

Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

LATVIA

Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19

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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

(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

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 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) programmes in Latvia was below the EU average: 39.6% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p.81); 40% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽³⁾. All upper secondary initial VET students were following work-based programmes: 100% in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Table 1): work-based learning was provided in the form of school labs, workshops, kitchens, etc. and in-company on-the-job learning. Adult participation in lifelong learning was low at 5.7% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Table 1).

In 2015, Latvia was in the process of reform to increase the attractiveness of initial vocational education and training (IVET) and involve companies more in providing practical training placements (European Commission, 2015; European Commission, 2016). In preceding years, attempts had been made to set up incentives for companies to provide apprenticeship opportunities. An apprenticeship scheme – nationally called *work-based learning* ⁽⁴⁾ – was piloted as of 2013. In 2014, a project entitled *National authorities for apprenticeships: implementing work based learning in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (WBL-Balt)* was launched. Support to apprenticeship and modularisation of vocational education programmes was reaffirmed in the 2014 *Education development guidelines for 2014-20* and the *Growth and employment programme 2014-20*. In 2015, amendments to the Vocational Education Law came into force, affirming the role of employers and Sectoral Expert Councils in vocational education governance, programme and examination design, and organising apprenticeship. An action plan for adult learning was also prepared in 2016.

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, data 2015.

⁽⁴⁾ On 8 February 2016, the European Commission's Employment Committee (DGEMPL), as a result of the vote, re-decided that Latvia, when it comes to the newly established apprenticeship scheme, has the right to use the term 'work-based learning'.

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

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*) ⁵			Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	LV	f EU	f	LV	f EU	Yr	LV	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14 39.6 b	48.0 ^b _{E1}		'13-'14	0.6	-0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14 100.0 b	34.0 ^b _{E2}		'13-'14	0.0	0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14 87.4	69.2 ^{E3}		'13-'14	-0.9	-1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	24.0	38.0 e	'10 24.0	38.0 e				
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	21.0	20.0 e	'10 21.0	20.0 e				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	5.4		'15 5.7	10.7 b		'13-'15	-0.5	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	40.0	66.0 e	'10 40.0	66.0 e				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14 33.1 b	42.7 ^b _{E1}		'13-'14	0.9	-1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	14.0	25.0 e	'10 14.0	25.0 e				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15 27.3 b	33.0 b		'14-'15	8.0	-0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	2.3	5.3	'15 3.2	6.9		'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	u		'15 2.4 C	4.3 ^b _C		'13-'15	↘ -0.1	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	6.7		'15 5.3	9.5 b		'13-'15	↘ -1.2	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	12.8 B	9.5 ^e _B	'11 12.8	9.5 e				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	81.1 B	80.2 ^e _B	'11 81.1	80.2 e				
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13 0.28 b	0.56 ^b _{E4}		'12-'13	0.00	-0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)			'13 3.2 b	6.4 ^b _{E5}		'12-'13	-1.1	0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.4	0.8 e	'10 0.4	0.8 e				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14 1.4 b	1.0 ^b _{E6}		'13-'14	0.5	0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14 35.8 b	30.0 ^b _{E7}		'13-'14	-6.2	-0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14 27.3	9.3 ^{E8}		'13-'14	2.5	0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training	35.7	41.5 ^{E9}	'12 25.4	41.6 ^{E9}		'10-'12	-5.2	0.0

(⁵) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*) ⁵			Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	LV	f EU	f	LV	f EU	Range	LV	EU
practices (%)								
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15 81.2 b	77.2 b	'14-'15	▪ 3.2	▪ 0.3	
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15 3.9 b	5.3 b	'14-'15	▪ -0.2	▪ -1.0	
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15 18.9 b	23.7 b	'14-'15	▪ -2.9	▪ -0.1	
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15 88.5	83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	47.2	55.2	'15 61.2	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 2.8	▪ 0.4	
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	12.9	13.9	'15 9.9 C	11.0 C	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↘ -0.6	
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	32.6	33.8	'15 41.3 C	38.7 C	'10-'15	↗ 1.7	↗ 1.0	
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	22.6	16.6	'15 13.8	15.8	'10-'15	↘ -1.7	↘ -0.1	
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	22.8	13.1	'15 10.6	12.9	'10-'15	↘ -2.4	↗ 0.1	
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	63.4	77.4	'15 78.8 C	76.9 C	'10-'15	↗ 2.8	↘ -0.2	
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	11.4	27.3	'15 9.9 C	23.5 C	'10-'15	↘ -0.4	↘ -0.8	
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	64.3	68.6	'15 72.5	70.0	'10-'15	↗ 1.6	↗ 0.3	
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	45.1	53.4	'15 53.2 C	52.6 C	'10-'15	↗ 1.4	↘ -0.2	
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16 90.3 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: 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, 2017a, p.81.

CHAPTER 1.

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

1.1. Baseline 2015

Following the amendments to the Vocational Education Law in 2015, a legal framework for apprenticeship was put in place. Within this framework, learners would first enrol in an education programme and thereafter their potential individual learning plan at the company would be designed. Apprenticeship was to be organised in the form of a scheme where learners follow the theoretical and practical part of the programme in a vocational school and, along with this, participate in both theoretical and practical training in a company. The in-company part would amount to at least 25% (50-70% usually) of the entire learning time. An agreement would be signed between the vocational school, the student and the enterprise. A collegial advisory body ('Convent', composed of the head of institution and representatives of ministry, local government and employers) was in place at each vocational education institution to ensure cooperation with local businesses, relevance to labour market needs and practice placements in enterprises. Apprenticeship was part of the formal vocational education programmes, and its programmes were to lead to qualifications linked to the national qualifications framework (NQF).

