



---

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

# CROATIA

---

**SYSTEM DESCRIPTION**



**Cite as:** Cedefop, & Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe - Croatia: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database - detailed VET system descriptions* [Database]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/croatia-u3>

Contributors: Nino Buić, Sandra Dobrić (ReferNet Croatia) and Veronika Leiner (Cedefop).

© Cedefop and Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) (ReferNet Croatia), 2023.

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

# Table of contents

- Chapter 1. Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET.
- Chapter 2. Main challenges and policy responses.
- Chapter 3. External factors influencing VET.
  - 3.1. Demographics.
  - 3.2. Economics.
  - 3.3. Labour market.
- Chapter 4. Education attainment.
  - 4.1. Share of high, medium and low level qualifications.
  - 4.2. VET learner share of the total VET population.
  - 4.3. VET learners by level.
  - 4.4. Female share.
  - 4.5. Early leavers from education and training.
  - 4.6. Participation in lifelong learning.
  - 4.7. VET learners by age.
- Chapter 5. VET within education and training system.
- Chapter 6. Apprenticeship.
- Chapter 7. VET governance.
- Chapter 8. VET financing mechanisms.
- Chapter 9. Teachers and trainers.
  - 9.1. VET teacher types.
  - 9.2. Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers.
- Chapter 10. Shaping VET qualifications.
  - 10.1. Anticipating skill needs.
  - 10.2. Designing qualifications.
- Chapter 11. Quality assurance.
- Chapter 12. Validation of prior learning.
- Chapter 13. Incentives for learners.
- Chapter 14. Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision.
- Chapter 15. Guidance and counselling.
- Vocational education and training system chart.
- VET Programme Types.
  - IVET 2-year programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 351 (dvogodisnji strukovni programi)..
  - Initial VET 3-year apprenticeship programmes for crafts and trades, Unified Model of Education, JMO (jedinstveni model obrazovanja, JMO programi); initial VET 3-year programmes for industry and crafts; and dual education programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 353..
  - Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354, 4-year programmes (Četverogodišnji programi redovitog strukovnog obrazovanja).
  - One 5-year programme for general nursing qualification (petogodišnji program - za medicinsku sestru opće njege).
  - VET specialist development programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 453 (programi strukovnoga specijalističkog usavršavanja)..
  - Short-cycle professional undergraduate programmes (kratki stručni studij)..
  - Undergraduate professional studies leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655, (preddiplomski stručni studij)..
  - Specialist graduate professional studies leading to EQF 7, ISCED 757 (specijalistički diplomski stručni studij).
  - Professional development programmes, ISCED 451 (programi usavršavanja).
  - Short training programmes, ISCED 351 (programi osposobljavanja).
  - Master craftsperson qualification exam leading to EQF level 5 (majstorski ispit).
- References.

## CHAPTER 1.

# Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

### Summary of main elements

Overall responsibility for vocational education and training (VET) in Croatia lies with the Ministry of Science and Education supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO). The agency is responsible for developing VET curricula, continuous professional development of VET teachers, skills competitions and quality assurance. Stakeholders are involved in curriculum development, sector skills councils and in the VET Council.

Initial VET is publicly financed and free of charge. All VET programmes combine professional and general competences, to varying degrees; all include work-based learning (WBL), with duration and type varying.

VET is provided at upper secondary and postsecondary levels; the entry point is completion of compulsory education at age 14 or 15.

At upper secondary level, 70% of learners participate in initial vocational education and training (IVET). Around two thirds of VET learners are in 4-year school-based programmes, with under one third in 3-year programmes. Only one upper secondary programme lasts 5 years, leading to a general nursing qualification.

The 4-year, mostly school-based VET programmes and dual education programmes lead to qualifications at the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) level 4.2/ EQF level 4 and allow progression to tertiary education upon completing State *Matura* exams.

3-year VET programmes give access to the labour market and lead to qualifications at the CROQF level 4.1/ EQF level 4; they include school-based programmes, apprenticeships (programmes for crafts, nationally referred to as unified model of education, JMO), and dual education programmes. Within the final exam for completion of the 3-year JMO programme, learners take the apprenticeship exam. Around 13% of all IVET learners are in apprenticeships.

Only a few learners take part in 2-year VET programmes, leading to qualifications, without completing upper secondary education. Graduates of 2- and 3-year programmes can continue their education as regular students to attain a (one level) higher qualification, which is decided by each school individually.

VET specialist development programmes (EQF 5) are being introduced at post- secondary level.

Professional education and training are offered at tertiary level. Short-cycle professional undergraduate programmes last 2 to 2.5 years and lead to qualifications at CROQF/EQF level 5. 3- to 4-year professional undergraduate programmes lead to a professional bachelor diploma at CROQF level 6.st (\*) / EQF level 6. Specialist graduate professional studies last 1 to 2 years and lead to a professional specialist diploma at CROQF 7.1.st (\*) / EQF level 7.

Adult education and training in Croatia lead to educational attainment at EQF levels 1 to 5 for learners older than 14. Most programmes are VET-related, ranging from short training and professional development to programmes leading to qualifications equivalent to those in IVET. The education ministry's approval of programmes leading to formal certificates is necessary, with prior positive opinion from ASOO.

(\*) As per Amendments to the CROQF Act (Official Gazette No 20/2021), abbreviation 'st' is added to professional qualifications at CROQF level 6 to differentiate these from university qualifications at the same level, indicated by abbreviation 'sv'. 'St' is abbreviated from *stručni* (professional), and 'sv' from *sveučilišni* (university).

### **Distinctive features**

VET in Croatia has two main roles. Alongside preparation for labour market entry, it enables progression to tertiary education; this is primarily through 4-year VET programmes, where learners spend half of their time acquiring general competences. In 2020 (summer examination period), 83% of VET students at CROQF level 4.2/EQF level 4 applied for the state matura exams, 67% passed the matura exams, and 51.1% enrolled in tertiary education studies in the year of their graduation.

Participation in VET at upper secondary level is one of the highest in the EU (70% compared to the EU-27 average of 48.7% in 2021). Croatia has the lowest rate of early school leaving in the EU (2.3% in 2022, compared to the EU-27 average of 9.6%).

Self-assessment at VET schools is part of the quality assurance system. Support measures are in place to advance self-assessment, including school visits, upgrades to the online tool e-Kvaliteta and feedback reports with recommendations.

To promote excellence in VET, Croatia has established a network of 25 regional centres of competence. These will offer state-of-the-art technologies, teaching excellence and work-based learning, training for professionals, VET teachers and in-company mentors, as well as close cooperation with local businesses.

In 2019, the first WorldSkills Croatia competition launched a reformed model of VET student competitions. With 10 000 visitors, over 40 disciplines, high visibility, and stakeholder endorsement, this became the leading national event for the promotion of VET. The competition was organized for the fourth time in 2023, becoming the largest education event and skills showcase in Croatia and the region.

---

[1] As per Amendments to the CROQF Act (Official Gazette No 20/2021), abbreviation 'st' is added to professional qualifications at CROQF level 6 to differentiate these from university qualifications at the same level, indicated by abbreviation 'sv'. 'St' is abbreviated from *stručni* (professional), and 'sv' from *sveučilišni* (university).

[2] As per Amendments to the CROQF Act (Official Gazette No 20/2021), abbreviation 'st' is added to professional qualifications at CROQF 7 to differentiate these from university qualifications at the same level, indicated by abbreviation 'sv'. 'St' is abbreviated from *stručni* (professional), and 'sv' from *sveučilišni* (university).

## CHAPTER 2.

# Main challenges and policy responses

Priorities for VET development focus on increasing labour market relevance, quality, attractiveness and internationalisation. Reforms are addressing outdated curricula, skills mismatches, work-based learning, apprenticeship, and VET's public image. The flagship initiative, VET curriculum reform, aims to comprehensively redesign in line with labour market needs, learning outcomes, and work-based learning, contemporary teaching, with strong support for VET providers. Youth unemployment (aged 15 to 24), which was 16.6% in 2019, rose to 21.9% in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic's economic effects but decreased to 18% in 2022 as the economy recovered. Similarly, the share of young people (aged 15 to 24) neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs) increased from 11.8% in 2019 to 12.7% in 2021 but returned to 11.9% in 2022. Youth guarantee schemes are in place to help young people enter employment, apprenticeships, education, or training within 4 months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

National demographics have reduced the number of learners, particularly in apprenticeship programmes (JMO). Enrolment in JMO halved between 2013 and 2018 but began recovering, increasing by 30% in 2023. A new dual education model was introduced in 2018 to improve the quality of work-based learning and apprenticeships.

Participation in adult learning in 2022 was 4.4%, positioning Croatia at the lower end of EU range despite the tax incentives available for entrepreneurs for education and training costs, and VAT exemptions for adult education providers offering programmes approved by the education ministry. The main activities aim at promotion of lifelong learning in Croatia through awareness-raising efforts by ASOO.

## CHAPTER 3.

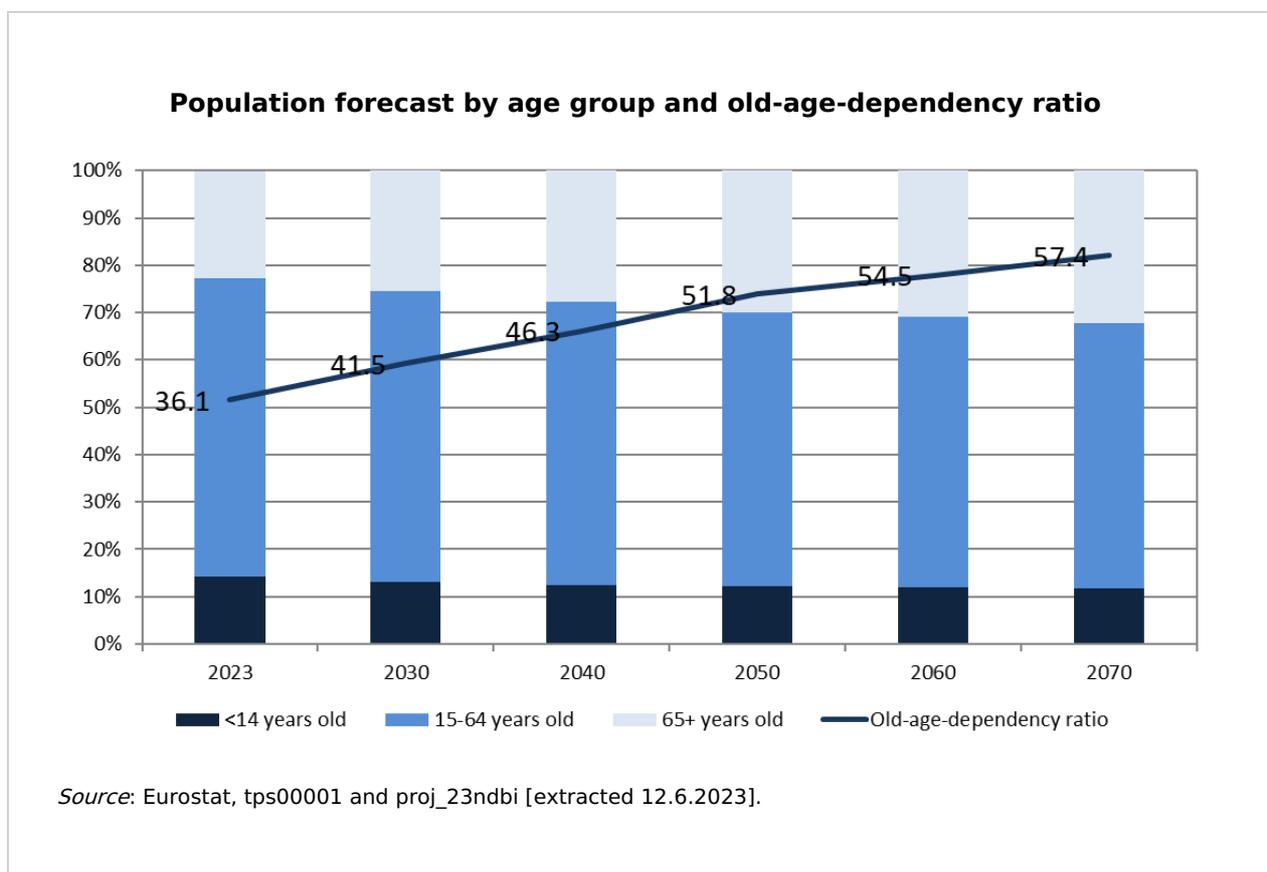
# External factors influencing VET

## 3.1 Demographics

Population in 2022: 3 862 305 (1).

It has fallen by 7.0% since 2017 due to negative natural growth and emigration that has been steadily intensifying since Croatia joined the EU in 2013 (2).

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing. The old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 36.1% in 2023 to 57.4% in 2070.



Overall reduction in the number of learners at upper secondary level had been reflected in a sharp decline in enrolment rates in 3-year VET programmes over the past years. National demographics reduced the number of learners, particularly in 3-year IVET programmes. So far, those most affected have been the apprenticeship programmes (JMO). The enrolment in JMO halved in the period from 2013 to 2018; however, there has been a notable recovery since 2018 with a 30% increase until 2023.

There is only a small number of VET providers that offer education in minority languages (12 institutions, 1 176 enrolled students). Most learners are enrolled in Serbian and Italian language

options, followed by Hungarian and Czech, and VET providers are located in regions with higher representation of minority communities.

## 3.2 Economics

SME contribution to the Croatian 'non-financial business economy' is of key importance. The number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been increasing since 2015 (+23.2% by 2020). Most SMEs in 2020 were micro enterprises (92.3%) (3).

SMEs are concentrated in major urban centres (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Osijek) and the surrounding areas. According to total revenues, the leading industrial branches are the production of food, drinks and tobacco, chemical and oil industries.

Tourism is an important driver of the economy and generates strong multiplying effects spilling over to other economic fields. In 2019, the direct contribution of tourism to GDP was estimated to be 11.8%, and tourism provided 91 608 direct jobs or 6.8% of total employment. Direct tourism employment was 11 385 jobs lower in 2021, seeing tourism's share of employment fell to 5.9% in view of the COVID-19 pandemic (4).

