

Completion and Dropout Pathways in Intensive Dual VET: An Empirical Approach and Recommendations (CDPVET)

Itinerarios de Finalización y Abandono en la FP Dual Intensiva: Aproximación Empírica y Recomendaciones (IFAFPI)

Date of creation

2024

Description

This project aims to analyse the factors influencing the completion and dropout processes in Intensive Dual VET (IDVET) programmes in Spain. The initiative responds to persistently high dropout rates and seeks to generate scientific knowledge and actionable proposals to enhance student retention and employability. The focus is on IDVET, a training modality characterised by a formal employment contract and significant employer involvement in training. The project examines a range of personal, academic, social, and labour-related variables and incorporates a gender-sensitive approach, addressing the strong gender segregation within vocational education and its impact on educational and career trajectories.

Employing a mixed-methods, longitudinal design, the study will gather data through questionnaires and in-depth interviews with students and tutors in the Balearic Islands between 2024 and 2028. It adopts the theoretical framework proposed by Krötz (2024), which conceptualises dropout as a dynamic process across three phases: development, decision-making, and adjustment, and identifies dropout trajectories as upward, downward, or horizontal. The project aims to construct a typology of these trajectories and co-design preventive strategies through participatory methodologies.

To this end, thematic focus groups will be organised with key stakeholders including education and labour policy officials, guidance counsellors, VET teachers and company tutors, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and gender equality experts to analyse results and develop transferable recommendations. In addition, the project will produce educational resources, collaborative workshops, and audiovisual materials co-created with students. Dissemination will be carried out via a dedicated website, social media channels, and an international seminar. Ultimately, the project seeks to advance a more inclusive, equitable, and high-quality VET system.

Beneficiaries

 **Early leavers from education and training**

 **VET students (work-based learning)**

Countries

 **Spain**

Education level and sector

- Lower secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)
- Upper secondary vocational education and training (work-based learning)

Type of policy/initiative

- Prevention
- Intervention

Level of implementation / Scope

- Regional level

Balearic islands

The project has a committee of national and international experts of recognised prestige with the aim of being able to extrapolate the results to other regions (both Spanish and European) with similar characteristics (implementation process of Intensive Dual VET and economic and labour market characteristics).

Aims of policy/initiative

The main rationale and objectives of the practice are:

- To identify and analyse the factors and processes that lead to either the successful completion or dropout of students in Intensive Dual VET
- To generate empirical evidence on the quality of training in both educational centres and companies and its impact on educational trajectories.
- To design and implement evidence-based strategies, actions, and recommendations aimed at preventing early leaving and fostering student perseverance.
- To promote an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality vocational education system aligned with labour market demands.
- To contribute to the development of policies and practices that reduce early school leaving and improve youth employability.
- To incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective in understanding and addressing dropout patterns, especially in highly segregated training fields.
- To foster stakeholder engagement through participatory and co-creative methods, ensuring the transfer and sustainability of the proposed interventions.

Features and types of activities implemented

The key features and activities of the /practice are:

- Mixed-method longitudinal research: Combines quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) methods to track students' educational trajectories

across different stages of FPDl.

- Three-phase model: The initiative follows Krötz's (2024) framework (development, decision, and adjustment phases) to analyse dropout as a dynamic process.
- Sequential student surveys: Online questionnaires administered at key moments (beginning of training, during the programme, and after signing the training contract) to assess motivations, experiences, and intentions to stay or leave.
- In-depth interviews: Conducted with students (both those who complete and drop out), VET centre tutors, and company tutors to explore personal, educational, and professional perspectives.
- Administrative data analysis: Incorporates official data on enrollment, dropout timing, and contract status provided by public bodies and training institutions.
- Typology creation: Based on triangulated data to classify different completion/dropout trajectories and influencing factors (e.g., gender, level of training, social background).
- Focus groups with stakeholders: Includes educators, policymakers, companies, and gender equality experts to co-analyze results and design practical recommendations.
- Collaborative workshops: Participatory sessions with students and professionals to co-create strategies, including awareness materials like a video report and a student blog.
- Training sessions: Delivery of at least 20 participatory and practical training sessions to educational and workplace staff to raise awareness and promote effective practices.
- Knowledge dissemination: Through a project website, social media, academic publications, and an international seminar.

Target group

This initiative is aimed at key stakeholders working directly with students at risk of early leaving, those who have already dropped out of Intensive Dual Vocational Education and Training and those who remain. The target group includes VET teachers and in-company trainers, especially those who support learners from vulnerable backgrounds such as students with migrant status, low academic performance, or socio-economic disadvantage. It also involves career guidance counsellors, school tutors, company mentors, and education policy professionals. These stakeholders will be engaged through participatory methods such as focus groups, collaborative workshops, and co-design activities to develop tailored practices and evidence-based interventions that help prevent dropout and promote successful completion of training programmes.

Resources

The project is led by the Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Vocational Training (LABVET) of the University of the Balearic Islands. The project is developed in collaboration with the Department of Education of the Government of the Balearic Islands.

A grant of EUR 84,375.00 distributed over the four years of the project is available.

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Evaluation of the measure

The project is in its first phase of implementation. Preliminary results from the administration of the first student questionnaire are currently being analysed.

As results on the factors influencing the drop-out and completion of intensive vocational training are obtained, they will be published on the LABVET website: <https://labvet.uib.eu/>.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

This initiative contributes to reducing early leaving from education and training by identifying key risk factors and dropout patterns in Intensive Dual VET. Through longitudinal tracking, targeted interviews, and co-created prevention strategies, the project has enhanced retention by informing more inclusive, responsive practices in educational centres and companies especially for learners from disadvantaged or gender-segregated backgrounds.

Success factors

This initiative is innovative due to its comprehensive and process-based approach to early leaving in Intensive Dual VET. It applies Krötz's (2024) theoretical framework to analyse completion and dropout pathways considering multiple factors: personal, educational, institutional, and workplace-related. Furthermore, it aligns with the new requirements of Spain's Organic Law 3/2022 on Vocational Education and Training, incorporating the quality standards of the European EQAVET framework, which identifies dropout and completion rates as key indicators. The combination of longitudinal analysis, participatory methods, and direct transfer of results to policies and training centres add significant value compared to previous practices.

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