

Estonia

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Estonia: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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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 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards at: 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



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Estonia is an independent 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 Parliament (*Riigikogu*) 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 Parliament with 101 members elected by proportional representation. Executive power is vested in Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*) 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 Parliament, and legislation of the President of the Republic.

The President of the Republic is the head of state representing Estonia in international relations. Ministries are established, pursuant to law, for the administration of the areas of government. The educational area in Estonia is managed by the Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*).

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 educational 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. In 2003, 68% of the population were Estonians. There are vocational educational institutions where instruction is in Estonian, institutions where instruction is in Russian and mixed types. One common feature is the significant improvement in knowledge of English. Knowledge of languages is becoming more expected on the labour market.

The experience of bilateral co-operation with the Nordic countries (especially Finland) is also a feature of the VET system. Active co-operation between (vocational) educational institutions has lasted over 10 years and has influenced their development.

Despite the positive image of some vocational educational institutions, vocational education has traditionally had an unfavourable image. People tend to 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 km² with a population of 1 351 069 in 2004. During the past decade, there has been a continuous decline in the population due to a negative birth rate and high migration rate. The proportion of young people in the population is decreasing due to the low birth rate in the last 10 years (Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 2005/ Statistical Office of Estonia- Tallinn 2005).

The number of potential students at educational institutions will start to fall from 2007 which will create a problem for schools and vocational educational institutions. In addition to financial problems (as providers are funded through a capitation system), the decreasing number of students will affect the quality of instruction (to have modern and high-quality facilities and teachers requires a certain number of learners). At the same time, the need for further training and retraining will be growing. Developing measures to meet these needs will be a challenge.

The decreasing 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 institutions. 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 its quality.

Table 1 Total population in thousands						
	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
TOTAL POPULATION (IN THOUSAND)	1 448	1 372	1 367	1 361	1 356	1 351

Table 2: Age-specific demographic trends for 2003, baseline scenario until 2025 (in thousand)						
	2003	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
0-24	430	396	343	288	213	250
25-59	631	647	638	625	583	531
60+	295	271	271	277	281	281
TOTAL	1 356	1 314	1 252	1 190	1 077	1 062

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

The economic activity of the population increased in 2004: employment increased and unemployment fell, a trend observed since 2001.

Table 1: Breakdown of economy by sectors (% in agriculture, % in manufacturing and % in the service sector)					
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004
AGRICULTURE	10.2	7.2	6.9	6.2	5.9
MANUFACTURING	34.2	33.3	31.3	32.5	34.9
SERVICE	55.6	59.5	61.7	61.4	59.3

Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. www.stat.ee

In 2004, compared to 2003, the employment increased by 8% in the manufacturing sector, while the number of people working in the agricultural sector and service sector decreased (by 5% and 3% respectively).

Planning state financed student places in vocational education has followed the 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 demand in some sectors (e.g. transport and logistics, metal processing). This is partly due to students finding other specialities more interesting.

The acquisition of manufacturing and engineering specialities has become more popular although the trends in the 3 economic sectors are different in more specific fields.

Table 2: Employment Rate (Men, Women) (%)					
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004
MALES	65.7	54.7	61.1	62.0	61.3
FEMALES	52.9	60.0	51.4	52.1	52.9
TOTAL	58.8	50.1	55.9	56.7	56.8

Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. www.stat.ee

The greater proportion of students (66%), acquiring upper secondary vocational education, are young men with lower secondary education. On the other hand, in post secondary vocational training 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 2004, the unemployment rate fell to 9.7%. Unemployment has been higher among men than among women since 1995.

Table 3: Unemployment rates (total, men, women, young people under the age of 25, %)					
	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004
TOTAL	9.7	13.6	10.3	10.0	9.7
MALES	10.5	14.5	10.8	10.2	10.4
FEMALES	8.9	12.6	9.7	9.9	8.9
POPULATION AGED BELOW 25	14.4	23.8	17.6	20.6	21.7

(Source: Statistical Office of Estonia. www.stat.ee)

Table 4: Expenditure (% of GDP) on education and training						
	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EDUCATION EXPENDITURE	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.7	5.8	5.7

Source: Ministry of Education and Research

Public spending on VET has fallen in real terms. Increases in capital investment have been funded through foreign aid (ESF, ERDF, Phare, LdV, etc.), but this additional funding would not make up for deficit financing of instruction costs.

Table 5: Public spending on education and training as % of total public expenditure						
	1996	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EDUCATION EXPENDITURE	15.0	15.2	15.7	16.0	15.8	14.2

Source: Ministry of Education and Research

*No required data for 1995.

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In comparison to the EU average, the proportion of the population with low level qualifications is small (11%). For tertiary education, the percentage of the population aged 25-64 with higher education was higher than in most of the EU member states in 2004. Education has been traditionally highly valued (both in Soviet times and currently)

and at the present time, education is valued (for example, in 2004 more than 70% of upper-secondary general school grauaes continued their studies at higher level).

Table 1: Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level % (2004)			
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
ESTONIA	11%	58%	31%

Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey, 2005

By 2004, 13.7% of the population aged 18-24 had not achieved upper secondary education and were not continuing their studies. This indicator is significantly better than the EU average (16%).

Table 2: Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
EU-25	17.3	16.9	16.6	16.1	15.7
ESTONIA	14.2	14.1	12.6	11.8	13.7

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. Attention has been given to privatisation and decentralising control of schools to the municipal level, as well as rationalising and improving cost-efficiency. This is less the case for policy towards employment services, where state offices still play 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 Parliament (*Riigikogu*) while the government decides on national strategies. Changing the VET system has been difficult in the transition period. In the early 1990s, it has had to adapt to many challenges, such as: introduction of 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.

While priority was given to general and higher education in the 1990s, more attention has been given to VET since 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 is laid out in the Concept of Vocational Education and Training (*Kutsehariduse kontseptuaalsed lähtekohad, 1998*). This elucidated the purpose of VET which was to enable individuals to develop and adapt to social change and to ensure broad-based occupational competences. Key principles for the organisation of VET were set out: efficiency, flexibility, functionality, co-operation, quality and availability. Changes have resulted in a new legal framework, providing for: more flexibility in VET provision; the rationalisation and privatisation of VET institutions; the introduction of a higher VET level (ISCED 5B) - applied higher education (*rakenduskõrgharidus*); as well as the establishment of vocational councils and involvement of social partners.

A number of important documents and development plans for VET have been agreed, these include:

- Vocational Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Eesti kutseharidussüsteemi arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) which sets goals for the developing of VET until 2008 and to plan necessary measures, activities and resources. It is based on what was achieved by the Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001/2004 (*Tegevuskava kutseharidussüsteemi arendamiseks Eestis aastateks 2001/2004*).
- State Vocational Education Institutions Network Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Riigikutseõppeasutuste võrgu arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) which provides for a more even distribution of VET providers across the country to ensure: location is based on local needs; resources are used more efficiently; higher quality provision; improved accessibility.
- Vocational Education Standard (*Kutseharidusstandard*) is a source document for: the preparation of national curricula and curricula for providers; the registration of curricula and the education process. All of these form the basis for issuing education licences.
- The Adult Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Täiskasvanuhariduse arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) has been prepared on the basis of The Strategy of Lifelong Learning (*Elukestva õppe strateegia*). It provides for measures to improve the accessibility and quality of adult education, and the development of a common financing scheme.
- The Strategy of Lifelong Learning 2005/2008 (*Elukestva õppe strateegia aastateks 2005/2008*) was developed in compliance with the programme Education and Training

2010, the European Commission documents "A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and A European Area of Lifelong Learning" and other documents setting objectives for near future. The main objective of the strategy is to improve adults' opportunities and motivation

- for participating in formal, non-formal and informal learning in order to improve their knowledge and skills in compliance with the needs of the country, society and labour market and their personal needs by increasing the share of 25-64 years old participants to 10% by 2008.

