

# Estonia

## Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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**Title:** Estonia: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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**Abstract:**

This is an overview of the VET system in Estonia. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at [http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/) where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

**Keywords:**

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

**Geographic term:**

Estonia

## THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



### 01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

#### 0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Estonia is an independent and sovereign democratic republic, wherein the supreme power of the state is vested in the people through their right to vote. This is exercised by electing the Riigikogu (Parliament) and through referenda. State authority is exercised solely pursuant to the Constitution and laws, which are in conformity therewith. The government of the Republic, and its courts are organised on the principle of separation and balance of powers.

Legislative power is vested in the Riigikogu (Parliament) which is comprised of 101 members who are elected in free elections on the principle of proportionality. Executive power is vested in Vabariigi Valitsus (Government of the Republic) which executes domestic and foreign policies and manages relations with other states; directs and co-ordinates the activities of government agencies; administers the implementation of laws, resolutions of the Riigikogu, and legislation of the President of the Republic.

Vabariigi President (President of the Republic) is the head of state in Estonia who represents the Republic in international relations, and who has certain co-ordination of and controlling functions in the relationship with the Riigikogu and the Government of the Republic.

Corresponding ministries are established, pursuant to law, for the administration of the areas of government. The educational area in Estonia is managed by Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (the Ministry of Education and Research).

Estonia is divided into 15 counties; 39 towns, and 202 rural municipalities. County governments, run by governors are the regional administration of the state. All local issues are resolved and managed by local governments, whose responsibilities include management of pre-school child care institutions, basic schools, upper secondary general schools, vocational education institutions, libraries, community centres, museums, sports facilities, nursing homes and shelters, healthcare institutions and other local institutions in the rural municipality or town, provided they are owned by the local government.

One specific cultural feature of Estonia is its bilingual community (education in Estonian and Russian) and multicultural society. The percentage of Estonians in the population was just over 68% in 2003. There are vocational schools where instruction is in Estonian, schools where instruction is in Russian and mixed types. One common feature is the significant improvement in knowledge of English. Knowledge of languages (especially that of Estonian, to a lesser extent of Russian) has started to affect the possibility of finding a job.

The experience of bilateral co-operation with the Nordic countries (especially Finland) could also be considered a feature. Active co-operation between schools has lasted over 10 years and has significantly promoted and influenced updating of schools, including vocational education.

Despite the positive image of some vocational education institutions, vocational education has traditionally had an unfavourable image in Estonia, people value upper secondary general education and higher education. However, in recent years the image of industry and production has improved as has the image of skilled labour.

#### 0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The area of Estonia is 54,227 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 1,356,045 in 2003. During the past decade, there has been a continuous decline in the population due to a negative birth rate and high migration rate. The age of the population is characterised by the decreasing share of youth, caused by the low birth rate in the last 10 years (Population 2002, Statistical Office of Estonia, Tallinn 2003).

The number of potential students at schools will start to fall from 2007. This will create a problem for schools and vocational education institutions. In addition to economic problems (the 'capitation fee' system is used for financing), the decreasing number of students will affect the quality of instruction (to have modern and high-quality facilities and teachers a certain critical mass of learners is required). At the same time, the needs for further training and retraining will be growing (lifelong learning, Education & Training 2010). Developing measures to meet these needs will be a challenge and opportunity for vocational education institutions.

The decrease in the number of potential students (by 50% in 10 years) will require a concentration of vocational training both in regions and sectors as well as a specialisation of schools. Preparing for this demographic situation started during the past couple of years. It will be difficult to concentrate provision in certain regions as the success and viability of a region depends on the availability of education and, on the other hand, on education quality.

	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>TOTAL POPULATION ('000)</b>	1448	1372	1367	1361	1356

Age-specific demographic trends for 2003, baseline scenario until 2025 ('000):

	2003	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>0-24</b>	430	396	343	288	213	250
<b>25-59</b>	631	647	638	625	583	531
<b>60+</b>	295	271	271	277	281	281
<b>TOTAL</b>	1356	1314	1252	1190	1077	1062

(Source: World Population Prospects. The 2000 revision. Vol. II: The Sex and Age. Distribution of the World Population". United Nations, Populations Division, New York, 2001).

#### 0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Economic activity of the population increased in 2003: employment increased and unemployment fell.

Breakdown of economy by sectors (% in agriculture, % in manufacturing and % in the service sector).

	1995	2000	2002	2003
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	10.2	7.2	6.9	6.2
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	34.2	33.3	31.3	32.5
<b>SERVICE</b>	55.6	59.5	61.7	61.4

(Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee))

In 2003 compared to 2002, the employment rate increased by 5% in the manufacturing sector and by 1% in the service sector. The number of people working in the agricultural sector fell to 10%.

Planning state financed student places in vocational education has followed employment trends indicated in the table, i.e. the number of available student places for service specialities has increased most and has decreased in agricultural specialities. This tendency could be observed 10 years ago and has continued. In the last couple of years, the share of student places available in industrial and manufacturing specialities has increased, but it has not yet satisfied economic needs in some sectors (e.g. transport and logistics, metal processing). This is partly due to the attraction of the so-called 'soft' specialities amongst young people.

Since employers have become more active, the acquisition of manufacturing and engineering specialities has become more popular. The trends in the three sectors are different in different fields. When planning for student places the differences are taken into account.

Employment Rate (Men, Women) (%)				
	1995	2000	2002	2003
<b>MALES</b>	65.7	54.7	61.1	62
<b>FEMALES</b>	52.9	60.0	51.4	52.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	58.8	50.1	55.9	56.7

(Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee))

The employment rate, which decreased between 1990-2000, has risen since 2001. The greater proportion of students (66%), acquiring upper secondary vocational education, is young men with lower secondary education. This might be that the choice of specialities in vocational training is wider for young men. On the other hand, in vocational training after secondary school there are more so-called 'soft' specialities, and as a result the share of girls is higher.

The unemployment rate in the period from 1995 to 2003 (at its height at 13.6%, in 2000), has decreased in recent years. In 2003, unemployment fell to 10% and was the lowest of the last five years. Unemployment has been higher among men than among women since 1995.

Unemployment rates (total, men, women, young people under 25, %)				
	1995	2000	2002	2003
<b>MALES AND FEMALES</b>	9.7	13.6	10.3	10.0
<b>MALES</b>	10.5	14.5	10.8	10.2
<b>FEMALES</b>	8.9	12.6	9.7	9.9
<b>POPULATION AGED BELOW 25</b>	14.4	23.8	17.6	20.6

(Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee))

Expenditure (% of GDP) on education and training				
	1995	2000	2002	2003
Education expenditure	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.8

(Source: Ministry of Education and Research)

Public spending on vocational education has fallen in real terms. Investments have grown at the expense of foreign aid (ESF, ERDF, Phare, LdV, etc.) in school facilities, which in itself is necessary and positive, but would not make up for deficit financing of instruction costs.

Public spending on education and training as % of total public expenditure.

	1996	2000	2002	2003
Education expenditure	15.0	15.2	16.0	15.7

\*No required data for 1995.  
(Source: Ministry of Education and Research)

#### 0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In comparison to the EU average, the proportion of people with low level qualifications in Estonia is quite small (12% vs 32%, respectively). The percentage of the population aged 25-64 having tertiary education in 2003 was 1.5 times higher than the EU average (30% and 20% accordingly).

Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level % (2003)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15+Acc	32%	46%	20%
ESTONIA	12%	58%	30%

(Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey)

By 2003, 11.8% of the population aged 18-24 had not received upper secondary education and were not continuing their studies. This indicator is significantly better than the EU average (16%). The situation in Estonia has significantly improved since 2000 when the indicator was 14%.

Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education.

	2000	2002	2003
EU-15+Acc	na	16.5%	15.9%
ESTONIA	14.2%	12.6%	11.8%

(Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey)

## 02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

### 0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Current education policy tends to follow a general liberal economic and political approach, dominant in Estonian society over the last decade. This has meant attention has been given to issues such as privatisation and decentralising control of schools to the municipal level, as well as rationalising and improving the cost-efficiency of education. This is less the case for policy towards employment services, where state offices are still playing an almost monopolistic role.

The aim of the vocational education and training (VET) system is to prepare young people, both socially and vocationally, for working life and produce a skilled labour force, which is competitive in Estonian and international labour markets.

The framework for VET policy is decided by the Riigikogu (Parliament) while the government decides on national strategies. The VET system was identified, from the beginning of the transition period, as the most difficult area within Estonian educational policy. Since the early 1990s, it has faced many challenges, such as: adaptation to a

market economy and political pluralism; implementation of modern curricular and education structures; the decline in VET participation and social status of VET, together with more recent preparations for a concept of lifelong learning.

Within overall education policy, priority was given to general and higher education in the 1990s. More attention for VET has occurred gradually in recent years through reforms, which started in 1998. Reforms have focused on diversifying and reorganising the VET structure, developing flexible funding mechanisms and a decentralised management with the involvement of social partners. These changes are expected to raise the social status of upper and post-secondary (non tertiary) VET and consequently the participation rate (only about ¼ of pupils after lower secondary education opted for VET in 2003).

The main direction of VET policy and reform are laid down in the Kutsehariduse kontseptuaalsed lähtekohad (Concept of Vocational Education and Training, 1998). This elucidated the purpose of VET which was to be seen as enabling individuals to develop and adapt to rapid changes in society and to ensure broad-based occupational competences. Key principles were set out, upon which the organisation of VET should be based, such as efficiency, flexibility, functionality, co-operation, quality and availability. These changes have resulted in a new legal framework, providing for: more flexibility in VET provision; the rationalisation and privatisation of schools; the introduction of a higher VET level (ISCED 5B) - in 2002 changed to rakenduskõrgharidus (applied higher education); as well as the establishment of vocational councils and involvement of social partners.

As a follow-up, and to speed up the process of reform, the Tegevuskava kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks Eestis aastatel 2001-2004 (Action Plan for developing the Estonian VET system 2001-2004) focusing on initial VET was approved by the government in 2001. This document has defined a total of 23 tasks linked to concrete annual targets to be achieved up to 2004. Major objectives are to increase VET participation by 8% annually, with the target to attract 50% of the age group of lower secondary education graduates and 50% of graduates from gymnasium (upper secondary school); to decrease the drop-out rate by 1% annually, and to reorganise the VET school network by privatisation and municipalisation of schools. In addition, a more rational and effective use of existing resources is envisaged.

Other national policy documents, like the Eesti riiklik arengukava Euroopa Liidu struktuurifondide kasutuselevõtuks - ühtne programmdokument aastateks 2004-2006 (Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds SPD 2004-2006) and the Eesti Vabariigi tööhõive tegevuskava 2002 ja 2003 (National Employment Action Plans 2002 and 2003) stress the need for a national continuing training and lifelong learning system to improve the employability and quality of the labour force. At the moment different strategies are under development as a part of a VET Development Plan for 2005-2008 to raise the status and attractiveness of VET and improve its flexibility.

