

Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training
policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

ESTONIA

Developments in vocational education and training
policy in 2015-19

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: Estonia*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies.
<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/developments-vocational-education-and-training-policy-2015-19-estonia>

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2020.
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

Contents

Contents.....	3
Tables and figures.....	5
Tables	5
Figures	5
Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015	8
CHAPTER 1. MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships	11
1.1. Baseline 2015.....	11
1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20	12
1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19.....	12
CHAPTER 2. MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET.....	16
2.1. Baseline 2015.....	16
2.2. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation in 2015-19.....	17
2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET in 2015-19	18
2.4. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET in 2015-19.....	20
CHAPTER 3. MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning.....	21
3.1. Baseline 2015.....	21
3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-19.....	23
CHAPTER 4. MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET	32
4.1 Baseline 2015.....	32
4.2 Key competences addressed in the reporting period	34
4.3 Key competences in initial VET	35
4.4. Key competences in continuing VET.....	37
CHAPTER 5. MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers.....	39
5.1. Baseline 2015.....	39

5.2 Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19	42
5.3 Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19	42
5.4 Initial and continuing training of trainers in enterprises 2015-1944	
Statistical overview – 2019 update	45
Conclusion	48
Acronyms	49
References	50

Tables and figures

Tables

Table 1.	Framework data: score on VET indicators in Estonia and in the EU: 2010-15	9
Table 2.	Key competences addressed in 2015-19	35
Table 3.	Score on VET indicators in Estonia (EE) and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change	45

Figures

1.	Use of EQAVET indicators	18
2.	Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET in 2016.....	33
3.	Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science.....	34

Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20 ⁽¹⁾.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises ⁽²⁾ in 2017-19. It also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTs) and Advisory

⁽¹⁾ *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf

⁽²⁾ European Semester: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) was low compared to the EU average: 34.4% in 2013 compared to 48.9% in the EU (European Commission, 2015); 34.7% against 48% in the EU in 2014 (Cedefop, 2017c); 36% against 47% in the EU in 2015 ⁽³⁾. The proportion of upper secondary initial VET students on work-based programmes was low: 1.1% compared to 34% in the EU in 2014 (Cedefop, 2017c). However, the employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was high (74.4% in 2014 compared to 70.8% on average in the EU (European Commission, 2015); and when comparing VET graduates only, the rate was 83.5% in 2015, above the EU average of 73% (European Commission, 2016). Adult participation in lifelong learning was high (11.5% in 2014 and 12.4% in 2015 (European Commission, 2016) compared to the EU average of 10.7% (Cedefop, 2017c) in both years (Table 1).

VET-related developments in 2015 included improving the quality of work-based learning in VET and promoting apprenticeships. The target for the latter was to raise the number of initial VET students in apprenticeships. A national *Lifelong learning strategy for 2020* ⁽⁴⁾ was adopted in February 2014. It guides the most important developments in the area of education and sets out five strategic goals ⁽⁵⁾:

- (a) a new approach to learning, based on the individuality, interests, experience and potential of each student;
- (b) competent and motivated teachers and school leadership;
- (c) better alignment of education provision with labour market needs;
- (d) a digital revolution in lifelong learning;
- (e) equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning.

The *Labour market and education cooperation* programme was issued early in 2015. The programme sets out a roadmap and offers a framework for increasing the qualifications level of the labour force, decreasing the structural labour

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, 2015 data.

⁽⁴⁾ www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/estonian_lifelong_strategy.pdf

⁽⁵⁾ For the implementation of these strategic goals, the Ministry of Education and Research has developed nine programmes: *Programme for competent and motivated teachers and school leadership*; *Digital focus programme*; *Study and career counselling programme*; *Labour market and education cooperation programme*; *School network programme*; *General education programme*; *Vocational education programme*; *Higher education programme*; *Adult education programme*.

shortage and enhancing the employability of graduates by responding better to changes in labour demand. Its focus is on increasing the quality and attractiveness of VET and work-based learning and promoting entrepreneurship. In early 2015 a new Adult Education Act was adopted, which targeted improving the quality of adult education, and a Professions Act was amended as the starting point for developing labour market monitoring and skills forecasting.

Table 1. **Framework data: score on VET indicators in Estonia and in the EU: 2010-15**

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	EE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	EE ^f	EU ^f	Range	EE	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	34.7 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ 0.2	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	1.1 ^b	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ 0.4	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	92.9	69.2 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ -0.7	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	31.0	38.0 ^e	'10	31.0	38.0 ^e			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	14.0	20.0 ^e	'10	14.0	20.0 ^e			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	11.0		'15	12.4	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -0.1	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	68.0	66.0 ^e	'10	68.0	66.0 ^e			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	24.4 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ 0.7	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	22.0	25.0 ^e	'10	22.0	25.0 ^e			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	21.7 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 4.0	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	5.9	5.3	'15	5.4	6.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.1	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	2.0 ^u		'15	4.5 ^c	4.3 ^{b,c}	'13-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	7.1		'15	9.9	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -1.7	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	15.8 ^B	9.5 ^e _B	'11	15.8	9.5 ^e			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	83.6 ^B	80.2 ^e _B	'11	83.6	80.2 ^e			
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.57 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}	'12-'13	▪ -0.07	▪ 0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)			'13	5.8 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ -0.4	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.5	0.8 ^e	'10	0.5	0.8 ^e			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.2 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ -0.3	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	45.4 ^b	30.0 ^b _{E7}	'13-'14	▪ -4.6	▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	0.0 ^z	9.3 ^{E8}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.4

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	EE ^f	EU ^f	Yr EE ^f	Yr EU ^f	Range	EE	EU
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	52.6	41.5 ^{E9}	'1248.3	41.6 ^{E9}	'10-'12	▪ -2.2	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)			'1582.7 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 3.5	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'157.9 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -0.6	▪ -1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'1520.1 ^b	23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 7.1	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'1584.6	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	52.6	55.2	'1549.9	57.3	'10-'15	▪ -0.5	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends							
Early leavers from education and training (%)	11.0	13.9	'1511.2 ^C	11.0 ^C	'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ -0.6
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	40.2	33.8	'1545.3 ^C	38.7 ^C	'10-'15	↗ 1.1	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	18.6	16.6	'1513.3	15.8	'10-'15	↘ -0.8	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	19.5	13.1	'156.8	12.9	'10-'15	↘ -2.3	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	64.5	77.4	'1580.6 ^C	76.9 ^C	'10-'15	↗ 2.9	↘ -0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	10.7	27.3	'158.9 ^C	23.5 ^C	'10-'15	↘ -0.5	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	66.8	68.6	'1576.5	70.0	'10-'15	↗ 1.7	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	44.2	53.4	'1556.8 ^C	52.6 ^C	'10-'15	↗ 2.9	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'1689.8 ^D	82.8 ^D			

(*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(A) UOE back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED 2011 not yet available.

(B) AES 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(D) Forecast made in 2016.

(E1) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(E2) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(E3) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(E4) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(E5) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(E6) Partial information for NL.

(E7) Based on 25 countries (missing: IT, HR, UK).

(E8) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(E9) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: Definitions in the indicators table differ from those used in national legislation.

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop (2017c), p. 49.

CHAPTER 1.

MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

1.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the basic legal framework for VET in Estonia was the Vocational Education Institutions Act (1998), regulating the provision of upper and post-secondary VET. This legislation had been amended in 2006 (VET Institutions Act), 2007 (Policies and conditions for implementing workplace-based learning) ⁽⁶⁾, and 2013 (Schools' role of coordinating training placement).

Initial VET in Estonia consisted mainly of school-based VET and included very limited provision for apprenticeships training (less than 2% in 2015) ⁽⁷⁾. However, work-based learning (in the form of practical training either at school or in company) was a compulsory part of every study programme and accounted for 35% to 70% of school-based VET programmes.

Apprenticeships had been introduced into VET in 2006. They could be offered at all VET levels (initial and continuing) and led to qualifications at EQF levels 2 to 5. Apprenticeships followed the same curricula as school-based programmes, but with differences in implementation plans. Apprentices signed a contract with their employer and received at least the minimum legal wage when on practical training. VET institutions and employers cooperated to set up implementation plans for apprenticeships, based on the curricula of the programme (Cedefop, 2017d).

One of the targets of the *Labour market and education cooperation* programme, launched in 2015 ⁽⁸⁾, was to improve the quality and attractiveness of work-based learning and to support entrepreneurship. The annual budget for the programme amounted to around EUR 10-11 million from the EU – allocated from the European structural and investment fund (ESIF) – and from the national

⁽⁶⁾ HETA ECVET Guidebook:
http://projects.centralbaltic.eu/images/files/result_pdf/HETA-ECVET_result1_Guidebook_ENG.pdf;
Cedefop; ReferNet Austria (2014). *Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes: Estonia*.
https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2015/ReferNet_EE_2014_WBL.pdf

⁽⁷⁾ 7.5% in 2018.