Capital investments in infrastructure would boost the economy's growth potential; this is particularly so in transport, energy efficiency, transition to a circular economy, public and private research and development and digitalisation, but benefit would also come from resources used getting people to work and promoting social inclusion (5).

## 3.3 Labour market

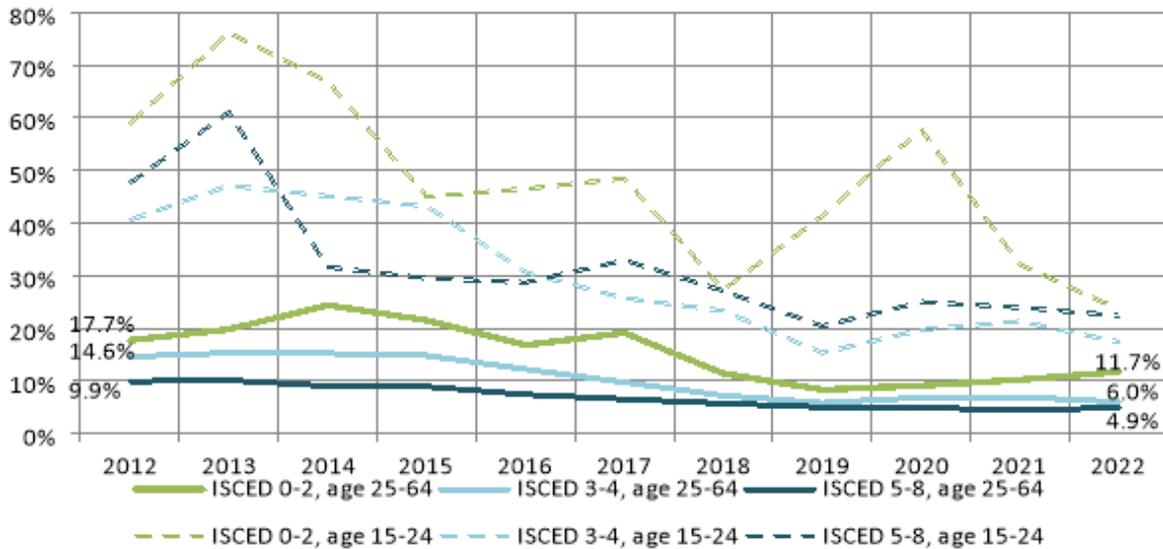
Alongside a fair number of regulated professions, the labour market is flexible to some extent.

Regulated professions extend over a range of sectors relevant to VET, including occupations in crafts and trades, medical care, tourism, and transportation.

The [list of regulated professions](#) is published by the Ministry of Labour.

Total unemployment (6) (2022): 6.0% (5,4% in EU-27); it decreased by 1.0 percentage points (pp) since 2018 (7).

### Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012-2022



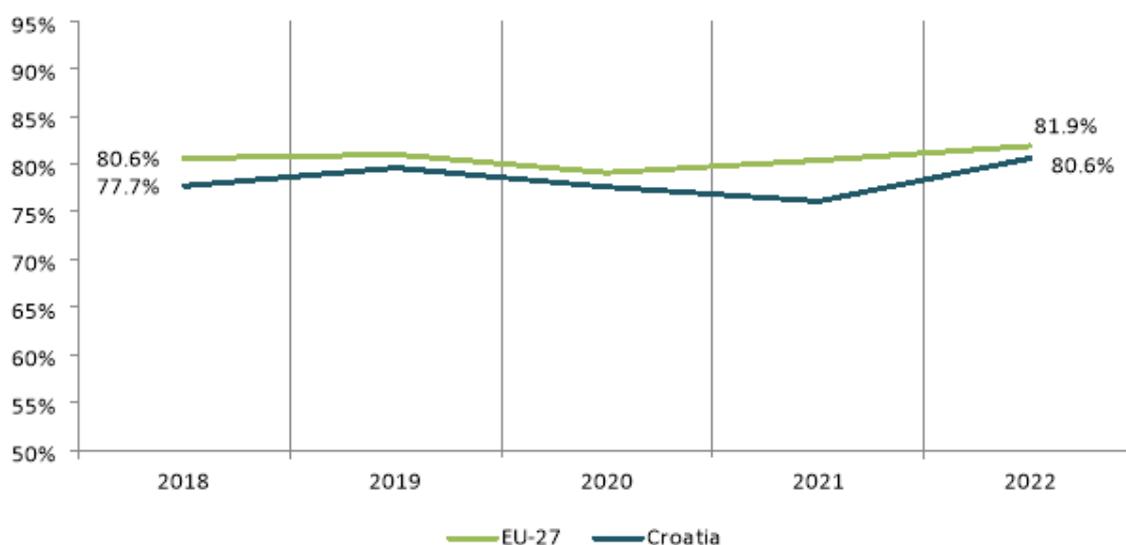
NB: data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 0-2 and 5-8, age 15-24. ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education. ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education. Source: Eurostat, lfsa\_urgaed [extracted 12.10.2023].

The figure above shows unemployment is significantly higher among young people (aged 15-24) than among those aged 25-64 and it is distributed unevenly between those with low- and high-level qualifications.

As of 2015, for the 25-64 age group, the gap has been decreasing, with the unemployment rate for unskilled workers (11.7%) still high in comparison to those with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (6.0%) and to those with tertiary education (4.9%) in 2022.

Employment of VET graduates aged 20 to 34 increased from 77.7% in 2018 to 80.6% in 2022. (8)

### Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.  
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.  
Source: Eurostat, edat\_ifse\_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

The increase (+2.9 pp) in employment of 20- to 34-year-old VET graduates in 2018-2022 in Croatia was higher compared to the increase in employment of VET graduates (+1.3 pp) in the same period in EU-27. In 2019-20, the COVID-19 pandemic similarly affected the employment of VET graduates in the EU-27 (-1.9 pp) than in Croatia (-2.0 pp).

---

[1] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 12.5.2022].

[2] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 12.5.2022].

[6] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.

[7] Eurostat, une\_rt\_a [extracted 12.6.2023].

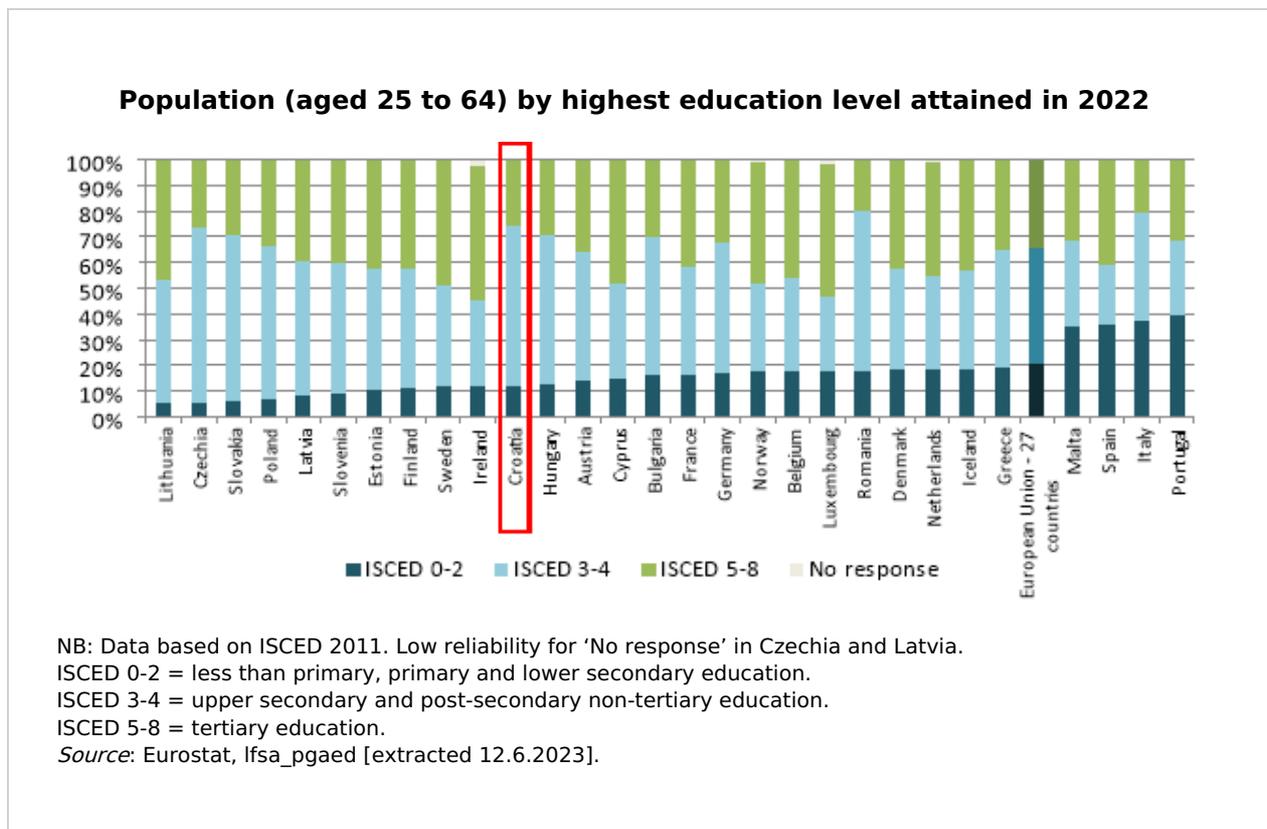
[8] Eurostat table edat\_ifse\_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

## CHAPTER 4.

# Education attainment

## 4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2022, 12.1% of the population (aged 25-64) in Croatia attained lower education level (ISCED 0-2), 62.6% attained medium education level (ISCED 3-4) and 25.4% attained tertiary education (ISCED 5-8).



## 4.3 VET learners by level

### Share of learners in VET by level in 2021

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
10.3%	70.0%	Not applicable

Source: Eurostat, educ\_uae\_enrs01, educ\_uae\_enrs04 and educ\_uae\_enrs07 [extracted 19.1.2024].

At tertiary level, 29% of higher education students attended professional programmes in 2021 (9).

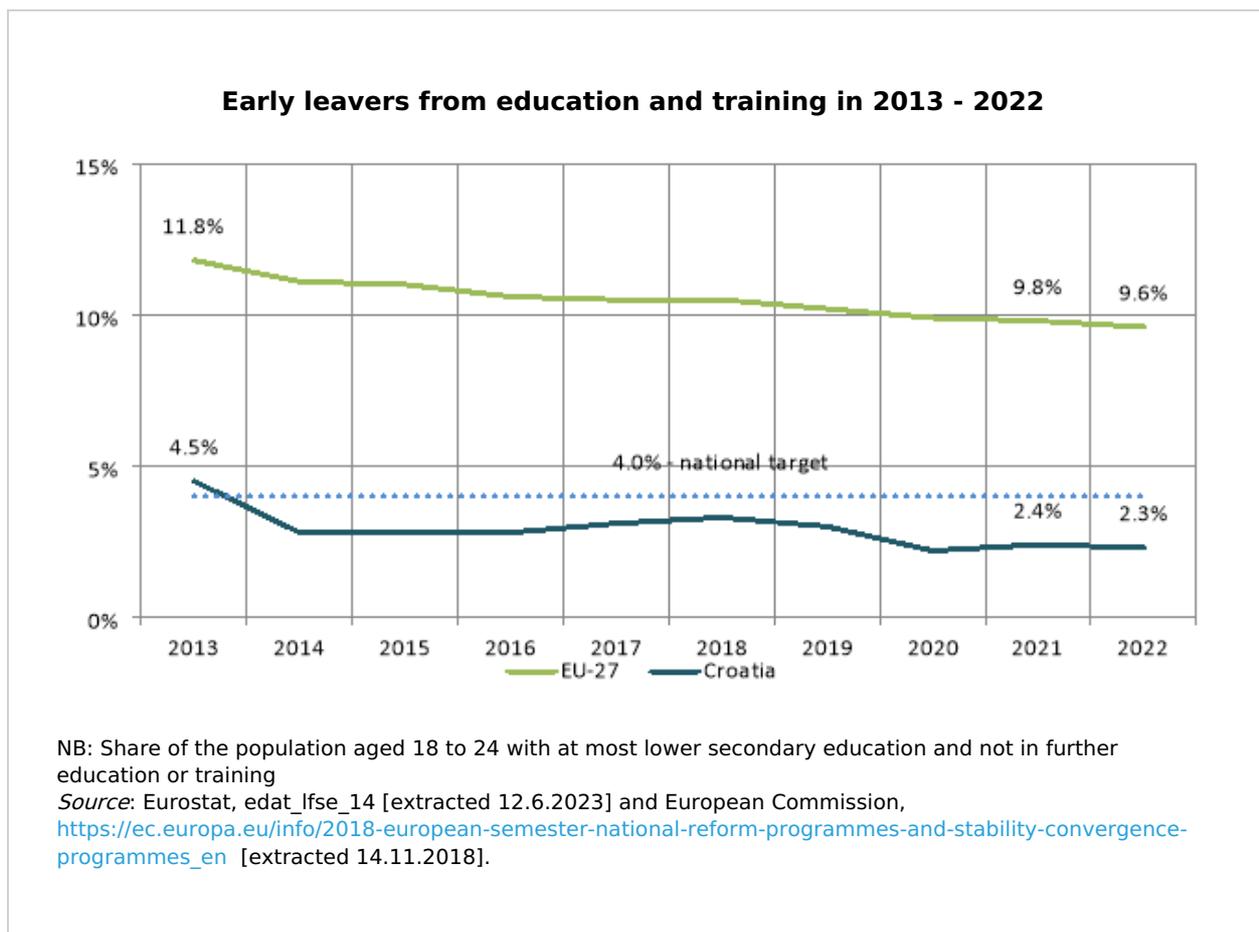
## 4.4 Female share

In 2023-24, there were 57% male students enrolled in initial VET, against 43% female students (10).

Male students are the majority in 3-year industrial programmes in IVET, whereas female students are the majority in 5-year programme for general care nurses.