Other important developments have also taken place such as the modernisation of curricula whereby modular-based curricula were developed and implemented in a number of pilot schools with Phare support between 1994-98. By 2001, all school programmes were modular. The VET curriculum reform approach could be termed the "labour market training model", as it is a modular and competence-based system, designed to be flexible and adaptable and can embrace initial training for young people as well as continuing training for adults and unemployed people. Continued curricula development for VET is related to an aim to develop a professional qualification system and establishing a national curriculum which will include the professional competence requirements for a given occupation riiklik kutsevalifikatsioonisüsteem (National Employee Qualification System) which will be recognised by employers and raise the status of VET.

Curricula reform as well as the introduction of more programmes at higher level is expected to improve the responsiveness of VET to labour market needs. Nevertheless, it is likely that the current trend of pupils opting towards üldharidus (general education) rather than VET will continue.

Continuing VET reform and improving the quality of VET provision is also dependent upon improving the qualification of teachers. The main basis for implementing these activities is the Tegevuskava kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks Eestis aastatel 2001-2004 (Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001-2004). The foundation for teacher training derive from the Õpetajakoolituse riiklik arengukava 2003-2010 (projekt) (National Development Plan of Teachers Training 2003-2010 (draft version). Training, further training and practical work experience for teachers and headmasters will be implemented in close cooperation between schools and enterprises.

The last substantial change involves not only merging vocational schools and establishing vocational training centres, but also cutting down the number of state-owned schools devoted to occupational education and setting up private vocational educational institutes. Great expectations have been set in the concept of kutsehariduskeskused (Regional Vocational Education Centres), which were established on the basis of existing VET schools in 2000, with Phare support. These Centres are expected to play a crucial role in the economic and social development of a region, providing multifunctional services, such as initial VET, applied higher education, CVT, counselling, continuing training of teachers, labour market analysis, programme development, local networking.

### 03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### 0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Education policy in Estonia is framed by Riigikogu (Parliament) which passes education laws. The Vabariigi Valitsus (government of the Republic) decides on national strategies by adopting and ensuring the implementation of state education development plans, determining procedures for the establishment, reorganisation and closure of public educational institutions (including tuition fees, payment procedures) and to determine remuneration principles for staff of public educational institutions and state universities.

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (Ministry of Education and Research - MoER) co-ordinates the implementation of education policy through local governments and other relevant Ministries to establish (reorganise and close) public educational institutions (except universities and applied higher education institutions), to direct and organise the preparation of curricula, study programmes, textbooks and teaching/study aids (except for universities) and to administer public assets used by public educational institutions and the education system as a whole. The MoER plays the most important role in VET provision. Other Ministries involved include:

- Sotsiaalministeerium (Ministry of Social Affairs) is responsible for the organising and financing training for unemployed people.
- Põllumajandusministeerium (Ministry of Agriculture) were responsible for 13 agricultural schools, which according to the Kutseõppeasutuse seadus (Law on Vocational Education Institutions) came under administrative jurisdiction of the MoER, as of September 2000.
- Kultuuriministeerium (Ministry of Culture) participates in devising state education in culture and sports and coordinates in-service training in their area of government.

Several advisory bodies assist the MoER in policy development, for example Teachers' Union, Education Organisation Council, Education Forum, Estonian Employers' Central Union, Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation, Estonian Qualification Authority, Estonian Research and Development Council, Estonian Adult Education Association - Andras, Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development – Innove, and many others.

At local level, county and local governments have an administrative role to play in VET. County governments and their education departments prepare and implement education development plans for their administrative region (county). They provide supervision of pre-primary institutions and organise vocational guidance and counselling of children and young people.

At school level, vocational education institutions are under the administration of local government, state or private persons and are managed by the director with the teachers' council and the council of vocational educational institutions. The heads are the legal representatives of the respective institutions and are required to ensure the effective work of the institution. They are responsible for its functioning and development as well as for the lawful and expedient use of funds. The head of the educational institution enters into employment contracts with the school staff (including teachers), a competition is organised to fill the vacancies and the whole procedure is carried out with the approval of the council of the educational institution.

### 0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The legal basis for a new education system was created in the early 1990s, and in the late 1990s for VET. Overall, there is still a lack of co-ordination and inter-ministerial consultation on different laws regulating VET.

The main laws related to education and training are:

- Eesti Vabariigi Põhiseadus (Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, 1992) provides the right to education for everybody in Estonia.
- Haridusseadus (Education Act, 1993) provides an overall framework and general principles for the education system.
- Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus (Basic school and Upper Secondary General Schools Act, 1993) provides more specific conditions for establishing, running and closing state and municipal primary schools, basic schools and upper secondary general schools. Defines the principles governing basic schools and upper secondary general schools.
- Ülikooliseadus (Universities Act, 1995) regulates higher education.
- Koolieelsete lasteasutuste seadus (Pre-School Childcare Institutions Act, 1999) defines the foundations for pre-school institutions in municipalities, as well as the whole pre-school education system.

Specifically to VET, legislation has only been introduced in the second half of the 1990s:

- Kutseõppeasutuse seadus (Vocational Education Institutions Act, 1998) regulates the provision of VET at upper and post-secondary (non tertiary) level, foundation and operation of VET institutions, including private VET institutions, as far as the Erakooliseadus (Law on Private Education Institution) does not stipulate otherwise.
- Erakooliseadus (Private Education Institution Act, 1998) regulates the provision of training longer than 120 hours organised by private providers as well as the foundation and operation of private schools.
- Rakenduskõrgkooli seadus (Applied Higher Education Institutions Act, 1998) regulates the foundation and operation of applied higher education institutions; provision of applied higher education, including that in VET schools.
- Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus (Adult Education Act, 1993) regulates education and training provisions for adults.
- Kutseseadus (Professions Act, 2000) regulates the status and work of the Vocational Councils and the system of qualifications.



- Välisriigis omandatud kutsequalifikatsiooni seadus (Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act, 2000) to be employed in a regulated profession and taking into account European Union Directives.

Continuing training is mainly regulated by the Adult Education Act, which sets the overall framework. It aims to encourage the national level, local governments and employers to guarantee possibilities for lifelong learning and defines their responsibilities. It also sets the principles for financing and organising of training for adults.

Apart from the Professions Act listed above, a number of Acts not directly related to education also have an impact on continuing vocational training. Puhkuseseadus (Holidays Act, 2001) regulates training leave of employees, Palgaseadus (Wages Act, 1994) regulates payments related to training, Avaliku teenistuse seadus (Public Service Act, 1995) confirms the right for training to civil servants, Töölepinguseadus (Employment Contract Act, 1992) introduced the obligation of employers to organise work-related training if vocational qualification needs are changing, and Tulumaksuseadus (Income Tax Act, 1999) provides for income tax reduction on training expenses for employees.

### 0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The participation of social partners in VET is regulated by national legislation as well as by their own charters, action plans and agreements with other stakeholders. In the last decade, the involvement of social partners in administrative and consultative bodies of the education system has evolved substantially. In particular, employers have been assigned to play a more active and influential role as reflected in their participation in Vocational Councils, which have been established according to the Law on Vocational Education Institutions and in the framework of the creation of the "National Employee Qualification System". Vocational Councils develop qualification requirements and vocational standards, which are used as a basic reference in programme development at educational institutions.

Notwithstanding the commitment and participation of social partners in different fields at national level, the actual involvement of social partners is still limited at local level and needs to be extended.

At the national level, social partners are represented by Eesti Kaubandus-Tööstuskoda (Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and Eesti Töoandjate Keskkliit (Estonian Association of Employers). Membership includes enterprises, employer/employee unions, and more active employer associations. Through tripartite negotiations, a consensus has been reached about the organisational structures of vocational/professional initial training, retraining, and complementary training and employee qualifications structures.

At regional level, participation of social partners in vocational/professional education depends mostly on the enthusiasm of schools and enterprise. Co-operation is present on the enterprise-school level.

In specific economic sectors, social partners at enterprise level have also acknowledged the need to participate in vocational/professional education and the importance of being involved with employee training.

Cooperation at enterprise (union)/school level exists in initial-, complementary- and retraining.

	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS</b>	<b>TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)</b>
<b>NATIONAL LEVEL</b>	Planning the reorganisation of vocations/professions, which do not require higher education. Preparing preliminary laws, elaborating strategies and the vocational/professional conception.	Decision making/direct
<b>REGIONAL LEVEL</b>	Elaborating and providing qualification and vocational standards	Advisory/direct
<b>SECTORAL LEVEL</b>	In-company training sessions, which are organised by employers or co-operation contracts between vocational guilds and VET institution in order to match required qualification standards and programmes	Decision making/direct
<b>ENTERPRISE LEVEL</b>	Training the necessary skilled workers personnel by employers/companies	Decision making/direct

## 04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

The initiative to reform vocational education dates from the second half of the 1990s based on a social agreement reached between 1996-2000. This initiative was based on a dialogue between trainers and social partners; a legislative basis and conditions were created for directing the development of vocational education and training

(VET) according to changes taking place in Estonia, for a more efficient application of available resources, developing new curricula and educating the personnel of kutseõppeasutus (vocational education institution). As of 1 December 2004, there were 68 VET institutions in Estonia 47 of which were public (including 3 special VET institutions), 18 private and 3 municipal VET institutions.

In January 1998, the government endorsed the conceptual bases of vocational education in the educational policy and reform programme and the amended Vocational Educational Institutions Act passed, establishing two new stages: vocational secondary education and vocational higher education. Vocational secondary education can be divided as follows:

- Vocational education at upper secondary level, that is based on põhiharidus (lower secondary education) and is equal with ISCED level 3B. The duration of study in this level is 3 years.
- Vocational education at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level, that is based on keskharidus (upper secondary education) and is equal with ISCED level 4B. The duration of study in this level is 1-2,5 years.

Of the 68 VET institutions 8 are offering curricula only for vocational education at upper secondary level and 27 are offering curricula only for vocational education at post-secondary (non tertiary) level. The rest 33 VET institutions offer curricula both for vocational education at upper secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) level.

Students who acquire vocational education at upper secondary level are usually aged between 16-18. Students who acquire post-secondary (non-tertiary) vocational education are aged between 18-20.

A student attends compulsory education until the acquisition of lower secondary education (until end of the 9<sup>th</sup> year) or until he/she is 17 years old. Schools are obliged to provide education to all children eligible for compulsory education and resident in the area of the school. Schools may accept children from outside the school's service area if there are vacancies. Students are evaluated on a five-point scale in põhikool (basic school) and gümnaasium (upper secondary general school), where grade 5 means very good and 1 equals weak.

[Estonia Formal Education Structure](#)

#### **0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL**

Initial vocational education and training does not exist at lower secondary level.

#### **0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)**

After graduation from basic school a young person has the opportunity to continue studies at a gümnaasium (upper secondary general school) to acquire general upper secondary general education (ISCED 3A) or at vocational education institution to acquire upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B). The state and the local authorities must provide learning opportunities for all young people who wish to commence studies on the basis of lower secondary education. Students are usually aged between 16-18. The standard period of study for students is a minimum 3 years, i.e. 120 study weeks of which vocational, professional and occupational related studies (including practical training) must account for at least 50%. Students complete at least 50 weeks of study of general educational subjects, of which 32 weeks are compulsory and common to all curricula and the other 18 weeks should be devoted to general educational subjects most relevant to the specialisation, and teaching must be integrated with the vocational subjects.

