Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014

Further information

- http://www.mzos.hr Ministry of Science and Education
- http://www.asoo.hr Agency for VET and Adult Education
- http://www.azoo.hr Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes
- http://www.nvoo.hr Agency for Vocational Education and Training
- http://www.azvo.hr Education and Teacher Training Agency
- http://www.azvoo.hr Agency for Science and Higher Education
- http://www.mobilnost.hr Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes
- http://www.nuvo.hr National Centre for External Evaluation of Education
- http://www.rosko.hr Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts
- http://www.hogk.hr Croatian Employers Association
- http://www.ksk.hr Chamber of Economy
- http://www.kzv.hr Chamber of Trades and Crafts
- http://www.kzv.hr/ Employment Service

This Spotlight is based on input from the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (ReferNet Croatia).
VET in Croatia

Vocational education and training (VET) plays a major 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, and quality assurance. The 2009 VET Act strengthened cooperation through increased involvement of line ministries, social partners, chambers of trades and crafts, the employment service, professional associations and other stakeholders. It also established multipurpose VET sector skills councils that informed VET on the needs of the labour market and higher education. Since the 2013 Act on the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF), 25 sector skills councils cover general, vocational and higher education. The Human Resources Development Council assesses, validates and coordinates education, employment, and linking professional guidance policies, regional policy and CROQF development, aiming to ensure human potential development, competitiveness and achieve Croatia’s strategic goals.

All VET programmes combine professional and general competences, to varying degrees; most include mandatory work-based learning (WBL), with duration and type varying among different VET programmes. Learners from lower-level programmes can progress to higher levels at the discretion of their schools. Initial VET is publicly financed and free of charge. Learners start VET on completion of compulsory education at age 14 or 15. At upper secondary level, 71.3% of learners participated in the beginning of the 2015/16 school year. Around two thirds of VET learners were in four-year school-based programmes, with one third in three-year programmes. Some learners participated in shorter, one- to two-year VET programmes (ISCED-P 351).

The four-year, mostly school-based VET programmes (ISCED-P 354) with a WBL component, lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4. These 'technical' programmes allow progression to tertiary education, after completing external final exams - administered by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NOVOD). Most students in four-year VET programmes use this opportunity in 2011, 91.94% entered the mature exam, and 77.7% passed.

The three-year VET programmes (ISCED-P 350) give access to the labour market and lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4. If they are mostly run as apprenticeships, with significant work-based learning. Since 2014, graduates from these programmes can enter an optional one- or two-year bridge programme, and, if successful, take mature exams to qualify for higher education access. This programme corresponds to the fourth year of the school-based programme.

VET is provided at higher education level in polytechnics in the form of short-cycle programmes (ISCED-P 554) and professional studies (ISCED-P 650) with focus on applied sciences. Learning in these programmes typically involves extensive practical work experience and leads to a qualification at CROQF and EQF levels 5 and 6. Shorter programmes also exist.

Adult education and training (for people above age 16) covers a broad range of options, mainly in the form of short (retraining) programmes, which range from basic or technical skills courses to complete formal secondary education and training. Entry requirements for post-secondary and adult VET programmes include relevant VET training and/or a number of years of professional experience. If adult education providers wish to issue formal certificates at a secondary level, the education ministry has to approve their programmes.

Distinctive features of VET

VET in Croatia has two main roles. Alongside preparing young people for the labour market, it enables access to higher education, skills competitions, and quality assurance. The 2009 VET Act strengthened cooperation through increased involvement of line ministries, social partners, chambers of trades and crafts, the employment service, professional associations and other stakeholders. It also established multipurpose VET sector skills councils that informed VET on the needs of the labour market and higher education. Since the 2013 Act on the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF), 25 sector skills councils cover general, vocational and higher education. The Human Resources Development Council assesses, validates and coordinates education, employment, and linking professional guidance policies, regional policy and CROQF development, aiming to ensure human potential development, competitiveness and achieve Croatia’s strategic goals.

