



Spotlight on VET **HUNGARY**

Vocational education
and training systems
in Europe

2023

VET in Hungary

The 2019 VET Act, based on the [VET 4.0 Strategy](#), reformed Hungary's vocational education and training (VET) system. VET was legally and administratively separated from general education, supporting closer cooperation with the economy.

The Ministry of Culture and Innovation oversees VET, with sectoral ministries handling qualifications in their respective fields. The National Office for VET and Adult Learning and the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre coordinate implementation. Stakeholder input supports government efforts through advisory bodies. The [VET Innovation Council](#) shapes national VET policies, while [sector skills councils](#) align qualifications with labour market needs. Dual VET is coordinated by economic chambers.

The school-based VET system includes 527 VET schools. Public VET schools are centrally governed, with about 20% maintained by non-state entities. Most public VET schools are organised into VET centres for better coordination.

Vocational qualifications can be awarded by the school-based VET system (nationally referred to as vocational education), by training providers (known as vocational training), and by higher education institutions (higher VET and professional tertiary programmes).

School-based VET is available at upper secondary and post-secondary levels, with the first two qualifications funded by the state. It offers regular full-time education for learners under 25 in 'student status' and flexible, shorter-duration options for those over 16 in 'adult status'. Work-based learning is provided in school settings or, preferably, through dual VET.

Upper secondary vocational education offers two main pathways, starting at age 14 after the completion of lower secondary education:

5-year ISCED 354 technician programmes at *technikum* schools prepare learners during grades 9-13 for both the upper secondary school leaving examination (*matura*) and an EQF level 5 vocational qualification (such as chemical technician). Programmes in art, pedagogy, and public cultural education fall outside the national VET framework.

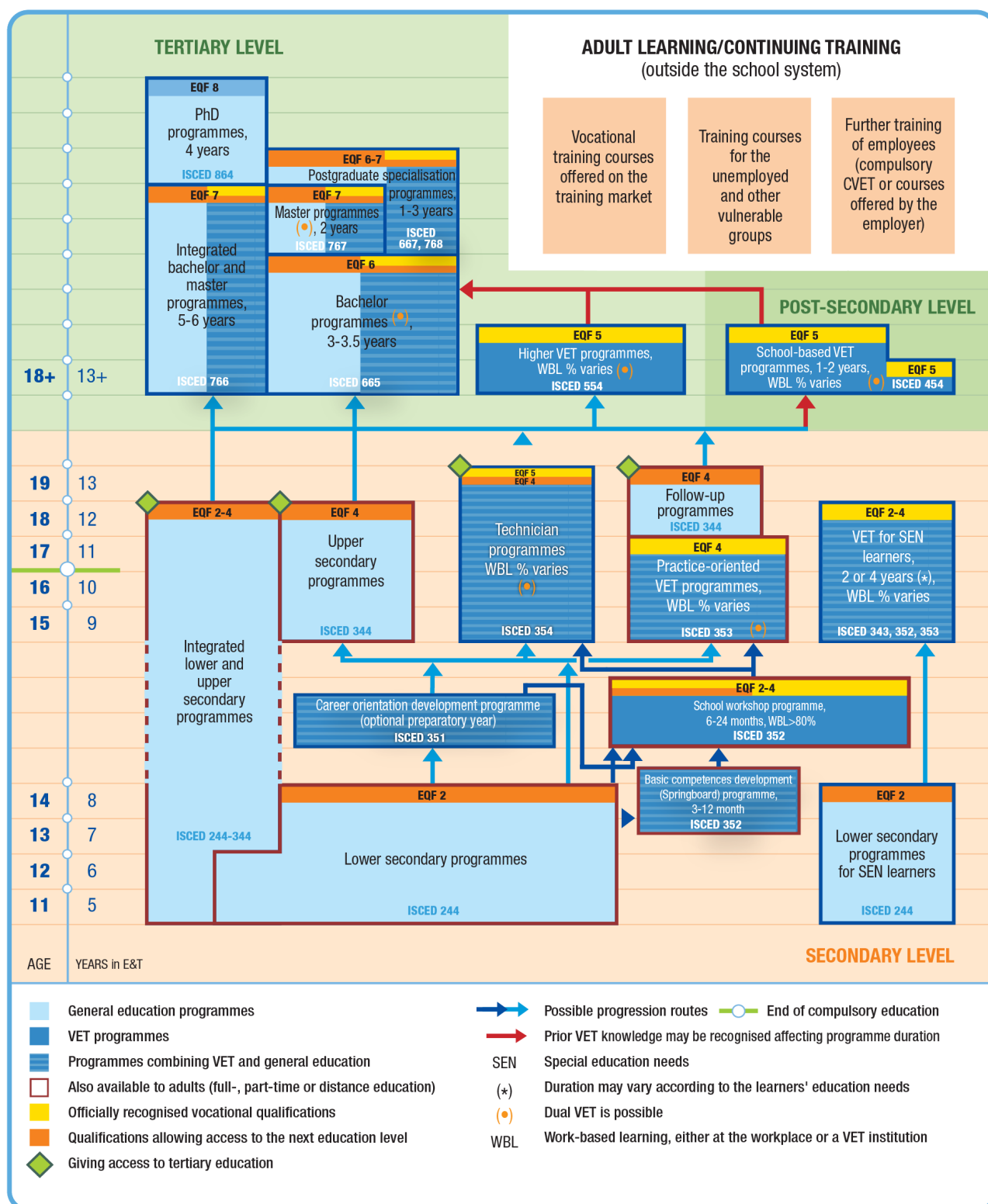
3-year ISCED 353 practice-oriented VET programmes at *szakképző iskola* schools lead to an EQF level 4 vocational qualification (such as carpenter or cook). Graduates can obtain the *matura* certificate by completing a two-year ISCED 344 general education follow-up programme.