## 4.5 Early leavers from education and training

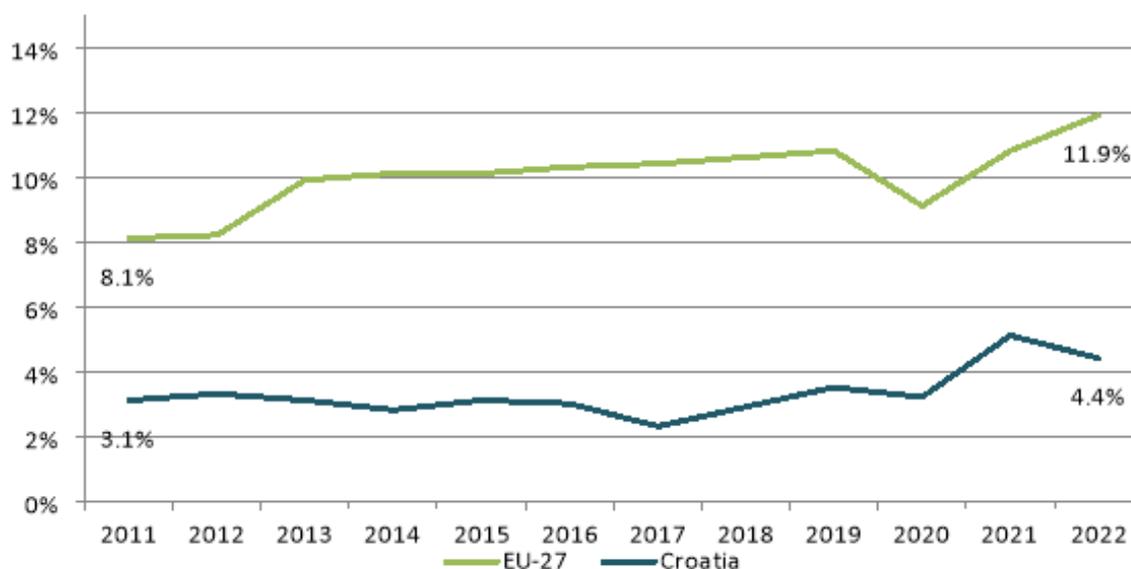
Croatia traditionally has very low rate of early school leaving, 2.3% in 2022. This figure is significantly lower than the EU-27 average of 9.6%.



For more information visit [Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving](#) and our interactive toolkits: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#).

## 4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

### Participation in lifelong learning in 2011 - 2022



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training; break in series 2021  
Source: Eurostat, trng\_lfse\_01 [extracted 12.6.2023].

The share of adults participating in training programmes in 2022 remains among the lowest in the EU (4.4%) and significantly below the EU-27 average (11.9%).

## 4.7 VET learners by age

In general, all IVET learners are under 19 years old; there are some exceptions, such as students with disabilities.

The majority of CVET learners are in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups. The available data on IVET and CVET learners by age are not comparable.

---

[9] Eurostat, educ\_uoe\_enrt02 [extracted 8.11.2023].

[10] Školski e-Rudnik, ŠeR [database] [extracted 7.11.2023].

# CHAPTER 5.

## VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0);
- integrated primary and lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) (hereafter basic education);
- upper secondary education (ISCED level 3);
- post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4);
- tertiary education (ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Early and preschool education is offered from the very early age of 6 months and is provided at childcare institutions (*dječji vrtići*). 1-year pre-school education is compulsory before enrolling in primary education.

Primary and lower secondary education are integrated and last 8 years, typically from age 6 to 15; it may last to age 21 for special education needs learners.

Upper secondary education includes 4-year general education gymnasium programmes, art education and initial VET programmes that might last from 1 to 5 years.

VET specialist development programmes (*strukovno specijalističko usavršavanje i osposobljavanje*) represent further education programmes (specialisation) at the post-secondary level (CROQF/EQF 5, at least 60 CSVET (11) or 120 ECTS) for learners who completed VET programmes at secondary level (at least CROQF 4.1/EQF 4 or higher). These programmes have been developed within the curricula reform initiative, starting as of 2018.

Access to tertiary education is ensured through achieving adequate results in State *Matura* exams (*državna matura*) for general education, art education and 4-year programme VET graduates. 3-year VET programmes may be offered as apprenticeship and dual education programmes leading to the labour market. Graduates can enter an optional 1- to 2-year bridging programme and, if successful, take State *Matura* exams to qualify for tertiary education. In order to enrol in higher education, VET graduates can opt to take the State *Matura* exams (*ispiti državne mature*) following the completion of 4- and 5-year programmes. The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education administers the State *Matura* exams in cooperation with upper-secondary schools. These exams serve three aims: final examination and requirement for graduation from general upper-secondary schools; entrance exams for undergraduate studies at tertiary level for all students (including VET graduates); and external evaluation of student competences and learning outcomes. State *Matura* exams are administered in general education subjects only, as obligatory and optional exams. Obligatory exams are in Croatian language, mathematics and foreign language and they may be taken at A (advanced) and B (elementary) level. The list of optional exams is determined by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education for each school year. Higher education institutions set the required level of exams and optional exams among their admission criteria independently.

Professional higher education is offered at polytechnics in the form of short-cycle undergraduate programmes (ISCED 5), professional undergraduate programmes (ISCED 6) and graduate professional specialist programmes (ISCED 7).

Initial and continuous VET is offered. The majority of initial VET programmes are 3-year or 4-year programmes leading to formal upper secondary VET qualifications. These programmes might be delivered as:

- apprenticeships (alternation schemes);
- school-based, with training periods at employers;
- dual education programmes (in an experimental phase since the 2018/19 school year).

### Delivery modes of upper secondary IVET programmes

IVET programmes	Delivery modes offered		
	Apprenticeship programmes	School-based VET with periods of training at the workplace	Dual education programmes
3-year VET programmes for crafts (WBL performed through practical training in licensed crafts and/or legal entities and school workshops)			
3-year VET programmes for industry and related education programmes (WBL is performed through practical training in school workshops, in the workplace and in school laboratories, and through professional practice performed in the workplace (included in most programmes))	x		x
4-year VET programmes (WBL is performed through practical training in school workshops and laboratories and through professional practice performed in the workplace (included in most programmes))	x		x
5-year VET programme - general care nurse (WBL is performed through training in school facilities, laboratories and clinical training)		x	

Source: Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education.

IVET at upper secondary level leads to VET qualifications at levels 3 and 4 that are the same as in the European qualifications framework (EQF). There is an offer of 1-to 2-year VET programmes leading to levels 3, but these are minor pathways, for less than 1% of upper secondary learners. There is one 5-year programme only (general care nurse) with the implementation mode different from other programmes (2-year general education training and 3-year VET programme).

4-year VET programmes combine general and vocational education on average in the same shares. Therefore, they have good progression opportunities to tertiary education if learners pass the State *Matura* exams that are entrance exams.

3-year programmes delivered as apprenticeships and dual education programmes leading to labour market. Graduates who want to progress to tertiary education will take 1-to 2-year bridging programme that will allow them to take State *Matura* exams.

Professional education and training programmes at tertiary level are not considered VET.

Non-formal continuing VET is part of adult learning regulated by the [Adult Education Act](#).

[11] As per amendments to the CROQF Act (Official Gazette No 20/2021), CSVET represents the Croatian credit system for vocational education and training. One CSVET point

corresponds to a workload of 15 to 25 hours, with each hour lasting 60 minutes.

[14] Zakon o obrazovanju odraslih (NN 144/2021) [[Adult education act](#)]

## CHAPTER 6.

# Apprenticeship

Currently, there are two types of apprenticeship programmes in Croatia:

- Unified Model of Education (*Jedinstveni model obrazovanja*, JMO);
- experimental dual education programme based on the Model of Croatian Dual Education.

### **Unified Model of Education (*Jedinstveni model obrazovanja*, JMO)**

As of the school year 2004/05, the apprenticeship scheme is implemented in 3-year initial VET programmes for crafts and trades, also known as the Unified Model of Education (*Jedinstveni model obrazovanja*, JMO).

Previously, programmes in dual education were introduced in the school year 1995/96. Their main characteristic was the separation of general education from vocational theoretical and practical education. In consequence, students were issued two certificates: one for general education and the other for vocational education. Due to the complexity, dual education programmes were replaced by the Unified Model of Education (JMO).

JMO programmes consist of two parts: general education part and apprenticeship. Apprenticeship consists of a professional-theoretical part and practical training and exercises. The share of work-based learning at apprenticeship providers is about 60% of the programme.

Apprenticeship providers are typically business entities such as craft business workshops or trade associations, institutions or cooperatives, licenced to offer practical training and exercises for apprentices. In order to get the licence, apprenticeship providers must ensure conditions for students to acquire competences in the real work environment, including a student mentor with adequate qualifications and pedagogical competences.

The JMO programme student has the status of regular student and apprentice in craft. Entry requirements include completed primary education, demonstrated medical fitness for the particular profession, as well as placement and apprenticeship contract with a licensed apprenticeship provider.

The apprenticeship contract in writing is concluded between the apprenticeship provider and the student or his/her parents or guardian if the student is not of legal age. It is not a contract of employment. The apprenticeship contract also prescribes the obligation to pay monthly remuneration to the student.

JMO programmes end with formal qualification at EQF level 4, ISCED 353. Students finish their education with the preparation and the defence of the final practical assignment (*završni rad*). The defence involves taking the apprenticeship exam, which includes a practical task within a complex examination item. The school issues a certificate of completion (*svjedodžba o završnome radu*) and the chamber of crafts issues a certificate supplement on apprenticeship (*dodatak svjedodžbi o naukovanju*). The main destination of graduates is the labour market. As of 2014, graduates from 3-year VET programmes can enter an optional 1- to 2-year bridge programme, where they can obtain a second VET qualification at CROQF level 4.2, and also prepare for State *Matura* exams to access higher education. JMO graduates can also apply for the master craftsman exam after at least 2 years of work experience in the field.

Various stakeholders are involved in the implementation of JMO programmes. The Ministry of Science and Education decides on enrolment quotas, adopts JMO curricula and approves programmes, with the prior consent of the ministry in charge of crafts. The ministry responsible

for crafts shares the responsibility with the ministry in charge of education. It ensures apprenticeship vacancies and suggests the enrolment structure, drafts curricula, defines and supervises the licensing procedure for apprenticeship providers, maintains the database of licensed crafts, and sets minimum conditions for apprenticeship contracts. It also defines the method and process of taking apprenticeship exams and exams on elementary teaching skills for workplace mentors. The Agency for VET and Adult Education proposes curricula to the Ministry of Science and Education for adoption and is in charge of the external evaluation of apprenticeship exams. The chamber of trades and crafts issues licences to apprenticeship providers, verifies and keeps record of the apprenticeship contracts, issues certificate supplements on apprenticeship, runs training programmes and conducts exams in elementary teaching skills for workplace mentors in JMO. Apprenticeship providers offer practical training and exercises to students and participate in exam committees for apprenticeship exams. VET schools enrol students in JMO programmes, implement the general, vocational theoretical part and a smaller part of the practical training of the programme, organise the preparation and defence of the final practical assignment, and issue certificates of completion.

In the school year 2023/2024, 12 754 students were enrolled in 41 JMO programmes delivered by 107 VET providers; this equates to 8.7% of all secondary school students and 12.8% of all VET students. National demographics reduced the number of learners, particularly in the apprenticeship programmes (JMO). The enrolment in JMO halved in the period from 2013 to 2018; however, it has started recovering since 2018 and increased by 30% until 2023. JMO programmes are offered in nine sectors: agriculture, food and veterinary medicine; forestry and wood technology; textiles and leather; mechanical engineering, shipbuilding and metallurgy; electrical engineering and computing; construction and geodesy; economy, trade and business administration; tourism and hospitality; and personal and other services. The most popular qualifications in 2023/24 were hairdresser, car mechanic, car mechatronic, carpenter and installer of heating and air-condition.

### **Dual education programmes based on the Model of Croatian Dual Education**

In 2018, the Ministry of Science and Education (MoSE) launched the experimental dual education programme based on the [Model of Croatian Dual Education](#) (in Croatian). The responsible institution for the implementation of the programme is MoSE, with other ministries, agencies, economic and crafts chambers, employers' associations and with the support from partner institutions from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Key participants in dual education represent students, VET schools and business entities. The partnership of VET schools and business entities reflects in cooperation in planning and implementation of work-based learning, continuous professional development of VET teachers and mentors in business entities, exchange of new technologies and know-how, monitoring and assessment of students' progress in work-based learning activities and the organisation of final exams. VET schools are responsible for teaching and learning activities in line with vocational curricula, planning work-based learning activities with business entities, preparing students for work-based learning, and supporting and supervising mentors in business entities. In the first year of the programme, work-based learning is mostly organised in VET schools, while in the following years, most work-based learning is undertaken in business entities. The entities are required to provide training and continuous professional development to mentors, as well as to ensure quality assurance of work-based learning. Students sign contracts with business entities and are entitled to a monthly allowance for the period of work-based learning undertaken in business entities. The experimental phase of the programme started in the 2018/19 school year. In 2023/24, it was conducted in nine qualifications at EQF level 4 (3-year programmes for salesman, glazier, chimney sweeper, CNC operator, waiter, cook, and painter decorator and 4-year programmes for beautician and hairdresser) in 24 VET schools. In 2020, curricula were adopted for four qualifications (salesman, glazier, chimney sweeper, and beautician). The programme is financed from the State Budget and from the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme as part of the project Modernisation of VET Programmes.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the [Cedefop European database on apprenticeship schemes](#). Please, see also [Cedefop Thematic country review on apprenticeship](#)

in Croatia.

# CHAPTER 7.

## VET governance

Although several governmental ministries have an influence on the development of VET for the sectors under their remit, the Ministry of Science and Education (*Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja*) is responsible for overall VET policy. It monitors the overall compliance of the VET system with legislation and coordinates multiple executive agencies in the field of education.