Other national policy documents, like the Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds SPD 2004/2006 (*Eesti riiklik arengukava Euroopa Liidu struktuurifondide kasutuselevõtuks - ühtne programmdokument aastateks 2004/2006*) and the National Employment Action Plan 2004 (*Eesti Vabariigi tööhõive tegevuskava 2004*) stress the need for a national continuing training and lifelong learning system to improve the employability and quality of the labour force.

Other important developments include the modernisation of curricula whereby modular-based curricula were developed and implemented in a number of pilot institutions with Phare support between 1994/1998. By 2001, all study programmes were modular and designed according to a competence-based system appropriate for initial and continuing training for both young people and adults. Curricula development continues with the aim to establish a national curriculum which will include the professional competence requirements for a given occupation. The National Employee Qualification System (*riiklik kutsekvalifikatsioonisüsteem*) which will be recognised by employers and raise the status of VET. This type of reform will improve the responsiveness of VET to labour market needs (although whether it will attract a higher number of participants compared to general education is doubtful).

Reforms for VET teachers are also underway. The National Development Plan of Teachers Training 2003/2010-draft version (*Õpetajakoolituse riiklik arengukava 2003/2010-projekt*) requires a better link between teacher training and the labour market through creating links between schools and enterprises.

The last substantial change involves not only merging vocational institutions and establishing vocational training centres, but also cutting down the number of state-owned institutions and setting up private vocational educational institutes. Regional vocational education centres have been established on the basis of existing VET institutions in 2000, with Phare support. They 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 approved by Parliament (*Riigikogu*). The Government of the Republic (*Vabariigi Valitsus*) decides on national strategies by adopting and implementing 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.

The Ministry of Education and Research - MoER (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) coordinates the implementation of education policy through local governments and other relevant Ministries. Their role is: to establish, reorganise and close public educational institutions (except universities and applied higher education institutions); to direct and organise curricula preparation, study programmes, textbooks and teaching/study aids

(except for universities); and to administer public assets allocated to the education system. Other Ministries involved include:

- Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sotsiaalministeerium*) is responsible for the organising and financing training for unemployed people and for the administration of Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre;
- Ministry of Culture (*Kultuuriministeerium*) participates in devising state education in culture and sports and coordinates in-service training in their area of government;
- Ministry of Defence (*Kaitseministeerium*) – administers the *Võru* Battle School of the Defence Forces;
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Siseministeerium*) – administers the following VET institutions: Rescue School of the College of the Public Service Academy of Estonia, Police School of the College of the Public Service Academy of Estonia, Muraste Border Guard School.

Several advisory bodies assist the MoER in policy development, for example Teachers' Union, Education Organisation Council, Estonian Education Forum, Estonian Employers' Confederation, Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation, Estonian Qualification Authority, Estonian Research and Development Council, Association of Estonian Adult Educators 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 county. They provide supervision of pre-primary institutions and organise vocational guidance and counselling of children and young people.

VET providers can be under local or central government or privately owned. They have a common management form by a director with the involvement of the teachers' council and the council of VET institutions. Directors are legal representatives and are accountable for their operation including the lawful use of funds. They are selected by public competition organised by the council of the VET institution pursuant to the procedure established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research. They are appointed by the founder of the VET institution and the term of office may not exceed five years. The head of an educational institution enters into employment contracts with its 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 VET was created in the late 1990s. Some consolidation of the laws would be useful. The main laws related to education and training are:

- Constitution of the Republic of Estonia (*Eesti Vabariigi Põhiseadus*, 1992) provides the right to education for all.
- Education Act (*Haridusseadus*, 1993) provides an overall framework and general principles for the education system.
- Basic School and Upper Secondary General Schools Act (*Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus*, 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.
- Universities Act (*Ülikooliseadus*, 1995) regulates higher education.
- Pre-School Childcare Institutions Act (*Koolieelsete lasteasutuste seadus*, 1999) defines the foundations for pre-school institutions in municipalities, as well as the whole pre-school education system.

Legislation governing vocational education:

- Vocational Education Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*, 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 *Private Schools Act* (*Erakooliseadus*) does not stipulate otherwise.
- Private Schools Act (*Erakooliseadus*, 1998) regulates the provision of training longer than 120 hours organised by legal persons in private law as well as the foundation and operation of private educational institutions.
- Institutions of Applied Higher Education Act (*Rakenduskõrgkooli seadus*, 1998) regulates the foundation and operation of applied higher education institutions; provision of applied higher education, including that in VET institutions. .
- Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993) regulates education and training provisions for adults.
- Professions Act (*Kutseseadus*, 2000) regulates the work of the Vocational Councils and the qualifications system. The act is the basis for developing the requirements for professional qualifications and the conditions and

procedure for their attestation and award as well as the organisation of work of professional councils.

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

The overall framework for continuing training is set by the Adult Education Act. It encourages governments (at national and local level) 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.

As well as the Professions Act listed above, a number of acts not directly related to education also have an impact on CVET. Holidays Act (*Puhkuseseadus*, 2001) regulates training leave, Wages Act (*Palgaseadus*, 1994) regulates payments related to training, Public Service Act (*Avaliku teenistuse seadus*, 1995) confirms the right for training to civil servants, Republic of Estonia Employment Contracts Act (*Eesti Vabariigi töölepingu seadus*, 1992) introduced the obligation of employers to organise work-related training if qualification needs change, and Income Tax Act (*Tulumaksuseadus*, 1999) provides for the tax deduction of training expenses for employees.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Social partner participation in VET is regulated by national legislation as well as by their own charters, action plans and agreements with other stakeholders. Their involvement in the administrative and consultative bodies of the education system has increased in the last decade. In particular, employers play a more active and influential role through their participation in Vocational Councils (established under the Vocational Educational Institutions Act) and in creating a national employee qualification system. Vocational Councils develop qualification requirements and vocational standards, which are used as a basic reference in curricula development at educational institutions. At local level, social partners are less involved.

At national level, social partners are represented by Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Eesti Kaubandus-Tööstuskoda*) and Estonian Employers' Confederation (*Eesti Töandjate Keskkliit*). Membership includes enterprises, employer/employee unions, and other employer associations. As a result of trilateral negotiations, the Agreement on Joint Activities (*Ühise tegevuse kokkulepe*, 2000) was signed to develop the national qualification system for employees, as well as to ensure a sufficient number of study places in IVET, to make the labour market more youth friendly and to improve in-service and re-training.

At regional level, social partner participation depends on cooperation agreed between VET providers and enterprises. Good cooperation exists at provider/enterprise level especially within specific sectors. This cooperation applies to initial and continuing training provision.

Table 1: Responsibilities of social partners		
	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE (ADVISORY/DECISION MAKING, DIRECT/INDIRECT)
NATIONAL LEVEL	Participating in the development of the professional qualifications system, preparing preliminary laws, elaborating strategies and the vocational/professional conception.	Advisory/direct
REGIONAL LEVEL	Developing professional standards	Advisory/direct
SECTORAL LEVEL	In-company training sessions, which are organised by employers or co-operation contracts between vocational associations and VET institution in order to ensure the compliance of theory with practical work /match required qualification standards and curricula	Decision making/direct
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	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 VET reform initiative started in the late 1990s based on a social agreement (between trainers and social partners) reached between 1996 and 2000. Legislation was passed to ensure that VET reflected the changes taking place in Estonia and its aims were: create a more efficient allocation of resources, develop new curricula; and educate teaching and training personnel. As of 1st September 2005, there were 59 VET providers: 41 were public (including 3 special VET institutions), 15 private and 3 municipally owned.

In January 1998, 2 VET stages were established and recognised: vocational secondary education and vocational higher education (through the Concept of Vocational Education and Training - *Kutsehariduse kontseptuaalsed lähtekohad* and the amended Vocational Educational Institutions Act - *Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*). Vocational secondary education comprises:

- Vocational education at upper secondary level based on basic education (*põhiharidus*) and equal to ISCED level 3B. Study duration is 3 years and students are usually aged 16-18.
- Vocational education at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level based on upper secondary education (*keskharidus*)

and equal to ISCED level 4B. Study duration is 1-2.5 years and students are usually aged 18-20.

Of the 59 VET providers, 8 offer only upper secondary level and 21 only post-secondary (non tertiary) level. The remaining 30 providers offer both.