The objective of upper secondary vocational education is to prepare students for starting work or for continuing at a applied higher education level. It aims to encourage the development of knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes required to perform independent skilled work, on the assumption that trainees have enough general education and ability to apply this know-how after they have qualified.

Practical training in enterprise is an integral part of the upper secondary vocational education curriculum and is based on a contract between a vocational school, student or his/her legal representative and (either public or private) enterprise.

Students who have interrupted their upper secondary vocational studies, have the right to continue studies in upper secondary general school. If the student wishes to transfer to the upper secondary general school, in grades 11 or 12, s/he has to present the study progress sheet on the subjects, volumes/contents and the results. The decision, for admitting the student to a year group, is made by the teachers' council on the basis of these documents.

After acquiring upper secondary vocational education, a student gets a Tunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta (Certificate on Acquiring Vocational Secondary Education Based on Lower Secondary Education). At present, however this certificate do not represent a formal qualification as such, but merely evidence that the holder has covered a certain program, at a certain level in a given school. Graduates from upper secondary vocational studies can apply for the accreditation of their professional qualification by join for students qualification examination issued by the Bodies awarding professional qualifications.

Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational), 2000	
<b>UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT</b>	50405
<b>UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>	36%
<b>UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS</b>	64%

Source: Eurostat,2002.

The majority of basic school graduates tend to continue their educational path in a upper secondary general school and not in a vocational education institution. This is largely due to the upper secondary vocational education being in many cases still a dead end route in Estonia as opportunities for VET graduates wishing to continue their studies on a higher education level are rather low (the proportion of general education subjects in upper secondary vocational education curriculum is much smaller as compared to a upper secondary general school).

#### **0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING**

##### **THE PHARE 2002 APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT**

The apprenticeship project is a pilot project and, on its basis, it is planned to develop and implement an apprenticeship training system in Estonia. A working-group, including representatives of the state and schools, has been established to develop the apprenticeship system. The concept of the system will be introduced to them and they will be expected to give their opinions and make comments. The first concept of the apprenticeship project was ready by October 2004 and negotiations with different parties started.

The aim of the Phare 2002 apprenticeship project was to develop and implement apprenticeship training programmes to contribute to the integration of young people with vocational skills, into the labour market. More detailed aims included:

- improve the flexibility of the VET system enabling young people to have a wider choice of study pathways;
- create new, additional opportunities to ensure the social and vocational readiness of young people when they start working life;
- reduce youth unemployment;
- launch the co-operation of trainers and their social partners;
- support business development, primarily in regions with a high unemployment rate and economically active regions, including more adults in training.

Target groups are:

- young people, without lower secondary education, who have dropped out of school;
- young people, with *üldkeskharidus* (general upper secondary education), without vocational skills.

The aim was to involve approximately 200 young people in the project by the end of their training period. As of September 2004, 160 people were participating in the project. Training programmes, developed within the project framework, comply with current vocational standards and consider already obtained education levels. The emphasis, of the training process, is on practical training in companies and experiencing real working processes. The share of practical training in the programme is 65%, depending on the sector and speciality. This means more time spent in a working environment to improve opportunities for starting full time employment at the end of the training period, either in the companies where they did their practical training or other companies. The programme started in May 2004 with the involvement of 7 vocational education institutions and 25 companies. The training period is 60 weeks and will end with qualification examinations in September 2005.

The project operates in the following sectors:

- accommodation and catering services (housekeeping attendant);
- construction (general builder, assembler of buildings);
- timber and furniture industry (machine-tool operator-fitter, joiner, upholsterer, builder of log houses);

- trade and services (cleaner, seller-cashier);
- clothing and textile industry (dressmaker, sewer of footwear uppers);
- electronics (maintenance operator of electrical equipment, installer of security devices);
- metal industry (machine tool operator, assembly fitter, welder);
- horticultural and landscaping design (gardener);
- plastics industry (operator of plastics industry).

#### **0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS**

Young people can have kutseõpe gümnaasiumis (vocational training in upper secondary general school) and young men, with behaviour problems, can participate in the project Uus Võimalus (New Opportunity).

#### **VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Vocational training in upper secondary general school (ISCED 3A) means preliminary vocational training for the students of upper secondary general school that is carried out to the extent intended for elective subjects and as a part of upper secondary general school curricula. Elective subjects are based on the vocational and professional curricula content applied in vocational institutions. Vocational training for upper secondary general school students is carried out by vocational education institutions for providing initial vocational and professional knowledge and skills. The volume of vocational training in upper secondary general school is 15-40 weeks of study. The aim of upper secondary vocational training is to prepare students for decisions in their life and career planning whether to continue studies or enter the labour market. Studying vocational curriculum at upper secondary general school will make it easier for learners to continue studies in vocational education institutions and will help in the choice between different vocational fields and curricula after graduating the upper secondary general school.

After completing the vocational training curriculum the kutseõppeasutus (vocational education institution) issues a document declaring passing the vocational training curriculum in upper secondary school. The modules or subjects passed will be indicated on the document together with the student's results.

Financing of vocational training in upper secondary general school is project-based, student place oriented and priorities established by vocational education institution are strongly considered. State financing from the funds of vocational education amounts to 2/3 of the costs, while financing from other sources (general education schools, owners of general education schools, others) will make up the rest of the 1/3.

#### **PILOT PROJECT 'NEW OPPORTUNITY'**

The aim of this project is to give young men (aged 15-17) who have not finished compulsory lower secondary education (ISCED 2A), an opportunity to finish their studies and to continue their education and training. During the project, they will be helped to acquire knowledge, skills and experience necessary for life as well as preliminary vocational training in a study group with military type rules. The project is operating in one educational institution in Estonia.

There are various entry criteria, the project is targeted at: ethnic Estonian young men, aged 15-17; has finished year 8 or interrupted studies in year 9; is healthy and meets the health requirements established for recruits of the defence forces. He has neither physical nor mental addiction of narcotic substances and will join the project voluntarily and with his parents' agreement.

Training is based on the lower secondary and preliminary vocational education curriculum and lasts for 28 weeks of 40 contact hours per week. A civic education course forms part of the framework. 60 students will be admitted each year in the pilot project. During free time, students can pursue interests to help them to develop their physical and mental abilities and their character.

During the study period, students will have free food and clothes and will receive an allowance to cover routine costs (study materials, etc.). They will live in a hostel with both living quarters and teaching rooms.

#### **0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL**

After acquiring upper secondary general education in gümnaasium (upper secondary general school - ISCED 3A) or at upper secondary vocational education in vocational education institution (ISCED 3B) students can continue their studies in post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education level (ISCED 4B). The people, who have not previously acquired vocational education, are preferred at admittance.

The post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education is carried out in kutseõppeasutus (vocational education institution).

The objective of a post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational curriculum is to prepare workers for skilled work. It should provide the student with knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes for performing independently, complicated skilled work, assuming üldkeskharidus (upper secondary general education) background and maturity, ability to understand technological processes and analysis at graduation. Some fields of studies are represented only in post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education level (and not in upper secondary vocational education level): social services, health (nursery, therapy and recovery treatment), environmental protection, security services. In addition, there are also other fields of study that can be studied in post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education level (and also in upper secondary vocational education level) like business and administration, engineering and engineering trades, manufacturing and processing agriculture etc.

The length of studies to acquire kutsekeskhariduse keskhariduse baasil (post-secondary, non tertiary vocational education) is 1-2,5 years, i.e. 40-100 study weeks of which the vocation, profession and occupation related studies (incl. practical training in enterprise) must account for at least 85% and students shall complete at least 6 weeks of

study of general education subjects. Students who acquire post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education are in the age 18-20.

A student who graduates from vocational education institution, i.e. has covered the full post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational curriculum gets a certificate named Tunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta (Certificate Acquiring Vocational Secondary Education Based on Secondary Education).

If student wishes to continue studies in applied higher education study or in Bachelor's study she/he may need to pass riigieksamid (state general education examinations) that are not compulsory for graduating from vocational education institution (compulsory only for graduating from upper secondary general school). Most universities or applied higher education institutions require passing these examinations as prerequisite in admission.

#### **0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL**

In Estonia, the higher education (HE) system consists of two branches – an academic branch (ISCED 5A) and a professional branch or rakenduskõrgharidus (applied higher education) (ISCED 5B).

The applied higher education may be provided in three different types of institutions: 1) rakenduskõrgkool (an institution of applied higher education), 2) in an institution that is part of the structure of a university, 3) kutseõppeasutus (vocational education institution) that offers post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education curricula has also right to offer applied higher education curricula.

According to HE Standards, applied HE provides students with the competences necessary for employment in a particular profession or to continue his/her studies at Masters level. All people who have completed keskharidus (upper secondary level education or training) or who have equivalent foreign qualifications have an equal right to compete to be admitted to applied HE (as determined by the Ministry of Education and Research). Each provider may set more specific entry requirements which can also differ by specialisation. The number of places at public-sector HE institutions is decided by the State although each HE institution is entitled to allocate a number of additional places (these are subject to fees).

Applied HE is the first stage of HE, and was established from the 2002-03 academic year. The nominal length of study is 3 to 4.5 years. Graduates who have completed their studies are awarded a diploma (rakenduskõrgharidusõppe diplom). From 2003-04 academic year, HE may be undertaken full-time, part-time or externally. In full-time study, a student shall cumulatively complete at least 75% of the study load, subject to completion according to the curriculum by the end of each academic year, and in part-time study – less than 75%.

Students are evaluated through a unified system for both academic and applied HE branches. The same system is also used for evaluation of students studying according to applied higher education curricula at vocational education institutions. An examination or an assessment is considered positive if a student receives a grade ranging from 1 (E) to 5 (A).

### **05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS**

#### **0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS**

According to legislation, adult education in Estonia is divided into:

- tasemekoolitus (formal adult education);
- tööalane koolitus (professional education/work-related training);
- vabahariduslik koolitus (informal education/popular adult education).

#### **FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION**

Within this grouping are the following possibilities:

- lower and upper secondary general education in the form of evening courses, distance learning or as an external student;
- upper secondary vocational education in the form of evening courses or distance learning;
- post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education in part-time study or as an external student;
- higher education in part-time study or as an external student.

Access requirements are the same as normal for these pathways whether for adults or young people, i.e. formal certificates are required.

#### **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION/WORK-RELATED TRAINING**

This provides the opportunity to acquire and develop professional, occupational and/or vocational knowledge, skills and experience and the opportunity for retraining at the place of employment or at an educational institution. Admission requirements tend not to be set but a certain level of knowledge may be required for some studies (e.g. language, ICT skills, etc.).

#### **INFORMAL EDUCATION/POPULAR ADULT EDUCATION**

This provides the opportunity to develop personality, creativity, talents, initiative and sense of social responsibility and to accumulate the knowledge, skills and abilities needed in life. Admission requirements tend not to be set but a certain level of knowledge may be required for some studies (e.g. language, ICT skills, etc.).

## RECENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Since Estonia regained its independence in 1991, numerous changes have taken place in the field of adult education. While the adult education system which had operated for all workers during the Soviet period was completely abolished, the period of decline was overcome relatively quickly and a new type of system was established. This new system recreated popular adult education in addition to job-related training and significantly changed the role of adult upper secondary general schools, vocational institutions, higher education institutions. The main emphasis was set on establishing the legislative basis that would ensure the right to lifelong learning for every person. Estonia passed the *Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus* (Adult Education Act) in 1993 which became a strong impetus for the development of the whole field and also opened new opportunities for subsidising adult education from the state budget.