⁽⁸⁾ It will run until 2023.

budget. The *PRŌM* programme – which set the conditions for the provision of ESIF support under the *Labour market and education cooperation programme* – aimed to improve the image of VET, expand apprenticeships training, and develop systemic work-based learning mechanisms and complementary language learning activities. *PRŌM* had a major impact on developing the quality of work-based learning and on expanding apprenticeships programmes. A working group on apprenticeship training had been established, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, VET schools, professional associations and employer representatives. Its task was to develop apprenticeship training models and instructional materials, identify obstacles and solutions, and recommend legislative amendments.

1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

In the *Labour market and education cooperation programme* and the ESIF-funded *PRŌM* programme, the Ministry of Education set out objectives for a sustainable, unified and transparent work-based learning and apprenticeships system that would involve more employers in the learning process and would meet the needs of all parties. The objectives identified include:

- (a) increasing the number of enterprises involved in apprenticeships to 330 by 2020;
- (b) supporting participation of 7 200 learners in apprenticeships programmes (during the period 2015-23);
- (c) increasing completion rate in apprenticeship to 75% by 2020;
- (d) increasing the satisfaction of labour market actors with the education system.

1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

1.3.1. Implementing the *Labour market and education cooperation programme*

In 2016, the *Labour market and education cooperation programme* became fully operational (including *PRŌM* measures). Achievements by 2018 include:

- (a) the proportion of initial VET learners participating in apprenticeships increased from 2% in 2015 to 7.5% in 2018;
- (b) the share of VET graduates who graduated from apprenticeships increased from 4.4% in 2015 to 12% in 2018;
- (c) in 2016-18, 1 200-1 300 new students per year enrolled in apprenticeship programmes;

- (d) more than 350 employers participated in the apprenticeships scheme, reaching the 2020 benchmark early;
- (e) during 2016-18, a total of 2 028 work practice instructors (both at schools and in companies, including apprenticeship instructors) were trained;
- (f) during 2016-18, a total of 2 170 higher education and VET students in work practice located outside of Tallinn or Tartu were provided with transportation and accommodation support (monetary allowance).

The following actions have been taken:

- (a) an apprenticeship training models pilot started in 2018. Analysis of results was planned for 2019;
- (b) education-business coordinators were introduced into schools, tasked with finding enterprise partners and coordinating cooperation in apprenticeship training;
- (c) additional apprenticeship study places were created;
- (d) apprentices received financial support through study allowances ⁽⁹⁾, a school lunch support scheme and compensation for travel expenses;
- (e) in 2016-17, templates for work practice and apprenticeship agreements were designed through cooperation between the Ministry of Education, employer representatives and the Innove Foundation. The templates were published and disseminated for use in work-based learning and apprenticeships;
- (f) in 2016-17, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Innove Foundation, universities, and social partners, including the Estonian Employers' Confederation, started a preliminary analysis of possibilities to extend the apprenticeship scheme to higher education. The pilot started in September 2017 and 2018;
- (g) VET schools received support to strengthen cooperation between employers and education institutions for developing work-based learning. Cooperation activities supported under the projects include: training company instructors; preparing, rolling-out and evaluating work-based learning activities; piloting and developing new forms/models of work-based learning; introducing short-term internships for VET teachers in enterprises; and involving representatives of business in teaching.

⁽⁹⁾ Study allowances are allocated to the best performing students only (not all).

1.3.2. Promoting work-based learning, apprenticeship, and craftsmanship education

Actions such as national skills competitions ⁽¹⁰⁾, participation in WorldSkills as well as regional and local career fairs were implemented continuously.

During the event Noor Meister (The young master), skills competitions were held in 34 fields, along with an exhibition of 28 VET institutions and 10 workshops that introduced study opportunities in VET. Free transport was provided to allow youngsters from all parts of Estonia to visit the event.

The strategy for the skills competitions for 2019-22 was drawn up in 2018 and is the basis for the further development of skills competitions.

On 8 November 2018, for the first time, a skills night was organised to celebrate the European vocational skills week and to present the opportunities of vocational education. VET institutions offered exciting activities and the opportunity to acquire at least one new skill during the evening.

The actions listed below have also been taken.

The nation-wide campaigns *Praktik cum laude* ⁽¹¹⁾ (Excellence in practical learning) and Best internship enterprise have been organised annually since 2016, aiming to promote work-based learning. The campaigns were jointly organised by the Estonian Employers' Confederation and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Information is disseminated to employers on opportunities for work-based learning.

To promote apprenticeships among employers more widely, and to motivate them to offer training places, practical guides for implementing apprenticeships were also published and disseminated in 2016. A conference on apprenticeships as an opportunity for employers was organised, in cooperation with the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce. In 2017, a thematic apprenticeships Facebook campaign was organised, reaching 65 000 contacts.

In 2016, a homepage on work-based learning ⁽¹²⁾ was launched and work-based learning promotion videos published.

In the framework of the Youth programme, mobile workshops (including virtual and augmented reality workshops) have been developed in order to introduce youth, in the age range of 7-26, to the fields of carpentry and metalwork as well as the medical field and youth work. For carpentry and metalwork, a trailer equipped with modern technology and tools is driven around the country, offering fascinating activities and directing the young towards more informed career choices. Through

⁽¹⁰⁾ <http://www.noormeister.ee>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.employers.ee/praktik-cum-laude>

⁽¹²⁾ Sub-page of vocational education portal: <http://www.kutseharidus.ee>

the workshops, young people are able to get hands-on experience with state-of-the-art technologies. Local timber and metal industry entrepreneurs are involved to highlight the career possibilities in their respective sectors and to introduce success stories.

The medical field (bio analysis and nursing) is introduced through a virtual reality workshop, where young people use virtual reality glasses to job shadow bio analysts and nurses and experience their day-to-day working environment. Through virtual reality, young people can closely observe how various samples and analyses are taken and made, how to work with a microscope, and become familiar with first aid techniques. During the practical part of the workshop, they can try out the skills needed in these jobs. Youth work is also introduced through virtual reality and augmented reality workshops. Similarly to the medical field, virtual reality glasses are used to job shadow youth workers. This is followed by a practical workshop that allows young people to experience the multifaceted profession of a youth worker. The chosen fields match the trends observed in the report on the health care sector by OSKA ⁽¹³⁾ (Section 2.3). The aim of the workshops is to give young people practical hands-on experience with various professions and increase their early contact with the world of work. The workshops are organised in different youth centres, fairs and camps across Estonia.

⁽¹³⁾ OSKA is a regular survey system for the monitoring and forecasting of sectoral needs for labour and skills. OSKA reports are presented in Section 2.3.

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

2.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, a national approach to quality assurance had been devised and developed independently from the EQAVET ⁽¹⁴⁾ system ⁽¹⁵⁾. However, it was aligned to EQAVET quality cycle, indicative descriptors and indicators and applied to initial and continuous VET offered by VET institutions. Curriculum groups in VET institutions and institutions of professional higher education had to be accredited. Accreditation results were taken into account for making funding decisions. Accreditation was valid for three or six years. IVET providers must have their own quality assurance models and methods.

A new Adult Education Act (AEA) came into force in 2015. It defined the organisation of studies in adult education institutions and presented the requirements for the quality of education. The Act stipulated the right of every person to constantly develop their knowledge and skills, the obligations of the State and local governments in coordinating adult training, and the obligation of employers to grant study leave to learners engaged in distance learning, evening courses, external study or part-time study. Licensing by the Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) was needed in four areas ⁽¹⁶⁾, licence being granted for an unlimited period. In all other areas, the training institution had to create a quality assurance system but could choose its quality model or methodology (internal evaluation, the European common assessment framework – CAF evaluation model, ISO standards or anything else). The school must indicate in its quality

⁽¹⁴⁾ European quality assurance in vocational education and training.

⁽¹⁵⁾ The concept of quality assurance was renewed in 2016-17 by the working group at the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA). The new concept is the basis for amendments to the Vocational Education Institutions Law to take place in 2018.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Training for drivers, training of security staff, training for train drivers and for Estonian language training courses, which are aimed at acquiring an official certificate on knowing the language.

assurance document how the quality of the training, the trainers and the learning team was guaranteed; the information had to be disclosed on its website.

The AEA also provided for the supervision of continuing education institutions. These institutions used to submit economic activity reports to the EHIS (Estonian educational information database ⁽¹⁷⁾).

Graduate tracking was ensured. Information about graduates from IVET and CVET was collected by the Ministry of Education and Research in the EHIS database.

Skills needs forecast was also in place. Since 2003, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications used to prepare an annual forecast of labour market needs. The report was updated annually for the next seven years. Data sources included labour market surveys, population census and forecasts, and expert assessments. However, the forecast was only run at an aggregate national level and lacked qualitative information (EEPO, 2015). It had limited use in informing and steering the designing of education and training.