Compulsory education (to lower secondary level) lasts until pupils are 17. Students are evaluated on a 5-point scale in basic school (*põhikool*) and upper secondary general school (*gümnaasium*), where grade 5 is very good.

See below the following attachments.

[Estonian formal education structure as of 2004 and the graduation certificates](#)

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)

On graduating from basic school a young person can continue studies at upper secondary general school (*gümnaasium*) to acquire upper secondary general education (ISCED 3A) or at a VET institution to acquire upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B). The state and local authorities must provide learning opportunities for all young people (usually aged 16-18) who wish to continue into upper secondary education and training. Upper secondary VET usually lasts for 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 studying of general educational subjects; of which 32 weeks are compulsory and common to all curricula, and the other 18 are devoted to general educational subjects most relevant to the specialisation. The objective is to prepare students for starting work or for continuing at applied higher education level. It encourages the development of knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes required to perform independent skilled work.

Practical training in enterprises is an integral part of the upper secondary VET and is based on a contract between a VET institution, 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 in upper secondary general school. A student can transfer in grades 11/12 on presentation of a study progress sheet showing subjects studied their content and his/her results. The decision, for admitting the student, is made by the teachers' council on the basis of these documents.

After acquiring upper secondary VET, a student gets a Certificate on Acquiring Vocational Secondary Education Based on Basic Education (*Tunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*). At present, this certificate is not a formal qualification as such, but merely evidence that the holder has covered a certain programme, at a particular level in a given school. Graduates from upper secondary VET can apply for the professional accreditation of their qualification through examinations.

Table 1: Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation (general/vocational), 2000	
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION TOTAL ENROLMENT	51 617
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS	32%
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS	68%

Source: Eurostat,2005.

The majority of basic school graduates tend to continue their educational path in an upper secondary general school and not in a VET institution. Upper secondary VET is often perceived as a dead end route 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

An apprenticeship project pilot project was started in Estonia under the EU's Phare 2002 programme. Its aim 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:

- improving the flexibility of the VET system thus enabling young people to have a wider choice of study pathways;
- creating new, additional opportunities to ensure young people are both socially and vocationally ready when they start working life;
- reducing youth unemployment;
- launching the co-operation of trainers and social partners;
- supporting business development, primarily in regions with a high unemployment rates or high economic activity, through higher involvement of adults in training and retraining.

The major target groups are:

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

The training programmes comply with current vocational standards and take into account existing education levels to allow an individual plan to the apprentice's training programme. The training process emphasises hands-on training in companies which constitutes about 65% of the programme, depending on sector and speciality.

A trilateral agreement is signed between the apprentice, the vocational educational institution and the enterprise. The agreement specifies study and practical training conditions, and the obligations and rights of the parties to the agreement.

Apprenticeship training started in May 2004 with the involvement of 7 VET providers and 25 enterprises. The training period was 60 weeks and ended with qualification examinations in September 2005. As of September 2004, 160 people were participating (30% of them were females). As of September 2004, 160 people were participating (30% of them were females). The original aim was to involve approximately 200 young people.

The project covers the following fields and professions:

- 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);
- forest management (feller);
- plastics industry (operator of plastics industry).

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

PILOT PROJECT "NEW OPPORTUNITY"

The aim of this project is to give young men and, if vacant places exist, also young women (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 VET institution in Estonia.

There are various entry criteria, the project is targeted at: ethnic Estonian young men, aged 15-17; has finished grade 8 or interrupted studies in grade 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 (ISCED 3A) education or upper secondary vocational (ISCED 3B) education, students can continue their studies in post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education (ISCED 4B). Enrolment priority is given to people without any vocational education. It takes place at upper secondary VET providers and participants are usually aged 18-20.

The objective is to prepare workers for skilled work by providing the students with knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes for performing complicated work independently. Some studies are only available in post-secondary (non tertiary) VET, such as: social services, health (nursery, therapy and recovery treatment), environmental protection, security services. Other studies can be studied at upper-secondary and post-secondary level, e.g. business and administration, engineering and engineering trades, manufacturing and processing agriculture, etc.

Study duration tends to be 1-2.5 years, i.e. 40-100 study weeks of which the vocational, professional and occupational studies (incl. practical training at an enterprise) must account for at least 85%. At least 6 weeks of study is given to general education subjects.

Courses are certificated, and graduates receive the Certificate Acquiring Vocational Secondary Education Based on Secondary Education (*Tunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*).

A student wishing to continue studies in higher education may need to pass the state general education examinations (*riigieksamid*). These are not compulsory to graduate from VET (only for graduating from general education).

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Higher education (HE) system consists of an academic branch (ISCED 5A) and a professional branch or applied higher education (ISCED 5B).

According to the *Standards of Higher Education*, 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 upper secondary level education or training or who have equivalent foreign qualifications have a right to compete for admission to applied HE (as determined by the Ministry of Education and Research). Each provider may set more specific entry requirements which can 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 which are subject to fees.

Applied higher education was established in the 2002/2003 academic year. The nominal length of study is 3 to 4.5 years. Practical training shall form at least 30% of the total volume of the curriculum. Graduates who have completed their studies are awarded a diploma (*rakendus kõrgharidusõppe diplom*). From academic year 2003/2004, 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%.

Professional HE may be provided by: 1) applied HE institution (*rakendus kõrgkool*), 2) university college, 3) VET institution (*kutseõppeasutus*) that offers post-secondary (non tertiary) vocational education curricula has also right to offer applied HE curricula. As of 16th September 2005, applied HE was provided in Estonia by 9 university colleges, 21 institutions of applied HE (13 of them are private schools) and 7 VET institutions (including 1 private school).

Students are evaluated through a unified system for both academic and applied HE branches. The same system is also used to evaluate students studying according to applied HE curricula at VET 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 INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Adult education refers to organised training irrespective of the content, level or method the purpose of which is to improve people's abilities and/or professional skills. CVET (continuing vocational education) is acquired during one's career. An adult learner is one whose main activity is something other than study, i.e. he/she is studying in parallel with working, taking care of children or other activity. The general concept is to ensure opportunities for lifelong learning for all and to increase the motivation to learn.

Adult education is governed by the Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993), its main provisions are:

- right of to continuous lifelong individual development;
- sets out for the obligations of government, local authorities and employers to co-ordinate and implement adult education;
- funding for adult education from the state budget.

According to the Adult Education Act, adult education can be classified as follows:

- formal education acquired within the adult education system (*tasemekoolitus*);
- professional education and training (*tööalane koolitus*);
- non-formal education/popular adult education (*vabahariduslik koolitus*).

Formal education acquired within the adult education system provides the opportunity to acquire basic education (ISCED 2A), upper secondary general education (ISCED 3A), upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3B), post-secondary vocational education

(ISCED 4B), higher education (ISCED 5A, 5B). Basic and upper secondary general education can be acquired through evening courses, distance learning or as an external student at adult upper secondary schools (*täiskasvanute gümnaasium*) or at general education schools. In the academic year 2004/2005, there were 33 schools where adults may acquire general education.

Adults may also acquire upper and post-secondary vocational education in part-time study or as an external student. The government funds upper and post-secondary part-time study at VET institutions.

Adults can also acquire higher education (HE) at institutions of applied higher education (*rakendusõrgkool*) and universities (*ülikool*), both offer flexible forms of study. In general, a fee is charged.

Table 1: Formal education for adults			
EDUCATION TYPE	PROVIDER	STUDY FORM	FINANCE
basic education, upper secondary general education	adult upper secondary schools, upper secondary general schools	evening courses, distance learning, external study	state financing
upper or post-secondary vocational education	vocational educational institutions	part-time study	state financing
(applied) higher education	universities, applied higher education institutions	part-time study external study	adult student, employer, state financing in the fields of state priority

Professional education and training enables the development of professional, occupational and/or vocational knowledge, skills and experience and the opportunity for retraining at the place of employment or at an educational institution. It is provided by numerous private providers as well as at applied HE institutions, universities and VET institutions.

