

VET in Slovakia

Vocational education and training (VET) has traditionally been a strong pillar of the education system. Despite growing interest in general education, participation in secondary VET programmes offering access to higher education (ISCED 354) is still among the highest in the EU.

IVET

Initial VET (IVET) usually starts at age 15. It is mainly school-based, with periods of work-based learning (WBL) defined by institutional contracts between secondary VET schools (SOŠ) and companies. Since 'dual IVET' was introduced in 2015/16, it has allowed companies to sign individual training contracts with learners for in-company practical training, complemented with an institutional contract between SOŠ and companies. Learners are considered VET students and not employees.

In 2017/18, 461 approved VET programmes could be offered by secondary schools. Changes in legislation will introduce a new type of art education school (*škola umeleckého priemyslu*) and secondary sports school to operate from 2019/20.

Secondary IVET programmes comprise:

- school-based four-year (occasionally five-year) programmes (ISCED 354). These are mainly theory-focused and lead to a *maturita* school leaving certificate confirming level of education and VET qualifications attained;
- four-year (occasionally five-year) programmes (ISCED 354) with extended practical training. These can be offered as school-based or 'dual VET' and lead to a VET qualification, certified by a *maturita* school leaving certificate, and to a certificate of apprenticeship, provided that they include at least 1 400 hours of practice. From 2018/19 school-based and 'dual VET' will be based on the same national curricula (the same will apply for ISCED 353 programmes);
- three-year (occasionally four-year) programmes (ISCED 353). These lead to a VET qualification (nationally referred to as certificate of apprenticeship) and can also be offered as 'dual VET';
- two- or three-year programmes (ISCED 253) for low achievers without completed lower secondary education. In individual cases a certificate of apprenticeship is awarded. These learners can also enrol in a one-year bridging programme (ISCED 244) which gives access to upper secondary education.

Special education schools also offer VET programmes tailored to students with special education needs.

Conservatories offer six- and eight-year programmes for performing arts students, leading to an ISCED 5 non-university diploma and title (specialist in arts diploma, DiS art).

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET programmes comprise:

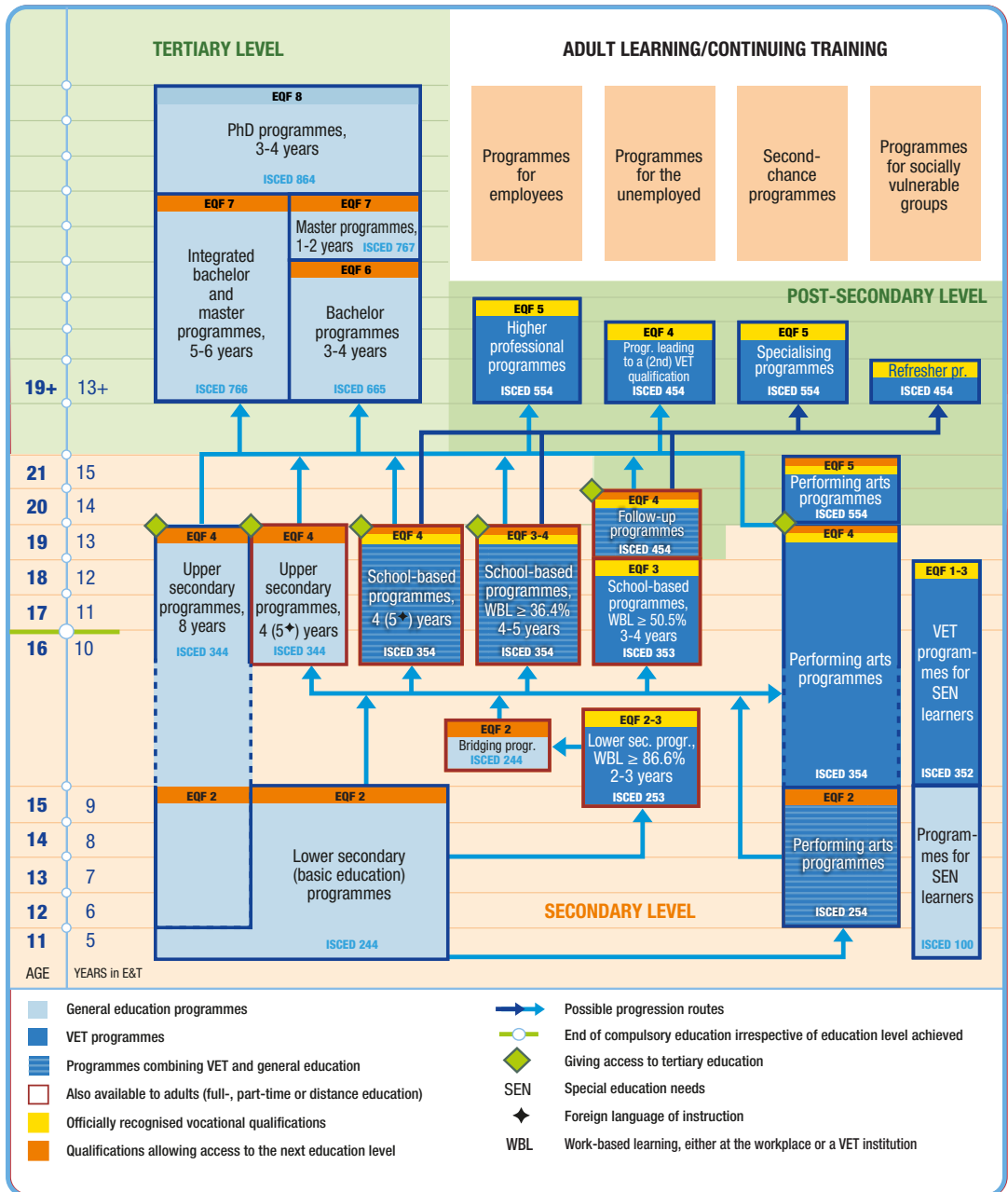
- two-year follow-up study programmes (ISCED 454) for three-year VET programme graduates (ISCED 353) leading to a *maturita* school leaving certificate;
- refresher programmes ending with a post-*maturita* exam (minimum six months, ISCED 454);
- programmes leading to a second VET qualification (qualifying programmes, ISCED 454, minimum two years) leading to a second *maturita* with a specific vocational component and, in some cases, also to a certificate of apprenticeship;
- specialising programmes (ISCED 554, minimum two years, nationally considered post-secondary) leading to a non-university diploma and title (DiS);
- three-year higher professional programmes (ISCED 554, nationally considered post-secondary) leading to a non-university diploma and title (DiS).

Tertiary education currently does not include universities of applied science. A practice-oriented bachelor programme, designed in cooperation with the automotive industry, was offered for the first time in 2017/18. The national programme for the development of education, adopted by the government in June 2018, promotes development of professionally oriented bachelor programmes and the expansion of 'dual VET' into tertiary education.

CVET

Continuing VET (CVET) provision is semi-regulated: according to the Lifelong Learning Act, all programmes for adults without a relevant qualification who are interested in starting a business regulated by the Trade Licensing Act must be approved by the accreditation commission of the education ministry. Some qualifications are regulated by sectoral authorities. Many training programmes offered by companies, and adult education *per se*, are not regulated.

The labour ministry regulates labour market training via its central office and district labour offices.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

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