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Adult education and training (for people above age 16) covers a broad range of options, mainly in the form of short (retraining) programmes, which range from basic or technical skills courses to complete formal secondary education and training. Entry requirements for post-secondary and adult VET programmes include relevant VET training and/or a number of years of professional experience. If adult education providers wish to issue formal certificates at a secondary level, the education ministry has to approve their programmes.

In September 2016, addresses these issues with a system development programme 2016-20, adopted in September 2016, addresses these issues with a series of measures, which, among others, aim to align VET with labour market needs, develop new curricula and strengthen the WBL model. Youth unemployment is high (4% in 2015 among 15 to 24 year-olds) and 18.5% of youth (aged 15 to 24) were neither in employment nor education and training (NEET) in 2015. Support services are expected to help young people get into employment, apprenticeship, VET or study. The chance to continue their education or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Both the education, science and technology strategy (October 2014) and the VET system development programme 2016-20 aim to improve the skills and competences of Croatia’s citizens and the country’s economic competitiveness. Participation in adult learning/continuing training was 3.5% in 2015, among the lowest in the EU, increased slightly in the following year. There are incentives for employers in the form of deductions of up to 50% of adult education and training costs (70% for small and medium-sized enterprises). However, uptake by companies is low, due to lack of awareness and the complexity of administrative procedures involved. New measures to address these issues are foreseen within the EU Structural Funds operational programmes for 2015-2020.

ADULT LEARNINGS/CONTINUING TRAINING (include the school system)
Vocational education and training (VET) plays a major role in Croatia. Overall responsibility for VET lies with the Ministry of Science and Education supported by the Agency for VET and Adult Education (ASO). The agency is responsible for developing VET curricula, continuous professional development of VET teachers, quality assurance, and policy responses. The 2004-2010 VET reform efforts, most curricula need to be updated, and some have to be aligned with labor market needs. The share of work-based learning and its quality need to be increased. A short-term focus placed on widening VET reform with the support of EU structural funds in 2015-2019. Special emphasis will be put on curriculum reform, the development of national and sectoral VET curricula, and improving work-based learning in all types of VET. The VET system development programme 2016-20, adopted in September 2016, addresses these issues with a series of measures, which, among others, aim to align VET with labor market needs, develop new curricula and strengthen the VET model. Youth unemployment is high (4% in 2015 among 15 to 24-year-olds and 18.5% of youth aged 15 to 24 years neither in employment, nor education and training (NEET) in 2015). Youth guarantee schemes are expected to help young people get into employment, apprenticeship, transversal or get the chance to continue their education or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Both the education, science and technology strategy (October 2014) and the VET system development programme 2016-20 aim to improve the skills and competences of Croatia’s citizens and the country’s economic competitiveness. Participation in adult learning/continuing training was 3.1% in 2015, among the lowest in the EU; it increased slightly in the following year. There are incentives for employers in the form of deductions of up to 50% of adult education and training costs (70% for small and medium-sized enterprises). However, uptake by companies is low due to lack of awareness and the complex administrative procedures involved. New measures to address these issues are foreseen in the Operational Programmes for 2015-2020.
The four-year, mostly school-based VET programmes (ISCED-P 354) with a WBL component, lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.1/EDF level 4. These 'technician' programmes allow progression to tertiary education, after completing external maturity exams - implemented by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NOVOD). Most students in four-year VET programmes use this opportunity (in 2011, 91.94% entered the matura exam, and 77.7% passed).

The three-year VET programmes (ISCED-P 350) give access to the labour market and lead to qualifications at CROQF level 4.1/EDF level 4; they are mostly run as apprenticeships, with significant work-based learning components. Since 2014, graduates from these programmes can enter an optional one- or two-year bridge programme, and, if successful, take maturity exams to qualify for higher education access. This programme corresponds to the fourth year of the school-based programme.