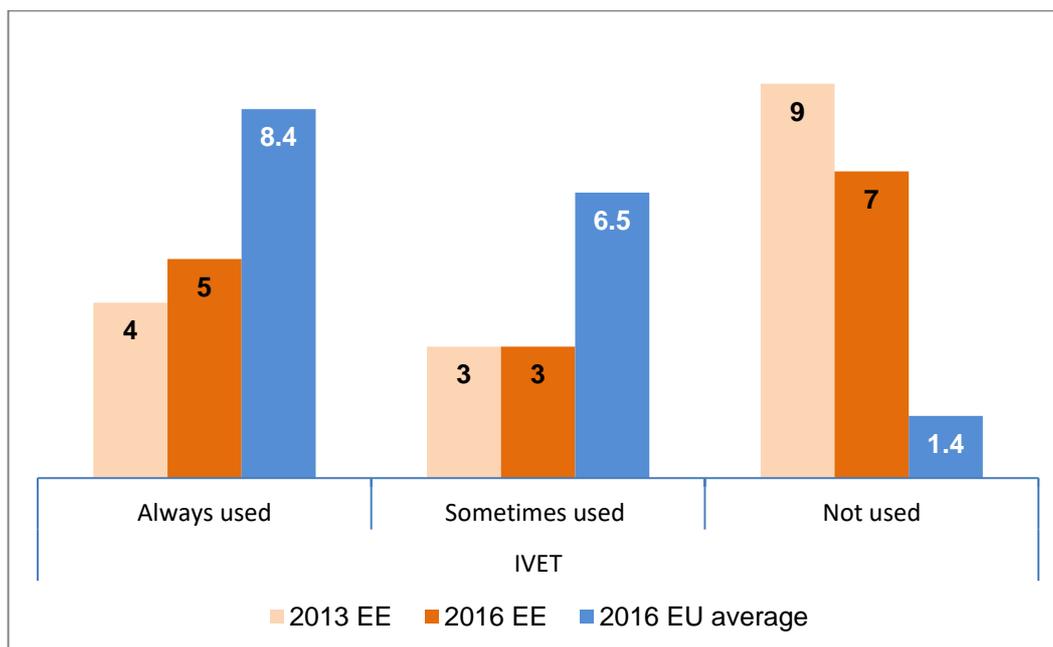
2.2. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQAVET recommendation in 2015-19

In the reporting period, a working group was set to review the national approach to quality assurance. The group is composed of representatives of the Education Ministry, employer and employee organisations, VET schools and the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA). In 2017, the group presented proposals concerning changes in the assessment criteria, and procedures and principles for the quality assessment of VET. Based on the working group outcomes, and in line with the EQAVET recommendation, amendments to the Vocational Educational Institutions Act were approved in Parliament in December 2018. According to the renewed quality assurance approach, the right to provide instruction of open duration will be granted to curricula groups for which a school has had accreditation for six years by 31 August 2019. The quality of the vocational training provided by the recipient of the right to provide instruction of open duration shall be assessed once in six years.

Estonia is below the 2018 EU average in its use of indicators in monitoring the IVET system. However, the use of indicators slightly improved between 2013 and 2018.

⁽¹⁷⁾ <http://www.ehis.ee/>

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



Key: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, four were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 in Estonia, compared to five in 2018 and the EU average of 8.8 in 2018.

NB: No information was provided for the use of EQAVET indicators in CVET. In 2013, there was no reply for the use of one indicator and in 2018 for two. The EU average was based on the available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys, data for 2013 and 2018.

2.3 Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET in 2015-19

A programme run by the Ministry of Education and Research aims to inform strategic planning, VET school management and the renewal of curricula and learning methods. As part of this programme, training, counselling and advice is available to VET schools to design new curricula.

Student, teacher and graduate satisfaction surveys were carried out in 2017-18. The results of the graduate satisfaction survey were published in 2017; student and teacher survey reports will be published in 2019. A survey on the transition of VET and higher education graduates to the labour market (graduate tracking) is also carried out annually under the *Labour market* programme. In 2017, this survey analysed the employability and incomes of the 2011-15 VET and higher education graduates. The results are published online ⁽¹⁸⁾. VET schools and VET

⁽¹⁸⁾ <http://www.haridussilm.ee>

stakeholders can easily get access to data on average VET graduate incomes by schools and by field of study.

The *Labour market and education cooperation* programme sets the framework for ensuring that lifelong learning opportunities are relevant and respond to labour market needs. Within this programme, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with employers and representatives from other ministries, launched a regular survey system called OSKA ⁽¹⁹⁾ for the monitoring and forecasting of sectoral needs for labour and skills. OSKA covers all levels of education for upskilling and reskilling, analysing the developmental potential and labour requirements of different economic sectors in Estonia. OSKA surveys on sectoral needs for labour and skills use a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Both statistical data and information collected from personal interviews with sectoral experts and from group discussions are used. Five economic sectors are examined per year, each being analysed again every six years on average. The results of these analyses form the basis for establishing qualifications, career information and guidance, curriculum development in education institutions, and for the work of the various authorities that finance learning activities. The prerequisite for this approach is the active and content-driven participation of employers in the lifelong learning system.

The first OSKA reports ⁽²⁰⁾ were published in 2016-17 alongside a general overview of global and domestic trends influencing labour supply and demand in Estonia. The first labour market overview, and the most important conclusions and suggestions, were presented to the Estonian Government in March 2017. The next OSKA reports ⁽²¹⁾ were published in 2018. In December 2018, an overview of the implementation of the OSKA system and an initial review of the forecasting for 2020+ was given to the Estonian Government.

In 2016-17, actions were taken to promote and communicate OSKA reports and their conclusions. A decision was taken to create a web-based visualisation tool for these reports; this will be part of the new education information portal, and the launch is envisaged for 2019. Several events, including a conference *Labour*

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://oska.kutsekoda.ee/en/>

⁽²⁰⁾ Covering: ICT; accounting; forestry and timber industry; metal products; machinery; social work; construction; healthcare; production of chemicals, rubber, plastic and construction materials; energy and mining; agriculture and food industry; transportation and logistics.

⁽²¹⁾ Covering: apparel, textile and the leather industry; human resources, administrative work and business consultation; education and research; trade, rental and repairs; accommodation, catering and tourism.

market – Education and many seminars, have been organised to present OSKA reports to career specialists, education institution representatives, employers, policy-makers and other relevant target groups.

During 2017-19, Cedefop has been providing technical advice to Estonia to improve its governance of skills anticipation and matching. The aim is to improve the management and coordination of skills anticipation efforts, making existing skills anticipation initiatives more useful for policy, and better linking skills intelligence to education and training ⁽²²⁾.

2.4. Continuous information and feedback loops in continuing VET in 2015-19

A study was carried out in 2016, based on foreign experience (Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden), about the organisation of second-chance formal education for adults with lower levels of educational attainment. The report was made available in 2017, presenting recommendations on how to improve continuing VET (CVET) provision ⁽²³⁾.

⁽²²⁾ Source: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/assisting-eu-countries-skills-matching>

⁽²³⁾ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/raport_2017.pdf (in Estonian).

CHAPTER 3.

MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, an overall objective of Estonia in the areas covered by MTD 3 was to increase participation in vocational education and training, and the labour market relevance of VET ⁽²⁴⁾.

One of the aims of the *Lifelong learning strategy* ⁽²⁵⁾ adopted in 2014 was to ensure equal opportunities and to raise participation in lifelong learning. In particular, the intention was to guarantee access to quality VET relevant to the labour market, and to reduce the share of adults (25+) without professional or VET qualifications from around 29% in 2015 to less than 25% by 2020. The following targets were closely linked to this aim:

- (a) reduce the dropout rate in VET (upper secondary VET, first year) from 24.7% in 2015 to less than 20% in 2020;
- (b) reduce the share of early leavers from education and training from 12.2% in 2015 to less than 9% in 2020 ⁽²⁶⁾;
- (c) raise progression from basic (compulsory) education to VET from 26.6% in 2015 to 35% in 2020;
- (d) raise the share of adults in VET from around 32% in 2015 to 33% in 2020;
- (e) increase the share of adults with lower levels of education in lifelong learning from 4.1% in 2015 to 6.5% in 2020.

⁽²⁴⁾ Council of the European Union (2015). Council recommendation of 14 July 2015 on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Estonia and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Estonia. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 272, 18.8.2015, p. 39-41.

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_estonia_en.pdf

⁽²⁵⁾ <https://www.hm.ee/en/estonian-lifelong-learning-strategy-2020>

⁽²⁶⁾ In 2013, the share was below 10% but then increased again to 11.6% in 2014:
https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/annual_analysis_by_the_ministry_of_education_and_research_2015.pdf

The Adult Education Act and the Professions Act were also adopted in early 2015. The aim of the Adult Education Act ⁽²⁷⁾ was to improve the quality of the provision of adult education, introduce the learning outcomes approach, and raise the visibility of adult training. The objective of the Professions Act was to create a legal basis for launching a system for labour market monitoring and forecasting future skills (European Commission, 2015). A system for monitoring and forecasting labour market needs was foreseen, expected to assist the update of the VET supply and reduce the number of people without professional qualifications.

Regarding guidance, steps had been taken in 2014. A study and career counselling programme 2014-18 ⁽²⁸⁾ was introduced to enhance the quality of counselling and career services and tackle early school leaving. The *Rajaleidja* (pathfinder) network of 15 county-based counselling centres was established in 2014 with aim to provide young people (up to 26 years of age) with study and career information and counselling as well as psychological and social support (Cedefop, 2017d).