During the 1990s, the lack of information about the labour market made it difficult to plan provision for both initial and continuing vocational education. In addition, the centralised administration of vocational institutions did not allow for regional adaptation to labour market needs or the interests of local authorities in training provision. Nowadays, cooperation has significantly improved enabling schools to respond more effectively to local labour market needs. Improved cooperation has been partly due to the creation of *kutsehariduskeskused* (regional vocational education centres) in 2000. These are expected to provide numerous services, such as initial vocational and professional higher education and re-training, labour market analysis, curricula development, counselling, training for trainers. In practice this has meant optimising the network of vocational institutions, which should consist of regional vocational training centres and specialised schools.

To implement lifelong learning according to the European Commission Lifelong Learning Memorandum and project of "Täiskasvanuhariduse arengukava 2005-2008" (Development Plan of Adult Education 2005-2008 draft 2004), the most important goal is to increase accessibility to education and training. For that reason, support to training projects will be provided under the European Social Fund. Projects supported must be initiated by training institutions (including vocational education institutions). The training courses should be labour market related and aimed at employed people.

According to the project of Adult Education Development plan 2005-2008, vocational education institutions should focus on providing adults with work-related training, for that reason several measures are planned within the development plan. One stresses the need for state financed study places in upper-secondary vocational education, in the form of evening courses or distance learning. The state may finance (according to local needs) study places in upper-secondary vocational education in distance-learning and evening courses and post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education in part-time study.

The Project "Riigikutseõppeasutuste võrgu ümberkorralduse kava aastateks 2005-2008" (the Vocational Education Institutions' Network Development Plan 2005-2008) also stresses the need for more work-related training. According to the development plan, there are about 300,000 workers, who would need work-related training offered by vocational education institutions. According to the Lisbon strategy, the number of employees should grow so that by 2010 there will be approximately 400,000 workers obtaining their work-related training from vocational education institutions, hence the need for qualified adult educators and extra resources is evident.

## 0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

The general organisation of adult education is coordinated by the Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (Ministry of Education and Research) in cooperation with many parties (ministries, employers, employee organisations, associations in the field of adult education and educational institutions).

In 2004, the Eesti Vabariigi Valitsus (Government of Estonian Republic) established the *Täiskasvanuhariduse Nõukogu* (National Adult Education Council) that operates on the basis of the *täiskasvanute koolituse seadus* (Adult Education Act). The Council consists of representatives from different ministries, employers and employees organisations, training providers and other relevant organisations. Its task is to counsel the government in adult education issues.

## FRAMEWORKS THAT GUARANTEE A MINIMAL LEVEL OF TRAINING FOR CERTAIN TARGET GROUPS

**Formal adult education** - according to the *täiskasvanute koolituse seadus* (Adult Education Act) 1993, local municipalities must provide opportunities for acquiring lower and upper secondary general education for all people living in their area which is publicly financed.

**Work-related training** - according to the Adult Education Act, 1993, local municipalities must also facilitate work-related training.

**Informal education** - according to the Adult Education Act, 1993, local municipalities must also facilitate informal adult education according to the local needs.

Special attention is paid to the unemployed and less competitive employed adults, including people past middle age, people living in rural areas and young people without qualification, who need in-service training and retraining to become competitive in the labour market. To ensure the quality of the training, prominence is given to the training of the providers of adult education.

Municipalities must pay special attention to providing specific training opportunities for unemployed people and jobseekers and other socially insecure people, including people with special needs. Funds for such courses (mostly work-related training in some cases informal training, depending on persons needs) are prescribed in state budget and are paid for by the *Sotsiaalministeerium* (Ministry of Social Affairs). Unemployed people participating in training courses, are also granted a study allowance from the state budget of up to 600 *kroons* (ca 38 EUR) per month depending on the number of hours spent in training.

The Eesti riiklik arengukava ELi struktuurifondide kasutuselevõtuks – ühtne programmdokument aastateks 2004-2006 ('Estonian National Development Plan – single programme document for 2004-2006' for the implementation of the EU Structural Funds) contains a number of priorities, the first includes measures for:

- support for vocational training projects which are targeted at working adults and people with low competitive ability, as well as at projects for training of trainers;



- support for people working in companies, including work-related training (further training and retraining) of managers. Support for potential entrepreneurs to start a business by offering them knowledge of business management;
- support for work-related training (further training and retraining) of unemployed people and people who had received notice of dismissal; enhancement of the capacity for work and readiness for work of risk groups through rehabilitation and re-socialisation. People whose command of the Estonian language is insufficient are also targeted;
- support for training projects where the target group is officials of state and local authorities.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education and Research and several partner institutions have compiled Hariduskorraldus vanglas. Arengukava 2004-06 (The Strategy of Education in Prisons for 2004-06). The development plan provides for measures enabling imprisoned persons to acquire both general education and professional skills. The main goal is to provide education for prisoners following the same pathways as those in the education system outside prison. Some examples of courses include electric and gas welder, painter, administrator for small enterprises, electrician.

#### **FRAMEWORKS THAT GUARANTEE A MINIMAL LEVEL OF TRAINING IN CERTAIN SKILLS**

**Formal adult education** – The acquisition of lower and upper secondary general education through evening courses, distance learning or as an external student is tuition free. The state finances a certain number of study places for acquiring post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education as well.

**Work-related training** - For vocational training the providers of training prepare programmes according to the demand and training needs in the region. For the existing professional standards the programmes are prepared according to the requirements of the standards. The professional qualification system enables to systematically develop the workforce, find out the training needs and plan education and use the workforce efficiently.

#### **FRAMEWORKS THAT GUARANTEE A MINIMAL LEVEL OF TRAINING IN ENTERPRISES**

People themselves or employers usually pay for work-related training (trainings can take place both-at workplace or in training firms). The state supports peoples participation in training through the tax system work-related training funded by employers is not regarded as a fringe benefit. The funding of formal and informal education by employers is deemed a fringe benefit.

#### **0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS**

According to the Täiskasvanute kooolituse seadus (Adult Education Act) adult education institutions are state and municipal authorities, private schools (with an education licence), self-employed persons, and legal persons in public and private law, provided that adult education is an activity in which the authority, school or person engages pursuant to the law.

In formal adult education the following providers are involved:

- A general education institution is a municipal school which pursuant to the decision of the Government of the Republic may be administered by the Ministry of Education and Research or by a county government or be a private school. General education schools cooperate with vocational schools to provide preliminary vocational training to the students of the general education school.
- Vocational education institutions may be public, municipal as well as private.
- Higher education institutions may be public educational institutions, or in state or private ownership.

In adult upper secondary general schools, lower and upper secondary general education can be acquired, either in the form of distance learning, evening courses, or as an external student. Some adult upper secondary general schools co-operate with vocational education institutions (VET institutions) and students can take courses offered in VET institutions. The aim of such co-operation is to prepare learners to enter the labour market or to encourage them to continue their studies in a VET institution.

In VET institutions, lower secondary vocational education, in the form of evening courses or distance learning, and post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education, in part-time study or as an external student, can be acquired. In addition, professional training is possible. According to the development plan, vocational education institutions should provide more work-related training courses for adults. This is important because, on the labour market, there are workers, whose education and vocational skills have been acquired at universities, VET institutions or technical colleges more than 40 years ago. The need for further education is thus evident.

In higher education institutions Bachelor's study, Master's study and Doctor's study are carried out in various fields of study. Study based on the integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's study may be carried out. The council of the relevant higher education institution approves the fields and format of and procedure for continuing education provided at the university.

In work-related training the following providers are involved:

- vocational education institutions;
- higher education institutions;

- self-employed persons;
- private schools;
- enterprises;
- professional associations.

In informal education the following providers are involved:

- public and municipal authorities;
- private schools (with an education licence);
- self-employed persons;
- legal persons in public and private law.

Adult education institutions offer work-related training (continuing education and retraining courses) or informal adult education. These institutions are mostly privately owned. Private institutions, which organise work-related training or informal education for adults, whereupon the volume of study exceeds 120 hours, shall apply for a training licence. When giving a licence, the Ministry of Education and Research adds expertise to the curricula. Qualification of teachers, safety of study environment, and the school owner's legal history is also checked. A number of state financed study places are also available in private schools and some students are able to study in private schools without paying a tuition fee.

There are institutions belonging to the public sector, which provide enterprise support for training their personnel. The Enterprise Estonia (Ettevõtluse Arendamise Sihtasutus) is one of the largest institutions within the national support system for entrepreneurship, providing financing products, counselling, co-operation opportunities and training for entrepreneurs, research establishments, for the public and third sectors. Training support, financed by the Põllumajandusministeerium (Ministry of Agriculture), can be applied for by companies engaged in the fields of agriculture, fishery, handicrafts and related tourism. Applicants can be companies, self-employed entrepreneurs or their employees.

## **0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES**

### **TRAINING LEAVE**

#### **FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION**

For formal education within the adult education system, an employee can request leave of up to 30 days per academic year. Additional study leave can be granted to complete lower secondary education (28 days), upper secondary general education (35 days), higher education (42 days) and to complete a Master's or Doctoral degree (49 days). An employee is entitled to 10 days of leave paid at the average salary with the minimum wage paid for the remainder. On completion of the education/training, an employee can gain an additional 7 days unpaid holiday.

#### **WORK-RELATED TRAINING**

For professional education/work-related training, a maximum of 14 days study leave per year is available. During this time, the employee continues to receive his or her average wage.

#### **INFORMAL EDUCATION**

For informal education, a maximum of 7 days study leave per year is available. During the time, the employee cannot get salary.

#### **JOB ROTATION**

Can be organized according to the rules of enterprises

#### **CARE FACILITIES**

Can be organized according to the rules of enterprises and is supported by the qualification system.

#### **DIFFERENT FORMS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Educational institutions provide very flexible study forms – evening courses, distance learning, part-time studies, e-learning.

#### **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

##### **FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION**

The acquisition of lower and upper secondary general education through evening courses, distance learning or as an external student is tuition-free. The state finances a certain number of study places for acquiring post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education as well.

#### **WORK-RELATED TRAINING**

For participating in work-related training, the state budget allocates means for teachers (3% of the salary fund), officials (2-4% of the salary fund), the unemployed and job-seekers (in the area of government of the Ministry of Social Affairs). Enterprise Estonia implements a programme of training support, which is co-funded from the Structural Funds of the European Union. The training support can be applied for by businesses and its purpose is to support the in-service and re-training of businesses and people employed in companies. The Ministry of Agriculture has used training supports for in-service training of people employed in the agriculture sector.

The teaching of the Estonian language among the non-Estonian population is supported by the INTEREST project. Successful learners can apply for a 50-percent refund of the sum spent on learning the language.

The state supports people's participation in training through the effective tax system. The Tulumaksuseadus (Income Tax Act) entitles people to an income tax exemption to the extent of the money spent on education and training and professional education funded by employers is not regarded as a fringe benefit. However, the funding of formal education and informal education by employers is deemed a fringe benefit.



