



Spotlight on VET

CYPRUS

2026

VET in Cyprus

Vocational education and training (VET) in Cyprus is governed by a multi-level structure involving the education and labour ministries, the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA), and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY) oversees formal VET, including technical schools and the apprenticeship system. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (MLSI) coordinates labour market and social policies and works closely with the HRDA, which plans and implements continuing vocational training and manages the system of vocational qualifications (SVQ). Social partners are actively involved in VET governance, contributing to planning, curriculum development, and identifying training needs.

Initial VET (IVET)

School-based VET is accessible to learners who have completed compulsory (lower secondary) education:

- upper secondary three-year VET programmes (ISCED 354, EQF level 4) are delivered in technical schools, in theoretical and practical streams. Programmes combine general education with vocational subjects and include work-based learning (WBL) in enterprises. Graduates may enter the labour market or pursue further studies at tertiary level;
- evening technical schools provide second-chance programmes for adults who have completed lower secondary education (EQF level 2) or a core apprenticeship programme (EQF level 3). Programmes lead to the same qualification (EQF level 4) as daytime technical schools.

For young people who have not completed lower secondary education, an apprenticeship system is in place:

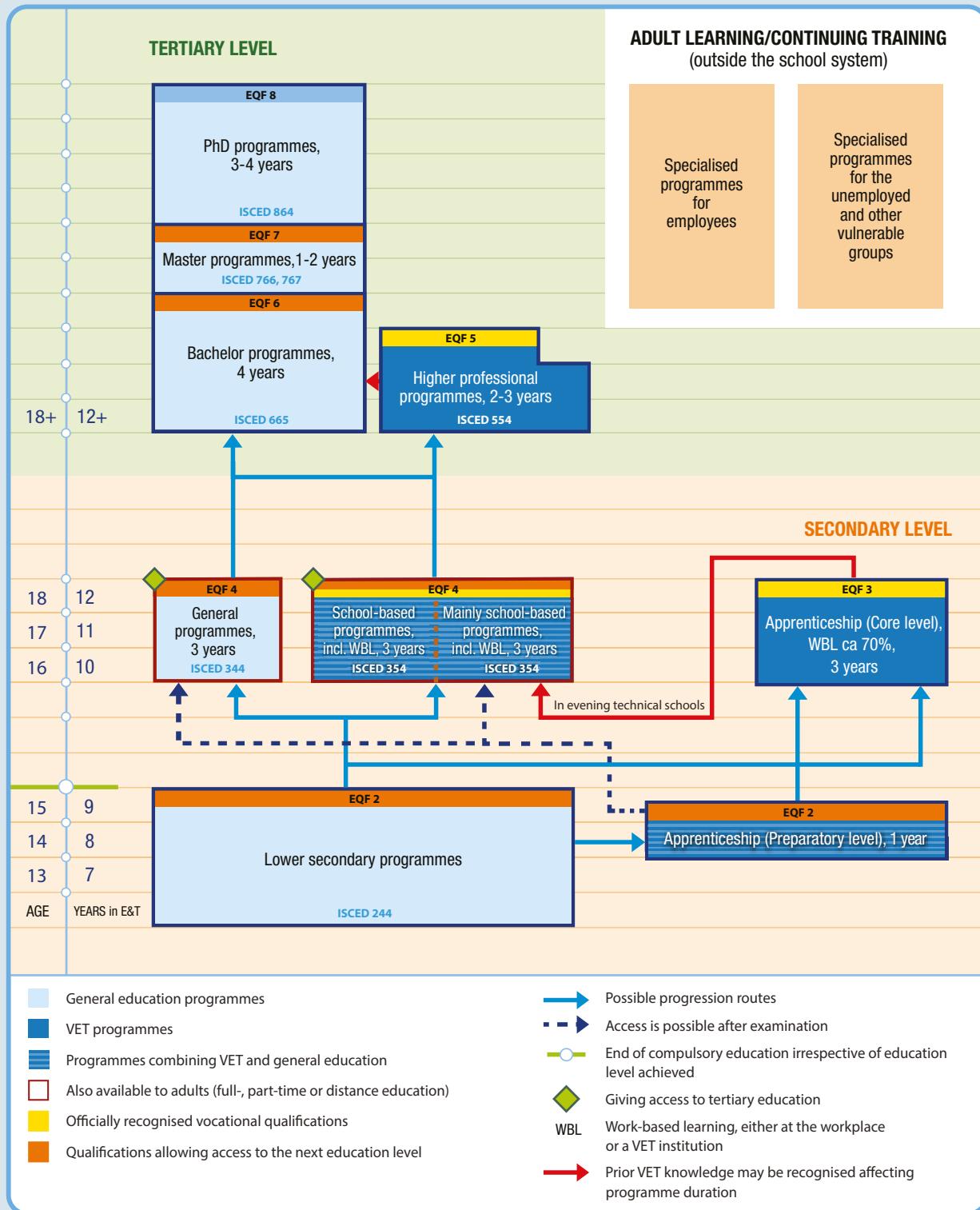
- preparatory one-year apprenticeship programmes target 14- to 16-year-olds and focus on acquiring basic skills and vocational orientation;
- core apprenticeships target early leavers (15- to 18-year-olds): programmes combine three-year school-based instruction with paid WBL (around 70%). Graduates acquire an apprenticeship certificate certifying completion of the 10th grade and may continue at evening technical schools to complete upper secondary education.