Flexible programmes provide alternatives for learners who struggle with traditional methods, focusing on competence and skills development. These include: the Career orientation development programme (*orientációs fejlesztés*) (ISCED 351), where learners explore different professions during an optional preparatory year; the Springboard (*dobbantó*) programme (ISCED 352), which allows entry to upper secondary VET for those over 15 without a lower secondary certificate; and, following the Springboard, progression to the School workshop programme (*műhelyiskola*) (ISCED 352) to obtain a partial qualification at EQF levels 2-4. Vocational programmes tailored for learners with special education needs (SEN) are available at ISCED level 3 and typically last 2 to 4 years.

Holders of the *matura* certificate can enrol in post-secondary (ISCED 454) programmes for technician qualifications as well as higher VET (ISCED 554) programmes, earning a certificate (with possible credit transfer toward a bachelor degree). Professional tertiary programmes at EQF levels 6-7 lead to a diploma and a professional qualification, encompassing bachelor and master programmes.

VET also includes adult training programmes offered by various providers. These programmes are flexible, industry-driven, and continuously updated to meet labour market needs. They can be state-recognised, if exams are taken in accredited examination centres. Participation is mainly voluntary, except for mandatory training such as teachers' continuing professional development. Training for vulnerable groups is also available with government funding.

VET in Hungary's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Private Limited Company (IKK Plc.) and Ministry for Culture and Innovation. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Hungary: 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/hungary-u3.

Distinctive features of VET

The 2019 VET Act changed the legal status of teachers in VET institutions, including teachers of general and vocational subjects. They are now employed under the labour code, instead of as public servants, which provides greater flexibility in salaries, working conditions, and career advancement, helping to attract a wider range of professionals to VET teaching. Since this change, they are referred to as VET teachers (*oktatók*) distinguishing them from teachers working in general education institutions (*pedagógusok*).

Both the 5-year and 3-year VET programmes in school-based VET consist of two phases: sectoral basic education (*ágazati alapoktatás*) and vocational specialised education (*szakirányú oktatás*). The first phase provides broad sectoral knowledge within school facilities and ends with a sectoral basic exam, which allows access to vocational specialised education. During this phase, students prepare for their chosen vocational qualification. In vocational specialised education, students can participate in dual VET with employment contracts, gaining practical experience in real work environments while earning a wage.

The national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*) includes 180 vocational qualifications. These are exclusively offered by the schools-based VET system and are regularly reviewed to align with the economy's needs. Vocational qualifications from adult training programmes aim to complement the school-based system with short-cycle programmes responsive to labour market needs. These are catalogued separately and can be expanded with new qualifications if any actor identifies a market need for a new training programme, following an authorisation process.