Private providers must be licensed by the Ministry of Education and Research if instruction lasts longer than 120 hours or 6 months in a year (*Private Schools Act - Erakooliseadus*, 1998).

Professional education and training is also provided by professional associations (*erialaliidud*) although their role is not big, the training which they organise is important for awarding professional qualifications.

Non-formal education/popular adult education is targeted at developing personality, creativity, talents, initiative and a sense of social responsibility and to accumulate the knowledge, skills and abilities needed in life. It is often difficult to draw a line between non-formal education and professional education and training as sometimes a hobby may become a profession. It is provided by training centres which are located in county centres across Estonia, through summer courses organised by universities, folk high

schools, non-formal education centres and cultural centres. Courses on art and culture, language courses and courses on economics and computer study are in higher demand.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES REGARDING LIFELONG LEARNING

The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005/2008 (*Elukestva õppe strateegia aastateks 2005/2008*) outlines objectives, measures and resources which are important to:

- improve motivation to learn and the ability of individuals to succeed;
- increase economic competitiveness of Estonia and achieve sustainable economic growth;
- strengthen social integration, the development of citizenship and to improve the quality of life.

These objectives are to be met by:

- providing opportunities for all adults according to their abilities and needs including language courses for non-Estonian adults;
- transparent funding and a quality assurance system for adult education and training;
- an information system for learners including information about education and training opportunities and career services;
- a professional qualifications system for employees;
- involving public, private and the tertiary institutions in the development of adult education and training system and policy;
- preparing reliable statistical data concerning adult education and training including regular surveys enabling for forecasting skill needs;
- implementing a system for accounting for prior learning and work experience (*VÕTA*).

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES REGARDING ACCESS TO LEARNING

The role of libraries, museums, theatres and other cultural establishments is becoming more important in promoting lifelong learning through offering learning opportunities. It is supported by EU programmes (e.g. ESF, Socrates) and organisations of other countries. Much attention is also paid to learning at home through various e-study opportunities which are often better choices for people with special needs and for those living in rural areas. ESF projects support e-learning for VET through the e-Vocational school initiative.

PLANNING AND FORECASTING MECHANISMS

Forecasts of labour force needs are prepared by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication based on surveys conducted in the field. The opinions of employers' representatives and professional associations are also taken into account as well as local authorities and other government offices and providers. Both labour market needs and

individual preferences are analysed. Provider and regional needs in terms of curricula, teachers, practical training facilities are also considered.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

According to the Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993) an adult learner does not study full-time.

According to Eurostat 6.7% of the Estonian population of the working age population participated in education and training in 2004.

FORMAL EDUCATION ACQUIRED WITHIN THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM

Basic education, upper-secondary general education (in the form of evening courses, distance learning or external study), upper and post-secondary vocational education (part-time study) and higher education (in the form of part-time study, external study) may be acquired in state funded study places at state, municipal or private VET institutions. According to the Statistical Office of Estonia, in 1997/2004, about 10% of students in VET institutions were adults studying at evening courses or through distance learning.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS

Professional education and training of adults is supported by the Government both directly and indirectly. Direct support includes the payment of training costs (for employees and public servants of state institutions), partial compensation for training costs through income tax exemptions and by granting study leaves. According to the Statistical Office of Estonia, 67.75% of people aged 15-24 participated in education and training in 2004. More women participate in post-secondary education (including CVET) than men.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING IN REGULATED PROFESSIONS

The majority of professions are not regulated by law but some are and continuous professional in-service training can be compulsory. Where this is the case, funds for training are prescribed in the annual salary fund of these employees (e.g. 2-4% of the annual salary fund of health care workers and 3% of the annual salary fund of teachers). For other professions, training costs may be covered by both the employer and the employee (Source: Statistical Office of Estonia, 1999, updated 2002).

TARGET GROUP AND PROVISION

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

VET institutions provide both formal education and professional training courses available through full-time and part-time study. State and private vocational educational institutions offer both initial and continuing VET for adults in 16 fields. Studies are based on the curricula based on professional standards. Participants must have completed upper secondary level education. Depending on the field of specialisation and curriculum, the graduates from vocational educational institutions receive a qualification of a skilled worker or a technician.

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

People who have completed upper or post-secondary VET may continue studies in applied HE at a VET institution an applied institution of HE or at university. Studies are

available part-time, through evening courses or distance learning. Participants may have to pay a fee.

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS IN VET INSTITUTIONS

Pursuant to the Minister of Education Regulation No. 61 of 8th November 2001 The Conditions and Procedure for Organisation of Adult Professional Education and Training in Vocational Educational Institutions (*Täiskasvanute tööalase koolituse kutseõppeasutuses korraldamise tingimused ja kord*), a VET institution shall organise adult professional education and training in the fields taught at the institution and if there is a demand and the relevant material resources and teachers exist, also in other study fields. Both state and private VET institutions offer training to physical persons and to enterprises. Courses can be organised in the daytime, evening and through distance learning. Upon completion, participants receive a certificate.

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ADULTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

Adult education and training is provided also by all HE institutions. Training programmes differ in content and duration and provide opportunity to improve one's knowledge and skills in all professions taught in formal education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus-ja Teadusministeerium*) is responsible for ensuring the quality of education and training. The quality of CVET is monitored through various mechanisms including curricula, accreditation, state supervision, internal and external assessment, quality prize awarded to vocational educational institutions.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The Employment Service Act (*Tööturuteenuse seadus*, 2000) regulates the provision of employment services to job seekers (including training provision) and to employers.

Training is commissioned by county employment offices and paid for by the Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sotsiaalministeerium*), local authorities may also allocate resources for this purpose. Training may be commissioned from any body with an adult education license from the Ministry of Education and Research.

In 2003, the Estonian Labour Market Board (*Tööturuamet*) commissioned employment training from 50 educational institutions (adult education institutions, VET institutions and institutions of higher education) for 1 592 persons. In 2004, 668 people participated in training or 1.8% of all people registered as unemployed.

TARGET GROUPS AND PROVISION

Employment training may be professional training, retraining and continuing training. Upon course completion, a certificate is issued and some training participants may sit an examination and obtain a professional qualification. Courses may last up to 6 months (20 credit points) and may be provided in employment offices or in a range of other education and training providers.

Employment offices offer a package of services - information, training and re-training, vocational counselling, subsidy to start a business, etc.

PROVIDERS LABOUR MARKET BOARD

The Estonian Labour Market Board has 16 regional employment offices. Its aim is to reduce unemployment and assist job-seekers and employers. Employment services can also be provided by private agencies although they must be free of charge.

EURES (EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

The consultants of EURES advise people wishing to work in an EEA (European Economic Area) country and employers who wish to recruit new employees from EEA. EURES is co-ordinated by the Estonian Labour Market Board.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is guaranteed by the requirement to verify the training commissioned with professional standards. In addition, all training must be commissioned from providers with a licence.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

Numerous policy documents emphasise the importance of continuing training for the workforce. While employers are paying more attention to continuing and re-training, there is room for improvement for: training places; assuring content relevance; and assessment procedures.

Professional training at company level is not regulated by law, however, the Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993) provides for everybody's right to improve oneself and the state's, local authorities' and employers' obligation to co-ordinate and organise adult education.

Some enterprises have their own training agreements which may include additional support for study leave, funding, etc. There is a training support programme operated by Enterprise Estonia (*Ettevõtluse Arendamise Sihtasutus*) and co-financed from the EU Structural Funds (*Euroopa Sotsiaalfond*). The aim is to support in-service training and retraining of entrepreneurs and people: working in the companies to maintain or increase labour market competitiveness; developing entrepreneurship; working in research and development activities and technological change.

Professional in-company training for adults is provided by many private training providers, but increasingly also by applied higher educational institutions, universities and VET institutions as well as professional associations. A survey examining training activities called the Consultancy and Training Market in the Estonian Business Sector (*Konsultatsiooni- ja koolitusturg Eesti äri sektoris*) undertaken in 2005 found that from 764 companies questioned, 85% have organized external training (*Ariko Marketing*, 2005). The results showed that there was a direct correlation between company size and willingness to offer training.