Good example of public-private partnership is the project Vaata Maaailma ([Look@World](#)), which was initiated by the private sector with partners from the governmental and non-governmental sectors (in all administrative regions in Estonia). The project provides learners with free Internet education (an 8 hour block). The project offered training for more than 100 000 inhabitants of Estonia. According to the Ühendus Vabariigi Eest - Res Publica, Eesti Reformierakonna ja Eestimaa Rahvaliidu koalitsioonileping aastateks 2003-07 (Coalition Agreement 2003-07), in 2005 the national computer study programme should be started for people over the age of 45.

#### **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

The system of taking previous study and work experiences into account has been implemented by applied higher education institutions and by universities.

#### **0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The acquisition of formal education within the adult education system enables an adult to continue his/her education and to obtain a position in the labour market, which is accordance with his/her interests and abilities. For formal education, the admission requirements are the same for all. As the system of registration of prior studies and work experience has been developed in applied higher education institutions and universities, people can move within the education system more flexibly. However, in the process of registering previous studies and work experience, his/her knowledge and skills have to be evaluated by the institutions the person plans to enter.

While studying in vocational education institutions, students have the possibility to take some extra courses from adult upper secondary general schools to prepare themselves for entering a higher education institution. The students who study in adult upper secondary general schools have the possibility to take courses from vocational education institutions to prepare themselves for entering a vocational institutions, such course-taking also serves the aim of career guidance.

Universities and applied higher education institutions offer the possibility to study in evening courses and through distance learning. They also offer work-related training outside formal education.

#### **0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY**

The Adult Education Development Plan 2005-2008 has been prepared in the Ministry of Education and Research on the basis of the Elukestva õppe strateegia, project 2002 (lifelong learning strategy drawn up at the end of 2002). After the development plan has been coordinated with social partners, it will be presented to the government for ratification. The plan provides comprehensive measures for improving the accessibility and quality of adult education and also the development of a common financing scheme.

The system of work-related training shall be reformed. Legal amendments are planned with a view to creating additional stimuli for increasing the interest and motivation of employers and employees in work-related training. Broadening access to work-related training and supporting the consolidation of kutsehariduskeskused (regional vocational education centres) are set out as objectives. As the need for work-related training increases, this requires extra resources such as rooms, qualified teachers, materials etc.

There is a need for an analysis of individual needs, enterprises' need for training and the development of political measures to satisfy them.

Since 1998, the National Employee Qualification System is being developed. Training providers will benefit from the qualification system by getting a clear overview of the necessity and content of training. The employee will benefit by getting a clear idea of existing and missing skills, training options available and planning career and professional development. For employers, the system will lead to a more efficient use of labour. Establishing professional standards, which form the basis of national curricula is of great relevance. Until now, professional qualification exams have been taken only by a small number of graduates from vocational education institutions. In 2004, the opportunities, for the graduates (including part-time students) from vocational education institutions to take the professional qualification examinations, will grow.

### **06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS**

#### **0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND**

Since 2000, vocational education and training (VET) teacher education has been regulated by the Government's directive nr 381, "Teacher Training Framework Requirements" (Õpetajate koolituse raamnõuded) and since 2002 by the directive nr 65 "Qualification Requirements for pedagogues" (Pedagoogide kvalifikatsiooninõuded). According to teacher training framework requirements, the extent teacher training subjects of the vocational teacher training curriculum is 120 credit points. The extent of the minor subjects in the teacher training curriculum must be a minimum of 30 credit points. The set extent of the one-year teacher training curriculum (training following higher education in the profession) is 40 credit points.

The "Qualification Requirements for pedagogues" sets the following requirements to the level of education of vocational teachers and to their professional training:

- a higher education in kutsepedagoogika (vocational pedagogy) or other pedagogical higher education in the field of the subjects taught and at least three years' professional experience in the vocational, special or professional teaching area, or
- post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education or higher education in the area of the taught curricula, at least three years' professional experience in the vocational, special or professional teaching area, and completing a 320-hour course of vocational pedagogy, or
- post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education or higher education in the area of the taught curricula, at least three years' professional experience, and

continued professional work in the vocational, special or professional teaching area.

- 75% vocational teachers in curriculum of vocational education have to meet requirements 1 or 2.

Training for vocational teachers was launched in Estonia, in 1992, in the form of a 40 CP (credit points) distance training course. Full-time training began in the academic year 1995-96.

According to the information from the Ministry of Education and Science, there are 2212 vocational teachers as of 2004. 41% vocational teachers are older than 50 years and 8 % are younger than 30 years. 73% of the vocational teachers have higher education and 27% have upper or post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education. More than half of the vocational teachers (55 %) both with higher education and with upper secondary or post-secondary (non-tertiary level) vocational education have not completed pedagogical training yet. People with a vocational secondary education are more likely to become VET teachers because this provides them with an opportunity to acquire higher education and offers a new challenge.

Due to VET reforms, more attention is paid to vocational teachers and their training. The national level teacher training system, as a whole, is being reorganised and the Õpetajakoolituse riiklik arengukava 2003-2010 (National Development Plan for Teacher Training 2003-10) has been introduced. The plan presents a new picture of a teacher's role, according to which, in addition to being a mediator of knowledge and skills, a teacher increasingly has to be a supervisor and counsellor, a learner-focused teacher, a developer of learning skills, a team member, cooperative, ethically responsible, a teacher as a learner and researcher. The plan specifies teachers' competences, which include: attitudes and values, knowledge and vocational skills (a professional standard based on these has been recently compiled).

Other changes in the development plan include reorganising the three-year bachelor curriculum for a vocational teacher (120 CP) into a curriculum with elective modules, which in addition to pedagogical and general educational studies contains 25% vocational/speciality-oriented studies and a practical placement. The vocational/speciality-oriented studies will take place in co-operation of applied higher education institutions or universities.

#### 0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Traditionally, teacher training has always taken place at universities (Tallinn Pedagogical University and Tartu University). At vocational education institutions have teachers of general education subjects and vocational teachers (who teaches vocational subjects – theory and practice). Training of these teachers are different:

- **Teachers/trainers of general education subjects.** Teachers of general education subjects are qualified to teach at upper secondary general school, they have right to teach also general education subjects in vocational education institutions. They have higher pedagogical education or higher education in their subject area and passed teacher training for general subjects (40 credit points or 160 hours pedagogical course).
- **Teachers/trainers of vocational subjects (theory and practice in school-based workshops).** VET teacher/trainer in Estonia teaches generally both - theory and practice in the vocational schools and the requirements and training are the same. Vocational teachers are trained by three universities: Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool (Tallinn Pedagogical University), Tartu Ülikool (Tartu University) and Tallinna Tehnikaülikool (Tallinn Technical University).

Admission requirements for VET teacher training are often upper or post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education or some years work experience in vocational area, which guarantees the level of a skilled worker in the field (in distance training additional work as a vocational teacher is required). A skilled worker acquires higher vocational pedagogical education in 3 years (bachelor study). The curriculum of vocational teacher training includes:

- general studies;
- educational studies;
- study of vocational pedagogy and didactics;
- Teaching Placement (10 credit points).

After having acquired higher vocational pedagogical education, a person can work as a vocational teacher (in addition, he/she has to have 3 years of work experience in the area of specialisation) or continue studies according to the master programme (80 credit points) on the Didactics of vocational training or Educational Science.

The second option is, after having acquired upper secondary general or vocational education, to continue studies in applied higher education or academic higher education in the area of specialisation, and afterwards continue with VET Teacher training, master studies or complete the 320-hour course of Vocational Pedagogy.

The curriculum of vocational teacher training (40 credit points) has to contain:

- educational studies;
- psychological study;
- study of vocational pedagogy and didactics and

- **Teaching Placement (10 credit points).**

All training programmes take place as distance training courses and students work generally at vocational education institutions or enterprises.

To harmonise the content of the in-service training courses offered, the work group composed by the Haridus- ja Teadusministeeriumi Riiklik Eksami ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus (State Examination and Qualification Centre of the Ministry of Education and Research) specified course content to meet the requirements for qualification – including the content of the course on vocational pedagogy. A 320-hour course should contain the following topics: Organisation of vocational education and respective legislation; Integration of general and vocational education; Communication and working environment; Pedagogical psychology; Special pedagogy Adult Education and Didactics of vocational training. The in-service training course necessary for fulfilling the qualification requirements for vocational teachers has to be passed at an institution of higher education.

From 2004, a vocational year has been introduced for graduates of teacher training, at the end of which the teacher has to take a vocational examination and will be awarded a teacher's qualification.

#### **0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)**

Supervisors in the workplace for apprenticeship training and for CVET in enterprises are not yet required to pass pedagogical courses and they are not treated as vocational teachers. It has only been in recent years that the need for pedagogical in-service training of the supervisors of practical placement has been discussed.

#### **0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)**

The participation of teachers in continuing training is governed by Õpetajate koolituse raamnõud (Framework Requirements for Teacher Training), Pedagoogide atesteerimise tingimused ja kord (Conditions and Procedure for Evaluation of Teachers) and Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus (Adult Education Act).

The purpose of professional in-service training of teachers is to support the professional and occupational development of teachers. Professional in-service training of teachers is carried out in the form of independent work and at a state or municipal educational institution, private school holding an education licence, private or public legal person or a self-employed person, provided that the field of activity of the training provider is in compliance with the subject taught by the teacher or his/her profession. During every five years, a teacher has to participate in professional in-service training to the extent of at least 160 hours (4 credit points). A vocational teacher has to participate in professional in-service training for at least two months during every three years.

Täiskasvanute tööalase koolituse kutseõppeasutuses korraldamise tingimused ja kord (Conditions and Procedure for the Organisation of Adult Professional Training in a Vocational Education Institution) lays down that training is provided by trainers who have relevant professional and teaching qualifications. If the curriculum of the course includes seminars and practical training, 40% of the volume of the course, but not more than the volume of seminars and practical training, may be provided by persons who have professional qualifications and practical experience in the field.

### **07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY**

#### **0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS**

Vocational education institutions work closely with employers to gain information on possible changes required in qualifications. Curricula are usually changed every 3-4 years. Given the lack of a national curriculum, it is possible for individual institutions to change their curricula.

The following is done in order to monitor the changes of necessary skills/qualifications:

- Vocational education institutions are merged into kutsehariduskeskused (regional vocational education centres) (starting from 2000) in order to improve the economic situation of vocational education institutions and opportunities to select personnel;
- Regional vocational education centres have advisory bodies comprising of representatives of employers who provide information about the labour market;
- Cooperation between vocational education institutions, local governments and enterprises in the training of teachers and other staff and in the retraining of the unemployed;
- The Government and local governments have initiated several projects in order to develop bases for practical training in cooperation between vocational education institutions and enterprises. Therefore, some vocational teachers have signed an employment contract with both an enterprise and a vocational education institution.

#### **0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Current education legislation is organised according to the types of educational institutions (general education, vocational education, higher education, etc.) and does not really support their integration. Contacts between general and vocational education institutions are mainly at the local level, based on local governments and their initiatives. There are some positive examples of fruitful cooperation between local government and different types of educational institutions in the field of vocational education at local level.

Sometimes, regional vocational education centres offer courses for students of general education schools and adult learners or unemployed persons. However, the system does not cover the whole country.