Higher (tertiary non-university) VET (ISCED 554, EQF level 5) is offered by public and private institutions, including the public schools of higher VET (MIEEK), which offer tertiary non-university programmes. MIEEK programmes last two years and focus on skills in demand, such as automation, culinary arts, and maritime studies.

Continuing VET (CVET)

Adult learning and CVET courses are available through a mix of public and private providers. The HRDA coordinates continuing vocational training, accredits providers, and subsidises training programmes. Different types of programmes target the employed, unemployed, and vulnerable groups, and cover both classroom-based learning and job placements.

VET in the Cypriot education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Cyprus, 2025.

Distinctive features

Cyprus's VET system is characterised by strong public provision, active social partner involvement, and a commitment to inclusive lifelong learning. Mainstream VET is free of charge and publicly regulated, including all programmes offered in technical schools, evening technical schools, the apprenticeship system, and the MIEEK public schools of higher VET.

A notable feature is the country's tradition of tripartite consultation. Employers' organisations and trade unions contribute to planning and curriculum development, and help identify training priorities. Their involvement ensures that VET remains responsive to labour market needs.

Another characteristic is the traditionally high tertiary educational attainment in Cyprus, which is among the highest in the EU. The country has taken steps to diversify VET pathways and improve accessibility. Piloting technical gymnasiums in 2025/26 at lower secondary level marks a strategic shift towards early vocational orientation. These programmes aim to strengthen the appeal of technical professions and offer learners an alternative route from an earlier age.

Adult learning is supported through a mix of formal and non-formal provision. The HRDA plays a central role in coordinating continuing vocational training, accrediting providers, and approving and subsidising programmes. The System of Vocational Qualifications ([SVQ](#)) enables adults to validate skills acquired through work experience or informal learning, offering flexible certification options aligned with the Cypriot qualifications framework (CyQF).

Challenges and policy responses

Despite progress, Cyprus continues to face challenges in VET participation, relevance, and inclusiveness. Low enrolment in upper secondary VET remains a concern. Cultural preferences for general education and limited provision in rural areas contribute to this trend. To address it, Cyprus is expanding technical school infrastructure, [promoting VET](#) through outreach campaigns, and enhancing pathways to higher education.

WBL uptake has been another area for improvement. One in three upper secondary VET

graduates aged 20 to 34 reported a [WBL experience](#) in 2023. By 2025, WBL was integrated into all upper secondary VET curricula and practical training was reinforced in all higher VET two-year MIEEK programmes. Cyprus is [strengthening employer engagement](#) through graduate tracking systems, matching platforms, and updated curricula informed by labour market intelligence.

Adult participation in lifelong learning remains low. In 2023, only 10.9% of adults reported recent learning experiences. The [2021-27 Lifelong learning strategy](#) promotes flexible learning formats, targeted outreach to vulnerable groups, and the development of individual learning accounts ([ILAs](#)). The HRDA has updated its training schemes and extended their validity to 2030, adding programmes with themes based on digital, green, and blue economy skills and entrepreneurship.

Digital skills gaps persist. In 2025, only 49.5% of individuals had basic digital skills, below the EU average of 55.6%. Cyprus is investing in digital infrastructure, educator training, and [STEAM initiatives](#) to improve digital literacy. The HRDA's Ermis portal also streamlines access to training and reduces administrative burden.

Teacher recruitment and retention, especially in technical and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, remain difficult. Cyprus is responding with [professional development frameworks](#), [certification for lifelong learning instructors](#), and stronger links with industry professionals.

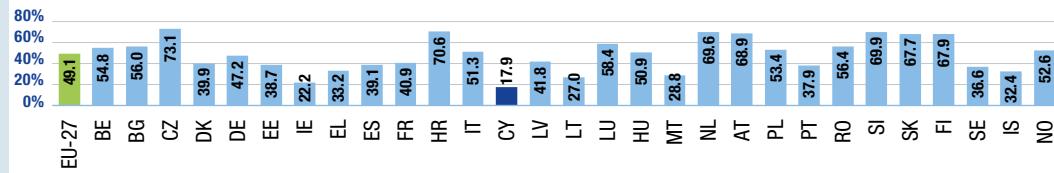
[NEET](#) rates and early school leaving are above EU averages. Targeted training programmes, second-chance education, and validation of prior learning aim to re-engage young people and adults in education and employment. National strategies such as the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Operational Programme THALIA 2021-27 support inclusive, future-oriented VET reforms.