Table 1: Correlation between company size and willingness to offer training.				
		SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)		
	TOTAL (%)	10-49 (%)	50-249 (%)	250 OR MORE (%)
EU-25	61	56	80	95
ESTONIA	63	58	85	96

Source: Ariko Marketing, 2005

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The Adult Education Act provides the right for employees to take study leave on the basis of a notice from the educational institution. The length can be at least 30 days in an academic year (except in the case of day time study and full-time study). Additional study leave is granted to complete the course. The duration of study leave depends on the level of education acquired. The employer continues to pay the average wages for ten days and the established minimum wage for remaining days. To participate in professional education and training, study leave of at least 14 calendar days in a year is granted and the employee continues to receive his/her average wage. To participate in non-formal education, study leave without pay of at least 7 calendar days in a year is granted. These rights and benefits are applied in both public and private sector, in small, medium size and big companies.

There are many reasons why people participate in continuing training and retraining as shown by various surveys. These show when people participate in education and training on their own initiative (e.g. in the case of non-formal education). However, only general statistics are available.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

VET TEACHERS

The Teacher Training Framework Requirements (*Õpetajate koolituse raamnõuded*, 2000) describes all teaching and training occupations from pre-school to upper secondary and from subject teachers to those who provide extracurricular activities.

Specifically for VET, there are 2 types of teacher at VET institutions:

- teachers of general education subjects (*üldaineõpetaja*);
and
- vocational teachers (*kutseõpetaja*) for both theory and practice.

The role of vocational teacher is: to manage the process of vocational training (supervision, assessment, etc.); to prepare study materials; to prepare and improve subject syllabuses and curricula.

Pursuant to the Vocational Teachers Statute (*Kutseõpetaja statuut. Kutseõpetaja statuudi rakendamise*, 1995), the following knowledge and skills are required:

- a profound knowledge of the theory and methods of the profession he/she teaches;
- aware of general developments in his/her profession;
- ability to link professional subjects with general education subjects;
- ability to link theory and practice;
- co-operates with employers;
- plans and provides theory studies and practical training according to the curriculum and at the required technical and methodological level;
- prepares teaching resources necessary for his/her work;
- sets tests, supervises students in writing course papers and final papers, sets exams and assessments;
- organizes and participates in final professional exams;
- is able to link teaching with educating and directing students in a broader sense.

Teacher training takes place at higher education institutions and teacher training curricula has to be registred in Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*). Training must meet the Teacher Training Framework Requirements and be equal to 180 ECTS (bachelor study) followed by 1-year postgraduate training of 60 ECTS.

WORKPLACE SUPERVISORS

Workplace supervisor (vocational trainer – *ettevõtte praktikajuhendaja*) supervises students during their work placement. Their tasks are to provide students with practical skills and theoretical knowledge at the working place in a real working situation. They help students to adapt to working life and provide feedback to the VET provider on student performance. The activities, obligations and liability of and qualification requirements for workplace supervisors are not regulated by national legislation.

DEVELOPMENTS FOR VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The Estonian Vocational Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Eesti kutseharidussüsteemi arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) sets for the new objectives:

- creation of a workplace supervisors' training system;
- development of a professional standard and new qualification requirements for vocational teachers;
- implementation of vocational teacher training and in-service training system to involve more teachers and to raise their qualification levels.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

Table 1: Vocational teachers and trainers in IVET		
TEACHER	INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
Vocational teacher (<i>kutseõpetaja</i>)	Vocational educational institution (ISCED 3B, 4B)	<p>1) higher education in vocational pedagogy or other pedagogical higher education (5A, 5B) and at least 3 years experience in the respective profession; or</p> <p>2) higher (5A,5B) or post-secondary vocational education (non-tertiary) (4B) in the respective field, at least 3 years experience in the respective profession and completed 320-hours course in vocational pedagogy; or</p> <p>3) higher (5A,5B) or post-secondary vocational education (non-tertiary) (4B) in the respective field, at least 3 years experience in the respective profession and ongoing working in the respective profession.</p>
Workplace supervisor (vocational trainer– <i>ettevõtte praktika-juhendaja</i>)	Companies, enterprises.	No requirements.

PRE-SERVICE (INITIAL) TRAINING

Vocational teachers' training is provided at the level of higher education. Access to the teaching depends upon previously acquired professional education, be it higher education (5A, 5B) or vocational upper secondary or post-secondary (non-tertiary) (3B, 4B) coupled with teacher training (1 or 3 years). Vocational teachers tend to receive their training together rather than according to the subjects they plan to teach due to low number (a maximum of 5 specialists in the same field commence teacher training each year). This means that they must have the necessary professional qualifications before embarking on a pedagogical qualification. Under the Teacher Training Framework Requirements, studies include: general education; subject studies; pedagogics; psychology and didactics. It also includes a practical training placement lasting at least 10 weeks. Teacher training is provided in two stages: initial training, induction year for novice vocational teacher. The induction year eases novice teachers into worklife and it also serves as a way to give feedback to the institution on the effectiveness of the teacher training curriculum. Novice teachers are supervised by a mentor who assesses their performance at the end of the year.

Studies are organised in the form of lectures and seminars, involving issue studies, presentations, discussions and group work. Depending on the university, students are assessed on an A-F scale or on a 5-point scale, where: A (5)- excellent and F (0)- fail.

CONTINUING, IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Vocational teachers often acquire their pedagogical qualification while they are working. The Qualification Requirements for Teachers (*Pedagoogide kvalifikatsiooninõuded*, 2002) requires that vocational teachers who have professional higher education or post-secondary vocational education (non-tertiary) complete a 320 hour vocational pedagogy course. The content was defined in 2003 by the National Examination and Qualification Centre. Courses must include: organisation of vocational education and legislation, integration of general and vocational education, communication and working environment, education psychology, special education, adult education and didactics of vocational education.

Other types of in-service training is to some extent governed by the Teacher Training Framework Requirements, which states that it is provided in a state or municipal school or a private school which holds an education license. It must be provided by an accredited person. A vocational teacher is required to participate in in-service training for at least two months during each three years of service. Participation is taken into account in their evaluation.

Pursuant to the Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993), in-service training is paid for jointly by the state budget and through a training fund collected from teacher wages (3% of their salary). As for the general population, VET teachers are also entitled to study leave lasting for the duration of the course or for at least 30 days in an academic year. A higher number of days can be awarded for teacher studying for higher education. Teachers continue to receive average wages for 10 days and then at least the minimum wage for the remainder of the leave (see section 0505 for more information on study leave).

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

There is no difference between IVET and CVET teachers, although the following can be noted:

- VET teachers work in VET institutions which provide both initial and continuing training and the requirements are the same. CVET courses at VET institutions are conducted by VET teachers who have completed both professional and teacher training. Based on the Minister of Education Regulation No 61 of 8th November 2001. The terms and procedure for the organisation of adult work-related training at vocational educational institutions (*Täiskasvanute tööalase koolituse kutseõppeasutuses korraldamise tingimused ja kord*, 2001), 40% of the volume of a course may be taught by persons who have relevant professional qualifications and practical experience, if the course includes seminars and practical training, but not more than the total volume of the seminars and practical training.
- At private training institutions which offer in-service training, the teachers are usually specialists in their field and the Teacher Training Framework Requirements and Qualification Requirements for Teachers are not applied to them.

- For non-formal company training for employees, no special requirements are set in place for supervising specialists.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

VET 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 to monitor change:

- VET institutions have been merged into regional vocational education centres (*kutsehariduskeskused*) which have advisory bodies comprising of representatives of employers who provide information on the labour market.
- Co-operation between VET institutions, local governments and enterprises in training teachers and other staff and in the retraining unemployed people.

Central and local governments have initiated several projects to develop practical training in co-operation between VET institutions and enterprises. Therefore, some vocational teachers have signed an employment contract with both an enterprise and a VET 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 VET institutions are mainly at the local level, based on local initiatives. There are some positive examples of fruitful co-operation, for example some 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. Pathways that bridge vocational education curricula at different levels are random and occasional.