A comprehensive national qualifications framework – the Estonian qualifications framework (EstQF) – had been established in 2008 through the Professions Act ⁽²⁹⁾ and had been linked to the EQF ⁽³⁰⁾ and the QF-EHEA ⁽³¹⁾ in 2011. The ambition of the EstQF had been to support transparency and communication as well as lifelong learning. Yet, at the beginning of the reporting period, the challenge still to be addressed was to better link the lifelong learning strategy to the development of the EstQF.

The ECVET principle had been included in VET legislation in 2013 and a national coordination point (NCP-ECVET) had been in place since then, working jointly with the Estonian Qualifications Authority and the Archimedes Foundation (the Lifelong Learning Programme / Erasmus+ National Agency) ⁽³²⁾.

⁽²⁷⁾ Parliament (2015). Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus [Adult Education Act]. *Riigi Teataja* [State Gazette], RT I, 23.3.2015, 5.

<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/529062015007/consolide>

⁽²⁸⁾ *Õppe- ja karjäärinõustamise programm 2014-18*. Additional information available at: <https://www.hm.ee/et/oppe-ja-karjaarinoustamise-programm> (in Estonian).

⁽²⁹⁾ The Professions Act entered into force on 1 September 2008: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/501072015005/consolide>

⁽³⁰⁾ European qualifications framework.

⁽³¹⁾ Qualifications framework in the European higher education area.

⁽³²⁾ Input from ECVET in Europe: *Monitoring report 2015*.

Overall, despite efforts to ensure access for all to VET and qualifications, greater participation of the low-skilled in lifelong learning was a challenge.

3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-19

3.2.1. Promoting equal opportunity

The new Adult Education Act ⁽³³⁾, which came into force in 2015, stipulates learners' right to study leave. The Income Tax Act stipulates that a learner has the right to deduct training expenses from his/her taxable income. Also, learner support systems and structures at VET schools were analysed and a report published in 2018 presenting recommendations on how to improve the provision of support services to learners at risk of drop-out.

Other legislative amendments were introduced in 2018:

- (a) the financing model for the VET system has been renewed and amendments in the Vocational Education Institutions Law were adopted on 28 December 2018 ⁽³⁴⁾. The aim is to increase the ability of VET schools to respond to changes in the regional labour market, and to establish better preconditions for cooperation between VET schools, employers and local governments. For learners this would mean a broadening of choices and better access to VET

⁽³³⁾ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/529062015007/consolide>

⁽³⁴⁾ On 21 December 2017, draft legislation was approved by the government, proposing a new financing model for vocational education. The previous model was based on financing the number of students engaged in State-commissioned education, which meant that the budgets of schools could fluctuate depending on changes in student preferences. The new model consists of basic financing and performance-based financing. Basic financing for vocational educational institutions would grant them stability and reassurance. Performance-based financing would support educational innovation and a stronger connection between employers and schools. Basic financing is fixed for a period of three years in order to ensure budgetary stability in schools with respect to both operating and administrative as well as staff costs. It ensures the resources required for the primary activities of schools and is calculated based on the number of learners, the areas taught, the salary rates of teachers, the specific features of specialties, students with special needs, the need for support specialists and the infrastructure used by the school. In the amendments adopted in December 2018, the performance-based financing component also depends on the outcomes of the school as evaluated using the education key performance indicators. These include the share of students who graduate after the nominal period of study, the share of graduates who learn further or participate in employment, the share of students who graduate by taking a professional examination, and the share of students participating in apprenticeship training. Schools are thus pushed to excellence. However, setting indicators for the performance-based financing proved to be a challenge.

- studies in regions. A range of stakeholders was involved in preparing the reform ⁽³⁵⁾. Primary analysis of the amendment impact was carried out prior to drafting the act; ex-post analyses were to take place as of 2019;
- (b) the process towards an orientation year was initiated in 2017. The orientation year aims at facilitating transitions from compulsory education to VET and/or to the labour market. It is targeted mainly at pupils with difficulties in deciding their field of studies, special education needs (SEN) learners, learners who have dropped out from VET or upper secondary general education, learners with a migrant background, or those lacking the basic skills to complete the VET curriculum. During the preparatory phase, three VET institutions piloted different pedagogical approaches with the above target groups. The aim was to identify which measures would be suited to every VET institution. Career counselling, practical training, vocational practice and the development of general skills (such as communication and mathematics) emerged as the core components to incorporate. During the pilot phase (2016-18) the schools shared their experiences with each other, and inspired others via networking. The legislative phase started in 2018 ⁽³⁶⁾. As of the beginning of 2019, schools have an opportunity to offer the vocational orientation curriculum on a regular basis at EQF level 2. Further requirements for opening the curriculum are to be set within the Vocational Education Standard in 2019. The stakeholders involved in the initiative include the Ministry of Social Affairs, Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, SA Innove and the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

3.2.2. Guidance

In April 2018 the Government decided to connect the career services of Innove *Rajaleidja* centres with the career service system of Eesti Töötukassa (the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund). The objective is to offer career counselling and information to the whole population on a unified basis. Since January 2019, Eesti Töötukassa has been providing career advice and career

⁽³⁵⁾ These stakeholders include: Tallinn Health Care College; the Estonian Trade Unions Confederation; the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Estonian Employers' Confederation; the Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education; the Ministry of Social Affairs; the Unemployment Insurance Fund; the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications; the Estonian Students Union; the Estonian Qualifications Authority; the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education; Jaan Poska Gymnasium; the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities and Tartu Vocational Education Centre.

⁽³⁶⁾ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/514012019002/consolide>

information services for everyone, including schoolchildren ⁽³⁷⁾. The Ministry of Education and Research is still responsible for providing high-quality career training lessons in basic schools and upper secondary schools, ensuring curriculum development in the field, quality learning materials and enhancing career-teachers' skills and knowledge with in-service trainings. A range of stakeholders is involved in the reform ⁽³⁸⁾. The issues encountered include the availability and training of career specialists able to provide counselling services for different target groups.

3.2.3. Permeability and flexibility

Actions were taken to improve access to VET and/or qualifications by introducing greater flexibility and permeability:

- (a) within the ESF programme *kutseõppe sisuline arendamine* 2007-13, guidelines had been developed for counsellors and relevant officials responsible for promoting the recognition of prior learning and work experience. The main focus is on adult learners without basic education and new immigrants from third countries. Education institutions and qualification awarding bodies were trained to implement principles of the recognition of prior learning and work experience;
- (b) the vocational orientation year (Section 3.2.1) also supports flexibility in the process of transition from general education to VET;
- (c) steps were taken to ease the progression of students with special educational needs (SEN students) from general education to VET and from VET to the labour market. On the initiative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, a working group was set up from September 2015 to June 2016 to propose solutions for alleviating this transition for SEN students. A joint action plan was agreed and is now being carried out by both ministries. In July 2016, the terms of

⁽³⁷⁾

https://www.strukturifondid.ee/sites/default/files/oigusaktid/tat_tk_karjaar_raamtekst_1.pdf (activities related to career counselling and development of methodology)
https://www.strukturifondid.ee/sites/default/files/oigusaktid/tat_tooturuteenused_raamtekst.pdf (activities related to the mediation of career information)

⁽³⁸⁾ These stakeholders include the following national authorities and institutions: the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Archimedes Foundation, the Association of Estonian School Directors, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Estonian Youth Work Centre, the Innove Foundation and the Society of Estonian Career Counsellors.

graduation in VET were also amended ⁽³⁹⁾ to allow for more flexibility for SEN students. The amendments allow SEN students the choice of graduating with a school examination instead of a professional examination. A 2019 decree ⁽⁴⁰⁾ regulating the support systems for SEN students at school, will be implemented from September 2019.

3.2.4. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.2.4.1. National qualifications framework ⁽⁴¹⁾

The Estonian qualifications framework (EstQF), established in 2008, brings together four sub-frameworks: higher education; vocational education and training; general education; and professional qualifications awarded outside formal education and training ⁽⁴²⁾. The framework has eight qualification levels; its descriptors are identical to EQF level descriptors. All types of State-recognised qualifications are included. EstQF and EQF levels have been indicated on higher education and professional qualifications since 2012, and on general education and VET qualifications since 2013. The levels are also indicated in the VET curricula database and the register of professional standards.

The referencing report of the EstQF was revised and updated in 2016 to include recent developments in the education system. Discussions on whether to include EstQF and EQF levels into the proposed new version of the Estonian education database (EHIS 2) are continuing.

3.2.4.2. Validation ⁽⁴³⁾

The *Lifelong learning strategy* includes the recognition of prior learning and the validation of work experience as a major principle. Recognition of prior/non-formal learning is used for initial VET, higher education and continuing VET; general education is not yet recognised, although the inclusion of compulsory validation of non-formal and informal learning to the regulations is envisaged and drafted into the amended Basic schools and upper secondary schools Act.

⁽³⁹⁾ Government Decree No 80 of 14.7.2016 (Amendments to Regulation No 130 of 26 August 2013 on vocational education standard).

<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/116072016005>

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/108012019008>

⁽⁴¹⁾ Source: Cedefop (2017a).

⁽⁴²⁾ Professional qualifications are those associated with a trade, occupation or profession, usually resulting from work-based learning, in-service training, and adult education. Professional qualifications have been placed into the EstQF and referenced to the EQF from the beginning.

