

VET in Croatia

Vocational education and training (VET) plays a prominent role in Croatia. Overall responsibility for VET lies with the Ministry of Science and Education, supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASOO). The agency is responsible for developing VET curricula, continuous professional development of VET teachers, skills competitions and quality assurance. Stakeholders are involved in sector skills councils and in the VET Council, which proposes measures for the development of VET in Croatia. A network of regional competence centres is foreseen in the near future; they will serve as centres of excellence in VET, offering work-based learning, professional guidance and continuous professional development and training for professionals, VET teachers and in-company mentors.

Initial VET is publicly financed and free of charge. All VET programmes combine professional and general competences, to varying degrees; all include work-based learning (WBL), with duration and type varying among different VET programmes.

VET is provided at upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels. Learners start VET on completion of compulsory education at age 14 or 15.

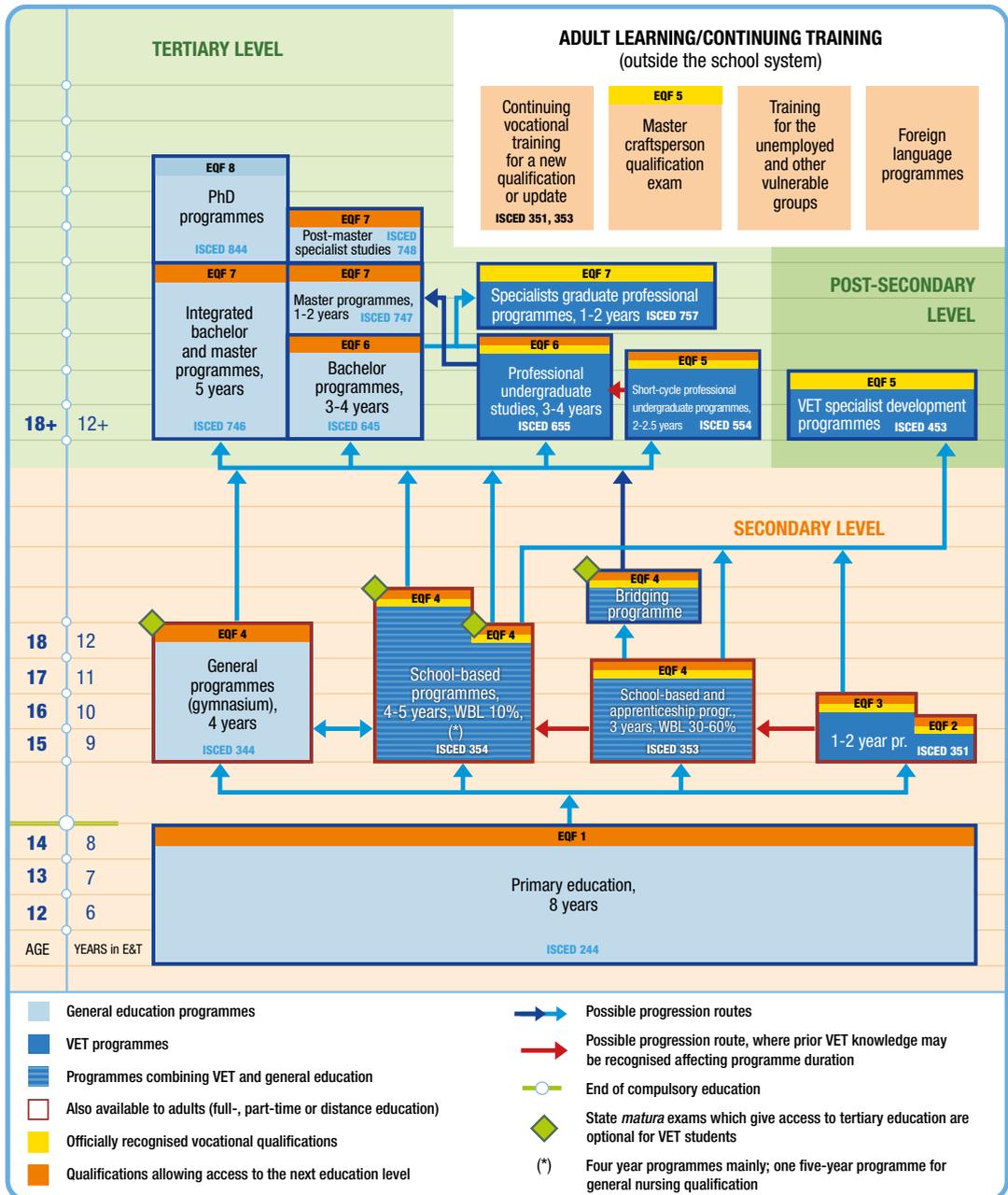
At upper secondary level, about 70% of learners participate in IVET. Around two thirds of VET learners are in four-year school-based programmes, with one third in three-year programmes. The four-year, mostly school-based VET programmes, with a WBL share of around 10%, lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.2/ EQF level 4 and allow progression to tertiary education, after completing external *matura* exams, administered by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCVVO). In the 2016/17 school year, 84% of four-year VET graduates took *matura* exams and 63% enrolled in higher education. The three-year VET programmes give access to the labour market and lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.1/ EQF level 4; they have a significant share of work-based learning, ranging from 30% for programmes for industrial occupations to 60% for programmes for crafts, which includes apprenticeship. On completion of the three-year programme for crafts, graduates take the journeyman exam. They can also enter an optional one- to two-year bridge programme corresponding to the fourth year. If successful, they can take *matura* exams to qualify for higher education access.

Only a small number of learners take part in one- to two-year VET programmes. These programmes lead to VET qualifications without completing upper secondary education. Graduates can progress further only at the discretion of their schools.

VET specialist development programmes (EQF 5) are provided at post-secondary level.

At tertiary level, VET is offered in different forms. Short-cycle professional undergraduate programmes last two to two-and-a-half years (120-150 ECTS points) and lead to qualifications at CROQF/ EQF level 5. Three- to four-year professional undergraduate programmes lead to a professional bachelor diploma at CROQF/ EQF level 6. Professional bachelors may equally continue their studies in university programmes subject to successful completion of additional exams and other requirements established by individual higher education institutions. Specialist graduate professional studies last one to two years and lead to a professional specialist diploma at CROQF/ EQF level 7.

Adult education and training (for people over 16) covers a broad range of options, mainly in the form of short (re)training programmes, which range from basic or technical skills courses to complete formal secondary education and training. If adult education providers want to issue formal certificates at secondary education level, the education ministry has to approve their programmes. Tax deductions are available to employers, partially covering adult education and training costs. Measures for modernising VET and increasing participation in adult education and lifelong learning are strongly supported through European Structural and Investment funds.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Croatia.



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