In some specialities (such as tourism, IT, sewing, home economics) it is possible, after achieving a qualification, to continue studying at applied higher education level, which provides additional opportunities in the labour market. However, this is not available for all specialities.

Since university education is very popular, young people who want to continue with their vocational training after graduating from lower or upper secondary school 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 on completion of upper secondary general education, people can study for applied higher education for three years. After that, they can apply for the master's degree at university. This should enable more people to study at higher level regardless of their previous education or training pathway.

Following the example of universities, a system for VET institutions to take into consideration earlier educational and work experience (VÕTA) is being developed. Preparatory work started in 2004/2005 but it will take more time to implement.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

Since there is no national curricula for VET, curricula renewal occurs at VET institution level by development director or training director. They work with heads of departments and vocational teachers and as a rule curricula are renewed after every 2-3 years.

VET institutions present their curricula to the National Examination and Qualification Centre (*Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus*) for formal approval to ensure that certain subjects are retained, but the essential renewal work is still the responsibility of each VET institution. Sometimes, the content and volume of curricula of close specialities are co-ordinated, but in most cases, it is up to VET institutions. Consequently, upgrading and updating of curricula depends on the administration of VET institutions and the attention they give to it. They use the following mechanisms for renewing curricula:

- communication with employers (VET institutions consider it to be the most important factor) through participation in their general meetings and through questionnaires on how satisfied they are with the skills of graduates and what types of skills might be necessary in the future;
- feedback from places of practical training (in the 2nd and 3rd year, the curricula include production practice and it is possible to get feedback on the efficiency of preparation and readiness of the graduates to manage in a modern work environment);
- 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;
- questionnaires from graduates (how satisfied they are with preparation; what could be changed in order to be more effective);
- on some occasions, researchers and social partners are used for the renewal of curricula.

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.).

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

Most IVET in Estonia takes place in a formal structure where study places are state commissioned. IVET is also provided by companies, in particular in professions in which worker demand is bigger (e.g. welders, sewing machine operators, construction workers). The VET system comprises education and training programmes at upper secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) levels.

It is not yet possible to take into account, in a systematic way, prior education and work experience of those who wish to continue their studies at VET institution. The development of such a system is one of the aims of a project funded from the European Structural Funds. Students, who complete VET courses, 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.

However, the system is changing – on the one hand due to the development of competence-based vocational education curricula and on the other hand due to the increasing number of people who pass professional qualifications. The Vocational Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Eesti kutseharidussüsteemi arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) provides for a gradual amalgamation of the final examinations of VET institutions and professional qualification. As curricula for the same professions at different VET institutions are different and the quality of studies differs also, a certificate of vocational education only states the fact that a curriculum was completed, without providing the employer with reliable information about the professional skills of the graduates. Therefore, the assessment of professional skills is being implemented. The organisation of this is based on the Professions Act (*Kutseseadus*).

VET graduates can apply for the accreditation of their professional qualification according to the Professions Act. This process started in 2003 as a PHARE pilot project; professional committees were formed and examination materials were prepared for 9 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), in 2005, the number had doubled and nearly 1/5 or 1 419 graduates passed the professional qualification examination. According to the 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

- Professions Act (*Kutseseadus*, 2000) provides the basis for developing professional requirements of professional qualifications and the conditions and procedure for their attestation and award.
- Vocational Education Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*, 1998) regulates the provision of VET, foundation and operation of VET institutions.
- Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993) regulates education and training provision for adults.

- Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (*Välisriigis omandatud kutsekvalifikatsiooni tunnustamise seadus*, 2000) regulates the recognition to be employed in a regulated profession and taking into account European Union Directives.
- Regulation No. 120 of the Government of the Republic of 6th June 2005 The conformity of the qualifications of the Republic of Estonia and the qualifications of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics prior to 20th August 1991 (*Vabariigi Valitsuse 6. juuni 2005 a. määrus nr 120 Eesti Vabariigi kvalifikatsioonide ja enne 20. augustit 1991. a antud endise NSV Liidu kvalifikatsioonide vastavus*).

CERTIFICATE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER HE/SHE HAS COMPLETED THE CURRICULUM OF BODIES FOR VALIDATING FORMAL LEARNING

- The Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) co-ordinates 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 (*Riiklik Eksami- ja Kvalifikatsioonikeskus - REKK*) is a state agency administered by the Ministry of Education and Research. Its main purpose is to implement the national education and language policies. It also prepares and directs the development of national vocational education curricula. It verifies upon the registration of VET curricula that they are compliant with the qualification standard of the relevant profession approved by the professional council.
- In 2001 the Estonian Qualification Authority (*Kutsekvalifikatsiooni Sihtasutus*) was established to develop a professional qualifications system and establish prerequisites for achieving comparability of employee qualifications and their acknowledgement by other countries. The Authority is under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Research. It organises activities of professional councils and is responsible for developing, supplementing and improving professional standards, and establishing evaluation criteria. It also manages the state register of professions. All vocational qualifications should meet standard quality criteria in their design and operation and be clearly located in the framework for professional standards.
- The Professional council (*Kutsenõukogu*) 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. It appoints experts in the field who map out the main vocations of the profession; develop the professional standard, grades of qualification as well as the scheme for awarding professional qualifications.

To recognise 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. To promote professional qualification, 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 Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993). Pursuant to the Private Education Institution Act (*Erakooliseadus*, 1998), if adult education institutions provide training which exceeds 120 hours in a year, they must 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 do not have a licence and provide professional training and hobby education which is not recognised as formal education (although certificates may be accepted by awarding bodies).

There is no regulation for considering the accreditation prior learning and work experience (*varasema õppe- ja töökogemuse arvestamine - VÕTA*) by educational institutions.

In higher education, the providers set down their own rules individually and on an individual student basis. This can include accrediting work experience.

ATTESTATION AND AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

According to the Professions Act (*Kutseseadus*), the award of professional qualifications is a process by which a person displays the level of his or her professional competence. Attestation methods are a written or oral examination, test assignment, attestation on the basis of documents or a combination of methods. They are set by the awarding body.

Generally, for lower level professions (level I and II), the qualification attestation does not demand a formal education certificate as a prerequisite. The awarding body should validate and recognise the results of non-formal education. Standards in higher levels (IV-V) demand a higher education diploma. In a re-attestation process, the awarding body takes into account the results of non-formal education certificate or higher education diploma.

EUROPASS NATIONAL CENTRE

Increasing the transparency of qualifications is an important component in ensuring a better linking of education and training systems. The national Europass centre started its activities in Estonia in May 2005; a relevant website is being developed <http://www.europassikeskus.ee>.

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. Provision in the education sector tends to be more complex and divided across many institutions compared to the labour market sector. This explains the unequal balance of the 2 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 information and counselling centres (*maakondlikud noorte teavitamis- ja nõustamiskeskused*) has operated since 1999/2000, contracted regionally by county governors and funded annually by the Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) and local governments. There is at least 1 centre in each county. These centres provide information and guidance services on the spot. They visit general education institutions to give lectures and to support teachers and schools in implementing career education. As career guidance is 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.

The Ministry of Education and Research is currently preparing a new model of integrated guidance services for young people whereby the range of services provided by the youth information and counselling centres will be expanded to include educational, social, psychological and career guidance, and information provision on labour market issues and other topics relevant for young people.

Within general education, all schools must implement Professional Career and its Development (*Töölane karjäär ja selle kujundamine*) as a compulsory cross-curricular theme since September 2004. In some schools, an individual staff member is responsible for the co-ordination of the career management activities. 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.

According to the Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds SPD 2004/2006 (*Eesti riiklik arengukava Euroopa Liidu struktuurifondide kasutuselevõtuks - ühtne programmdokument aastateks 2004/2006*), VET institutions are also to establish 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 provide specific lessons (e.g. 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, 5 biggest Estonian universities have established career services without central regulation. The main aim of the services is to develop students' job seeking skills, support them in finding employment, and research their career destinations after graduation.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Research founded the Estonian Euroguidance Centre in 1998 to support guidance practitioners in promoting mobility and the European dimension within education and training. Since then, 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 National Resource Centre for Guidance (*Karjäärinõustamise Teabekeskus*), and although it does not provide direct counselling services to end-users, it provides support to the practitioners through: developing 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 and from September 2005, it has been implementing a comprehensive national guidance project, co-funded by the Ministry and the European Structural Funds. The project will last till July 2008 and should improve the quality of guidance services to enhance participation in lifelong learning and improve employability.

