

VET in Belgium (BE-DE)

Belgium is a federal State comprising three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and three Communities (Flemish, French, and German-speaking Communities). Citizens can access three different vocational education and training (VET) systems: Flemish (BE-FL), French-speaking (BE-FR) and German-speaking (BE-DE). Brussels is a specific case, as both BE-FR and BE-FL systems coexist. Despite multiple authorities being responsible for education, training and employment, as well as diverging VET systems, there is political consensus on specific issues. This, as defined in the 2017 national reform programme, aims to reduce early leaving from education and training, increase lifelong learning participation, increase access to and value of qualifications, and reduce inequalities within each Region. At all levels, VET policies involve social partners in a tradition of social dialogue.

In the BE-DE system, the German-speaking Community is in charge of education, training, and employment. Compulsory education covers learners aged 6 to 18. VET is offered at secondary, post-secondary, and tertiary levels.

Formal upper secondary education can be accessed from age 14; it lasts four years and is offered in two branches (nationally referred as full-time secondary education): general education and VET. The latter comprises:

- technical school-based programmes that lead both to an upper secondary education diploma and a VET qualification;
- vocational school-based programmes that are more practice-based and focus on preparing learners for labour market entry. They lead to a VET qualification only, but graduates can follow a one-year upper secondary programme (nationally referred to as seventh year) providing an upper secondary education diploma and access to tertiary education.

Learners can switch from one pathway to the other or even continue with general education or apprenticeship.

Graduates of these upper secondary education programmes can follow a three-year nursing programme at post-secondary level.

Besides these formal VET programmes, the regional training provider IAWM (*Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung im Mittelstand und in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen*) offers two- to three-year apprenticeship programmes to learners

from age 15 onwards to become a skilled worker. These programmes incorporate one day per week of general, occupational, and practical courses at school and four days of work-based learning in a company, based on a contract.

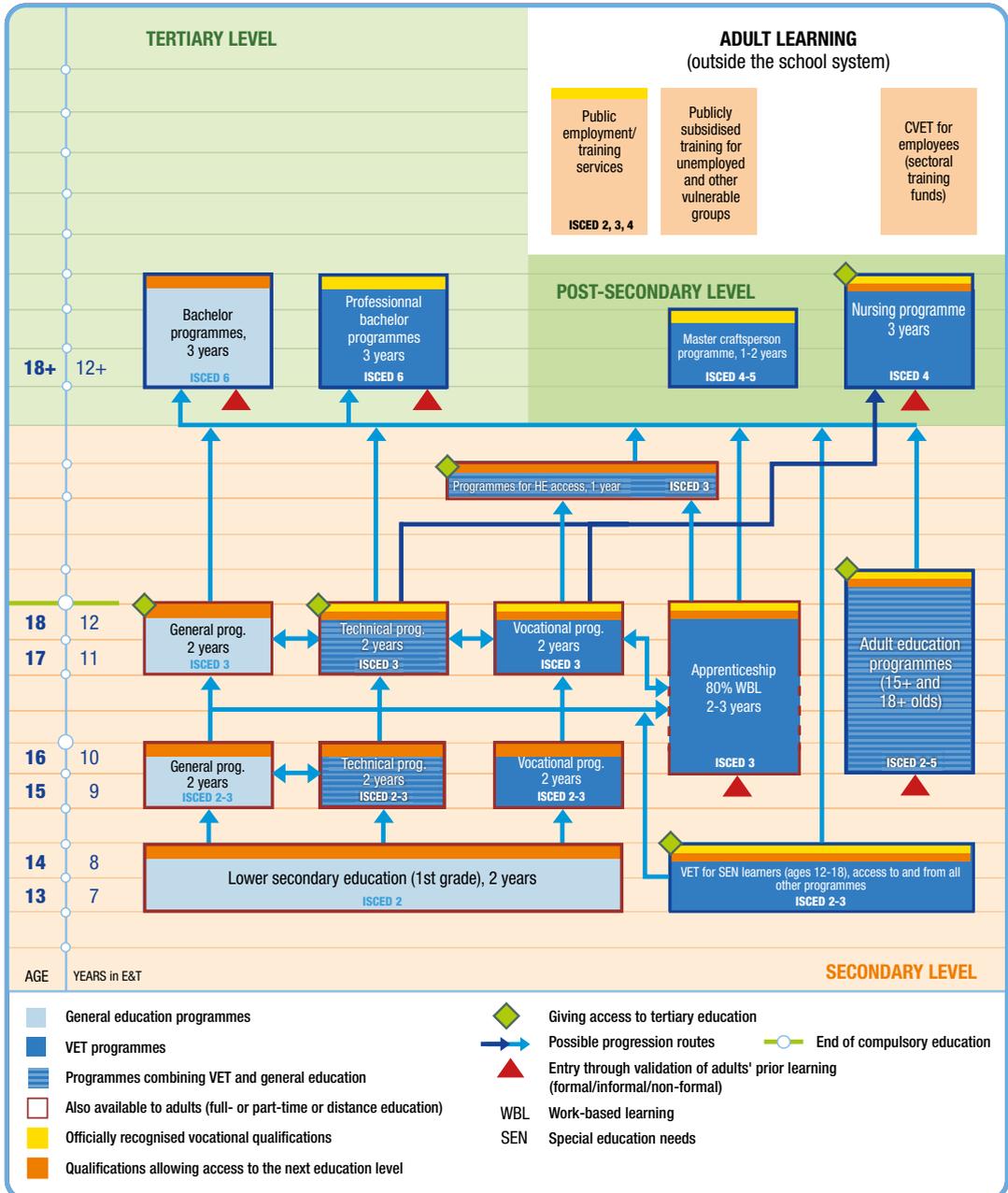
Graduates with a certain level of professional experience can follow a one- to two-year master craftsman programme at post-secondary level, which qualifies them to become self-employed professionals and train apprentices themselves.

Apprenticeship programmes are very popular, socially highly recognised, and supported by many stakeholders.

Adult education is partially accessible from age 15 (individual modules/courses) and fully from age 18. Course participants may obtain a recognised diploma, qualification or certificate from primary to tertiary level. Adult learners can choose among a wide range of programmes at secondary level, which can lead up to an upper secondary education diploma. Adult programmes are offered by the formal education system and by public and private VET providers.

At tertiary level, graduates with an upper secondary education diploma can access three-year professional bachelor programmes, offered in various professional fields such as primary school teacher or accountant. Due to the small size of the German-speaking Community, professional master programmes are not offered but students can obtain a master degree in a nearby university in another Community (e.g. Université de Liège), the Netherlands (e.g. Maastricht University) or Germany (e.g. RWTH Aachen).

The public employment and training service ADG (*Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft*) offers vocational training, allowing learners to gain partial or full qualifications, or to get trained in specific subject areas such as language learning. Such training mainly targets job-seekers and employees and is sometimes provided in cooperation with public or private VET providers.



NB: ISCED-P 2011 and EQF referencing has not yet been done. ISCED-2011 one digit code used in the chart is estimated by the Ministry of Education of the German-speaking Community.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Belgium.



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