Since the mid-2000s, the government has established several new agencies. The establishment of the Agency for VET in 2005 marked the beginning of profound reforms in VET. In 2010, the agency underwent restructuring, merging the VET and adult education agencies under a new name - the Agency for VET and adult education (*Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih*, ASOO) (12). As an executive body in charge of the overall development and organisation of the VET system, ASOO is responsible for the following:

- development of VET programmes/curricula;
- ensuring stakeholder involvement in VET;
- support and follow-up for VET school self-assessment;
- monitoring the work of VET and adult education institutions;
- provision of advice and counselling services for VET and adult education institutions;
- professional exams for new, and promotions for experienced VET teachers, offering continuous professional development opportunities for VET teachers;
- foreign VET qualification recognition process;
- organising national skills competitions.

Other stakeholders in VET are:

- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (*Ministarstvo gospodarstva i održivog razvoja*) defines conditions and procedures for licensing apprenticeship providers, taking apprenticeship exams, apprenticeship contracts, etc.;
- Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*) is in charge of employment policies and labour market forecasting;
- Council for VET (*Vijeće za strukovno obrazovanje*) consists of 21 members from various stakeholders. The role of this body is to coordinate activities of all stakeholders in VET, initiate the development of new curricula and revision of existing curricula, recommend new developments in VET, and to provide its assessment for the establishment of the network of regional centres of competence;
- Education and Teacher Training Agency (*Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje*, AZOO), responsible for the development of general education part of VET curricula;
- the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts issues licences to apprenticeship providers, verifies and keeps record of apprenticeship contracts, issues certificate supplements on apprenticeship, runs training programmes and conducts exams in elementary teaching skills for workplace mentors in JMO. It is also a partner in the experimental programme in dual education, launched as of school year 2018/2019;
- the Croatian Chamber of Economy (*Hrvatska gospodarska komora*) is an independent organisation of all legal bodies performing business activities. The chamber advocates for the advancement of VET in Croatia and it is also a partner in the experimental programme in dual education, launched as of school year 2018/19;
- the Croatian Employers' Association (*Hrvatska udruga poslodavaca*) is an independent organisation of all legal bodies performing business activities. Its tasks are to represent the interests of members in the development of the economic system, assess means and conditions of economic growth, improve the development of entrepreneurship, develop

- business relations with foreign partners, and support innovation and development;
- industrial trade unions (six confederations of trade unions) are key stakeholders in social dialogue in Croatia who represent the position of Croatian labour force.

IVET providers are public and private secondary vocational schools that can be vocational or polyvalent (offer both gymnasium and VET programmes). The majority of schools are public, with the share of private VET schools at 11% in 2023/24. Local authorities are legal founders and owners of public schools. Vocational schools can be technical, industrial, craft and others, based on the type of programmes and their duration (2-, 3- (industrial and crafts schools), 4- or 5-year (technical schools)). Some VET schools offer programmes from a single education sector or subsector, such as health and medicine, economy, commerce, administration, forestry, carpentry, agriculture, veterinary medicine, maritime, traffic, aviation, hospitality, tourism, engineering, electrical engineering, and construction, while others provide VET programmes in multiple sectors.

Based on legislative provisions introduced in 2018 (13), 25 schools from the sectors of tourism and hospitality, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and ICT, health care, and agriculture have been selected in the process of establishing the network of [regional centres of competences](#).

- 
- [12] Zakon o Agenciji za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih [Act on Agency for VET and Adult Education]; *Official Gazette* No 24/2010.
- [13] Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o strukovnom obrazovanju [Amendments to the Vocational Education and Training Act]; *Official Gazette* No 25/2018.

# CHAPTER 8.

## VET financing mechanisms

Since 2001, the financing of public upper secondary VET schools has been decentralised.

The State budget finances:

- salaries for teachers and other employees in education;
- in-service training of teachers and other specialists;
- education of at-risk groups (ethnic minorities, learners with special needs) and gifted learners;
- transportation costs of learners;
- teaching materials and equipment;
- information and communication technology infrastructure and software for schools;
- school libraries;
- capital investments (buildings, infrastructure).

Local and regional governments cover:

- costs related to school premises and equipment;
- operating costs of secondary schools;
- transportation costs of employees;
- co-financing of food and lodging in learner residences;
- capital investments (buildings, infrastructure) according to criteria determined by the Minister of Education (14).

If local/regional governments cannot ensure minimum funding, the centrally managed equalisation fund (*Fond za izravnavanje*) provides the deficit amount.

In 2021, the distribution of education expenditure by level shows greater inclination to funding pre-primary and primary education (48.9% rather than tertiary (19.9%), and secondary education (18.7%) (15).

In CVET, adult learners usually cover the expenses of the education programmes they attend. The exception is primary education programmes, which are free of charge for adults and financed by the Ministry of Science and Education. The public employment service covers the education expenses of the unemployed within the framework of the main employment policy, the Active labour market policy (ALMP), and awards vouchers for upskilling of both the employed and unemployed individuals as of 2022.

The reforms outlined in the [VET System Development Programme 2016-20](#) for both IVET and CVET are strongly dependent on EU structural funds.

---

[14] Local authorities as the legal founders and owners of the schools can also be investors regarding buildings/infrastructure.

[15] Eurostat, gov\_10a\_exp [extracted 11.11.2023].

## CHAPTER 9.

# Teachers and trainers

## 9.1 VET teacher types

In VET, there are:

- general subject teachers;
- vocational teachers and trainers.

Teachers of general subjects, such as mathematics and English, are qualified according to general regulations on teachers set by the education ministry. These require graduate university or professional studies, as well as pedagogical competences.

Teachers and trainers in IVET and formal CVET (16):

- teachers of theoretical vocational subjects (*nastavnik stručno-teorijskih sadržaja*) require higher education (180 ECTS or more) and completed supplementary pedagogical-psychological education (55 ECTS) and other requirements according to the VET curriculum;
- teachers of work-based learning (*nastavnik učenja temeljenog na radu*) require an undergraduate university or professional degree (180 ECTS or more), pedagogical competences and holding a qualification matching the required profile;
- vocational teachers (*strukovni učitelj*) require a level of education defined by VET curriculum (at least a secondary vocational education of the corresponding profile) pedagogical competences and at least 5 years of work experience in the appropriate profession;
- teaching associate (*suradnik u nastavi*) requires a secondary education, pedagogical competences and at least 5 years of work experience, unless regulated differently by the vocational curricula.

In 3-year VET programmes (JMO), apprenticeship providers (crafts and legal entities) have to assign a mentor, usually a qualified staff member who accompanies apprentices during their work at employers. According to the legislation (17), mentors can be:

- master craftspersons;
- persons who have the same rights, as per the Crafts Act, as the persons who have passed the master craftsman's exam and also have passed the exam that proves elementary teaching competences;
- persons with relevant higher education qualifications and the exam proving elementary teaching competences;
- inventors or persons with high school qualifications who have their trades and crafts businesses registered in the region of particular national interest, with at least 3 years of relevant professional experience and the exam proving elementary teaching competences;
- persons with relevant high school qualifications, at least 7 years of relevant professional experience and the exam proving elementary teaching competences.

In 2021, about 15 850 teachers taught either vocational or general education subjects in upper secondary vocational education (18).

In dual education programmes the mentor must be employed by the employer, have the appropriate qualification and have passed an exam that proves the basic knowledge of teaching.

## 9.2 Continuing professional development of

## teachers/trainers

The [continuing professional development and in-service training of VET teachers](#) is mainly provided by the Agency for VET and Adult Education. VET schools are also expected to provide in-house staff development activities. However, there are currently no data available on the quality or effectiveness of these activities (see also below for school-based developmental projects and mobility projects funded by EU programmes). Travel and accommodation costs of in-service training for teachers are covered by VET institutions, which affects the number of teachers attending training. Overall, the provision of in-service training for VET staff is underfinanced and generally perceived as insufficient.

Apart from the State-funded in-service training described above, in-service training of VET teachers is also implemented by:

- professional associations and other non-governmental organisations offering training (fee-based or free of charge);
- public open universities (*Pučka otvorena učilišta*);
- the Chamber of Crafts and Trades;

Such in-service training does not require programme or provider accreditation.

The system enables promotion in the profession of teachers, vocational trainers and teaching associates. The Regulation on professional advancement of teachers, education professionals and school directors in primary and secondary schools and student dormitories (19) guides [promotion in the profession](#), and teachers can acquire the title of mentors, advisors and excellent advisors.

They can be recognised for outstanding achievements in education. The Regulation prescribes levels, conditions and ways of progression. VET teachers initiate the process of promotion, with mandatory notification to their schools. The Agency of VET and Adult Education conducts the promotion procedure and issues decisions on the promotion of VET teachers. The requirements for advancement include a professional exam, work experience as a teacher, participation in CPD, and meeting additional assessment criteria, which cover organisation, participation or mentorship in student competitions; mentorship to students or teacher trainees; delivery or participation in training; activity in professional associations; publications and production of teaching materials and educational content; project management or implementation; and contribution to school (a mandatory criterion) and the education system.

Teachers are elected into positions of mentor, advisor and excellent advisor for the period of 5 years and can be re-elected.

In 2018, the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) produced the concept for the new model of continuing professional development (CPD) and open programme of CPD for VET school teachers (20). The concept significantly expands the scope, the quality and the modalities of CPD and defines general and elective modules delivered through guided training, individual assignments and assessment activities. Modules are directed at developing teaching competences, teaching talented students and students with disabilities, quality assurance, class management, innovative teaching methods, adult education, service learning, as well as strengthening peer- and lifelong-learning, digital and project management competences.

For more information visit Cedefop project page on [Teachers' and Trainers' professional development](#) and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#). You may also read [Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World](#) and [Cedefop comparative analysis](#).

- [16] Zakon o strukovnom obrazovanju [Vocational Education and Training Act], *Official Gazette* No 30/2009, 24/2010, 22/2013, 25/2018, 69/2022
- [17] Zakon o obrtu [Crafts Act]; *Official Gazette* No 143/2013, 127/2019, 41/2020. Pravilnik o minimalnim uvjetima za ugovore o naukovanju [Regulation on minimal conditions for apprenticeship contracts]. *Official Gazette* No 107/2020.
- [18] Eurostat, educ\_uoe\_perp01 [extracted 11.11.2023].
- [19] Pravilnik o napredovanju učitelja, nastavnika, stručnih suradnika i ravnatelja u osnovim i srednjim školama i učeničkim domovima [Regulation on professional advancement of teachers, education professionals and school directors in primary and secondary schools and student dormitories]. *Official Gazette* No 68/2019, 60/2020, 32/2021.
- [20] As part of the national project *Modernisation of the continuous professional development of VET teachers*, launched by AVETAE in 2017 and co-funded by the European structural and investment fund.

## CHAPTER 10.

# Shaping VET qualifications

## 10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Based on the Government Decree on the monitoring, analyses and prediction of labour market needs and the development of an educational enrolment policy (21), the Public Employment Service (*Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje, hereinafter PES*) conducts an annual analysis and prediction of labour market needs for specific qualifications. This analysis is based on relevant statistical data and employment indicators of currently unemployed persons with specific qualifications, data from the Employers questionnaire (*anketa poslodavaca*) and regional and local development strategies and plans. PES publishes the Recommendations for educational enrolment and stipend policies (*Preporuke za obrazovnu upisnu politiku i politiku stipendiranja*) for every school year. These recommendations are regionally and locally determined and are qualitative, rather than quantitative in nature, indicating only if there is a need for an increase or decrease in the enrolment in a specific VET programme. They have not always been taken into account while determining the enrolment vacancies in the specific VET programmes and the need for a more efficient and precise system was recognised.

Legislation on NQF (22) in 2013 provided a new tool for qualification development and reshaped the structure for labour market anticipation and feedback loops between occupational standards, qualification standards and curricula. The process of adjusting education to labour market needs begins with an estimation of future needs for knowledge and skills, as outlined in key strategic documents (23). The process of adjustment between education and labour market needs is based on the development of occupational standards (*standard zanimanja*) and subsequently on the development of qualification standards (*standard kvalifikacija*). The occupational standards are empirically founded upon the sector profiles (*profil sektora*) and the occupation standard survey (*anketa o standardu zanimanja*). The development of VET curricula is based on the qualification standards.

In order to support qualification development, the ministry in charge of labour runs the Portal for advanced labour market monitoring as the central portal with labour market and education indicators and updated version of the [Croatian Qualifications Framework web portal](#), initiated in 2018. The CROQF portal is designed to serve as the central tool for labour market monitoring and the main evidence base for the development of sector profiles and occupational standards as the key mechanisms of CROQF. The portal offers data visualisation, statistics and analyses by CROQF sectors. It integrates data on employment, unemployment, enrolment in secondary and higher education programmes, key economic activities and corresponding employment rates, and distribution of different occupations in sectors in relation to economic activities. The portal associates data on unemployment from the Croatian Employment Service, data on employment from the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, enrolment in secondary and higher education programmes from the Ministry of Science and Education and the relevant statistical indicators from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

See also [Cedefop's skills forecast](#).

## 10.2 Designing qualifications

### **VET qualifications**

Three major elements of qualification development are in place:

- **occupational standards** (*standard zanimanja*)

The occupational standards are a tool developed to identify the skills and associated knowledge required to be 'competent' in a particular job role. The standards are broken into units, which classify different sets of skills and knowledge. For VET qualifications, the occupational standards are being developed to a level of detail that highlights and describes the broad skills and knowledge sets that may be applied across a number of subsectors and related job roles within a particular industry.

- **qualification standard** (*standard kvalifikacija*)

The qualification standards take the skills identified and described within the occupational standards and translates them into criteria against which learners are evaluated. The qualification standards are broken down into a series of logical 'units'. Each unit is comprised of a set of 'learning outcomes' and 'assessment criteria'. The learning outcomes describe what a learner should be able to achieve once a programme of study has been completed. The assessment criteria establish the activities and benchmarks that must be achieved by the learner in order to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been achieved. Each unit is also given a credit value that identifies the amount of time required by an average learner to complete all relevant learning and assessment activities to achieve the required learning outcomes. Qualification standards also specify 'mandatory' or 'elective' units of learning outcomes.