GUIDANCE IN THE LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Within the labour market sector, vocational counselling is provided by 22 counsellors working in 16 employment offices across Estonia. Depending on client needs, a counsellor will try to help with assessing the client's educational and job related aspirations, map their 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 (*Tööhõiveamet*) that is also responsible for the provision of training. In addition, there is a 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.

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). Links with the public sector are rather rare and information events are occasional. Within companies, human resource managers sometimes address staff career management issues but it is not regulated. The first links between the education sector and the Estonian Association for Personnel Development PARE (*Eesti Personalitöö Arendamise Ühing PARE*) have been established.

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-company training venues.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

The main target groups of regional youth information and counselling centres are young people aged 7–26 who are living, studying and working in each county. Parents and teachers can also 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 information retrieval on learning and working opportunities from the Internet, and in some cases, the completing of various personality and ability tests.

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. But due to the lack of human resources, the co-operation of practitioners from regional youth information and counselling centres with VET institutions has so far been more occasional and limited to in-group personality testing. In the 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 the search for employment. However, these examples are very rare and VET students can be said to have virtually no career guidance services targeted at them.

University career services are provided for 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 provide their services only to the registered unemployed or those who have received their redundancy-note, i.e. official job seekers. These services are free of charge. 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. One interview lasts usually for 1 hour during which time the counsellor can apply a range of different methods and tools including exercises, 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 counsellors have a strong background in psychology, they tend to use a selection of elements from a range of different counselling and therapy approaches. Main methods include solution-oriented therapy, humanistic and behaviouristic approaches. Two 2-day training courses in socio-dynamic counselling, provided by international specialists and attended by approximately 70 practitioners, have instigated the spread of constructivist techniques. In addition, elements from psycho-analytical, existential and cognitive approaches are being used.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

There are 3 qualification standards for career practitioners: career counsellors, career information specialists and career co-ordinators at schools (including VET institutions and higher education institutions). All 3 were adopted by the Estonian Qualification Authority (*Kutsevalifikatsiooni Sihtasutus*) in December 2005. The standard for career counsellors was up-dated on the basis of a previous standard, approved in June 2001; the other 2 standards were new.

Between November 2005 and June 2006 three Estonian public universities are piloting a joint 9 ECTS training programme in guidance within the framework of the EU Structural Funds career services project. It will be followed by three separate 2 ECTS specialisation courses for career counsellors, career information specialists and career co-ordinators at schools leading to the professional examinations to acquire one of the three qualifications.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GUIDANCE PERSONNEL IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Until December 2005, there have been no official and nationally agreed minimal qualification requirements for guidance practitioners. The recently approved qualification standards might also take some time to implement. The majority of working guidance practitioners have 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 have been met by various short and long-term courses, organised by different institutions. Twice a year, National Resource Centre for Guidance organises three-day information and training seminars aimed at both education and labour sector counsellors. They serve as a meeting point to enhance co-operation and information flow between the two. Topics have included 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 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 employment offices. Likewise, the ELMB organises regular further training sessions for all practising counsellors 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 Ministry of Education and Research (*Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium*) is to avoid a short-sighted approach regarding the budgeting policy of educational costs, and to focus on the stability of the development of the VET system. To cover the costs of vocational education, efficiency savings will be achieved by a more rational use of resources and a better allocation to priority areas.

General goals of the development of vocational education are described in the Vocational Education Development Plan 2005/2008, approved by the Government of the Republic on 14th of July 2005.

In the foreseeable future financial planning will focus on the need for further development of regional vocational education centres, 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.

Since 2005, coefficients used in vocational education have been changed to reflect the cost differences in training for different professions.

According to the Development Plan for VET Funding in 2005/2008 the factors used in calculating VET institutional budgets have changed. From 2005, numbers of students will be the most important factor rather than premises costs. There will be a substantial increase in the allocation for the basic student cost in VET (50% by 2007). At the same

time, funds will be allocated to VET institutions not in receipt of investments by the European Regional Development Fund (*Euroopa Regionaalarengu Fond - ERDF*).

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Funding of initial vocational education is regulated by the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*), which provides that VET institutions are financed from the state, municipality or city budgets, fee-charging services, revenue from foundations, and other funds. Budgets are delegated to VET institutions.

Students attend public VET institutions which may be owned and funded by the state or municipality. In both cases, costs are covered from the state budget from relevant ministry funds on the basis of student cost and the number of financed students at institution.

The number of student places commissioned and funded by the state is decided by the Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sotsiaalministeerium*), the Estonian Labour Market Board (*Tööturuamet*), the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (*Majandus- ja Kommunikatsiooniministeerium*), the Office of Regional Minister (*Regionaalministri Büroo*), employers' and employees' associations and professional associations.

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

In 2004, the student cost in VET institutions was € 869 of which teacher salaries and social taxation amounted to € 520 and study materials to € 61. In 2005, a study place at a VET institution cost € 932, of which teacher salaries and social tax was € 583 and the cost of study materials was € 61. To calculate study costs, the student costs are multiplied by the factor given to a field of study, form of study and, if appropriate, with the special needs' education factor. In addition to the above costs, the student cost covers management costs, and wages and social tax costs of non-pedagogical staff of € 288.

The Ministry of Education and Research covers study costs 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 Private Schools Act (*Erakooliseadus*, 1998). Teacher salaries are calculated on the same basis as public or municipal VET institutions, and the costs of acquiring study materials are covered from the state budget. This applies where the VET institution is providing state commissioned education. Admission numbers are approved by the Ministry of Education and Research on the basis and pursuant to the procedure prescribed by the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (*Kutseõppeasutuse seadus*, 1998). In 2003/2004, the Ministry of Education and Research financed a small amount (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 amounts are determined by the owner and are fixed for an academic year. The tuition fee may be increased by up to

10% between 2 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 municipal budget.

See below the following attachment.

[Student cost in VET institutions in 1999/2005](#)

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

Continuing education is not state-financed in Estonia although it is provided in state VET institutions in the case of formal education and by private VET institutions or training centres. Tuition fees are paid by clients i.e. either individuals or employers who want their employees to be trained.

The state contributes through tax reductions for employers and individuals paying for their own training. Some types of continuing training and adult education are covered by public financing and legislation as listed below.

FORMAL EDUCATION

State funds are available for those participating in:

- basic and upper secondary education by evening and distance learning in adult upper secondary general schools - available to all;
- 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).

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

State funding is allocated for some professions to participate in work-related training, for example, for teachers (3% of the salary fund), officials (2-4% of the salary fund), unemployed and job-seekers (in the area of government of the Ministry of Social Affairs). Enterprise Estonia (*Ettevõtluse Arendamise Sihtasutus*) implements a programme of training support, which is co-funded from the EU Structural Funds. This can be applied for by business and its purpose is to support in-service training and re-training. Learning Estonian among the non-Estonian population is supported by the Interest project.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Allocations are made from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Research through a competition. The salaries of approximately 45 headmasters and teachers in non-formal education training centres can be funded. The Estonian Non-formal Adult Education Association (*Eesti Vabariidusliit*) organises the competition.

Apart from these specific cases, individuals or their employers pay for work-related training and non-formal education. The state supports through the tax system. Pursuant to the Income Tax Act (*Tulumaksuseadus*, 1999) people can be exempted from income tax up to the extent of the sum spent on training. Where non-formal education is funded by an employer, it is treated as a fringe benefits. Pursuant to Value Added Tax Act (*Käibemaksuseadus*, 2001), enterprises are exempt from paying pre-school, lower and

upper secondary education, and higher education as well as private tuition related to general education and other training, except for training provided by a company or sole proprietor.