⁽⁴³⁾ Source: Cedefop (2017a); Johnson, M. (2017).

Validation in Estonia is understood as a process that helps a responsible authority assess the competence of an applicant based on specific criteria. This includes the extent to which an applicant's knowledge, skills and attitudes conform to the enrolment criteria of an education institution, to the learning outcomes of (part of) the curriculum, or to the competence requirements of an occupational standard. If the applicant's competences meet the requirements, they will be taken into account with respect to the enrolment criteria, completion of the curriculum, or in terms of awarding an occupational qualification.

Validation allows for access and exemption of parts of the programme in higher education and initial VET, but in both cases a final examination needs to be taken. In continuing VET, some qualifications can be fully obtained through validation.

Since 2015, the Ministry of Education and Research has been preparing initiatives to widen access to education: validation of previous experience; insertion of recognition-related data into the education database; and more precise regulation for validating non-formal and informal learning in general education. Principles for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) have been developed and are regulated by higher education and vocational education legislations ⁽⁴⁴⁾.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/v6ta_p6himotted.pdf

3.2.5. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees

3.2.5.1. Youth programme

The *Youth* programme supports the implementation of the *Youth field development plan 2014-20*, which outlines the strategic objectives for young people. The overall goal of the plan is to establish a coherent and creative society by providing young people with ample opportunities for self-development and self-realisation. For this, the youth field must operate more efficiently and young people must have more choices to discover their own creative and developmental potential. They must have a lower risk of exclusion and they must be able to participate in decision-making. The *Youth* programme stipulates measures and activities to achieve these goals. For example, during 2015 to 2018, the programme offered services to (re)integrate young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) into education, and to improve their employability. For this, youth workers locate NEETs (e.g. through networking), motivate them and provide them with individualised support. Since 2015, a total of 7 893 young people have benefited from this service. EUR 3.1 million has been allocated from the EU (ESIF) and the State budget for 2015-18 to put this measure into effect. Some other programmes (not necessarily related to training) have provided young people with competences and experiences that increase their competitiveness in the labour market and help them make good and informed decisions about their future ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

-
- ⁽⁴⁵⁾ (a) The *Youth summer work* programme prepares young people for the labour market by giving them the opportunity to gain practical work experience during the summer. In addition to earning a small salary, young people become familiar with different types of work, receive career guidance and acquaint themselves with labour market legislation.
- (b) The *Community practice* programme provides secondary school students with the opportunity to carry out community practice at a local NGO. This enables young people to gain experiences that will enhance their employability and increase their active participation in society.
- (c) The *Mobile workshops* programme aims to introduce young people to professions, work practices and tools in the fields of carpentry and metalwork by offering them a hands-on opportunity to test the work tasks associated with these professions. For this, a trailer equipped with appropriate tools drives around Estonia, stopping at youth centres, hobby schools, youth camps, etc., and carries out workshops for interested young people. In addition, young people are introduced to the medical field (nursing and bio analytics) through a virtual reality workshop, which is followed by a practical workshop where young people can practice the work tasks they saw through the virtual reality glasses. A virtual reality and augmented reality workshop introducing the youth worker profession was finalised at the end of 2018. Mobile workshops help to raise young people's career awareness and competitiveness in the fields of technology and engineering as well as the medical field and the youth field.

3.2.5.2. *Employment programme 2017-20*

The *Employment* programme for 2017-20 ⁽⁴⁶⁾ was revised by the government in autumn 2016. It stipulates a package of new measures for workers at risk of unemployment. The goal of the additional measures is to prevent unemployment through continuous training and retraining, thus enabling workers to retain their jobs or move to jobs that create more added value. The main target groups are: workers with no professional or vocational education; those whose skills are outdated; workers whose knowledge of Estonian is poor; those who are older than 50; and workers who cannot continue their present work due to health issues. Implementation of the programme started in May 2017. The VET and training-related measures include: a study allowance scheme to support participation in VET and higher education; people at risk of unemployment will be given access to labour market training with a training voucher; employers will be compensated by payment of between 50% and 100% of their training costs; and employers can also apply for a training grant to support their workers in adapting to changes in business processes, technology, or formal qualification requirements.

Since June 2018 the target group of workers eligible for preventive measures has been widened. The study allowance scheme for those taking up formal studies (including VET) is now available not only to those working under employment contracts, but also to those working under a service contract or authorisation agreement. The target group of the training voucher scheme was also widened by lifting the income threshold to the national average wage.

In 2018, training vouchers were used by 2 100 persons in employment who took 2 380 training courses, 73% of them for an Estonian language course and 13% for training in a field where there are labour shortages. The inflow to the study allowance scheme was 819 persons, with the most popular field of study being care work. The reimbursement of training costs to employers covered the training of 682 employees, including 435 studying the Estonian language.

-
- (d) The *Youth Initiatives* programme provides young people with the opportunity to design and carry out a project in their local communities. These projects respond to specific community needs that young people have identified. Through this programme, young people acquire many competences (project planning and management, budget planning, collaboration, communication, decision-making, problem solving, etc.) that enhance their personal and professional development and prepare them for the future.

All of the above programmes are also part of the Estonian Youth guarantee scheme.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/122112016006> (in Estonian).

3.2.5.3. Adult education programme

The *Adult education* programme was introduced in 2015 with the aim of providing training courses to adults without secondary education and/or professional training, or with outdated skills. The target for 2020 is to have 66 500 adults participating in flexible training courses for the low-qualified, less competitive or other disadvantaged groups, with 53 500 of them completing successfully. Since 2018, more than 41 000 adults have benefited from participating in training courses. The programme was successful in targeting less competitive or disadvantaged groups of learners, with 70% of all learners belonging to such groups. EUR 22.4 million from the EU (ESIF) and the State budget has been allocated for the period 2015-18 (to cover the budget of the whole programme, including other relevant measures).

The share of adults with lower levels of education in lifelong learning increased to 7.3% in 2018 compared to 4.1% in 2015. A positive trend in recent years has been the rapid rise of adults (25+) in vocational training: their share had increased to 39.6% by 2018 (compared to 32% in 2015).

3.2.6. Promoting VET participation through increased attractiveness

3.2.6.1. Improving the image of VET

The *Labour market and education cooperation* programme includes measures to make VET more attractive by providing information about VET opportunities, including apprenticeships, and awareness-raising activities such as media campaigns and national skills competitions. EUR 2.14 million was allocated from the EU (ESIF) and the State budget for 2015-18 to improve the image of VET. Assistance was provided to VET schools for setting up communication plans. A network of communication and marketing specialists was set up and in-service training has been provided. In 2016-17, communication and marketing strategies and virtual tours were commissioned. A working group on the image of VET was established involving VET schools, employers, employee representatives, and experts from the Ministry of Education and Research (Section 1.3.2).

3.2.6.2. Increased financial support to learners

In 2015, the study allowance for VET students was increased to prevent drop-out for economic reasons. Terms and conditions for travel allowances were changed to remedy previous unequal access to this benefit. In 2016, accommodation allowances (up to EUR 50 per month) were introduced, particularly for VET learners in schools with no dormitory facilities, and for special education needs

learners. As of December 2018, the target group benefiting from compensation of school lunch was enlarged to all students without upper secondary education.

3.2.7. Creating new qualification opportunities

A national VET curriculum on business services was adopted in 2015, creating a new qualification opportunity at upper secondary level, as only post-secondary programmes were available in the office services curricula group until then. In 2017, a national VET curriculum on music and a national VET curriculum on vehicle maintenance and repair were introduced; a national VET curriculum on handicrafts and a national VET curriculum on energy and automation were amended according to the occupational qualification standards.

The module of social sciences in every national curriculum was of open duration amended in 2018. A national VET curriculum on textiles, clothes, footwear, and leather, a national VET curriculum on beauty care, and a national VET curriculum on energy and automation were renewed following amendments to occupational qualification standards.