- **VET curriculum** (*strukovni kurikulum*)

The final phase of the development process is associated with the production of VET curricula, which set out what needs to be taught in order to ensure that learning outcomes can be achieved.

The qualification development in VET follows the general process for qualification development at all levels, described in the CROQF Act (24) and the Regulation on CROQF Register (25). The CROQF Register represents the central repository of approved occupational standards, qualification standards and units of learning outcomes, organised in corresponding sub-registers. In order to be approved, the proposals for occupational standards and qualification standards follow the prescribed procedure for the entry in the CROQF Register.

The first stage of qualification development consists of the development and entry of the relevant occupational standard for the qualification. According to the CROQF Act, any legal entity or natural person, as well as public administration body with legitimate interest, may propose an occupational standard for entry in the CROQF Register. The proposed occupational standard needs to be empirically founded on relevant development strategies, sector profiles and occupational standard survey, which ensures the input of employers. The proposed occupational standard is submitted to the Ministry of Labour to decide on the entry of the occupational standard in the CROQF Register based on the expert opinion of an assessment commission set up by the Ministry.

Qualification standard development follows a similar process, with the Agency for VET and Adult Education responsible for the entry of VET qualification standards in the CROQF Register, based on expert opinions of assessment commissions set up by the Agency.

The final stage comprises the development of a vocational curriculum, which is based on the qualification standard and aligned to the occupational standard. The proposed vocational curricula should be aligned with the [National curriculum for VET](#) and the relevant sectoral curricula. Based on the learning-outcome approach, the National curriculum for VET from 2018 describes teaching and learning processes, including work-based learning and learning cycles. It encompasses qualifications at CROQF/EQF levels 2-5 and defines the curricular framework for VET, which comprises sectoral curricula, vocational curricula and VET school curricula. The document sets out the structure for each qualification level in terms of the proposed teaching time devoted to general content, vocational modules, elective modules and work-based learning

in line with sectoral and vocational curricula. The National curriculum for VET defines enrolment, permeability and assessment in VET. It allows for learning flexibility and specialisation through elective modules integrated in qualifications at CROQF level 4.1. and 4.2. / EQF level 4 for up to 30% of vocational curricula. The sectoral curricula set out the framework for all vocational curricula for qualifications on EQF levels 2-5 within particular education sectors. This way, the sectoral curricula ensure the attainment of broader competences relevant for all occupations within a sector. The sectoral curricula development was completed within AVETAE project for the modernisation of vocational education and training system in Croatia from 2018 until 2023.

### Managing qualifications

Several bodies are involved in designing, updating and awarding qualifications:

- Assessment commissions appointed by the Ministry of labour for expert evaluation of occupational standards and by the Agency for VET for evaluation of qualification standards in VET;
- Ministry of Science and Education: as the national coordinating body responsible for CROQF, the Ministry of Science and Education offers methodological guidelines for the development of qualification standards. It also coordinates quality assurance of qualifications and learning outcomes, and is responsible for developing a system for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- Ministry of Labour: as the responsible authority for the labour market, the Ministry of Labour is in charge of the sub-register of occupational standards. It offers methodological guidelines for the development of occupational standards and decides on the entry of the proposed occupational standards in the CROQF Register. It is also responsible for producing evidence-base for the development of occupational standards by collecting information about current and future labour market needs and the necessary competences. The Ministry of Labour is expected to monitor the labour market needs and propose corresponding development of qualification standards and occupational standards;
- Agency for VET and Adult Education (AVETAE): as the public administration body in charge of VET, AVETAE proposes occupational standards, qualification standards and curricula in VET. AVETAE also processes and decides on the requests for entry of VET qualification standards in the CROQF Register. Currently, AVETAE leads a large-scale project for the modernisation of vocational education and training in Croatia, as the largest initiative for update of VET qualifications and reform of VET curricula;
- The National Council for the Development of Human Potential (*Nacionalno vijeće za razvoj ljudskih potencijala*): as the strategic advisory body responsible for CROQF, the National Council offers recommendations for policies relevant to qualification development and the alignment of education to the labour market.

- 
- [21] Uredba o praćenju, analizi i predviđanju potreba tržišta rada za pojedinim zvanjima, te izradi i uzimanju u obzir preporuka za obrazovnu upisnu politiku [Government decree on the monitoring, analyses and prediction of labour market needs and the development of an educational enrolment policy]; *Official Gazette* No 93/2010.
- [22] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [23] Strategy of regional development, Industrial strategy, Smart specialisations strategy, Innovation strategy and Strategy of science, education and technology.
- [24] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021..
- [25] Pravilnik o Registru Hrvatskog kvalifikacijskog okvira [Regulation on CROQF Register]; *Official Gazette* No 96/2021.

# CHAPTER 11.

## Quality assurance

### Developing a coherent system

The area of quality assurance is informed by:

- external assessment of student competences and VET providers, and administration of the State *Matura* exams based on the VET Act and the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education Act (26) by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education;
- external assessment of institutions (27), inspection (28) performed by the Ministry of Science and Education and professional-pedagogic supervision of VET providers (29) by the Agency for VET and Adult Education;
- quality assurance of qualifications and learning outcomes by the Ministry of Science and Education through the CROQF (30);
- supervision over the implementation of apprenticeships (31) by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development;
- external assessment of apprenticeship exam by the Agency for VET and Adult Education (32);
- self-assessment of VET providers (33), based on the VET Act and relevant methodology (34) organised and supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education.

VET schools conduct self-assessment once a year, covering six assessment areas:

- planning and programming of work;
- teaching and support to learning;
- learning outcomes;
- material and human resources, including continuing professional development of staff;
- cooperation within the VET school and with stakeholders; and
- administration and management.

Each area is further broken down into quality areas, which are described using individual quality criteria. All areas are applied primarily to IVET. In 2011, secondary VET schools launched a self-assessment process and the first annual reports were produced and analysed. To assist VET schools in the process, the VET agency developed a comprehensive manual and an online [E-quality tool](#) (*e-kvaliteta*) that enabled secondary VET schools to present their self-assessment data and plans for improvements. Both measures are evidence-based.

In 2022-2023, the methodology for [self-assessment and external evaluation of adult education providers](#) (including CVET providers) was finalized and put in practice, in line with the 2021 Adult Education Act.

The methodology defined five assessment areas, each accompanied by a set of quality standards:

- organizational and quality assurance management
- education programmes, teaching, and learning
- learning outcomes and support to learners
- human and material resources
- public relations, communication and cooperation, integrity, and ethics

Self-assessment is conducted by adult education providers and external evaluation by the Agency for VET and Adult Education, according to a yearly schedule. The Agency for VET and

Adult Education published guidelines for self-assessment (35) and external evaluation (36), as well as protocols for external evaluation of providers (37) and learning outcomes (38).

The strategic documents call for the establishment of a coherent, unified system of VET quality assurance at the national level, at the level of VET providers and at the level of qualifications developed in line with EQAVET recommendations. Strong argumentation for a coherent, unified system comes from analyses indicating the existence of parallel and uncoordinated structures that are insufficiently used for the amelioration of school practice and the development of VET policy.

- 
- [26] Zakon o Nacionalnom centru za vanjsko vrednovanje obrazovanja [National Centre for External Evaluation of Education Act]; *Official Gazette* No 151/2004, 116/2021
- [27] Pravilnik o načinu provedbe vanjskog vrednovanja i korištenju rezultata vanjskog vrednovanja školskih ustanova [Regulation on the Means of Implementing External Evaluation and Using the Results of External Evaluation of Education Providers]; *Official Gazette* No 23/2011.
- [28] Zakon o prosvjetnoj inspekciji [School Inspection Act]; *Official Gazette* No 61/2011, 16/2012, 98/2019, 52/2021.
- [29] Zakon o stručno-pedagoškom nadzoru [Professional-Pedagogical Monitoring Act]; *Official Gazette* No 73/1997.
- [30] Pravilnik o Registru Hrvatskog kvalifikacijskog okvira [Regulation on CROQF Register]; *Official Gazette* No 96/2021.
- [31] Zakon o obrtu [Crafts Act]; *Official Gazette* No 143/2013, 127/2019, 41/2020
- [32] Zakon o obrtu [Crafts Act]; *Official Gazette* No 143/2013, 127/2019, 41/2020
- [33] Zakon o strukovnom obrazovanju [Vocational Education and Training Act]; *Official Gazette* No 30/2009, 24/2010, 22/2013, 25/2018, 69/2022
- [34] Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih (2011b). Hrvatski okvir za osiguranje kvalitete u strukovnom obrazovanju i osposobljavanju: Priručnik za samovrjednovanje [Croatian framework for quality assurance in VET: manual for self-assessment].  
<http://www.asoo.hr/UserDocsImages/Priru%C4%8Dnik%20za%20samovrjednovanje.pdf>
- [35] Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih (2023). Priručnik za unutarnje osiguravanje kvalitete u obrazovanju odraslih: Smjernice, područja i alati za samovrjednovanje [Handbook for Internal Quality Assurance in Adult Education: Guidelines, Areas, and Tools for Self-Assessment] [https://www.asoo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Prirucnik-za-unutarnje-osiguravanje-kvalitete-u-obrazovanju-odraslih-Smjernice-podrucja-i-alati-za-samovrednovanje\\_2022-1-2.pdf](https://www.asoo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Prirucnik-za-unutarnje-osiguravanje-kvalitete-u-obrazovanju-odraslih-Smjernice-podrucja-i-alati-za-samovrednovanje_2022-1-2.pdf)
- [36] Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih (2023). Priručnik za vanjsko osiguravanje kvalitete u obrazovanju odraslih: Smjernice za provedbu vanjskog vrednovanja ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih [Handbook for External Evaluation in Adult Education: Guidelines for External Evaluation of Adult Education Institutions] <https://www.asoo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Smjernice-za-provedbu-vanjskog-vrednovanja-ustanova-za-obrazovanje-odraslih.pdf>
- [37] Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih (2023). Protokol vanjskog vrednovanja ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih [Protocol for External Evaluation of Adult Education Institutions] <https://www.asoo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Protokol-vanjskog-vrednovanja-ustanova-za-obrazovanje-odraslih.pdf>
- [38] Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje i obrazovanje odraslih (2023). Protokol vanjskog vrednovanja skupova ishoda učenja [Protocol for External Evaluation of Units of Learning

Outcomes] <https://www.asoo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Protokol-vanjskog-vrednovanja-skupova-ishoda-ucenja.pdf>

## CHAPTER 12.

# Validation of prior learning

Presently, formal qualifications cannot be obtained through recognition of non-formal and informal learning. However, the Law on Adult Education enacted in 2021 establishes a legal framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. In 2022, the Ministry of Science and Education initiated a project to develop the validation system for prior learning.

## CHAPTER 13.

# Incentives for learners

### Allowances for learners

In the 3-year VET programmes for crafts and trades, the contract for apprenticeship (*ugovor o naukovanju*) regulates learner allowances as stipulated by the legislation (39). In other VET pathways, learner allowances are also regulated through contracts for practical training and exercises (*ugovor o provedbi praktične nastave i vježbi*) (40).

### Scholarships for craft occupations

In 2020, EUR 10.8 million was granted for scholarships to 4 561 students enrolled in 3-year VET programmes in crafts and trades (*jedinstveni model obrazovanja, JMO*). Subsequently, these scholarships were discontinued as EU financing ended. However, local communities, as well as professional associations and private firms, continue to provide incentives and stipends for learners.

In Croatia, the main employment policy relevant to VET is the Active labour market policy (*Mjere aktivne politike zapošljavanja, ALMP*). The Croatian Employment Service also awards [vouchers for upskilling](#) of the employed and unemployed as of 2022, significantly backed by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 and prioritizing skills development for the green and digital transition.

---

[39] Pravilnik o minimalnim uvjetima za ugovore o naukovanju [Regulation on minimal conditions for apprenticeship contracts]. Official Gazette No 107/2020.

[40] Pravilnik o načinu organiziranja i izvođenju nastave u strukovnim školama [Regulation on the organisation and implementation of teaching and learning in VET schools]; Official Gazette No 140/2009, 130/2020.

## CHAPTER 14.

# Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

### **Tax exemptions**

Companies that provide apprenticeships for learners in 3-year VET programmes have tax breaks reducing their taxable income (41). Entrepreneurs that train one to three learners per year on their premises may reduce their taxable income by 5%; an additional learner further reduces the taxable income by 1 percentage point, up to a limit of 15%.

---

[41] Zakon o državnoj potpori za obrazovanje i izobrazbu [Act on State Aid for Education and Training]; *Official Gazette* No 109/2007, 134/2007, 152/2008, 14/2014.

## CHAPTER 15.

# Guidance and counselling

The Croatian Employment Service (CES) systematically organises activities aimed at giving information, guidance and counselling for students in the final years of primary and upper secondary education (including VET).

Several elements developed by CES within this [comprehensive guidance and counselling system](#) are aimed at young persons. In recent years, CES has organised a regional network of 17 centres for career information and guidance under the name of [CISOK](#) (*Centri za informiranje i savjetovanje o karijeri*). This allowed for a tailor-made approach to guidance and counselling. The services are free of charge and open to both students and parents. Trained guidance counsellors provide services. Guidance is provided to learners in transition from primary to secondary and from secondary to higher education through open days and career fairs. These initiatives are supported by chambers, employers, former students and parents. Further establishment of CISOKs is planned to cover all counties in Croatia.

Career guidance for learners is conducted through the joint efforts of school counsellors and CES career guidance counsellors. Particular attention is devoted to learners with lower achievement and those who, according to the evaluations, might face labour market problems after they complete their education, i.e. those with developmental and health issues, learning disabilities or behaviour disorders. Team evaluation is carried out, including psychological assessment, an interview and, if needed, a medical examination by an occupational health physician. Labour market needs, educational opportunities and learners' individual abilities and needs are taken into account while forming the expert team opinion on the most appropriate choices in education.