Table 1: 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 are lower than in EU-15 and CVT courses are relatively high in price. Hence, total costs of CVT are smaller.

The Adult Education Act (*Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus*, 1993) 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.

USE OF THE EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS

In 2004 the EU Structural Funds became available. The European Social Fund (ESF) is for developing human resources and with its help, the Ministry of Education and Research has planned activities for developing lifelong learning. The need to create 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 (*Eesti riiklik arengukava Euroopa Liidu struktuurifondide kasutuselevõtuks - ühtne programmdokument aastateks 2004/2006*) (hereinafter the NDP) and in the Programme Complement of the NDP. The Ministry of Education and Research applies 2 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 by the Estonian Labour Market Board under the Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sotsiaalministeerium*). The Board allocates funds to employment offices to organise employment training taking into consideration their funding applications. As a rule, employment offices buy employment training courses from VET institutions. Courses may also other bodies 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 all stipends.

FINANCING OF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING COSTS

Table 1: Costs of social protection of the unemployed (in thousand €):							
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
TOTAL COSTS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION OF UNEMPLOYED	5 781.0	6 110.1	15 746.2	17 162.8	17 246.7	12 222.9	10 307.7
INCLUDING:							
ORGANISATION OF TRAINING	1 773.9	1 775.2	2 044.7	2 057.5	2 703.7	3 037.4	2 792.6
STIPENDS	341.4	258.9	384.7	388.7	467.7	456.8	461.8

Source: Labour Market Board

As a result of EU accession, finances are allocated to increase the competitiveness of unemployed persons. The Estonian National Development Plan contains priorities for programmes, which promote equal opportunities in the labour market and higher social involvement of unemployed people (measure 1.3). Active employment measures tailored to the needs of unemployed people and employers have been developed: long-term training courses are available for skills where there is high demand. Unemployed persons can also participate in entrepreneurship training.

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

IVET

The main aim for the immediate future is to allocate additional funding to VET by increasing funding for student costs by 50% per year (from € 869 in 2004 to € 1 304 in 2007). This will allow the VET institutions to pay better wages to vocational teachers and to upgrade their materials and facilities.

The State Vocational Education Institutions Network Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Riigikutseõppeasutuste võrgu arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) will reduce the number of VET institutions by merging and pooling their resources. Currently, the budget of € 45 million is divided amongst 49 VET institutions, which will be reduced to 25-9.

From 2004/2006, 10 VET institutions will receive funds from the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) totalling € 19.3 million. For 2007/2008, this will be approximately € 10.9 million. These sums are capital investment to renovate and upgrade buildings and to improve the training and living conditions of students.

In future years, additional resources from the European Social Fund (*Euroopa Sotsiaalfond – ESF*) could be used to develop national priorities. The total amount for the first programme period (2004/2006) for measure 1.1 of the Estonian National Development Plan amounts to € 53 588 477 (25% of which should come from the state budget and 75% from ESF). In the longer term, it will not be enough to rely on foreign aid and a much higher contribution of state resources will be needed.

CVET

Funds are being allocated to various activities as defined in the National Priorities of Adult Education 2004/2006 (*Täiskasvanuhariduse riiklikud prioriteetidid aastatel 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.

Both direct and indirect aid will be increased to make education and training more accessible. Over the next couple of years it will be possible to use ESF funds to provide training for people who are less competitive and for unemployed persons. The 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 principles of lifelong learning.

The Adult Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Täiskasvanuhariduse arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) was prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Research and in co-operation with Adult Education. According to the draft, a working group will be established to develop a system of funding adult education.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The general objectives and priorities of the government in relation to the EU are set out in the document The European Union Policy of the Government in 2004/2006 (*Valitsuse Euroopa Liidu poliitika 2004/2006*). Estonia supports the main objectives of the EU education policy: to create conditions for transfer to knowledge-based economy and to develop human capital for supporting a competitive labour force. To achieve those objectives, Estonia supports the creation of a common educational space in the EU, which would contribute to the increase of competitiveness and flexibility of the labour force. More specifically, Estonia supports:

- developing and modernising lifelong learning (particularly in-service training) and non-formal training, including facilitating access to education for less advantaged target groups;
- developing education and mobility programmes;
- improving quality of provision, including developing quality assurance systems at national and European level;
- specifying roles and competences of teacher and the modernisation teacher education (particularly vocational teacher);
- improving the structure and quality of youth work and the expansion of cooperation in the field of youth work including research.

Education and training are fields where the EU mostly does not intervene. According to articles 149-150 of the EU Treaty, the EU does not establish strict requirements in the

field of education but establishes general aims and principles of co-operation. The EU supports the development of good quality education by promoting Member State cooperation and, if necessary, by supporting and complementing their activities. Member states take the responsibility for study content and for the educational system.

EU legislation mainly offers legal acts of recommendation which support high quality education, development of training and vocational studies, student and staff mobility, language training, exchange of information and experiences, etc. Estonia takes all recommendations into account when developing national educational policy. On a broader level, the Lisbon Strategy, the Copenhagen Declaration, The Bologna Declaration, the Education and Training 2010 programme, the Communication on making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a reality and the Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning are all taken into account when developing national policy.

Estonia also cooperates with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since the 1990s. Since 2003, the Ministry of Research and Education has observer's status in the OECD's Education Committee. This status allows Estonia to compare its educational policy with those of other countries. In 2006 Estonia will join the PISA comparative study on education.

The Vocational Education Development Plan 2005/2008 (*Eesti kutseharidussüsteemi arengukava aastateks 2005/2008*) focuses, among other issues, on 2 aspects of promoting lifelong learning: a student should attain the appropriate attitude and skills in the VET system for further studies; and VET institutions network should play a bigger role in adult education. The infrastructure of VET institutions is currently being changed through investments from the state budget and the EU structural funds to enable institutions to merge and to provide up-to-date skills that are in line with the needs of employers. The same infrastructure will also be used for adult education and training.

Given the decreasing number of young students, VET institutions will have more resources available for adults in the future years. Teachers and trainers will also receive teaching experience for teaching adults. Curricula development, teacher training and other content issues will be partly financed from the ESF. According to the action plan, the national qualification system should enable workers' mobility both in the national and international labour markets. The VET system should also encourage more adults to participate through developing non-formal and informal education and their validation. Career guidance for adults will also be developed as will an appropriate qualifications structure.

The focus on increasing training opportunities for adults is also the main objective of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning 2005/2008 (*Elukestva Õppe strateegia aastateks 2005/2008*, approved by the Government 3rd November 2005). The strategy provides the target to increase the share of 25-64 years old participants in education and training to 10% by 2008. The Lisbon Strategy aims for 12.5% by 2010.

Similar priorities for adult education and training and lifelong learning are outlined in the National Priorities of Adult Education for 2004/2006 (*Täiskasvanuhariduse riiklikud prioriteetidid aastatel 2004/2006*). Priorities additional to the ones indicated above are to develop a funding model for adult education including using the tax system to encourage enterprises to invest in employee training. Also to co-operate with the EU in the fields of education, training and youth work and the related programmes: Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and European Youth.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Since joining the EU in May 2004, Estonia has been internationalising its education system through co-operation with the member and neighbouring states of the EU. Both VET institutions and higher education institutions plan to invite teachers and researchers from foreign states, improve the study conditions, update their study programmes, provide curricula with instruction in foreign languages, etc. Competition with other European educational and research institutions makes Estonia improve its own provision.

The common educational space of the EU contributes to cooperation as well as the free movement of learners and workers. In principal, students from other countries can access the Estonian VET system, but the major obstacle is language. Formal education courses (ISCED 3B) are taught in Estonian and Russian although exceptions can be made for short courses. ICT supported learning is possible for some parts of courses, though vocational studies are considered to be too practical for distance learning for the whole course.

Many initiatives for international co-operation at VET institutions originate from the VET institutions themselves. Almost all of them are actively working together with VET institutions of the same specialisation of other countries/regions. Most cooperation is with neighbouring countries through teacher and student exchange. There are also examples of curricula development projects with VET institutions abroad through different EU programmes.

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