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1 Baseline 2015

In 2015, key competences were represented in all national and school curricula but their volume varied by programme. They were either offered as stand-alone modules or integrated in curricula. At upper secondary level, vocational studies were often combined with general education providing graduates with access to higher education. In such VET programmes, 50% of key competences ⁽⁴⁷⁾ were taught in special modules common for all students and 50% were integrated into basic modules of vocational studies that varied by qualification ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Already since 2013, VET qualifications had been linked to the national qualifications framework that promoted a learning outcomes approach. Learning outcomes of the modules were described in terms of occupation specific knowledge, skills and key competences ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

In 2015, the rationale for developing key competences in VET was mainly about supporting lifelong learning. Some of the EU-defined key competences were explicitly outlined in the national *Lifelong learning strategy for 2020* adopted in 2014 to guide developments in education including VET. The strategy emphasised the necessity to develop creativity and entrepreneurship, problem solving and teamwork skills, critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as digital competence. It also promoted teachers' role in developing critical and creative thinking in students, as well as entrepreneurial skills, team work and written and oral communication.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Communication in the mother tongue and foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see [Taimsoo, R. \(2016\). Key competences in vocational education and training – Estonia. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.](#)

⁽⁴⁹⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see [Taimsoo, R. \(2016\). Key competences in vocational education and training – Estonia. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.](#)

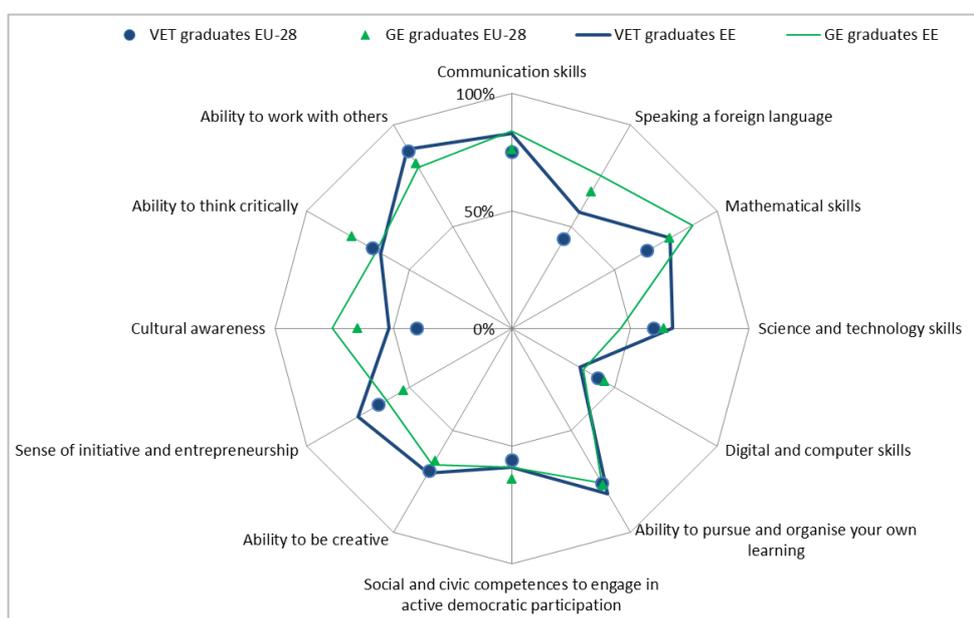
A recent survey ⁽⁵⁰⁾ showed that, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they had stronger (ranged by priority):

- (a) science and technology skills;
- (b) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- (c) ability to work with others;

and weaker:

- (a) cultural awareness;
- (b) foreign language skills;
- (c) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET in 2016**



NB: GE stands for general education.

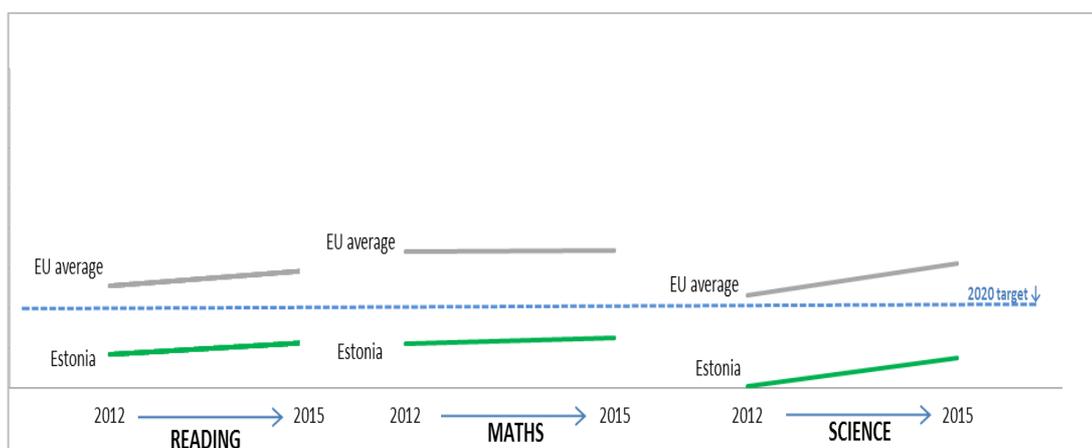
Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop (2017c).

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). However, the share of low achievers in Estonia was much smaller than in the EU on average, making the country a top performer.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Cedefop (2019). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/264585>

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing Level 2 on the PISA scale.

Source: OECD (2014); OECD (2016): PISA 2012 and 2015.

As VET enrolled 36 % of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽⁵¹⁾, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

In 2015, only a small part of upper secondary VET students took the national examinations which were an instrument of centralised assessment of key competences in mathematics and communication in mother tongue and foreign languages. The progress of upper secondary VET students in mastering key competences was not monitored and related data were lacking. The assessment of key competences was rather integrated in the assessment of the learning outcomes which they contributed to ⁽⁵²⁾.

4.2 Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines the key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. Description of policies is provided in the following sections.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Calculated from Eurostat table educ_uae_enrs04; 2015 data. According to national data 31%, taking into account only those programmes that give direct access to tertiary education. The immediate enrolment rate in VET after completing basic education was 26.2% in 2016.

⁽⁵²⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see [Taimsoo, R. \(2016\). Key competences in vocational education and training – Estonia. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.](#)

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-19**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy	YES	YES
Foreign languages	YES	YES
Digital competence	YES	YES
Maths	YES	
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		YES
Learning to learn		YES
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence	YES	YES
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package	YES	

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

4.3 Key competences in initial VET

Within the overall framework of the *Lifelong learning strategy*, four programmes have a more specific focus on key competences ⁽⁵³⁾.

The *Vocational education programme* was amended in 2016 to improve key competences in VET. It now offers analyses on how to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching the Estonian language, mathematics and foreign languages, to prepare for upper secondary exams, and to support progression of upper secondary VET graduates to tertiary education. Schools can obtain advice on how to integrate key competences successfully into the curriculum. By June 2017, 21 national VET curricula, adopted in accordance with the 2013 VET Institutions Act, were promoting key competences.

In the *Labour market and education cooperation* programme, EUR 6 million has been devoted to supporting the development of entrepreneurship competence at all levels and in all types of education (including teacher training) for the period 2015-18. An entrepreneurial competence model and entrepreneurial study modules were prepared and pilots started in 14 VET schools ⁽⁵⁴⁾. EUR 1.7 million

⁽⁵³⁾ The programmes were launched in 2015 but they are regularly updated. The most recent edition is 2017.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ A new programme – *Systematic development of entrepreneurship education at all education levels* – was launched by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2015

has also been allocated to supporting language teaching. Estonian as a second language and as a foreign language is promoted in VET and higher education to ensure better career opportunities and mobility. Since 2016/17, all VET schools may apply for additional support to provide their students with opportunities for learning Estonian as a second language and as a foreign language. Innovative approaches combining formal and non-formal learning methods (language camps, site visits, student exchange programmes, and intensive language courses) are encouraged. At the beginning of 2017, about half of VET schools had already launched language training projects.

In 2015-18, the *Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership* programme was devoting resources to teacher training, including digital competences and innovative approaches in VET.

The *Digital focus* programme is devoted to developing digital skills, digital learning resources and e-assessment. VET curricula have been updated to meet the digital skills requirements contained in professional standards (Section 4.4.2). The *Mentoring technology-enhanced pedagogy* project (MENTEP), developed by the Information Technology Foundation for Education (HITSA), addresses teacher needs for using ICT innovatively. The project investigates the potential of an online self-assessment tool to empower teachers to develop their technology-enhanced teaching competence at their own pace.

In 2018 a working group was created in the Ministry of Education and Research to discuss overarching key competences at all education levels and to find ways to better include them in curricula.

for this purpose. The main aims included: developing a competence framework, methodology, teaching tools and modules and training programmes for teachers; supporting student enterprises and entrepreneurial schools; conducting research and sharing experiences in the field; and rewarding best practice. Within the timescale of the programme (2015-17), a new framework of entrepreneurship competences was developed by experts for all education levels, and new modules to support the development of entrepreneurship skills were also developed at all vocational levels (EQF levels 2-5). During the study year 2017/18, 14 vocational education institutions piloted those new study modules at levels 4 and 5, which comprises up to 40% of all VET schools. In 2018/19, entrepreneurship modules were also created for EQF levels 2 and 3, and 17 VET institutions out of 32 have paid more attention to applying entrepreneurial skills in their curricula. The aim is to attract the remainder of schools to apply the modules in their school curriculum by 2020. A network combining career and entrepreneurship teachers was created to share new information and teaching practices. E-materials supporting teachers have been compiled and put in use during the training for pilot schools.

4.4. Key competences in continuing VET

4.4.1. A new standard for continuing education

The Adult Education Act (2015) regulates the provision of non-formal learning opportunities ⁽⁵⁵⁾. It sets out the requirements for the provision of continuing education and stipulates the right of every person constantly to develop their knowledge and skills. The Ministry of Education and Research has developed a new continuing education standard (2015). It specifies the requirements and quality criteria for adult education curricula based on learning outcomes.

4.4.2. Update of professional standards in relation to digital skills

In 2016, the *Adult education* programme was amended and a measure (sub-action) added, stipulating an update of professional standards ⁽⁵⁶⁾ to promote digital skills. These changes will influence the respective initial and continuing VET curricula that include sector-specific digital competences.