Any pathways that bridge vocational educational curricula at different levels are random and occasional.

In some specialities, such as tourism, IT, sewing/home economics, it is possible, after successfully passing a qualification exam, to continue the studies at the level of applied higher education, which provides additional opportunities in the labour market. However, such opportunity to continue studies at the level of applied higher education is missing in most specialities.

Since university education is very popular in Estonia, young people who want to continue with their vocational training after lower or upper secondary education are, to some extent, disadvantaged. The situation will improve as a result of the starting of the 3+2 Education System, which commenced as a result of the Bologna Convention. This means that after upper secondary general education, people can study for a vocational bachelor's degree at university or at the institutions of professional higher education for three years. After that, there is a possibility to apply for the master's degree studies at universities. This should lead to the removal of the deadlock between the current higher vocational education and university education and will enable young people to study together at the higher level, regardless of the pathway they have followed.

Following the example of universities, a system for vocational education institutions to take into consideration earlier educational and work experience (acronym VÕTA) is being developed. Preparatory work is planned for the academic year 2004/2005 and the start of the system from the autumn of 2005. Based on the VÕTA system, it will be possible to apply to the relevant committee to take into consideration earlier educational or work experience in further studies.

#### **0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA**

Since there is no national curricula for VET in Estonia, curricula renewal occurs at vocational education institution level. Most vocational education institutions (VET institutions) have created the position of development director for this purpose or have asked the training director to take responsibility and follow and direct the activities for the renewal of curricula in VET institution. Development directors work with heads of departments and vocational teachers to develop and renew curricula. As a rule, the curricula in vocational education institutions are renewed after every two or three years.

VET institutions present their curricula to the Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus (National Examination and Qualification Centre) for formal approval to ensure that certain subjects retain a proportion within the curricula, but the essential renewal work is still the responsibility of each VET institutions. Sometimes, the content and volume of curricula of close specialities are co-ordinated, but in most cases, it is for the interest and responsibility of VET institutions themselves. Consequently, the upgrading of curricula and updating of its content primarily depend on the administration of the VET institutions and the attention they give to it.

VET institutions use the following mechanisms for the renewal of curricula:

- communication with employers VET institutions consider it to be the most important factor);
- questionnaires from employers (how satisfied they are with the skills and work experience of graduates);
- questionnaires from graduates (how satisfied they are with preparation; what could be changed in order to be more effective);
- feedback from places of practical training (in the 2nd and 3rd year, the curricula include production practice and it is possible to get feedback regarding the efficiency of preparation and readiness of the graduates to manage in a modern work environment);
- participation of VET institutions in general meetings of employers, where possible development trends in the foreseeable future and expectations and needs of employers with regard to newly employed staff are pointed out;
- employers' representatives are in the councils of VET institutions and they give timely indication of the necessary changes in the preparation of students;
- co-operation agreements with larger employers ensure exchange of information and, if required, transfer of a certain part of training to the work environment of the company;
- on some occasions, researchers and social partners are used for the renewal of curricula.

At present current students (they are questioned only after graduation) and their parents are left out in the process. The representatives of authorities, at different levels, and the public are involved in the process to a very limited extent.

The choice of teaching methods within the curricula is decided by vocational teachers. Forms of project-based teaching are often used. Contemporary forms of teaching are mainly used in the VET institutions where large investments have been made in both the material base and infrastructure in recent years (PHARE projects, state investments, etc.).

#### 0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Most IVET in Estonia takes place in a formal structure. On some occasions, enterprises or managers train individuals or small groups at their own expense. The Estonian VET (Vocational Education and Training) system comprises education and training programmes at the upper secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) levels.

Prior education and work experience are not accredited in VET institutions as yet. Students, who complete courses at VET institutions, are awarded a certificate, which do not represent a formal qualification but evidence that the holder has covered a certain programme, at a certain level, in a given institution. This system has already begun to change with the implementation of an employee competence based qualification system and more thorough assessment of qualifications.

As the curricula of the same areas of specialisation differ by VET institutions, the quality of education also differs from institution to institution and leaving certificates only state the fact that a curriculum has been completed without providing the potential employer with reliable information about the professional skills of the graduates. Therefore, the assessment of professional skills of graduates in professional examinations is being implemented. The organisation of accreditation and assessment of professional qualifications, including professional examinations, is based on the Kutseseadus (Professions Act). Person who has passed the professional examination gets a professional certificate. Final examinations are mandatory in order to graduate; professional examinations are voluntary pursuant to the Professions Act.

Graduates from VET institutions can apply for the accreditation of their professional qualification according to the Professions Act. Graduates from VET may take a professional examination at the lowest level of possible qualifications described in the professional standard. Professional qualifications are divided into five levels where level I is the lowest and level V is the highest. If the professional examination is passed successfully, the graduate will receive a professional certificate confirming that the holder of the certificate has the skills and competencies necessary in the profession. Professional examinations for graduates from VET institutions were first organised in 2003 as a PHARE pilot project. In the course of the project, professional committees were formed for a number of professions and examination materials were prepared for nine professions (construction finisher, mason, chef, machine-tool worker, joiner, welder, forwarder operator, border guard official). In 2004, there were already 641 graduates from VET institutions, who passed the professional qualification examination (about 9 % from graduates). According to the draft of Vocational Education Development Plan 2005-2008, the final examinations of VET and professional qualification examinations will be combined by 2008 and 70% of the graduates of that year should pass a professional qualification examination.

#### LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

- Kutseseadus, 2000 (Professions Act) provides the basis for the development of professional qualifications requirements and the conditions and procedure for their attestation and award.
- Kutseseaduse seadus, 1998 (Vocational Education Institutions Act) regulates the provision of VET, foundation and operation of VET institutions.
- Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus, 1993 (Adult Education Act) regulates education and training provision for adults.
- Välisriigis omandatud kutsekvalifikatsiooni tunnustamise seadus, 2000 (Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act) regulates the recognition to be employed in a regulated profession and taking into account European Union Directives.

#### BODIES FOR VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

- **Ministry of Education and Research** coordinates the implementation of education policy to direct and organise the preparation of curricula, study programmes, textbooks and teaching/study aids.
- **The National Examination and Qualification Centre** is a state agency administered by the Ministry of Education and Research. The main purpose of the Centre is to implement the national education and language policies. The National Examination and Qualification Centre also prepares and directs the development of the national vocational education curricula. The National Examination and Qualification Centre (REKK) verifies upon the registration of VET curricula that these are in compliance with the qualification standard of the relevant profession approved by the professional council.
- In 2001 the Kutsekoda (**Estonian Qualification Authority**) was established for facilitating the establishment and development of professional qualifications system and establishing prerequisites for achieving comparability of the qualifications of employees as well as acknowledgement of other countries' requirements. The Estonian Qualification Authority is under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Research. Qualification Authority organises activities of professional councils and is responsible for the development, supplementing and improvement of the kutsestandard (professional standards), and establishment of evaluation criteria. It also works out methods for developing and implementing the professional qualifications system, and

the qualification evaluation system; and manages the state register of professions as an authorised processor of the register. All vocational qualifications should meet standard quality criteria in their design and operation and be clearly located in the five-level framework for professional standards.

- Kutsenõukogu (**Professional council**) is a joint body between confederations of employers/employees, professional and vocational associations and authorised representatives of state. Its objective is to implement systems of professional qualifications. The professional council shall appoint experts in the field. These experts shall map out the main vocations of the profession; develop the professional standard, grades of qualification as well as the scheme for awarding professional qualifications.

As regards the recognition of professional qualifications, all graduates are treated on an equal basis with any other person who has applied for accreditation, i.e. for assessment of professional qualifications through professional qualification examinations. Thus, any person may apply for a professional certificate, regardless of whether he/she has completed the curriculum of formal education. In order to promote professional qualification examinations, the costs of examinations are paid by the graduates' school from the funds allocated for study purposes.

#### **0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING**

The basis of adult education is the Täiskasvanute koollituse seadus 1993 (Adult Education Act, 1993). Erakooliseadus, 1998 (Private Education Institution Act, 1998) regulates the provision of training longer than 120 hours. Pursuant to the Private Education Institution Act, adult education institutions, if the duration of the training they provide exceeds 120 hours in a year, shall apply for an education licence from the Ministry of Education and Research. Institutions providing professional training are required to hold an education licence in order to organise labour market training that is funded by the state. However, a number of institutions, which do not have a licence, provide professional training and hobby education. Therefore, certificates certifying the completion of such training programmes are not recognised by formal education. However, such certificates may be accepted by awarding bodies.

There is not laid down the state law considering accreditation prior learning and work experience (Varasema õppe- ja töökogemuse arvestamine - VÕTA) by educational institutions.

Prior education and work experience (non-formal and informal learning) are not accredited in vocational education institutions as yet.

Higher education institutions set down the rules and principles for accreditation prior learning themselves. Prior learning, the studies carried out elsewhere than the institution and work experience are accredited by the institutions individually and on the basis of the student's application. The institutions may, in evaluating the completion of the curriculum, accredit previous study results in an extent of up to 50 per cent. Higher education institutions accredit the studies carried out in other institutions of higher education and may also accredit the studies carried out in other educational and training institutions. Further education will be accredited if it is completed with an examination or a preliminary examination. Higher education institutions will accredit work experience if it is connected with the speciality, in certain cases: for the completion of practice programmes; for the subjects connected with the acquisition of practical skills. In evaluating work experience, the skills and knowledge acquired through work and their correspondence to the curriculum are taken into account.

#### **ATTESTATION AND AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

According to the Kutseseadus (Professions Act), the award of professional qualifications is a process in the course of which a person displays the level of his or her professional competence. The methods of attestation of professional qualifications are a written or oral examination, test assignment, attestation on the basis of documents or a combination of methods specified above. The awarding body sets the concrete method and form of attestation for the certain professional qualification. Professional qualifications are attested on the basis of an application submitted by the person on a voluntary basis

Generally, for professions on the lower levels (I-II) of professional standards, the qualification attestation does not demand a formal education certificate as a prerequisite. The awarding body, setting out the rules for attestation, should take into account (validate and recognise) the results of non-formal and/or informal learning.

The professional standard in higher levels (IV-V) is setting up the demands of a higher education diploma. In the process of re-attestation the qualification the awarding body takes into account the results of non-formal and/or informal learning. (The professional standard in level III may demand of upper secondary education certificate or higher education diploma as a prerequisite).

#### **EUROPASS NATIONAL CENTRE**

The increased transparency of qualifications is one of the main components in an approach to a better provision of education and training systems. Estonia approves the concept of linking separate documents aimed at the transparency of qualifications and competence into a single, coordinated framework, known as "Europass". Estonia will start building up the Europass National Centre in 2005.

### **09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT**

#### **0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION**

Guidance in Estonia is mainly provided by the public sector within the education and labour market structures. Although equally important, service provision in the education sector is more complex and divided between many institutions as compared to the labour market sector. This explains the unequal balance of the two in the following overview. While private career services exist, they tend to provide a different type of service.

