

VET in Belgium (BE-FL)

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). In the Brussels Region 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. The Belgian 2017 national reform programme defines common goals: reducing early leaving from education and training, increasing lifelong learning participation, increasing access to and value of qualifications, and reducing inequalities within each Region. At all levels, VET policies involve social partners in a tradition of social dialogue.

The Flemish Government is in charge of education and training and employment in Flanders.

Compulsory education covers learners aged 6 to 18. Formal upper secondary education starts at age 14, lasts four years and is offered in two branches, general education and VET. The latter comprises:

- technical school-based programmes (nationally referred as full-time education), which combine technical-theoretical classes and practical lessons. They lead to an upper secondary education diploma including a VET qualification such as hospitality;
- vocational programmes that are more practice-based and aim at direct employment. These can be delivered as school-based programmes (also referred as full-time education). After successful completion of an additional year (follow-up vocational programme), an upper secondary education diploma is awarded;
- from age 15 onwards VET programmes can also be delivered as programmes combining company and school-based learning (referred to as part-time education or apprenticeship-type programmes). The latter are organised by schools and are based on a contract with the company involved. Another apprenticeship scheme is organised by the regional SYNTRA training centres. In these apprenticeship programmes, learners follow general and technical courses at school or at a SYNTRA training centre (one or two days per week).

The other days (three or four days), they do work-based learning in a company. Graduates receive a vocational qualification and an upper secondary education diploma. These programmes are also accessible to young adults up to 25 years old.

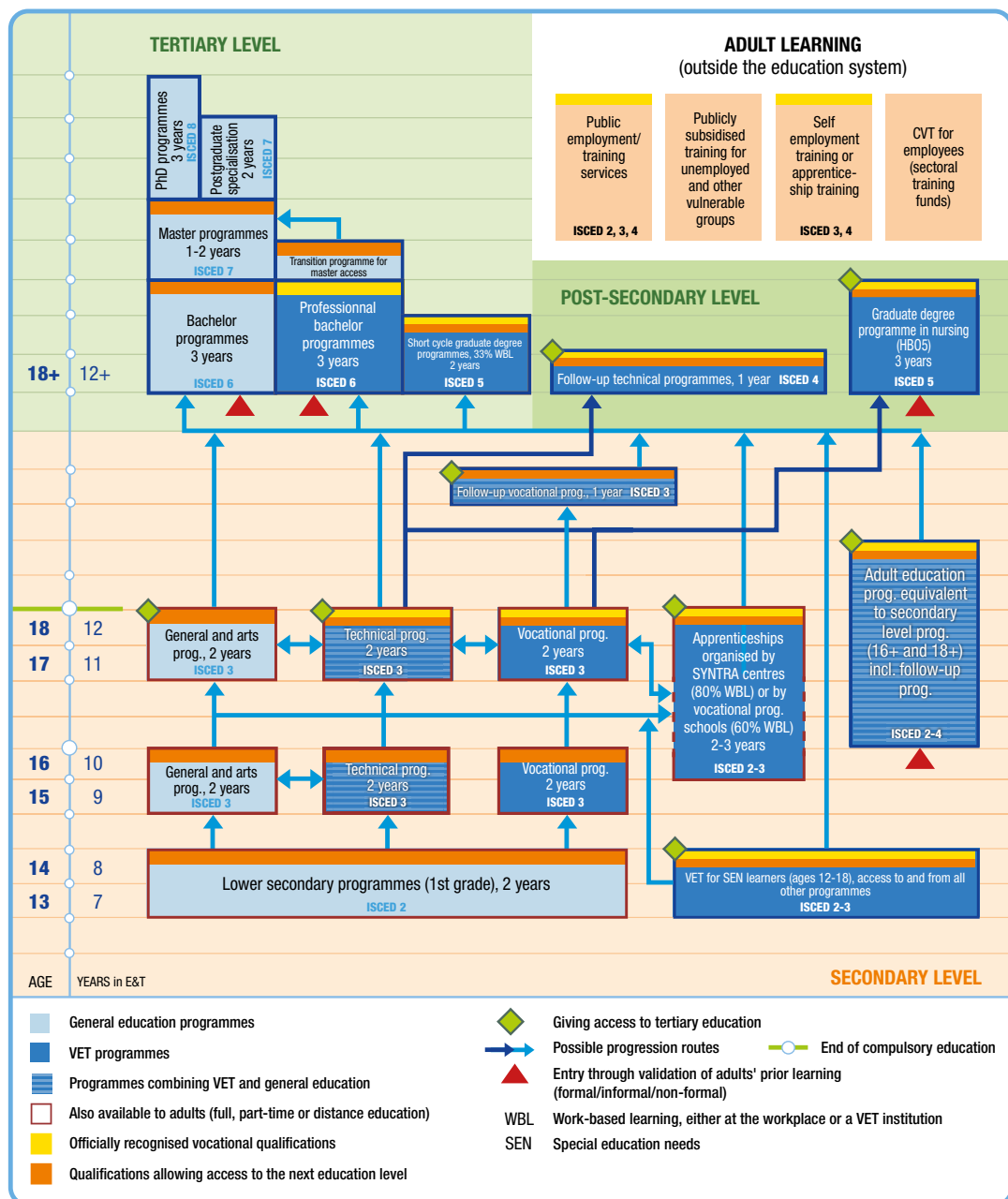
A new apprenticeship pathway called 'dual learning' has been formally adopted and will be fully implemented in Flanders from September 2019. It will replace the two current apprenticeship schemes and encompass selected professional fields which are now covered in technical and vocational upper secondary education programmes.

Adults over 18 can choose among a wide range of programmes offered by the formal adult education system and by public and private VET providers, such as the training centres of SYNTRA, which also offer entrepreneurial training programmes.

At post-secondary level, one-year specialisation programmes are offered as follow-up technical programmes, as well as a three-year nursing (HBO5) graduate programme.

An upper secondary education diploma is necessary to enter tertiary education. People who have failed to get this diploma can obtain it via formal adult education programmes later. An exception is the two-year short cycle programmes (two years, 33% WBL) which can be accessed by VET programme graduates. Professional bachelor programmes (three years) are another profession-oriented programme offered in Flanders. Graduates can progress to a master degree programme after following a one-year transition programme. Higher education is accessible to adults either by full-time pathways, part-time pathways or distance learning.

Public services organise vocational training for job-seekers, employees and entrepreneurs. It leads to partial or full professional qualifications, or relates to specific subject areas, such as language learning. It is offered by SYNTRA (for entrepreneurs) and by the Flemish public employment service VDAB who also organise some training in cooperation with public or private VET providers.



NB: ISCED-P 2011. Assignment of programmes to ISCED classification is under revision, so only the first digit in ISCED coding is displayed. EQF levels on qualifications are being discussed.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Belgium.



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