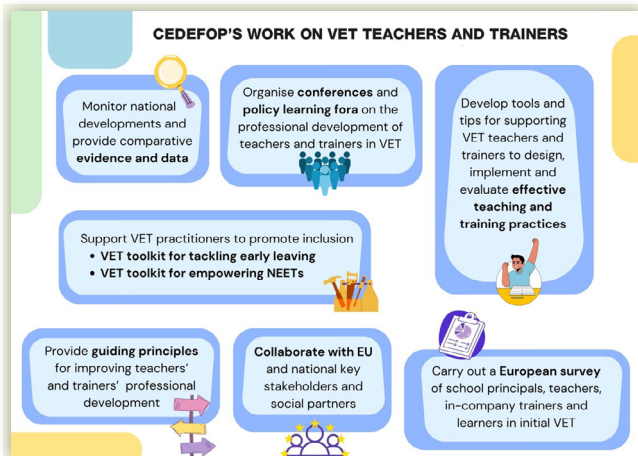




EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND TRAINERS TO MANAGE CHANGE

VET teacher and trainer professional development is crucial to helping them perform their many tasks

Teachers and trainers are at the forefront of initial vocational education and training (VET) delivery ⁽¹⁾. In the face of the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, their commitment and creativity have been central to sustaining teaching and learning in schools and workplaces. They play a key role in empowering young people, on whose lives and hopes the lockdowns have taken a particularly high toll, and in helping integrate refugees into Europe’s labour markets.



Source: Cedefop.

The vocational training and labour market inclusion of **young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)**, of refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups has become a major focus. Today it is a cornerstone of high-quality VET ², requiring specific **psychosocial** and intercultural skills from teachers and trainers.

1 While a few countries do not specifically define IVET as opposed to continuing VET (e.g. Ireland, Poland, Slovakia), most consider it as a distinct pathway to a qualification and occupation providing young people an access route to the labour market.

2 The 2020 **Osnabrück Declaration** states that ‘excellent and inclusive European VET are equally necessary for the competitiveness of European enterprises and a well-functioning European labour market’, highlighting that they are in fact the two sides of the same coin.

At the same time, the greening of European economies and the **rapid digitalisation of many jobs**, including the teaching profession itself, confront them with more new skills requirements. This is why it is now more important than ever for them to upgrade and update their own skills to be able, in turn, to instil (self-)confidence in their students, trainees and apprentices, as well as offering them up-to-date knowledge and skills. This briefing note presents new evidence gathered by Cedefop on teacher and trainer initial training and continuous professional development (CPD), including many practical examples ⁽³⁾.

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS: DIFFERENT PROFILES AND QUALIFICATION NEEDS

The professionals who teach and train learners in initial VET can generally be distinguished by where and how they perform their tasks:

- staff teaching general subjects in VET schools;
- staff teaching VET-related subjects in VET schools. These comprise a theoretical part taught in classrooms and a practical one, taught in workshops;
- trainers teaching at workplaces.

Different qualifications are required for these distinct groups of professionals, who also need a tailored mix of skills to perform their tasks efficiently.

TEACHER AND TRAINER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All European countries have legal or other provisions that govern the professional status, work and CPD of VET school teachers and, to a lesser degree, trainers in workplaces.

⁽³⁾ It is based on **country reports on Teachers and trainers in a changing world** by Cedefop’s national ReferNet partners, available in the **ReferNet Thematic perspectives** collection and a forthcoming synthesis report prepared by Cedefop.

While the qualification requirements and initial education of VET school teachers and in-company trainers differ, there are common aspects to their CPD. It is provided in many settings, including seminars, workshops, internships and study visits, in physical, online and hybrid formats, and usually covers three types of skills:

- technical or subject-specific;
- pedagogical/teaching/didactic;
- transversal or cross-cutting, including increasingly soft skills such as communication and social skills.

Teacher and trainer CPD is most often delivered by VET schools, training centres and chambers of commerce. Companies, national and regional authorities and agencies can all play a role, depending on the country.

BOX 1. CEDEFOP AND THE EUROPEAN POLICY CONTEXT

The crucial role and professional status of VET teachers and trainers has featured prominently in the [enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training](#) for 20 years. Starting with the 2002 Copenhagen Declaration, teachers and trainers and their professional development have been included in most subsequent Council Communiqués and Conclusions and remain high on the European policy agenda.

Cedefop has supported the policy process at European level throughout the years. From 1998 to 2011, it operated a Teachers and Trainers Network (TTNet) whose focus included the training and professional development of VET school teachers and in-company trainers. Subsequently, Cedefop coordinated, with the European Commission, the ET 2020 working group on the professional development of teachers and trainers, which integrated the TTNet activities. Today, besides providing a wealth of related online resources, the Agency contributes to the work of the [2030 thematic working groups](#) Pathways to school success and Digital education: learning, teaching and assessment, in the framework of the European Education Area.

Source: Cedefop.