#### **GUIDANCE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

Within the education sector, guidance is provided both as part of youth work as well as part of formal education. Within youth work, a network of maakondlikud noorte teavitamis- ja nõustamiskeskused (Youth Information and



Counselling Centres) has been operating since 1999/2000, contracted regionally by county governors and funded annually by the Ministry of Education and Research and local governments. There is at least one centre in each county. These centres provide information and guidance services on spot, visit general education institutions for lectures and testing, support teachers and schools in implementing career education, and co-operate with other relevant organisations on both regional and national levels. As career guidance has so far formed only an undefined part of the centres' services, some of them tend to place greater emphasis on information provision and youth work, rather than focussing on career guidance and counselling.

Within general education, all schools have the responsibility to implement *Töölane karjäär ja selle kujundamine* (Professional Career and its Development) as a compulsory cross-curricular theme from September 2004. In some schools, managements have appointed a staff member to be responsible for the co-ordination of the career management activities in school in general. The number and creation speed of such positions of career co-ordinators varies by counties and schools. Tasks of a career co-ordinator include co-operation with regional youth information and counselling centres and class teachers, supporting subject teachers in the implementation of the cross-curricular theme, organisation of student visits to/by employers, and in some cases – delivery of a designated career lesson. The latter is usually provided as an elective course for the students in the last years of either basic or upper secondary general school. Although not practised very widely yet, many schools have already understood the need for such a nominated lesson in order to provide students coherently with basic career management skills. So far, these issues have mostly been addressed by the class teachers during their weekly tutorials and in the course of annual development interviews with their students.

According to the National Development Plan for 2004 - 2006, vocational education institutions are also to establish the availability of permanent career services to their students. Due to the lack of financial resource and trained specialists, in reality only a few VET institutions have taken up that initiative. Some vocational education institutions provide specific lessons (eg job seeking skills) or occasionally invite a counsellor from outside to make some personality and ability tests for students, and deliver lectures on labour market information.

At tertiary level, five biggest Estonian universities have established career services for their students. In all cases, this has been done on their own initiative with no central regulation. The main function of these services is the development of students' job seeking skills, supporting them in finding employment, and researching their career destinations after graduation.

In addition to the above named institutions, the Ministry of Education and Research founded the **Estonian Euroguidance Centre** in 1998 with the aim to support guidance practitioners in promoting mobility and European dimension within education and training. Over the following years the activities of the Centre have expanded to include the development of the national guidance system in general. The Centre has been additionally named as the *Karjäärinõustamise Teabekeskus (National Resource Centre for Guidance)*, and although it does not provide direct counselling services to end-users, it provides support to the practitioners through the development of related electronic, printed and web-based materials, the organisation and mediation of short-term training courses and information seminars, and the mediation of foreign expertise to Estonia. It has become the main partner for the Ministry of Education and Research in the implementation of national career guidance policy.

#### **GUIDANCE IN THE LABOUR MARKET SECTOR**

Within the labour market sector, vocational counselling is provided by 18 counsellors working in 16 employment offices across Estonia. Depending on the needs of the client, the aim of counselling is either to help to specify the client's educational and job related aspirations, map the existing qualifications, assess professional suitability, inform about the labour market situation and different training possibilities, advise on how to make rational and well-informed decisions concerning employment and training, and/or provide instructions on job seeking.

The network of employment office counsellors is co-ordinated by the Estonian Labour Market Board that is responsible for the provision of training, information and methodological materials to these specialists.

In addition, there is a newly established small network of 5 EURES counsellors who are engaged in job mediation to foreign countries. With the constantly increasing number of people wishing to work abroad, the need for and proportion of career counselling is likely to increase in their work as well.

#### **PRIVATE GUIDANCE PROVISION**

The main focus of guidance in the private sector tends to be on job mediation (both face to face as well as over Internet), whereby career guidance forms only an undefined part of the process. Links with the public sector are rather rare, common trainings or information events are occasional. Within companies, human resource managers sometimes address staff career management issues but it is not regulated. First co-operative links between the education sector and the *Personalijuhtide Ühing* (Union of Human Resource Managers) have been established though.

Private enterprises are involved in guidance activities for young people mainly through participation in work-shadowing days, career days and related events, company presentations and as in-service training venues.

#### **0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY**

Main target groups of *maakondlikud noorte teavitamis- ja nõustamiskeskused* (**regional Youth Information and Counselling Centres**) are young people aged 7 – 26 who are living, studying and working in that county. Likewise, their parents and teachers can access the centres for advice. The majority of services are free of charge, and are provided in the form of both individual and group counselling, often accompanied by computer-based activities. The latter include mostly information retrieval on learning and working opportunities from the Internet, and in some cases, the completing of various personality and ability tests.

Although so far perceived as the ones already having made a career choice by embarking on a VET course, the participation, achievement and drop-out rates of the students in vocational education as well as their high proportion among the unemployed suggest a strong need for targeted guidance too. Unfortunately, due to the lack of human resource, the co-operation of practitioners from regional youth information and counselling centres with VET institutions has so far been more occasional than systematic, and is usually limited to in-group personality testing. In those few VET institutions where the career practitioner is permanently employed, he/she provides the students with information on the world of work, helps them to develop their job seeking skills, and supports in finding employment upon graduation. However, these examples are very rare and VET students can be said to have virtually no career guidance services target at them.

**University career services** are above all aimed at the current students, employers and alumni. In addition to career consultation they often act like a bridge between employers and students, by organising relevant lectures and seminars, company presentations, by providing job and in-service training practice mediation, and by giving the opportunity to join relevant databases.

Counsellors working at employment offices can provide their services only to the registered unemployed, those who have received their redundancy-note, i.e. official job seekers. These services are free of charge to the clients. Young people aged 16 – 24 are considered a particular risk group, along with mothers who have small children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Vocational counselling is carried out both in the form of individual interviews as well as in group sessions, clients of the labour sector can also use self-service possibilities for information retrieval from the Internet. One individual interview lasts usually for 1 hour during which time the counsellor can apply a range of different methods and tools. The latter includes workbooks, questionnaires and tests in both electronic and printed formats. On occasional and voluntary basis the employment office counsellors in some counties also visit schools for lectures on the world of work.

As Estonian counsellors have a rather strong background in psychology, they tend use a selection of elements from a range of different counselling and therapy approaches. Main methods applied by practitioners from both sectors include solution-oriented therapy, humanistic and behaviouristic approaches. Two two-day training courses in socio-dynamic counselling, provided by international specialists and attended by circa 70 Estonian practitioners, have instigated the spread of constructivist techniques in guidance. In addition, elements from psycho-analytical, existential and cognitive approaches are being used. Most Estonian practitioners would describe themselves as eclectics.

### **0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL**

#### **QUALIFICATION STANDARDS AND TRAINING**

The qualification requirements for career counsellors in Estonia are outlined in the qualification standard, approved in June 2001. In order to qualify as a career counsellor, one has to have a university degree, a 3-year working experience and a participation certificate from a respective further training course. In September 2004, the Kutsekvalifikatsiooni Sihtasutus (Estonian Qualification Authority) initiated the up-dating of that standard with the aim to produce similar standards also for other types of guidance specialists, for example career information specialists, career co-ordinators etc.

Up till February 2005, there has been no official basic training provided to help either already practising or future counsellors to meet the requirements set by the qualification standard.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GUIDANCE PERSONNEL IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

In the education sector, there are no official and nationally agreed minimal qualification requirements for counsellors commencing their work. The majority of already working guidance practitioners has a background in youth work, teacher training, social work or psychology.

Due to the lack of accredited basic training in career guidance, the most urgent training needs of practitioners have so far been met by various short and long-term courses, organised by different institutions, at times also under the leadership of foreign experts. Twice a year, the National Resource Centre for Guidance organises three-day information and training seminars on the basis of needs stated by the practitioners. These seminars are aimed at both education and labour sector counsellors, and serve as a meeting point to enhance co-operation and information flow between the two. Topics have included the enhancement of practitioners' information retrieval skills, trends in economy and employment, solution oriented counselling, crises psychology etc.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GUIDANCE PERSONNEL IN THE LABOUR MARKET SECTOR**

Within the labour sector, vocational counsellors are to have a university degree, preferably in psychology, pedagogy or social work. The Estonian Labour Market Board (ELMB) has developed a short pre-service training course for all new counsellors starting their work in the employment offices. Likewise, the ELMB organises regular further training sessions for all practising counsellors in the sector to harmonise and raise their professional skills. Three times a year they are invited to participate in information days where new materials and methods are being introduced, and where practitioners can discuss administrative questions and exchange experiences.

## **10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING**

The task of the Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (Ministry of Education and Research) is to avoid a shortsighted approach regarding the budgeting policy of educational costs, and to focus on the sustainability and stability of the development of the VET system. To cover the costs of vocational education, cost savings will be achieved by a more rational and efficient use of resources as well as a better allocation in priority areas.

In the foreseeable future financial planning will be influenced by the urgent need for further development of regional vocational education centres, which are important to ensure the economic and social development of a region. This will require intensive investment to upgrade the VET framework, e.g. updating the qualifications structure for teaching staff, better forecasting for labour market development, etc.

In 2004, a new development plan for VET funding in 2005-2008 is being prepared which will alter the factors used in calculating VET institution budgets. From 2005, numbers of students will be the most important factor in setting budgets rather than premises costs. The main priority will be a substantial increase in the allocation for the basic student cost in VET (a 50% increase in allocation by 2007). At the same time, funds will be allocated to those VET institutions not yet in receipt of investments by the Euroopa Regionaalarengu Fond (the European Regional Development Fund - ERDF).

### **1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The funding of initial vocational education is regulated mainly by the Kutseõppeasutuse seadus (Vocational Educational Institutions Act), which provides that VET institutions are financed from the state, municipality or city budgets, fee-charging services related to the main activities of VET institutions provided for in their statutes, revenue from foundations, and other funds. Student costs for a public VET institution are covered from the state



budget from relevant ministry funds on the basis of student cost and the number of financed students at institution. VET institutions have their own budgets. Student costs of public and municipal VET institutions are covered from the state budget funds within the limits of the number of student places financed by the state during the standard period of study determined in the curriculum on the basis of student cost, factors for the curricula and forms of study. In Estonia, the principles of funding municipal and public VET institutions are the same.

The state commission of student places is developed within the co-operation of Sotsiaalministeerium (the Ministry of Social Affairs), Tööturuamet (the Labour Market Board), Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium (the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications), Regionaalministri Büroo (the Office of Regional Minister), employers' and employees' associations and professional associations. The opinion of the professional councils is also taken into consideration. The analysis of social and economic needs serves, more widely, as the basis of the commission. As funding is based on the number of students, there is a direct connection between the state commission and funding. Therefore, we have described how student places are commissioned.

The allocation for each student place for each budgetary year is established by the government. Similarly, the Government of the Republic establishes the factors of the fields of study (specialities, different curriculum groups) and forms of study (daytime study, evening courses, apprenticeship) and the factors for the provision of instruction for students with special needs.

In 2004, the student cost in VET institutions was EUR 869 of which teacher salaries and social taxation amounted to EUR 520 and study materials to EUR 61. To calculate study costs, the student costs are multiplied by the factor given to a field of study, form of study and, if necessary, with the factor for the provision of instruction for students with special needs. In addition to the above costs, the student cost include management costs, and wages and social tax costs of non-pedagogical staff of EUR 288. (Please see the graph "Student cost in VET institutions in 1999-2004" in attached file).

