cyprus, Netherlands and Slovenia: (z) not applicable

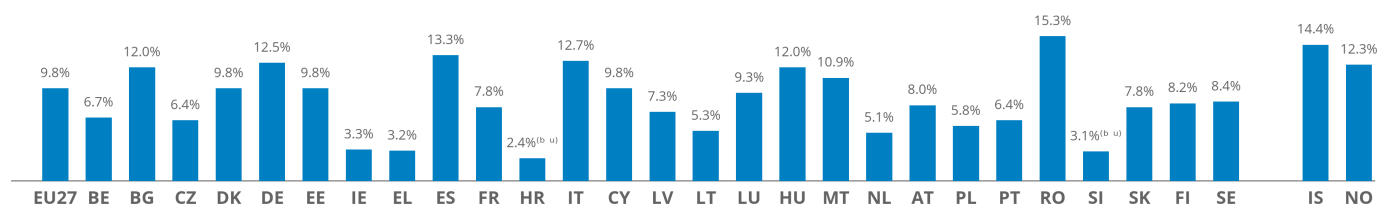
Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%), 2016



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Notes: All values: (b) break in time series

Early leavers from education and training (%), 2021



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Notes: EU27, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway: (b) break in time series, Croatia and Slovenia: (b) break in time series (u) low reliability

Source: [Cedefop's Key indicators on VET](#)



Further information

- Cedefop. (2022). *Vocational education and training in Czechia: short description*.
- Cedefop and ReferNet. (2023). *Timeline of VET policies: Czechia*.
- European Commission. (2023). *Education and training monitor: Czechia*.
- Eurydice. (2024). *National education systems: Czech Republic*.
- Cedefop. (2022). *European skills index: Czechia*.

www.msmt.cz	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
www.mpsv.cz	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
www.npi.cz	National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic
www.refernet.cz	ReferNet Czechia
www.nvf.cz	National Training Fund
www.czso.cz	Czech Statistical Office
www.vupsv.cz	Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs
www.narodnikvalifikace.cz	National Register of Qualifications

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