To support inclusivity and combat early school leaving, the VET system has provided IVET learners with a general scholarship since the 2020/21 school year. This scholarship helps young learners acquire their first vocational qualification and includes a career start allowance. Disadvantaged learners can also apply for the *Apáczai* scholarship, which aims to promote talent development and reduce disadvantages.

Challenges and policy responses

The Hungarian VET system faces challenges in aligning with labour market needs and addressing skills shortages. Efforts to adapt include modernising VET school infrastructure for digital and green technologies and strengthening dual training with incentives for SMEs. Partnerships with higher education and the [certified technician programme](#), a special track within the technician programme, support pathways to higher engineering and IT studies. Current legislation to adopt micro-credentials aims to increase adult participation in lifelong learning by improving the validation of prior knowledge.

Hungary's early school leaving rate was 11.6% in 2023, exceeding the EU target, with notable regional and socioeconomic disparities. Several measures have been implemented to address this, including flexible programmes for at-risk learners and the scholarship system. Learner assessment programmes help to signal at-risk learners. Students identified as at-risk are engaged in individual or group-based skills development. Improved career guidance is mandated in VET schools to prevent misinformed career choices and consequent dropouts.

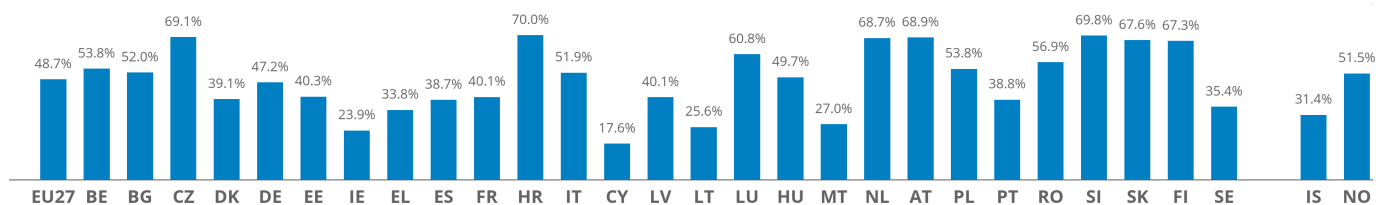
Sustaining a skilled teacher workforce up-to-date with industry practices is another challenge. Continuing professional development (CPD) organised in company environments, along with the shift from traditional teaching to project-based learning, supported by the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre, helps keep teachers current.



Hungary

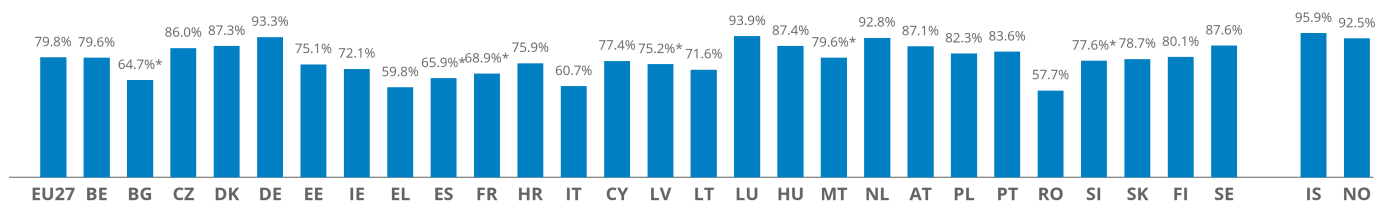
Education and training in figures

IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2021



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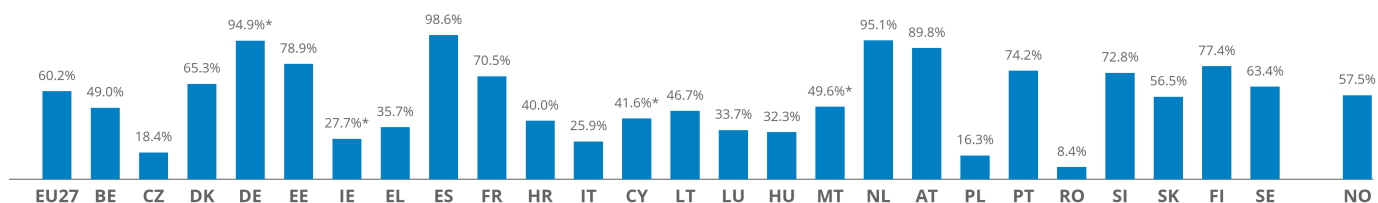
Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%), 2022