CYPRUS

Education and training in figures

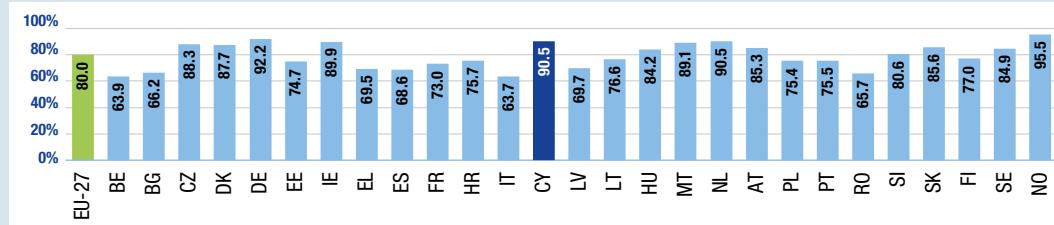
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2023



NB: There's a break in time series for Spain.

Source: [Key indicators on VET](#) (Cedefop).

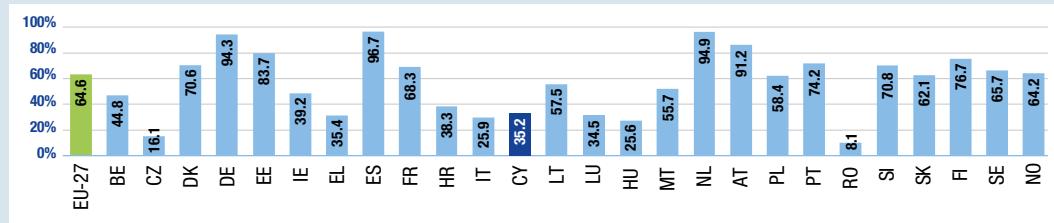
Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34) (%), 2024



NB: There is a break in the time series for Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland and Greece. The data for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia are of low reliability; definitions differ for Spain and France.

Source: [Key indicators on VET](#) (Cedefop).

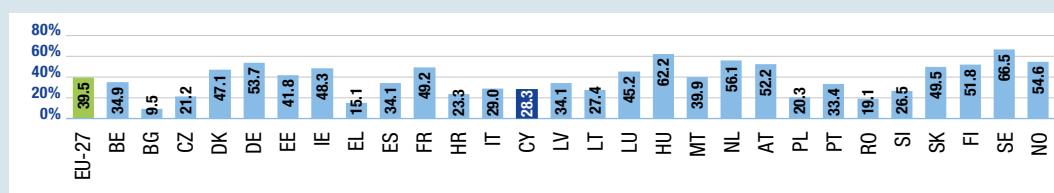
Recent IVET graduates (20-34) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%), 2023



NB: There is a break in the time series for Poland and Slovakia. There are no data available for Bulgaria, Latvia and Iceland.

Source: [Key indicators on VET](#) (Cedefop).

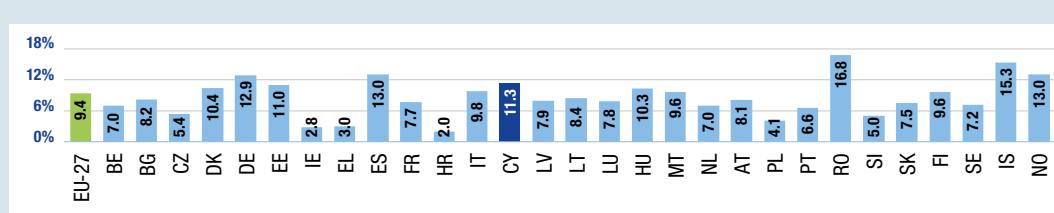
Adults (25-64) with a learning experience in the past 12 months (%), 2022



NB: There is a break in the time series for France, Italia and Romania.

Source: Percentage of the population aged 25-64 who participated in formal or non-formal education and training over the 12 months prior to the survey (Eurostat, AES, data supplied at Cedefop's request and excluding participation in guided on-the-job training; Cedefop used this source as a proxy, as LFS data were not available until 2024).

Early leavers from education and training (%), 2024



NB: The data for Croatia and Luxembourg are of low reliability; there is a break in the time series for Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland and Greece.

Source: [Key indicators on VET](#) (Cedefop).



Further information

- Cedefop. (2026 forthcoming). *Vocational education and training in Cyprus: short description*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2022). [Cyprus Lifelong learning strategy 2021-2027](#).
- Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). [Timeline of VET policies: Cyprus](#) [Online tool].
- European Commission. (2025). [Cyprus 2025 Digital decade country report](#).
- European Commission. (2025). [Education and training monitor: Cyprus](#).
- Eurydice. (2025). [National education systems: Cyprus](#).

Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MESY)

Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA)

Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DoSTVET)

Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA)

This Spotlight was based on input from the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (ReferNet partner in 2025).