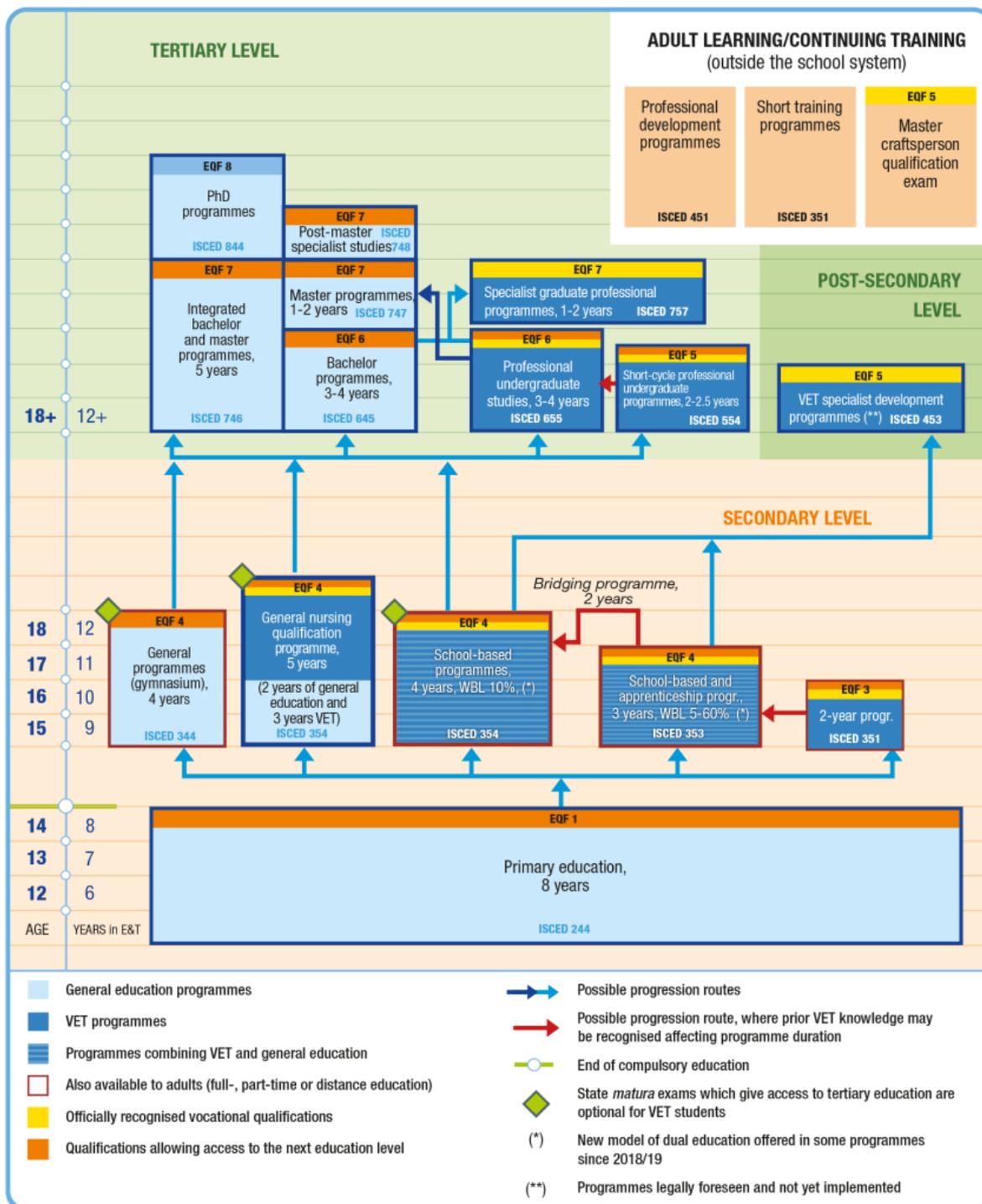
CES has also developed a [web portal e-Guidance](#) to offer the information needed for the selection of education programmes and to provide assistance in setting and reaching professional goals and searching for jobs.

Finally, CES conducts a yearly survey of the vocational intentions of primary and secondary school students. Using the results of this survey, expert teams of school and CES representatives define target groups that need specific services for career guidance. The aggregate results of the survey indicate the trends in the intentions of learners and are forwarded to stakeholders in education and employment at both regional and national levels.

Please also see:

- [Cedefop's guidance and outreach Croatia national report](#);
- [Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices](#)
- [Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit](#).

# Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Cedefop, & Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Croatia: 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/croatia-u3](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/croatia-u3)

# VET Programme Types

EQF 3
2-year programmes
ISCED 351

## IVET 2-year programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 351 (dvogodisnji strukovni programi).

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	351
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	10
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	16
Length of a programme (years)	2 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for acquiring a vocational qualification at EQF level 3 is a minimum of 60 CSVET credits of the EQF level 3 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes (42).

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2 to 5 (43). Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)**

- school-based learning;
- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice).

**Main providers** Upper secondary VET schools

<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	>50% Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines WBL share for 2-year programmes at EQF level 3 at over 50%. New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the National curriculum for VET have been developed in the VET reform process, which is currently underway.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>2-year programmes at EQF level 3 are particularly suitable for young people aiming to enter the labour market upon completion of the programme, or learners at risk of early leaving.</p> <p>Students with disabilities may enrol adapted 2-year VET programmes, which could extend for up to 3 years.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Entry requirements include a certificate of completion of primary education and good physical and mental health, as required by the curricula.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	For 2-year programmes at EQF level 3, VET providers perform the final learner assessment, which comprises production and presentation of the final practical assignment ( <i>završni rad</i> ).
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	For 2-year programmes at EQF level 3, certificates of completion ( <i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i> ) represent a formal award recognised by the education and training and labour authorities.
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Welder ( <i>zavarivač</i> ), administrator ( <i>administrator</i> ).
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Students holding this certificate normally enter the labour market meeting requirements to execute simple tasks under standard conditions. After completing 2-year VET programmes, learners have the possibility of vertical mobility and continuing their education at a higher level in the status of regular learners. They can enrol in a 3-year VET programme and pass additional and supplementary examinations.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	2-year programmes at EQF level 3 are labour market-oriented, which is the primary destination of graduates.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	
<b>General education subjects</b>	Currently, the share of the general education content in the total teaching load for 2-year programmes ranges from 20-40% (44).
<b>Key competences</b>	Depending on the curricula, key competences in programmes at EQF level 3 usually include competences in Croatian and foreign languages, mathematics and ICT.

<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	In the 2023/24 school year, 3 learning outcome-based programmes at EQF level 3 were implemented in Croatian VET schools.
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	In the school year 2023/2024, 7 VET providers enrolled 329 students (0,3% of all IVET learners) in 8 programmes at EQF level 3.

- 
- [42] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [43] Hrvatski sustav bodova strukovnog obrazovanja i osposobljavanja [CSVET stands for Croatian credit system for vocational education and training], as per the Croatian Qualification Framework Act (Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru); *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [44] Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines those vocational curricula for qualifications at EQF levels 2-3 should include up to 20% general education content. New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the National curriculum for VET have been developed.

EQF 4

School-based and  
apprenticeship programmes,

3 years,

WBL 5-60%

ISCED 353

**Initial VET 3-year apprenticeship programmes for crafts and trades, Unified Model of Education, JMO (jedinstveni model obrazovanja, JMO programi); initial VET 3-year programmes for industry and crafts; and dual education programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 353.**

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	11
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	17
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for 3-year vocational programmes is a minimum of 180 CSVET credits, with at least 120 CSVET credits of level 4 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes (45).

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.

<p><b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b></p>	<p>JMO programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apprenticeships</li> </ul> <p>School-based programmes for industry and crafts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school-based learning with practical training at school and in-company</li> </ul> <p>Dual education programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school and in-company</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main providers</b></p>	<p>JMO programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools</li> <li>• Companies (licenced craft workshops or legal entities)</li> </ul> <p>School-based programmes for industry and crafts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools</li> </ul> <p>Dual education programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools</li> <li>• Companies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b></p>	<p>JMO programmes: 60%</p> <p>School-based programmes for industry and crafts: 5%-10% (46)</p> <p>Dual education programmes: 70% (exceptional to other 3-year programmes, which have up to 60% of WBL (JMO).</p>
<p><b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b></p>	<p>JMO programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apprenticeships</li> <li>• practical training at school</li> </ul> <p>The education follows a VET curriculum that consists of two parts, the general education part and the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship consists of a professional-theoretical part and practical training and exercises. The general education and the professional-theoretical parts are implemented in VET schools. The practical training and exercises are implemented mainly in the work process, in craft business workshops or in a trade association, institution or cooperative, and, to a lesser extent, in VET school workshops for a certain number of hours, according to the curriculum for each qualification.</p> <p>School-based programmes for industry and crafts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul> <p>Dual education programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>

---

**Main target groups** Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.

Many curricula at this level, for example for assisting professions, are also suitable for learners with special educational needs, such as moderate and severe disability. Special arrangements are available for them in VET schools.

Programmes are also suitable for learners at risk of early school leaving.

---

**Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)**

The entry requirements for 3-year programmes include:

- certificate of completion of primary education;
- adequate physical and mental health, as required by the VET teaching plans and programmes.

For JMO programmes, an apprenticeship contract is also required. In dual education, contracts are also signed between learners/legal guardians, companies and schools.

---

<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to take a final practical assignment (<i>završni rad</i>) which is mandatory for all learners in order to receive a valid qualification. The final assessment is organised and conducted by schools (47); upon passing it, a learner acquires a secondary school qualification and the VET school issues a certificate.</p> <p>The final assessment consists of the final practical assignment (<i>izrada završnog rada</i>) and its defence (<i>obrana</i>). Each school can have different timelines regarding the organisation of the final assessment as well as the specificities regarding the choice of topics. Learners choose topics (<i>tema</i>) from the list of topics set by the school; learners may also propose topics themselves, in line with teaching plans / curricula. Each learner is assigned a VET teacher as mentor for the final practical assignment. Defence involves presentation of the final practical assignment in front of a commission, which consists of VET school teachers, including the learner's mentor.</p> <p>For learners in JMO programmes, the defence of the final practical assignment includes the apprenticeship exam. This consists of a practical task performed within a complex examination item, which assesses the practical skills, autonomy and responsibility of learners to perform an occupation in crafts in line with the qualification standard. VET schools organise apprenticeship exams and form assessment commissions, consisting of VET teachers and mentors in crafts (mostly the latter); the chamber of trades and crafts proposes mentors from licensed crafts and other legal entities for commissions. The apprenticeship exam may take place in school or craft workshop, including where the learner completed apprenticeship. JMO graduates receive a certificate of completion (<i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i>) from schools and certificate supplement on apprenticeship (<i>dodatak svjedodžbi o naukovanju</i>) from the chamber of trades and crafts.</p> <p>Learners in JMO programmes can also take an intermediate test (<i>kontrolni ispit</i>) in the second year (48).</p> <p>An intermediate test (<i>ispit provjere znanja i vještina</i>) is also foreseen in other VET pathways, such as dual education programmes, in the second year of education.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>For 3-year programmes, certificates of completion (<i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i>) are a formal award recognised by the education and training and labour authorities.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>JMO programmes:</p> <p>Chef, hairdresser, auto-mechanic, carpenter, photographer</p> <p>Programmes in industry:</p> <p>CNC operator</p> <p>Dual education programmes:</p> <p>Salesman, waiter, painter decorator</p>

---

**Progression opportunities for learners after graduation**

Both horizontal and vertical pathways are stipulated (49). As of 2014, graduates from 3-year VET programmes can enter an optional 1- to 2-year bridging programme (*program za stjecanje više razine kvalifikacije*) (50) and, if successful in gaining a second VET qualification, can also take State *Matura* exams to access higher education.

JMO graduates can apply for the master craftsman exam after 2 years of work experience in the field.

In 2016, an additional regulation on the conditions and the pathways of continuing education for obtaining a higher level of qualifications was introduced (51). According to that regulation, learners can continue education for 2 years after acquiring the lower-level qualifications, conditional on previous education, i.e. qualification profile and the minimum grade point average achieved during their 3-year education. Schools providing 3-year programmes are obliged to organise a tuition-free fourth year for learners wishing to continue their education.

Before enrolling a learner into the bridging programme, the teaching council at VET school determines the list of supplementary exams to the qualification already attained and the qualification that the learner aims to attain by completing the bridging programme. The number of supplementary exams determines the duration of the bridging programme. Learners with fewer supplementary exams can immediately integrate into the regular classes of the final year of 4-year programmes under condition that they pass the exams before 31 March of the same school year. Learners with more supplementary exams first take 1 year to pass them, and then can attend the classes regularly the following year. To complete the bridging programme, learners need to produce and present the final practical assignment (*izradba i obrana završnog rada*) which is mandatory for all learners to receive a valid qualification. The final assessment is organised by schools; upon passing it, a learner acquires a secondary school qualification and the VET school issues a certificate of completion (*svjedodžba o završnom radu*).

To enrol into higher education, graduates can opt to take the State *Matura* exams (*ispiti državne mature*) following the completion of the bridging programme and the attainment of the qualification at EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (52). According to the findings of the [Cedefop apprenticeship review](#), provisions for access to higher levels of education are not widely used in practice. It is very hard for JMO learners to continue with their education: schools reported approximately 10% of their third-year learners continuing their studies. Learners have to take many exams to catch up with learners from other programmes and enrol in the regular fourth year: according to some, about 20-25 exams, or equal to 2 years of schooling, the successful graduation of which gives access to the State *Matura* exams (*državna matura*). Most schools offer, and learners opt for, adult education programmes that are not free of charge but are provided as evening school option allowing learners to work full-time. The learners who decide to continue their education are mostly those with higher grades achieved during the 3-year period of the JMO programme.