The Haridus ja Teadusministeerium (Ministry of Education and Research) covers the study costs of VET institutions proceeding from the number of student places during the standard time of study. The budget is developed in accordance with the following formula:

- annual number of state commissioned student places x student cost x the factor of field of study x the factor of the form of study.

#### **PRIVATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Financing for private VET institutions is regulated pursuant to the Erakooliseadus (Private Schools Act). Teacher salaries are calculated on the basis of upper secondary vocational education curriculum, similarly to the same type of public or municipal VET institutions, and the costs of acquiring study materials are covered from the state budget. This applies where the VET institution has state commissioned education.

For state financing, the following principle applies: the salaries of teachers, employed at a private VET institution on the basis of an upper secondary vocational education curriculum and the costs of acquiring study materials, are covered from the state budget to the extent of admission numbers as approved by the Ministry of Education and Research on the bases and pursuant to the procedure prescribed by the Vocational Educational Institutions Act. Economic costs of private vocational education institutions are not funded from the state budget, which is a difference between the funding of public and private institutions.

In 2003-04, the Ministry of Education and Research financed a small percentage (196) of student places in private VET institutions.

Where the state does not commission education from a private VET institution, the institution can receive its budget from tuition fees. The size of which is determined by the owner and is fixed for an academic year. The tuition fee may be increased by up to 10% between two academic years unless otherwise provided for by the contract between the private institution and the student. Private VET institutions may receive subsidies for specific purposes from the state or a municipal budget.

#### **1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING**

Continuing education and retraining are not state-financed in Estonia although it is provided in state vocational educational institutions according to current formal education curricula and by private VET institutions or training centres. Tuition fees are paid by clients i.e. either natural persons or employers who want their employees to be trained.

The state has contributed to funding continuing education and retraining through tax reductions for employers and through income tax deductions for individuals funding their own training. Some legislation allows financing of adult education through the state budget for those participating in the types of adult continuing education and training listed below.

#### **FORMAL EDUCATION**

State funds are available for those participating in:

- lower secondary education by evening and distance learning and upper secondary general education in adult upper secondary general schools - for everybody interested;
- post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education by distance learning - 800 to 900 student places;
- part-time education in higher education institutions for certain fields (e.g. teachers without higher education).

#### **WORK-RELATED TRAINING**

For participating in work-related training the state budget allocates means for teachers (3% of the salary fund), officials (2-4% of the salary fund), the unemployed and job-seekers (in the area of government of the Ministry of

Social Affairs). Enterprise Estonia implements a programme of training support, which is co-funded from the EU Structural Funds. The training support can be applied for by business and its purpose is to support the in-service training and re-training of businesses and people employed in companies. The Ministry of Agriculture has used training supports for in-service training of people employed in the agriculture sector. The teaching of Estonian language among the non-Estonian population is supported by the Interest project. Successful learners can apply for a 50-percent of the sum spent on learning the language.

#### INFORMAL EDUCATION

Allocations are made from the budget of Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium (the Ministry of Education and Research) by way of competition to support salaries for approximately 45 headmasters and teachers of informal education training centres. Organising this competition is the responsibility of Eesti Vabaharidusliit (The Estonian Non-formal Adult education Association).

Apart from these specific cases, individuals or their employers pay for work-related training and informal education. The state is supporting people's participation in training through the effective tax system. Pursuant to Tulumaksuseadus (Income Tax Act) people have a right to be exempted from income tax to the extent of the sum spent on training. The training financed by employers is not considered as fringe benefits, however, financing of an employee's formal education and informal education by the employer is considered as a fringe benefit. Pursuant to Käibemaksuseadus (Value Added Tax Act), value added tax shall not be imposed on pre-school education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, higher education, private tuition related to general education and other training, except for training provided by a company or sole proprietor.

Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
EU-15	2.3	1.4	0.8
ESTONIA	1.8	1.3	0.5

In Estonia, the labour costs of participants are lower than in EU-15 generally because of the lower level of salaries and relatively high price of CVT courses. This is the main reason why the total costs of CVT in Estonia are also smaller.

The Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus (Adult Education Act) provides for the funding of adult education from the state budget, requiring the Ministry of Education and Research to allocate funds from their budget to implement the national priorities of adult education. The national priorities of adult education are activities, which ensure the development of the field.

#### USE OF THE EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS

In 2004 the EU Structural Funds became available to Estonia. There are four Structural Funds of which the European Social Fund (ESF) is aimed at developing human resources. With the help of the ESF the Ministry of Education and Research has planned activities for developing lifelong learning. The need for creating opportunities and conditions for lifelong learning has been described in the Estonian National Development Plan for Implementation of the EU Structural Funds – a single programme document for 2004-2006 (hereinafter the NDP) and in the Programme Complement of the NDP. The Ministry of Education and Research applies two measures of the NDP: measure 1.1 of Priority No. 1 (human resources development) and measure 4.3 of Priority No. 4 (infrastructure and local development).

#### 1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Vocational training for unemployed people is funded in Estonia by the Tööturuamet (Labour Market Board) which is in the subordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

As a rule, employment offices buy employment training courses intended for continuing education and retraining from VET institutions. Courses may also be ordered from natural and legal persons having adult education licences issued by the Ministry of Education and Research. For larger education commissions, employment offices arrange public procurement.

Stipends are granted to unemployed persons if they attend a course of at least 80 hours. The employment office keeps records of receivers of stipend and payments, including the payment of additional stipends (travelling costs).

#### FINANCING OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING COSTS

The Labour Market Board allocates budgetary funds to employment offices to organise employment training taking into consideration their funding applications.

Costs of social protection of the unemployed (in thousand euros):

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>TOTAL COSTS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION OF UNEMPLOYED</b>	5781.0	6110.1	15746.2	17162.8	17246.7	12222.9	10307.7
<b>INCLUDING:</b>							
<b>ORGANISATION OF TRAINING</b>	1773.9	1775.2	2044.7	2057.5	2703.7	3037.4	2792.6
<b>STIPENDS</b>	341.4	258.9	384.7	388.7	467.7	456.8	461.8

Source: Labour Market Board

As a result of EU accession, additional attention is paid and finances are allocated to increase the competitiveness of unemployed persons. The Estonian National Development Plan contains priorities for programmes, which provide equal opportunities in the labour market and higher social involvement of unemployed people (measure 1.3). To achieve higher efficiency and through it a better meeting of the clients' (unemployed, employers) needs, it is necessary to improve the existing active employment measures and develop new ones more appropriate to the needs of employers. Preference is given to long-term courses, during which it is possible to gain sound vocational skills, and training of vocations for which there is higher demand in the labour market. In addition, unemployed persons are provided business training in the same framework.

#### 1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

##### IVET

It is intended to include additional funds to vocational education and to increase the allocation to the basic student costs per year by 50% (from EUR 869 in 2004 to EUR 1304 in 2007). This change will allow the VET institutions to have more flexibility to pay better wages to vocational teachers and to upgrade its materials and facilities.

The Development Plan for the VET Institutions Network in 2005-08 will reduce the number of VET institutions, which should be merged and create possibilities to pool available resources. At present the budget for VET institutions of EUR 45 million is divided between 49 VET institutions, while in the future, the number of state-financed VET institutions will be between 25-29.

Between 2004 and 2006, 10 VET institutions will receive funds from the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) totalling EUR 19.3 million. For 2007-08, this amount will be approximately EUR 10.9 million. These sums will be used for capital investment to renovate and upgrade buildings and to improve the training and living conditions of students.

In future years, additional resources from the Euroopa Sotsiaalfond (European Social Fund – ESF) could be used to develop national priorities. The total amount for the first programme period (2004-06) for measure 1.1 of the Estonian National Development Plan amounts to EUR 53 588 477 (25% of which should come from the state budget and 75% from ESF). In the longer term, it is important to recognise that the system cannot be built and remain operational only with foreign aid, and a much higher contribution of resources from the state is needed.

##### CVET

In order to develop and improve the system of adult education, it is important to allocate funds to development activities. These activities are defined in the Täiskasvanuhariduse riiklikud prioriteetidid aastatel 2004-2006 (National Priorities of Adult Education 2004-2006) approved by the Government of the Republic in 2004. Based on the Adult Education Act, the Ministry of Education and Research will allocate funds to implement the national priorities.

In order to make education and training more accessible, it is important to increase both direct and indirect aid. Over the next couple of years it will be possible to use the funds of ESF to provide training for people who are less competitive and for unemployed persons. The ESF funds will be used to develop the system for accreditation of prior learning and work experience, the system of professional qualifications and the system of counselling – all supporting the implementation of the principles of lifelong learning.

A draft of the Täiskasvanuhariduse arengukava 2005-2008 (Adult Education Development Plan 2005-2008) has been prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Research and in cooperation with the Adult Education. According to the draft, it is important to develop a system of funding adult education and a relevant working group is being formed.

Recent EU documents mostly specify how the strategic objectives should be reached in and with the help of the Estonian national education system. The vocational education and training (VET) and adult education objectives and indicators are based on the Lisbon Strategy, Copenhagen, Bologna and Education and Training 2010 processes; for issues of lifelong learning: Communication on Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality and Resolution on Lifelong Learning. Other international organisations' and networks' initiatives are also taken into consideration. OECD is mostly a partner in compiling overviews of educational systems and organising knowledge transfer, also, lifelong learning issues have been dealt through UNESCO's Education for All initiative.

The key strategic documents concerning the Estonian VET system stress the importance of preparing a labour force that is competitive in both domestic and international labour markets. The VET Concept (adopted by the Government in 1998) stated the VET objectives. It declared that workers should receive training to enable Estonia to integrate into the European economy. Another key objective is the social readiness of graduates of the VET system for entering the labour market.

The Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System for 2001–04 declared the need to develop the system of assessing and accrediting vocational education institutions to improve quality management. The poor quality of VET studies was seen as a major shortcoming especially compared to the EU15. According to the Action Plan, the objective of a vocational curriculum is to encourage the development of the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes required for performance of independent skilled work and/or further studies.

The Action Plan for 2005-08 is currently being discussed by experts and social partners. The draft will soon be passed to the government. Among other issues, it focuses on two aspects of promoting lifelong learning. First, a student should attain the appropriate attitude and skills in the VET system for further studies. Also, the VET institutions network should play a bigger role in adult education. The infrastructure of VET institutions is currently being modified with investments from the state budget and the EU's structural funds to enable the system to provide up-to-date skills that are in line with the needs of employers. That infrastructure will also be used for adult education and training. In the light of the decreasing number of young students, VET institutions will have more resources available for adults in the upcoming years. In addition, teachers and trainers of the VET system will acquire knowledge and skills for adult education. Curricula development, teacher training and other content issues will be partly financed from the European Social Fund. According to the action plan, the national qualification system should enable workers' mobility in the domestic and international labour market.

The Plan will be passed to the Government by the end of 2004. The document stresses that the formal education system (including VET institutions) should attract more adult learners. A greater flexibility of the formal education system is foreseen for that purpose. The action plan also focuses on developing non-formal and informal education and validation of those branches of education. Services enabling greater mobility of labour force will be developed according to the plan. These include: career guidance for adults and a qualifications system, which shall be in accordance with sectoral initiatives on the international arena.

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