Training of VET school teachers

In most countries, VET school staff teaching general subjects or theoretical vocational subjects must have a higher education degree (bachelor or master) in a related field. For staff teaching practical vocational subjects, a professional degree or upper secondary diploma is often enough. Professional experience is also required by 11 European countries ⁽⁴⁾ and a State

⁽⁴⁾ Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Finland.

exam or competition by six ⁽⁵⁾. Only six EU countries offer specific initial training programmes for future VET teachers ⁽⁶⁾.

All EU Member States, Iceland and Norway require VET school teachers to have a pedagogical/teaching qualification besides their degree in a specific field of study. Country approaches differ, however, as to the types of subjects included in this pedagogical qualification and the level of education at which they are delivered.

VET teacher CPD is mandatory in 19 EU Member States ⁽⁷⁾. Many are flexible concerning timeframe and/or content. In Austria, for example, teachers are required to attend 15 hours of CPD outside teaching time per school year, but there are no prerequisites as to the content.

Training of trainers in work-based settings

Duties of trainers in work-based settings vary, ranging from on-the-job training, e.g. of apprentices, to external consultancy and supervisory responsibilities. Their qualification requirements are less clear-cut than those of VET school teachers. In Hungary, in-company trainers need to have a State-recognised secondary VET degree, at least 5 years of experience and pass a practical exam organised by the relevant crafts or industry chamber. Apart from their professional qualification and experience, Poland also requires a pedagogical qualification. Only eight European countries ⁽⁸⁾ have specific competence profiles and national qualifications for them.

Ten countries ⁽⁹⁾ have provisions for in-company trainer CPD. In Croatia and Germany, trainer CPD content is defined by State VET institutes ([Croatian Agency for VET and Adult Education, BIBB](#)). In Estonia, Romania and Finland, this task lies with VET schools, in Hungary with chambers, in Norway with regional authorities, and in Iceland with the [Directorate for Education](#).

TEACHER AND TRAINER EVOLVING ROLES

At the interface between VET and work

With their pivotal position between labour markets and VET, teachers and trainers share their knowl-

⁽⁵⁾ Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Malta and Slovenia.

⁽⁶⁾ Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, the Netherlands and Austria.

⁽⁷⁾ Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Sweden.

⁽⁸⁾ Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Poland.

⁽⁹⁾ Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

edge from both worlds, helping shape the quality and relevance of VET provision. To fulfil their multiple roles and deal effectively with current and emerging needs, however, they need the right mix of skills.

To link VET provision better to labour market needs and opportunities, many European countries have fostered partnerships between VET schools and companies. The most common formal link is an agreement signed by the two parties, allowing for coordination and cooperation between in-company trainers and VET schools. In France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland cooperation includes internship agreements and apprenticeship contracts, while in Germany it comprises joint examination-boards, and in Poland it allows for in-company trainer presence on a school's teacher board.

BOX 2. TRAINER QUALIFICATION AT HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL

In Germany, in-company trainers can obtain two advanced vocational qualifications linked to their professional environment: [certified initial and continuing education pedagogue](#) (EQF level 6) and [certified vocational pedagogue](#) (EQF level 7). Both offer pedagogy and management skills and entitle trainers to take on additional tasks, such as selecting apprentices or managing training. The occupational profiles include online tutoring, devising teaching material, quality management, ability to identify apprentice skills, drafting exams, mentoring and leading trainers and skilled workers who provide training.

Source: [ReferNet Germany/Cedefop](#).

There are many initiatives across Europe offering VET school teachers 'real-world' experiences in companies. Austria's [Seitenwechsel initiative](#) allows teachers to gain extensive practical experience in a company for 12 months before returning to their school. Finland offers similar placement schemes for teachers in companies. France's [Ingenieurs pour l'école](#) works the other way round: it allows for the secondment of engineers and executives of a company to a school for up to 3 years so that they can put their practical professional experience at the service of learners.

Adapting to change

The greening and the digitalisation of many jobs, accelerated by the pandemic, are transforming workers' skill needs. To be able to respond to these, teachers and trainers across Europe must update their related skills and knowledge. At the same time, their own increasing use of digital tools and technologies in their work is changing the way they communicate with their students,

allowing for flexible and personalised interaction thanks to new online and blended teaching formats.

BOX 3. GREEN SKILLS FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CROATIA

The Croatian [Agency for VET and Adult Education](#) offers teacher training in green skills, notably through the organisation of VET teacher conferences and webinars, sector-specific training, and by providing information on its web portal. Topics include the circular economy, the internet of things, sustainable and zero energy construction, biodiversity, biofuel, plastic waste, sustainable fashion, solar and electric vehicles and biotechnology.

Source: [ReferNet Croatia/Cedefop](#).

BOX 4. DIGITAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN SPAIN

The [National Agency for Educational Technologies and Teacher Training \(INTEF\)](#) offers teachers and trainers digital education both through tutored courses and [massive, nano and self-paced open online courses](#). It also fosters:

- the exchange of experiences and resources among teachers through professional networks;
- development and dissemination of curriculum materials and other support documents for teachers;
- the design of teacher training models;
- the design and implementation of training programmes in cooperation with the autonomous regions.