4.4.3. Adult education projects to develop key competences

The government aims to reduce the share of adults aged 25 to 64 without any professional or vocational education from 28.5% in 2016 to less than 25% by 2020, and to increase their participation in lifelong learning. Barriers to achieving this goal are low motivation and a lack of key competences. Nine projects to provide adults with social and learning skills, entrepreneurship competence, and skills in foreign languages and Estonian for non-native speakers have been set up. The projects offer support and follow-up activities that increase the sustainability of learning outcomes and bridge the development of key competences and motivation for the continuation of studies in formal and non-formal education. Courses are available in regions for adults without professional or vocational education, or with disabilities, or with poor knowledge of Estonian ⁽⁵⁷⁾. A special training package aimed at improving the digital competences of medical staff (accessible also

⁽⁵⁵⁾ VET institutions offer formal initial and continuing programmes. Initial VET is offered at the second, third, fourth and fifth levels of the Estonian qualifications framework (and the EQF). Continuing VET is offered at EQF levels 4 and 5. To enrol, learners need to have a VET qualification or relevant competences in addition to having completed upper secondary education. Non-formal continuing VET is part of adult learning, regulated by the Adult Education Act. Its forms, duration and content vary. Training can be provided by VET institutions appointed via public procurement.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Ten professional standards were to be updated in 2017.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Half of adult non-native speakers do not possess active language skills in Estonian. Source: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/de/news-and-press/news/estonia-high-demand-adults-estonian-language-training>

through VET) is being prepared. Altogether, around 5 400 people will benefit from the projects. The overall budget is EUR 2.2 million in total.

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

5.1. Baseline 2015

Providing teachers with opportunities for self-assessment and continuing professional development (CDP) was among the goals of the 2011 regulation on teacher training. Then in 2014, the *Lifelong learning strategy for 2020* set as a goal the raise of the number of competent and motivated teachers. In order for the teaching profession to become more appealing to young people, teachers' image had to be changed and teacher wage to become more competitive. Focus of the Strategy was also on improving teachers' digital competences (Cedefop, 2015).

At the beginning of the reporting period, three main groups of teachers and trainers were at play in VET programmes:

- (a) general subject teachers;
- (b) vocational subject teachers (teaching both theoretical and practical subjects);
- (c) in-company trainers.

Many VET theory and practice teachers were only working part-time at schools while working at an enterprise or being entrepreneurs themselves. National data of 2014/15 suggested that 2 283 persons were working as teachers in VET and 1 448 were in full-time positions ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

National data indicate that 80% of teachers working in VET in 2013/14 had participated in CPD during the preceding three years. Slightly more than 50% were engaged in CPD each year.

Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training

Qualification requirements were based on the professional standard adopted in 2004. Qualification requirements for VET theory and practice staff were lower and more flexible than those for general education subjects so as to attract people from business and industry to teaching. According to the government regulation (2000) on framework requirements for teacher training:

⁽⁵⁸⁾ In 2015-18, a total of 1 775 students graduated in initial teacher training programmes, of which 220 in VET teacher training programmes. 55% of VET teacher training graduates have gained the teacher qualification. National data from 2018/19 suggests that 2 001 persons were working as teachers in VET, of which 1 311 full-time.

- (a) general subject teachers were required to have a master's degree (300 ECTS credits);
- (b) vocational subject teachers (at EstQF levels 5, 6 and 7) were required to have work experience in the field as well as some upper secondary and/or higher vocational education qualifications, i.e.:
 - (i) vocational teachers at EstQF level 5 had to have upper secondary general or VET qualifications and work experience in the field. They were mainly expected to provide practical training;
 - (ii) vocational teachers at EstQF level 6 had to have (a) higher education in their field or higher education in another field and work experience in their field, along with (b) pedagogical preparation acquired during initial or continuing teacher training. Alternatively, they could have either (a) a professional qualification from a vocational educational institution or (b) work experience in the field plus a bachelor's degree in vocational pedagogy (or vocational teacher training of 180 ECTS). Their specific role was to develop a learning environment and a learning methodology;
 - (iii) vocational teachers at EstQF level 7 had to have a higher education degree in their field along with a master's degree in vocational teacher training (120 ECTS) plus work experience. They were mainly in charge of developing, in cooperation with enterprises and professional associations, methodology both for their own and other organisations, and supporting other teachers.

Common requirements for all levels included: foreign language skills at level B2 of the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR); Estonian at the level defined in the 2011 Language Act; and educational technology skills in line with the standards of the International Society for Technology in Education.

During their induction year, teachers were accompanied by mentors ⁽⁵⁹⁾. Mentors had to have at least three years' teaching experience and specific training. The induction programme was carried out by Tallinn University.

The 2013 Vocational Education Institutions Act introduced flexibility in the assessment of qualifications, focusing on content/competences rather than on formal education and certificates. Schools were allowed to hire people from business and industry provided they had the competences required by the standards and met the school's needs. To attract more people (especially young), it had been made possible to work as a teacher for three years even without

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Regulation on framework requirements for teacher training, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Estonia on 22.11.2000.

meeting the qualification requirements at the outset, provided that the requirements were fulfilled within this period.

In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training

There were no qualification or competence requirements for in-company trainers working with apprentices and other in-company trainers. Their activities, obligations, or liability were also not regulated by national legislation. Finding suitable staff was the responsibility of employers. According to two regulations of 2013, schools had to inform, train and guide in-company trainers. School teachers and in-company trainers had to cooperate to improve teachers' knowledge of current work practices and trainers' general pedagogical skills and competences.

VET school teachers: main lines for CPD

Following the 2013 VET institutions Act, CPD was mandatory and free of charge for VET teachers. General subject teachers had to attend 160 hours of academic CPD programmes in five years; vocational subject teachers: two months in three years. VET teachers had to undergo an annual self-assessment, which was monitored by their supervisor. The procedure would serve as the basis for identifying their CPD needs.

CPD providers could be universities, VET providers, the VET Agency in Foundation Innove, and private companies. Since 2013, CPD could also take the form of internships/practical work at an enterprise or organisation (minimum two months either consecutively or accumulated within five years). Already before 2010, recognition of competences acquired on the job and in non-formal setting was possible provided it was supported by work contracts, reports on the work experience and self-evaluation. International mobility activities could be recognised as CPD on the basis of recognition of prior learning and work experience.

In the period up to 2015, accepted training themes for CPD included active learning, assessment methods, support to colleagues, labour market needs, entrepreneurship, special education needs, and working with adults and at-risk groups (Cedefop, 2015). Funds were allocated to VET institutions for teacher internships.

In-company trainers: main lines for CPD

Training for trainers and special guidelines (for learners, enterprises and VET institutions) were available (Cedefop, 2015).

5.2 Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

In 2015, the regulation on the framework requirements for teacher training was amended. The amendment stipulates that lecturers at higher education institutes who train VET teachers must also teach for at least 100 hours over a three-year period in VET schools.

Within the *Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership* programme (2015-18), the teacher education competence centres at the Universities of Tallinn and Tartu were required to help put in place new learning approaches, in cooperation with VET providers and employers.

As Estonia is expanding work-based learning in VET and higher education, work practice in enterprises is being developed not only for learners but also in initial teacher training. This is one of the goals of the *Labour market and education cooperation* programme (Section 1.2).

5.3 Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

5.3.1 Framework and targets for systematic CPD

The fixed number of hours, and the distinction between vocational teachers and teachers of general subjects, were abandoned in 2015 and replaced by a needs-based approach. The approach had been developed in the preceding year in cooperation with teachers, education institutions and social partners. Regulation of the teacher training framework requirements was amended accordingly. The goal is to ensure that continuing professional development (CPD) is planned and enacted systematically and is based on: the competences defined in professional standards; teachers' self-assessment (which has replaced previous teacher attestation) and feedback on their work; VET teacher and provider needs; and national priorities. It is the task of school leaders to offer CPD and support individual development based on these criteria.

One of the aims of the *Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership* programme (Section 5.2) is to establish a multi-level CPD scheme for teachers and school leaders. The following actions have been taken within the framework of the programme:

- (a) support was provided to schools in improving the integration of general and vocational learning and promoting key competences;

- (b) the share of teachers with practical experience and labour market qualifications was increased;
- (c) support was provided to VET teachers in improving how they address the needs of adult learners and developing their digital competences;
- (d) tuition in Estonian was provided to VET teachers with insufficient language skills.

The training of school teams is meant to focus on innovative teaching and learning methods, inclusive education and education policy priorities. Involving local community members, universities, learning communities and other stakeholders is encouraged.

Examples of planned measures include:

- (a) provision of methodological guidance and support by the teacher training competence centres of Tallinn and Tartu universities;
- (b) developing a self-reflection platform for teachers to test their skills in relation to the competences outlined in their professional standards;
- (c) setting up competence requirements and training programmes for VET school leaders.

National data indicate that 67% of teachers working in VET in 2018/19 had participated in CPD during the preceding three years ⁽⁶⁰⁾. Fewer than 50% were engaged in CPD each year. 2% of teachers also study in vocational education schools and 8% of teachers in higher education institutions.