<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Students holding this certificate generally enter the labour market.</p> <p>In the school year 2023/2024, 208 students are recorded to have enrolled a 4-year VET programme after having completed a 3-year programme, which equals 0.3% of students in 4-year VET programmes. The trend is similar for previous years.</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	X
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>JMO:</p> <p>Currently, the share of the general education content in the total teaching load for JMO programmes is around 20%.</p> <p>Programmes in industry and crafts:</p> <p>Currently, the share of the general education content in the total teaching load for 3-year school-based programmes is 20-40% in the first and the second year, and 25-40% in the third year (53).</p> <p>The share of the general education content in the total teaching load for 3-year dual education programmes is around 20-24%.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>Depending on the curricula, key competences in 3-year programmes at EQF level 4 usually include competences in Croatian and foreign languages, mathematics and ICT.</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>In the 2023/24 school year, 8 three-year learning outcome-based programmes were implemented in Croatian VET schools. However, additional qualifications and vocational curricula, in line with the learning-outcome approach are yet to be introduced as part of the ongoing VET reform process. In dual education, 3-year programmes are also outcome-based for the qualifications of salesman, glazier, chimney sweep, CNC operator, waiter, cook, and painter decorator.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<p>In the 2023/2024 school year, 213 VET providers enrolled 28 884 students (28,9% of all IVET learners) in 140 programmes. National demographics reduced the number of learners, particularly in 3-year IVET programmes. So far, those most affected have been the apprenticeship programmes (JMO). The enrolment in JMO halved in the period from 2013 to 2018; however, it has started recovering since 2018 and increased by 30% in 2023.</p>

[45] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.

[46] Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines WBL share in 3-year industrial programmes at 30-40%. New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the National curriculum for VET have been developed, but have not yet been implemented in VET schools

[47] Pravilnik o izradbi i obrani završnog rada [Regulation on the development and defence of the final exam] (2009).

[48] Cedefop (2019). *Apprenticeship review: Croatia. Improving apprenticeships through stronger support and care*. Luxembourg: Publications office. Thematic country reviews.

- [49] Act on VET (2009) and the 2012 Amendments to the Act on Primary and Secondary Education (2008).
- [50] Cedefop (2019). [Apprenticeship review: Croatia. Improving apprenticeships through stronger support and care](#). Luxembourg: Publications office. Thematic country reviews.
- [51] <sup>[55]</sup> Ministry of Science and Education (2016). Pravilnik o uvjetima i načinima nastavka obrazovanja za višu razinu kvalifikacije [Regulation on conditions and pathways of continuing education to higher level of qualification]. Official Gazette No 8/2016, 126/2021
- [52] For more information on the State *Matura* exams please see Box 4.
- [53] Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines those vocational curricula for 3-year school-based programmes should include up to 20-25% general education content. New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the National curriculum for VET have been developed.

EQF 4

School-based programmes,

4 years,

WBL 10%

ISCED 354

### Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354, 4-year programmes (Četverogodišnji programi redovitog strukovnog obrazovanja)

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	354
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	9	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	12
<b>Usual entry age</b>	15	<b>Usual completion age</b>	18
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	4		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✓	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for 4-year programmes is a minimum of 240 CSVET credits, with at least 150 CSVET credits of the level 4 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes (54) .

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)**

For 4-year programmes:

- school-based learning with practical training at school and in-company

Dual education programmes

- practical training at school and in-company

<b>Main providers</b>	<p>4-year programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools</li> </ul> <p>Dual education programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VET schools</li> <li>• Companies</li> </ul>
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	<p>4-year programmes: less than 10% (55)</p> <p>Dual education programmes: 70%</p>
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<p>In 4-year programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul> <p>Dual education programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Young people
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	The entry requirements include a certificate of completion of primary education and adequate physical and mental health, as required by occupational standards.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	For the completion of the educational programme learners need to produce and present a final practical assignment ( <i>izradba i obrana završnog rada</i> ) which is mandatory for all learners in order to receive a valid qualification. A final assessment is organised and conducted by schools (56) ; upon successfully passing it, a learner acquires a secondary school qualification and the VET school issues a certificate.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	For 4-year programmes, certificates of completion ( <i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i> ) are the formal certificate recognised by the education and training and labour authorities.
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>School-based programmes: beautician, mechanical engineering technician, ICT technician, commercialist.</p> <p>Dual education programmes: hairdresser, beautician.</p>

<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>In order to enrol into higher education, graduates can opt to take the <i>State Matura</i> exams (<i>ispiti državne mature</i>) following the completion of 4-year programmes. Students holding the certificates of completion (<i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i>) as well as a certificate on the State <i>Matura</i> exams (<i>potvrda o položenim ispitima državne mature</i>) can apply to higher education. The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education administers the State <i>Matura</i> exams in cooperation with upper-secondary schools. These exams serve three aims: final examination and requirement for graduation from general upper-secondary schools, entrance exams for undergraduate studies at tertiary level for all students (including VET graduates) and external evaluation of student competences and learning outcomes. State <i>Matura</i> exams are administered in general education subjects as obligatory and optional exams. Obligatory exams are in Croatian language, mathematics and foreign language and they may be taken at A (advanced) and B (elementary) level. The list of optional exams is determined by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education for each school year. Higher education institutions set the required level of exams and optional exams among their admission criteria independently. National data from 2020 suggest that over 80% of 4- and 5-year VET programme students expressed a wish to study at the tertiary level by enrolling in the national information system and taking the three obligatory State <i>Matura</i> exams (Croatian language, mathematics, foreign language).</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>In 2020 (summer examination period), 83% of VET students at CROQF level 4.2/EQF level 4 applied for the state matura exams, 67% passed the matura exams, and 51.1% enrolled in tertiary education studies in the year of their graduation.</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>The programmes consist of general education and vocational parts in approximately equal shares.</p> <p>The share of the general education content in the total teaching load in 4-year programmes ranges from 40-70% in the first year, 40-60% in the second year and 30-40% in the third and fourth years.</p> <p>The National curriculum for VET states that vocational curricula for 4-year programmes in IVET should comprise up to 45% of general education content.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>Depending on individual curricula, 8 key competences (57) are integrated in 4-year programmes at EQF level 4 to different extents.</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>In 2023/24, 30 outcome-based curricula were in implementation in Croatian schools in 4-year IVET programmes. In dual education, 4-year programmes for beautician and hairdresser are also outcome-based.</p> <p>All other programmes are content-based teaching programmes (58) .</p>

---

**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

---

In 2023/2024, 269 VET providers enrolled 64 887 students (64,9% of all IVET learners) in 99 four-year programmes

---

- [54] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [55] Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines WBL share in 4-year programmes at around 10%. New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the National curriculum for VET have been developed in the VET reform process, which is currently underway.
- [56] Pravilnik o izradbi i obrani završnog rada [Regulation on the development and defence of the final exam]. *Official Gazette* No 118/2009.
- [57] As per Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC).
- [58] New qualifications and vocational curricula in line with the learning-outcome approach have been developed in the VET reform process, which is currently under way.

EQF 4
General nursing qualification programme, 5 years (2 years of general education and 3 years VET) ISCED 354

### One 5-year programme for general nursing qualification (petogodišnji program - za medicinsku sestru opće njege)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	19
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✗

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for 5-year programmes is a minimum of 240 CSVET credits, with at least 150 CSVET credits of the level 4 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes (59) .

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)** 5-year programmes for general nursing qualification follow a different structure:

- school-based general education in the first 2 years;
- school-based vocational theoretical and practical parts in schools and practical training in hospitals in the second 3 years.

**Main providers** VET schools

**Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies** 60% in the final 3 years of the programme

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	For 5-year general nursing qualification programmes, practical training is organised in hospitals and other teaching healthcare institutions.
<b>Main target groups</b>	Young people
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	The entry requirements include a certificate of completion of primary education and adequate physical and mental health, as required by the occupational standard.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	For the completion of the educational programme learners need to produce and present a final practical assignment ( <i>izradba i obrana završnog rada</i> ) which is mandatory for all learners in order to receive a qualification. A final assessment is conducted by schools (60) ; upon passing it, a learner acquires a secondary school qualification and the VET school issues a certificate.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Certificates of completion ( <i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i> ) also represent the final formal award. However, after completing the first 2 years of the nursing programme, which focuses on the general education content, learners receive a certificate of completion, for 2-year general education for the attainment of a medical care qualification ( <i>uvjerenje o završenome dvogodišnjem općeobrazovnom programu za stjecanje zdravstvene kvalifikacije</i> ).
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	General care nurse
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	In order to enrol into higher education, graduates can opt to take the <i>State Matura</i> exams ( <i>ispiti državne mature</i> ) following the completion of the 5-year programme. Students holding the certificates of completion ( <i>svjedodžba o završnome radu</i> ) as well as a certificate on the <i>State Matura</i> exams ( <i>potvrda o položenim ispitima državne mature</i> ) can apply to higher education. The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education administers the <i>State Matura</i> exams in cooperation with upper-secondary schools. These exams serve three aims: final examination and requirement for graduation from general upper-secondary schools, entrance exams for undergraduate studies at tertiary level for all students (including VET graduates) and external evaluation of student competences and learning outcomes. <i>State Matura</i> exams are administered in general education subjects as obligatory and optional exams. Obligatory exams are in Croatian language, mathematics and foreign language and they may be taken at A (advanced) and B (elementary) level. The list of optional exams is determined by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education for each school year. Higher education institutions set the required level of exams and optional exams among their admission criteria independently. National data from 2020 suggest that over 80% of 4- and 5-year VET programme students expressed a wish to study at the tertiary level by enrolling in the national information system and taking the three obligatory <i>State Matura</i> exams (Croatian language, mathematics, foreign language).

<b>Destination of graduates</b>	In 2020 (summer examination period), 83% of VET students at CROQF level 4.2/EQF level 4 applied for the state matura exams, 67% passed the matura exams, and 51.1% enrolled in tertiary education studies in the year of their graduation.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	X
<b>General education subjects</b>	The general education ratio is 100% the first 2 years, and VET part ratio is 100% in the second 3 years.
<b>Key competences</b>	Depending on individual curricula, eight key competences (61) are integrated in 5-year programme at EQF level 4 to different extents.
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	Curriculum for the qualification of general care nurse is learning outcome-based.
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	In 2023/2024, 25 VET providers enrolled 5 882 students (5,9% of all IVET learners) in the sole (general care nurse) 5-year programme.

- 
- [59] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [60] Regulation on the development and defence of the final exam (2009).
- [61] As per Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC).

## EQF 5

VET specialist development programmes

ISCED 453

**VET specialist development programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 453 (programi strukovnoga specijalističkog usavršavanja).**

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	453
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Duration depends on the number of CSVET credits awarded by the programme; 1 CSVET point is multiplied by 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes. Typically, programmes leading to full qualifications at EQF level 5, awarding 60 CSVET, last one year, programmes awarding 120 CSVET last two years, etc.		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	Fees are determined by education providers individually. Vouchers are available as of 2022 for digital and green upskilling.		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✗

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for full qualifications awarded at EQF level 5 is a minimum of 60 CSVET, with at least 30 CSVET credits of the level 6 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes. The total workload for partial qualifications awarded at EQF level 5 is a minimum of 10 CSVET, with at least 50% of CSVET credits of the level 5 of units of learning outcomes (62).

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes (63). 25 hours is standard for qualifications at EQF level 5 (64).

<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	VET specialist development programmes may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● school-based learning</li> <li>● work-based learning at school and in-company</li> </ul>
<b>Main providers</b>	Adult education providers
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	> 50% (65) (recommended, varies depending on the learning outcomes proposed by the programme)
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	VET specialist development programmes may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work-based learning at school;</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Learners who completed VET programmes at secondary level (at least CROQF/EQF 4.1. or higher)
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Completed VET programmes at secondary level (at least CROQF 4.1/EQF 4 or higher)
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	Final assessment is performed by an exam commission at the adult education provider delivering the training programme. It can include a theoretical exam (written and/or oral) and a practical exam, as defined by the programme. Continuous assessment of learning outcomes is also performed throughout the programme.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	VET post-secondary development and training certificate ( <i>uvjerenje o strukovnom specijalističkom usavršavanju</i> )
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Driving instructor (instructor vožnje); digital marketing specialist ( <i>specijalist za digitalni marketing</i> )
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	These programmes have labour market orientation.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✗
<b>General education subjects</b>	✗
<b>Key competences</b>	✓ if relevant for the programme
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	✓

---

**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners** Information not available.

---

- 
- [62] Croatian Qualification Framework Act (Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru); *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [63] Croatian Qualification Framework Act (Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru); *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [64] Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (2022). [Metodologija za izradu programa obrazovanja odraslih za stjecanje mikrokvalifikacija, djelomičnih kvalifikacija i cjelovitih kvalifikacija financiranih putem vaučera i drugih izvora financiranja](#) [Methodology for the development of adult education programmes for acquiring micro-credentials, partial qualifications and full qualifications financed through vouchers and other sources of financing].
- [65] Adopted in 2018, the National curriculum for VET defines WBL share for VET specialist development programmes of at least 50%.

EQF 5

Short-cycle professional  
undergraduate programmes

2-2.5 years

ISCED 554

## Short-cycle professional undergraduate programmes (kratki stručni studij).

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	554
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2-2.5		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	<p>Education is free of charge for full-time students enrolled in public higher education institutions, either for students in the first year of the programme for the first time or, in further years of study, for students who earned at least 55 ECTS credits in the previous academic year (30 ECTS for students with 60% disability).</p> <p>Students at private higher education providers or part-time students pay tuition fees for their studies.</p>		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✗
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	120 -150 ECTS		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• part-time</li> <li>• full-time</li> </ul>		
<b>Main providers</b>	Higher education institutions		

<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Opportunities for practical training depend on individual curricula.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at higher education institutions, if determined by curricula</li> <li>• in-company training, if determined by curricula.</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>For full-time studies: young people, secondary school graduates at EQF level 4.</p> <p>Besides young people, part-time studies may also be available to working adults.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Previously acquired EQF level 4 qualification or higher.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Written or oral examinations at course level.</p> <p>Final assessment may include written and/or oral examination or final thesis, as determined by curricula.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Professional associate ( <i>stručni pristupnik</i> ).
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Professional associate in chemical engineering ( <i>stručni pristupnik kemijskog inženjerstva</i> ).
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Graduates may continue their education with professional undergraduate programmes.</p> <p>Depending on the curricula, at the discretion of higher education institutions, graduates may also enrol in university graduate programmes or specialist graduate professional programmes; on condition they pass additional and supplementary exams.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Not applicable
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✗
<b>General education subjects</b>	General education subjects are taught mostly in relation to vocational subjects.
<b>Key competences</b>	Some courses may be offered to teach key competences.
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	Not consistent.
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	In 2021, there were 12 students enrolled in short-cycle professional undergraduate programmes, representing 0.03% of students in higher education professional programmes, and 0.01% of all students in higher education.