VET is provided at higher education level in polytechnics in the form of short-cycle programmes (ISCED-P 554) and professional studies (ISCED-P 650) with focus on applied sciences. Learning in these programmes typically involves extensive practical work experience and leads to a qualification at CROQF ISCED 5 and 6 levels. Shorter programmes also exist.

Adult education and training for people above age 16 covers a broad range of options, mainly in the form of short (retraining) programmes, which range from basic to technical skills courses to complete formal secondary education and training. Entry requirements to school-based and adult VET programmes include relevant VET learning and/or a number of years of professional experience. If adult education providers want to issue formal certification at the secondary level, the education ministry has to approve their programmes.

VET programmes

- School-based programmes
  - Integrated vocational and academic education
  - Specialist professional studies
  - College and master programmes
  - Bachelor programmes
- Adult learning/continuing training

- Integrated vocational and academic education
- Specialist professional studies
- College and master programmes
- Bachelor programmes

VET in Croatia's education and training system

- Tertiary level
- Adult learning/continuing training
- Secondary level
- Primary education, early

Distinctive features of VET

Despite initial VET reform efforts, most curricula need to be updated, as they remain irrelevant to labor market needs. The share of work-based learning is at a low quality level. Moreover, the funding model placed on widening VET reform with the support of EU structural funds in 2015-2020. Special emphasis will be put on programme reform, the development of national and sectoral VET curricula, and improving work-based learning in all types of VET. The VET system development programme 2015-2016, adopted in September 2016, addresses these issues with a series of measures, which, among others, aim to align VET with labour market needs, develop new curricula and strengthen the WBL model. Youth unemployment is high (42% in 2015 among 15 to 24-year-olds). Employment rates (aged 15 to 24 years) have continued to rise in the period since 2015, while youth unemployment in 2015. Youth guarantee schemes are expected to help young people get into employment, apprenticeship, enterprise or find the chance to continue their education or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Both the education, science and technology strategy (October 2014) and the VET system development programme 2015-2020 aim to improve the skills and competences of Croatian citizens and the country's economic competitiveness.

Participation in adult learning/continuing training was 3.1% in 2015, among the lowest in the EU. It increased slightly in the following year. There are incentives for employers in the form of deductions of up to 50% of adult education and training costs (70% for small and medium-sized enterprises). However, uptake by companies is low, due to lack of awareness and the unstable administrative procedures involved. New measures to address these issues are foreseen in the Future Funds operational programmes for 2015-2020.
E&T 2020=15

Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education

% of upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education students in vocational programmes and upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education students in general programmes in 2015

Further information

- Croatian Employers Association http://www.hgk.hr
- Chamber of Economy http://www.kam.hr
- Chamber of Trades and Crafts http://www.kuz.hr/
- Employment Service

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Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes % of all students in upper secondary education, 2014

- Croatia 26.6
- EU-28 29.3
- HU 52.6
- CZ 74.9
- AT 100.0
- SK 100.0
- SI 100.0
- RO 100.0
- HR 100.0

Lifeelong learning % of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015

- Croatia 31.3
- HU 14.4
- CZ 10.7
- HR 7.1
- RO 3.1
- SK 3.1
- AT 2.8
- IE 4.0
- ES 11.6
- MT 10.0

Early leavers from education and training % of early leavers from education and training, 2015

- Croatia 31.0
- EU-28 33.2
- AT 31.3
- SI 31.3
- SK 25.5
- HR 25.5
- CZ 24.2
- HU 22.6
- RO 19.6

Employment rates of young graduates % of 20 to 34 year-olds no longer in education and training, 2015

- Croatia 81.7
- EU-28 81.7
- CROATIA 81.7
- AT 87.6
- SI 86.8
- SK 77.9
- HU 79.1
- IE 75.7
- ES 77.2
- MT 78.1
- AT 68.5
- HU 57.2
- SK 47.5
- CZ 57.9
- HR 53.5
- SI 36.4
- AT 33.2
- SK 51.5
- CZ 78.1
- HR 76.2
- ES 71.8
- IE 72.2

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