5.3.2. Ensuring the competences of school leaders

A training programme for future school leaders, and for school leaders already in post who would like to work at VET schools, was launched in 2015. The training programme was based on the competence model of school leaders. It has been centrally financed and offered at three different levels (from freshman to proficiency). To date, two groups of school leaders have attended and finished the course during 2016/17 and 2017/18.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Percentage of teachers who participated in CPD in the last three academic years (from 1 September to 31 August 2018) from teachers working in vocational education institutions in the 2018/19 academic year. Not all teachers working in vocational education institutions have taken part in CDP.

5.3.3. Supporting teachers in helping learners develop entrepreneurial skills

In its 2016 country report ⁽⁶¹⁾, the European Commission pointed to challenges in developing entrepreneurial skills. The country's action plan refers to a planned entrepreneurial competence model and study modules for all education levels and areas. This also entails supplementary teacher training. Since the end of 2016, 14 VET schools (together with general and higher education establishments) have been involved in providing teacher training in entrepreneurship. The following quantitative targets (not limited to VET teachers and trainers) have been set:

- (a) 800 teachers and business and industry specialists involved in teaching are expected to have attended in-service training in entrepreneurship education by 2020. This target was actually set and counted as 'attendance numbers of teachers' at training concerning entrepreneurial skills. The target was met, and a new indicator has been set for 2 020 at 2 900 training attendances by teachers;
- (b) 75 cooperation projects to promote mutual learning between teachers, employers, learners, parents and other institutions are being launched (45 were launched by the end of 2018), covering both VET and general education institutions.

EUR 6 million from the EU (ESIF) and the national budget were allocated within this period for entrepreneurship education at all education levels, including EUR 0.5 million for the in-service training of teaching staff.

5.4 Initial and continuing training of trainers in enterprises 2015-19

Measures within the *Labour market and education cooperation programme* (fully operational since 2016) primarily target not only company staff who want to become work practice instructors but also those who already train/support young people during their work practice periods or apprenticeships. They also address the training needs of trainers involved in internships.

Training programmes may include: preparing and organising learning; didactics/teaching methods; assessment criteria and practices; and working with learners who have special education needs. Training is to be coordinated by schools; they either provide it themselves or outsource it.

⁽⁶¹⁾ European Commission (2016). *Commission staff working document: country report on Estonia, including an in-depth review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances*. SWD(2016) 76 final: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/cr_estonia_2016_en.pdf

Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Estonia (EE) and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	EE	f	EU	f	Yr	EE	f	EU	f	Range	EE	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	35.7		47.3	ce	'17	40.7		47.8	ce	'15-'17	5	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	1.4		28.3	ce	'17	5.1		27.9	ce	'15-'17	3.8	0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	94.6		68.1	ce	'17	62.9		68.6	ce	'15-'17	-32	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	31.9		40.8		'15	31.9		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	50		34		'15	50		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	12.4		10.7		'18	19.7		11.1		'15-'18	7.3	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	86.1		72.6		'15	86.1		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	26		42	ce	'17	33		42.7	ce	'15-'17	7.1	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	21.2		30		'15	21.2		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	22.4		33		'18	22.6		33		'15-'18	0.2	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	5.4		6.9		'18	11.9		7.3		'15-'18	6.5	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.1		4.3		'18	7.4		4.3		'15-'18	3.3	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	9.9		9.5		'18	20.1		10.7		'15-'18	10.2	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	20.4		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	87.6		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	EE	f	EU	f	Yr	EE	f	EU	f	Range	EE	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.5		0.5	ce	'16	0.4		0.5	ce	'15-'16	-0.1	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	5.9		7.1	ce	'16	5.5		7.4	ce	'15-'16	-0.4	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.8		0.9		'15	0.8		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.1		1	ce	'17	0.5		1	ce	'15-'17	-0.6	0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	42		29.2	ce	'17	48.8		29.1	ce	'15-'17	6.8	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates		z			'17		z	14.3	b ce	'15-'17		
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	22.7		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	83.1		77.2		'18	79.1		80.5		'15-'18	-4	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	8.3		5.4		'18	-1.1		6.6		'15-'18	-9.4	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	19.4		23.7		'18	5.1		23.3		'15-'18	-14	0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	84.6		83.7		'15	84.6		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	49.3		57		'15	49.3		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	12.2		11		'18	11.3		10.6		'15-'18	-0.9	0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	45.3		38.7		'18	47.2		40.7		'15-'18	1.9	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	13.3		15.8		'18	10.6		13.7		'15-'18	-2.7	2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	6.8		12.9		'18	5.5		9.4		'15-'18	-1.3	3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	79.2		75.9		'18	80.4		80.6		'15-'18	1.2	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	11.3		23.5		'18	10.8		21.9		'15-'18	-0.5	1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	76.5		70		'18	79.5		73.1		'15-'18	3	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	57.7		52.6		'18	65.7		56.1		'15-'18	8	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	86.8	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.
(D) Forecast made in 2018.
(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data.
(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.
(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.
(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.
(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 40.7% of all upper secondary students in Estonia were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 7.1 points below the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is higher by 5 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 5.1 % of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting, higher (3.8 points more) than in 2015. In contrast the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 19.7% of the adults participated in lifelong learning activities, significantly higher (7.3 points more) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 79.1%. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is lower by 4 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5%.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Estonia has developed a range of initiatives targeted at improving quality, labour market relevance, equity and key competences in VET. Steps have been taken to develop work-based learning and apprenticeship, update quality assurance mechanisms, enhance information and feedback loops, and increase the attractiveness of VET. Ensuring access for all to VET and VET-related qualifications was addressed through measures for improving permeability and flexibility, reinforcing validation, and providing in-need groups with training opportunities. The framework for the initial and continuing training of VET teachers and trainers was updated.

In 2017, the restructuring of the financing model for the VET system was initiated (Section 3.2.1), and the introduction of an orientation year was started. The orientation year aims to facilitate transitions from compulsory education to VET and/or the labour market and improve inclusion and flexibility. This initiative has undergone the legislative and piloting phase in 2017-18 (Section 3.2.1).

As compared to 2015-17, the main change in 2018 has been the unification of the career services previously provided by the Innove *Rajaleidja* network and the Unemployment Insurance Fund (Section 3.2.2).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions are being addressed. However, information currently available to Cedefop suggests that an issue which could deserve consideration in future is further developing the use of EQAVET indicators to monitor initial and continuing VET.

Acronyms

AEA	Adult Education Act
CAF	European common assessment framework
CEFR	common European framework of references for languages
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
CVT	continuing vocational training
DGVT	Directors General for Vocational Education and Training
EKKA	Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education
EHIS	Estonian educational information database
EstQF	Estonian qualifications framework
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESIF	European structural and investment fund
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
HITSA	Information Technology Foundation for Education
ICT	information and communications technology
IVET	initial vocational education and training
MENTEP	<i>Mentoring technology-enhanced pedagogy project</i>
MoER	Ministry of Education and Research
NEET	not in employment, education, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
QF-EHEA	qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area
SEN	special education needs
VET	vocational education and training

Bibliography

[URLs accessed 15.11.2019]

- Cedefop (2015). *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14*. Cedefop Reference series; No 98. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/publications/3067>
- Cedefop (2017a). *European inventory of national qualifications frameworks 2016: Estonia*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/estonia-european-inventory-nqf-2016>
- Cedefop (2017b). *European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper: No 62. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/publications/5562>
- Cedefop (2017c). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies: country statistical overviews: 2016 update*. Cedefop research paper; No 61. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5561>
- Cedefop (2017d). *Vocational education and training in Estonia: short description*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/15844>
- Cedefop (2020). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies. Indicator overviews: 2019 update*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 76. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5576_en.pdf
- EEPO (2015). *Country fiches on skills governance in the Member States – Estonia*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?langId=en&docId=15943&>
- EQAVET Secretariat (2014). *Supporting the implementation of the European quality assurance reference framework: results of EQAVET Secretariat survey 2013-14*. [http://www.eqavet.eu/Eqavet2017/media/Documents/Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2013-2014-\(1\).pdf](http://www.eqavet.eu/Eqavet2017/media/Documents/Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2013-2014-(1).pdf)
- EQAVET Secretariat (2019). *Supporting the implementation of the European quality assurance reference framework: draft results of EQAVET Secretariat survey 2018*. <https://www.eqavet.eu/getattachment/What-We-Do/Statistics/Progress-report-Results-EQAVET-Secretariat-Survey-2018.pdf.aspx?lang=en-IE>
- European Commission (2015). *Education and training monitor 2015: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

- <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87b59c67-c3f8-11e5-8d08-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-125395834>
- European Commission (2016). *Education and training monitor 2016: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e9916271-ad65-11e6-aab7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>
- Eurostat. *Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation, sex, type of institution and intensity of participation* [database].
http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?wai=true&dataset=educ_uoe_enrs04
- Johnson, M. (2016). Country report – Estonia: 2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. In: Cedefop; European Commission; ICF (2017). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning – 2016 update: synthesis report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_validate_EE.pdf
- OECD (2014). *PISA 2012 results in focus: what 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>
- OECD (2016). *PISA 2015: PISA results in focus*.
<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>
- Taimsoo, R. (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Estonia*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_EE_KC.pdf