EQF 6

Professional

undergraduate studies,

3-4 years

ISCED 655

**Undergraduate professional studies leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655, (preddiplomski stručni studij).**

<b>EQF level</b>	6	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	655
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	3-4		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	<p>Education is free of charge for full-time students enrolled in public higher education institutions, either for students in the first year of the programme for the first time or, in further years of study, for students who earned at least 55 ECTS credits in the previous academic year (30 ECTS for students with 60% disability).</p> <p>Students at private higher education providers or part-time students pay tuition fees for their studies.</p>		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✗
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	180-240 ECTS		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• part-time</li> <li>• full-time</li> </ul>		

<b>Main providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colleges (<i>visoke škole</i>)</li> <li>• polytechnics (<i>veleučilišta</i>)</li> <li>• universities (<i>sveučilišta</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Opportunities for practical training depend on individual curricula.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at education institution, if determined by curricula</li> <li>• in-company training, if determined by curricula</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>For full-time studies: young people, secondary school graduates at EQF level 4</p> <p>Besides young people, part-time studies may also be available to working adults.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Secondary education qualification at CROQF level 4.2 / EQF level 4 (awarded upon completion of at least 4-year secondary education programmes) and State <i>Matura</i> exams. Higher education providers may set additional requirements and different weights to average secondary school graduate point average (GPA), State <i>Matura</i> exams or entry exams independently. Work experience may be considered for enrolment in part-time programmes.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Written or oral examinations at course level.</p> <p>Final assessment may include written and/or oral examination or final thesis, as determined by curricula.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional bachelor (baccalaureus, <i>prvostupnik</i>) in occupation, or</li> <li>• professional bachelor engineer (<i>prvostupnik inženjer</i>) in occupation.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Professional bachelor (baccalaureus) in economy (<i>stručni prvostupnik (baccalaureus) ekonomije</i>) (bacc. oec.)</p> <p>Professional bachelor (baccalaureus) engineer in information technology (<i>stručni prvostupnik (baccalaureus) inženjer informacijske tehnologije</i>) (bacc. ing. techn. inf.)</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Upon graduation, students are allowed to progress to specialist graduate professional studies or university graduate programmes (EQF 7).
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	Higher education providers set internal guidelines for recognising prior learning at EQF levels 6 and higher (66) .

<b>General education subjects</b>	General education subjects may be taught in relation to vocational subjects, depending on individual curricula.
<b>Key competences</b>	Depending on the programme, courses may be offered to teach key competences.
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	In 2021, there were 39 206 students enrolled in professional undergraduate programmes, representing 84% of students in higher education professional programmes, and 24.3% of all students in higher education.

---

[66] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; Official Gazette No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.

## EQF 7

Specialist graduate professional programmes leading to EQF 7

ISCED 757

**Specialist graduate professional studies leading to EQF 7, ISCED 757 (specijalistički diplomski stručni studij)**

<b>EQF level</b>	7	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	757
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	1-2		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	Education is free of charge for full-time students enrolled in public higher education institutions, either for students in the first year of the programme for the first time or, in further years of study, for students who earned at least 55 ECTS credits in the previous academic year (30 ECTS for students with 60% disability).  Students at private higher education providers or part-time students pay tuition fees for their studies.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✗
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	60-120 ECTS		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• part-time</li> <li>• full-time</li> </ul>		
<b>Main providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• colleges (<i>visoke škole</i>)</li> <li>• polytechnics (<i>veleučilišta</i>)</li> <li>• universities (<i>sveučilišta</i>)</li> </ul>		

<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Opportunities for practical training depend on individual curricula.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at education institution, if determined by curricula</li> <li>• in-company training, if determined by curricula</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for full-time studies: young people, graduates of undergraduate professional programmes</li> <li>• Besides young people, part-time studies may also be available to working adults.</li> </ul>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Entry requirements are completed undergraduate professional studies or completed undergraduate university studies.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>Written or oral examinations at course level</p> <p>Final assessment may include written and/or oral examination or final thesis, as determined by curricula</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional specialist in occupation (<i>stručni specijalist</i>), or</li> <li>• professional specialist engineer (<i>stručni specijalist inženjer</i>) with the addition of the name of the occupation</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Professional specialist engineer in civil engineering (<i>stručni specijalist inženjer građevinarstva</i>) (<i>struč. spec. ing. aedif.</i>).</p> <p>Professional specialist in accounting and finances (<i>stručni specijalist računovodstva i financija</i>) (<i>struč.spec.oec.</i>).</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Specialist graduate professional studies are designed as a terminal professional degree leading to the labour market.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	Higher education providers set internal guidelines for recognising prior learning at EQF levels 6 and higher (67) .
<b>General education subjects</b>	General education subjects are taught in relation to vocational subjects.
<b>Key competences</b>	Courses may be offered to teach key competences, depending on curricula.
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	In 2021, there were 7 474 students enrolled in specialist graduate professional programmes, representing 16% of students in higher education professional programmes, and 4.6% of all students in higher education.

[67] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act];  
Official Gazette No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.

## EQF 4

Professional development programmes

ISCED 451

**Professional development programmes, ISCED 451 (programi usavršavanja)**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	451
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Duration depends on the number of CSVET credits awarded by the programme; 1 CSVET point is multiplied by 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✗	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓
	Fees are determined by education providers individually. Vouchers are available as of 2022 for digital and green upskilling.		

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for partial qualifications awarded at EQF level 4 is a minimum of 10 CSVET, with at least 50% of CSVET credits of the level 4 of units of learning outcomes.

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes (68).25 hours are standard for adult education programmes. Micro-credentials are also awarded for professional development programmes. The recommended volume for micro-credentials is 2-9 CSVET credits; however, it is possible to award a higher number of credits, depending on the complexity of learning outcomes of individual micro-credentials (69).

<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	The theoretical part of the programme may be delivered through in-person group instruction at the adult education provider, and partially, through independent learning (including distance learning). The practical part of the programme is generally delivered in-person at the adult education provider or in companies, as set by professional development programmes. Distance learning programmes are also available.
<b>Main providers</b>	Adult education providers
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Not defined, determined by each programme individually
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work-based learning at adult education provider</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Professional development programmes are generally intended for adult learners who wish to further their skills related to their occupation.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Previously acquired EQF level 4 qualification or higher. Professional development programmes, adopted by adult education institutions, can set additional entry requirements. These may involve certain qualification, age, work experience, medical fitness or other specific prerequisites of the programme (e.g. driver's licence).
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	Final assessment is performed by an exam commission at the adult education provider delivering the professional development programme. It generally includes a theoretical exam (written and/or oral) and a practical exam. Continuous assessment of learning outcomes is also performed throughout the programme.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Professional development certificate ( <i>uvjerenje o usavršavanju</i> ) is a formal certificate ( <i>javna isprava</i> ) recognised by the education and training and labour authorities.
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Micro-credential for preparation of Croatian traditional dishes ( <i>mikrokvakifikacija za pripremu hrvatskih tradicionalnih jela</i> )
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Labour market. Professional development programmes are intended for workers who wish to further their skills in the existing occupation.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✗
<b>General education subjects</b>	Only if related to training programme

<b>Key competences</b>	Only if related to training programme
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	About 6% of adult learners opted for professional development programmes in 2022.

- 
- [68] Croatian Qualification Framework Act (Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru); *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.
- [69] Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (2022). [Metodologija za izradu programa obrazovanja odraslih za stjecanje mikrokvalifikacija, djelomičnih kvalifikacija i cjelovitih kvalifikacija financiranih putem vaučera i drugih izvora financiranja](#) [Methodology for the development of adult education programmes for acquiring micro-credentials, partial qualifications and full qualifications financed through vouchers and other sources of financing].

EQF Short training programmes can be offered at EQF levels 2,3 and 4, depending on the complexity of learning outcomes of the programme.

Short training programmes

ISCED 351

## Short training programmes, ISCED 351 (programi osposobljavanja)

<b>EQF level</b>	Short training programmes can be offered at EQF levels 2,3 and 4, depending on the complexity of learning outcomes of the programme.	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	351
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Duration depends on the number of CSVET credits awarded by the programme; 1 CSVET point is multiplied by 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✗ Fees are determined by education providers individually. Vouchers are available as of 2022 for digital and green upskilling.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	<p>The total workload for partial qualifications awarded for short training programmes is a minimum of 10 CSVET, with at least 50% of CSVET credits of units of learning outcomes at the respective EQF level (2,3 or 4).</p> <p>CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes (70).25 hours are standard for adult education programmes. Micro-credentials are also awarded for short training programmes. The recommended volume for micro-credentials is 2-9 CSVET credits; however, it is possible to award a higher number of credits, depending on the complexity of learning outcomes of individual micro-credentials (71).</p>
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	The theoretical part of the training may be delivered through in-person group instruction at the adult education provider, and partially, through independent learning (including distance learning). The practical part of the training is generally delivered in-person at the adult education provider or in companies, as set by training programmes.
<b>Main providers</b>	Adult education providers
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Not defined.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work-based learning at adult education provider</li> <li>• in-company practice</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	Short training programmes are intended for adult learners.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Previously acquired at least EQF level 1 qualification. The training programmes, adopted by adult education institutions, set entry requirements. These may involve certain age, work experience, medical fitness or other specific prerequisites of the training programme (e.g. driver's licence, etc.).
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	Final assessment is performed by an exam commission at the adult education provider delivering the training programme. It generally includes a theoretical exam (written and/or oral) and a practical exam. Continuous assessment of learning outcomes is also performed throughout the programme.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	Short training certificate ( <i>uvjerenje o osposobljavanju</i> ) is a formal certificate ( <i>javna isprava</i> ), recognised by the education and training and labour authorities.
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Bookkeeper ( <i>knjigovođa</i> ); band saw operator in primary wood processing ( <i>rukovatelj tračnim pilama u primarnoj obradi drva</i> ); food and beverage server ( <i>poslužitelj hrane i pića</i> )

<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Learners holding this certificate normally enter the labour market meeting requirements to execute simple tasks in familiar conditions.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✗
<b>General education subjects</b>	✗
<b>Key competences</b>	Only if related to training programme
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	✓
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Adult learners most often opt for short training programmes, over 65% in 2022.

[70] Croatian Qualification Framework Act (Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru); *Official Gazette* No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.

[71] Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (2022). [Metodologija za izradu programa obrazovanja odraslih za stjecanje mikrokvalifikacija, djelomičnih kvalifikacija i cjelovitih kvalifikacija financiranih putem vaučera i drugih izvora financiranja](#) [Methodology for the development of adult education programmes for acquiring micro-credentials, partial qualifications and full qualifications financed through vouchers and other sources of financing].

## Master craftsperson qualification exam leading to EQF level 5 (majstorski ispit)

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	Not applicable
<b>Usual entry age</b>	Not applicable	<b>Usual completion age</b>	Not applicable
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Not applicable		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✗
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✗	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits** The total workload for programmes at EQF level 5 is a minimum of 60 CSVET, with at least 30 CSVET credits of the level 6 or a higher level of units of learning outcomes (72).

CSVET credits are awarded for vocational education and training at EQF levels 2-5. Each CSVET credit includes 15 to 25 hours of study work, duration of 60 minutes.

<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Main providers</b>	Chamber of trades and crafts
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Not applicable
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Main target groups</b>	Professional workers in regulated crafts and trades occupations

<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Eligible candidates for taking the master craftsperson qualification exam are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• those who passed the apprenticeship exam and have at least 2 years of experience in the occupation;</li> <li>• those who completed upper secondary education other than apprenticeship and have at least 4 years of experience in the occupation (2 years of professional experience is also accepted for those who graduated from relevant programmes up to 1999/2000);</li> <li>• those who passed the apprenticeship exam and completed 1-year training in master craftsperson school;</li> <li>• those who completed upper secondary education other than apprenticeship, have at least 2 years of experience in the occupation, and who completed 1-year training in master craftsperson school.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>The master craftsperson qualification exam includes assessment of general knowledge and knowledge of legislation in the economy and entrepreneurship relevant for operating a crafts business and training apprentices, as well as practical skills and professional-theoretical knowledge relevant for specific occupation in crafts and trades.</p> <p>Master craftsperson qualification exams are conducted by commissions nominated by the chamber of crafts. The ministry in charge of crafts regulates the procedure of taking the master craftsperson qualification exams (73).</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>Master craftsperson diploma (<i>diploma o majstorskom zvanju</i>)</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Master ship mechanic (<i>majstor brodski mehaničar</i>), master plumber (<i>majstor vodoinstalater</i>)</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Labour market. Qualification is intended for experienced craftsmen in regulated crafts and trade occupations. Holders of the master craftsperson qualification also meet requirements to become in-company trainers in apprenticeships.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Not available</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>✗</p>

---

<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Not applicable
--	----------------

---

[72] Zakon o Hrvatskom kvalifikacijskom okviru [Croatian Qualification Framework Act]; Official Gazette No 22/2013, 41/2016, 64/2018, 47/2020, 20/2021.

[73] [BOX\_11 ] Pravilnik o postupku i načinu polaganja majstorskog ispita te ispita o stručnoj osposobljenosti [Regulation on the procedure and ways of taking master craftsperson qualification exam and professional training exam]. Official Gazette No. 88/2002.

---

## References

[3] Eurostat, sbs\_sc\_sca\_r2, [extracted 9.11.2023]

[4] [THEMATIC 3] OECD [Tourism Trends and Policies 2022](#)

[5] [THEMATIC 3] European Commission (2019). [Country report Croatia 2019](#). COM(2019) 150 final.