Source: [ReferNet Spain/Cedefop](#).

BOX 5. LATVIA SUPPORTING TRAINERS' DIGITAL SKILLING

When the pandemic hit Latvia in early 2020, authorities responded to VET teacher and trainer needs to continue teaching. Courses were quickly organised to help them teach via online platforms, create interactive learning materials and prepare online presentations, using visual tools. Training was also offered to strengthen teachers' and trainers' soft skills and to provide them with tools and strategies to help them overcome burnout and cope effectively with the new education environment.

Source: [ReferNet Latvia/Cedefop](#).

Empowering learners

Inclusive education in school- and work-based settings is a key goal for VET teachers and in-company trainers. They are in a central position to [identify young learners at risk of early leaving](#) and to help them [sustain their motivation](#). To empower teachers and trainers to take up this important role, [many countries have developed training programmes](#) to equip them with the [psychosocial](#) and intercultural

skills they need to create [inclusive learning environments](#) in schools and workplaces ⁽¹⁰⁾.

VET teachers and trainers must be able to rely on inter-service networks to allow them to refer learners to other services including guidance, outreach, second-chance measures, mental health support and care for people with disabilities or special educational needs.

BOX 6. MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTION OF EARLY LEAVING

Norway has created a CPD programme and toolkit for teachers and trainers in initial VET, providing practical help on the appropriate approach for young adult students diagnosed with [Asperger syndrome](#). It shows them ways to optimise their students' learning outcomes and thus minimise the differences between neurotypical students and students with Asperger.

Source: ReferNet Norway/Cedefop.

BOX 7. A WHOLE SYSTEM SUPPORTING LEARNERS AT RISK

In the Netherlands, VET has a long tradition of preventing early leaving and reintegrating early school leavers. In parallel, the country has carried out research into the trends and causes of the phenomenon and set up a [Basic register of education](#) with records on all young people enrolled in general education or VET. It allows authorities to track their careers and identify those who have dropped out of the system. Forty regional reporting and coordination networks support potential and actual early leavers, offer guidance and help young leavers find work or an apprenticeship. VET teachers and trainers can rely on this infrastructure in their daily work.

Source: ReferNet Netherlands/Cedefop.

Taking stock and looking ahead

Considering teachers' and trainers' crucial role and tasks, European countries have acted to strengthen further their occupational status and professional development. Many EU policy documents have pointed to countries' need to attract and retain motivated professionals, but ReferNet reports show that only a few reward their CPD participation with career progression and, ultimately, higher salary. Spain has put VET teachers on an equal footing with general secondary education teachers, Germany has opened their career prospects up to EQF level 7, and Ireland awards CPD participants with certificates included in its [qualifications framework](#).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Cedefop has developed two toolkits for policy-makers and practitioners, one on [empowering NEETs](#) and another on [tackling early leaving](#), offering a wealth of examples of best practices, including on digital inclusion, from all EU Member States. More information on teacher and trainer professional development can be found [here](#).

Technologies, working methods and skill needs are constantly evolving. Examples of best practices show that 'hybrid' teachers and trainers, people who work in parallel in VET institutions and companies, can help tie VET provision more closely to employer needs. They not only bring innovation to school but also help address the shortage of VET teachers. The concept offers interesting career prospects to individuals and benefits both schools and companies, e.g. through shared salary costs.

Cedefop's research shows a potential for further improvement of IVET teacher and trainer CPD through more targeted needs analyses and stronger evaluation and appraisal processes. A (self-) evaluation component could support the design of programmes tailored to participants' needs.

Few countries have specific CPD provision for in-company trainers. Opening CPD courses delivered in VET schools to trainers and, conversely, offering in-company training to VET school teachers could be mutually beneficial in addressing their needs. Involving VET teachers and trainers in shared design of their CPD would increase their motivation to participate.

Europe's green transition is progressing and many jobs and qualifications are being adapted or created. France has revised an array of VET qualifications in agriculture, energy, waste and water management. While green skills are reflected in a growing number of VET programmes and qualifications, ReferNet reports show that, apart from a few promising initiatives and programmes, little has been done so far to integrate these skills for the future more systematically in the training of teaching and training staff.

Finally, there is a lack of data on the effectiveness of VET teacher and trainer CPD. This is particularly true for work-based and hybrid training provision and the measurement of its outcomes. Also, data available are often not comparable across countries, complicating analysis at European level ⁽¹¹⁾. Improving the monitoring and evaluation of CPD, in-company performance reviews and learner satisfaction surveys are precious tools for informing policy. And more targeted approaches to teachers' and trainers' professional development will lead to better skills and higher job and life satisfaction for these professionals and, ultimately, better learning outcomes for their students.

⁽¹¹⁾ To obtain a more detailed and up-to-date picture of teachers' and trainers' professional development needs, Cedefop has conducted a feasibility study with a view to launching a new pan-European survey with VET principals, teachers, learners and in-company trainers. In this context, it is organising a [policy learning forum](#) in November 2022.



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