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

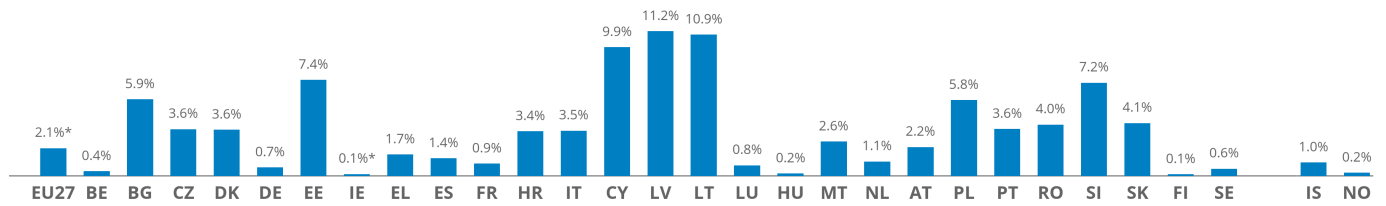
Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%), 2022



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

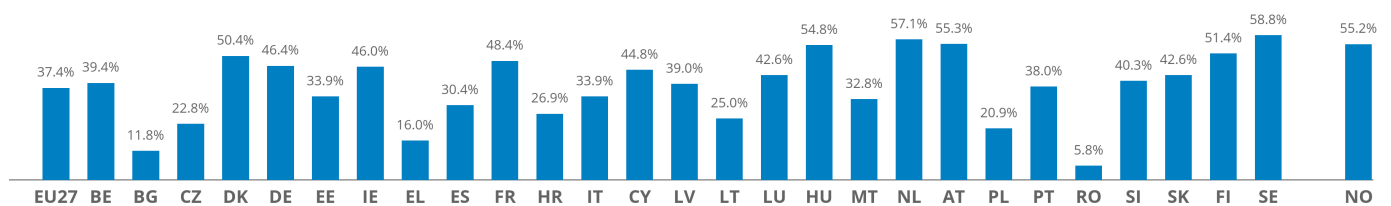
IVET learners who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%), 2021



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

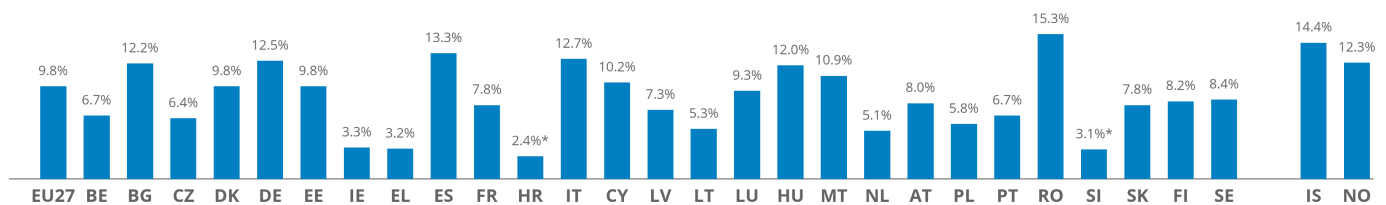
Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%), 2016



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

Early leavers from education and training (%), 2021



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

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



Further information

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

https://ikk.hu/gyujto/intezmenyek#refernet	ReferNet Hungary
https://kormany.hu/kulturalis-es-innovacios-miniszterium/	Ministry of Culture and Innovation
https://www.nive.hu	National Office of VET and Adult Learning (NOVETAL)
https://www.ikk.hu	IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Nonprofit Private Limited Company (IKK Nonprofit Plc.)
https://www.oktatas.hu/projects_educationalauthority	Educational Authority
https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en	Hungarian Central Statistical Office
https://mkik.hu/en	Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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