Craftsmanship education referred to learning outside of the formal education system. It was organised in the craft sector on a small scale. Potential learners had to be at least 15 years old (or younger with permission from a parent or guardian). Programmes – regulated by a learning contract – included school and enterprise-based learning. Learners took the journeyman's exam and then the master of crafts exam, both organised by the Chamber of Crafts. Craftsmanship did not provide access to regulated professions nor pathways to formal education, as it was not part of the NQF. In 2014, craftsmanship was available in 77 of 172 crafts occupations.

In 2014/15, short vocational education programmes (1.5 academic year) targeting youth aged 17-29 (especially NEETs) were also being offered. Programmes included a 15-week work-based practice with an employer and could lead to vocational qualifications available in more than 70 professions ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/nrp2015_latvia_en_0.pdf

Twelve Sectoral Expert Councils had been created and operating since 2011, bringing together employers, trade unions, government and other independent experts (7). The Latvian Chamber of Crafts had also been involved in craftsmanship already before the reform.

1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to:

- (a) prepare conceptual approaches and a legal framework for work-based learning;
- (b) design and test approaches for the education of teachers and mentors in the school and workplace.

1.3. Main actions in 2015-18

1.3.1. Implementing regulations on apprenticeships

In July 2016, the implementing regulations (8) for the 2015 amendments to the Vocational Education Law introducing apprenticeship and defining the roles of sectoral expert councils and enterprises were approved. The regulations stipulate that the sectoral expert councils promote and evaluate the implementation of apprenticeship and encourage cooperation between vocational schools and enterprises. The apprenticeship contract between a learner, vocational education institution and enterprise is concluded for a minimum one semester. Enterprises pay wages or scholarships to students and provide them with in-company trainers. The enterprise submits to the vocational education institution an assessment of how the student has mastered the individual apprenticeship plan. In turn, the education institution carries out an assessment of the student's knowledge, skills and competences. According to the regulations, in-company trainers are requested to have a master of crafts certificate, vocational education or at least three years of relevant work experience, and teaching competence

(7) <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/latvia-14-sectors-have-been-explored-improve-initial-vocational-education>

(8) Cabinet of Ministers (2016). *Kārtība, kādā organizē un īsteno darba vidē balstītas mācības* [Procedure for organisation and implementation of work-based learning]. Regulation No 484, last amended 12.9.2017 No 556. <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=283680>

evidenced by teacher qualification or completed teaching competence development course. A September 2017 amendment had postponed the teaching competence requirement until 2019 and shortened the compulsory programme for the acquisition of teaching competence from 72 to 32 hours ⁽⁹⁾.

In 2017, Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) adopted guidelines on organising and implementing apprenticeship ⁽¹⁰⁾, including templates for an apprenticeship individual plan and contract, recommended duration, and the breakdown of in-company training by semesters and type of vocational programme.

1.3.2. Tax incentive to attract learners to work-based learning

The law on personal income tax was amended in November 2016 to introduce, as of January 2017, a tax exemption on apprenticeship scholarships not exceeding EUR 280 per month ⁽¹¹⁾.

1.3.3. Social partner involvement

Social partners (employer and employee organisations) were involved in designing the apprenticeship implementing regulations. They are represented in the sectoral expert councils ⁽¹²⁾ which:

- (a) promote cooperation between companies and schools;
- (b) evaluate and collect information about the companies involved in apprenticeship;
- (c) consult companies on issues related to apprenticeship;
- (d) evaluate the implementation of apprenticeship and propose improvements;
- (e) evaluate compliance of the company with the apprenticeship individual plan;
- (f) give companies the right to participate in apprenticeship.

Employer and employee organisations also participate in different partnership projects promoting the development of the apprenticeship system in Latvia. The Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) was involved in the

⁽⁹⁾ One reason for the change is the argument raised by the Latvian Employers' Confederation and Sectoral Expert Councils that the requirement of 72 hours long teaching course is an obstacle for 50% companies to conclude cooperation agreements: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/izglitiba/profesionala-izglitiba/darba-vide-balstisu-macibu-vadlinijas>

⁽¹⁰⁾ Cabinet of Ministers (2016): <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=283680>

⁽¹¹⁾ *Likums Par iedzīvotāju ienākuma nodokli [Law on personal income tax]*. <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56880>

⁽¹²⁾ Saeima (1999). *Profesionālās izglītības likums [Vocational education law]*. Last amended 5.7.2017. <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244>

implementation of an ESF-funded project on apprenticeship ⁽¹³⁾. LDDK and the National Centre for Education (VISC) also participate in a project aimed at reviewing work-based learning / apprenticeship type schemes, informing on the needs and demands of industries (especially those of SMEs) and on regional development strategies ⁽¹⁴⁾. LDDK and the Free Trade Union Confederation carry out a project to develop systemic tools for quality work placements in line with labour market needs ⁽¹⁵⁾.

⁽¹³⁾ Cabinet of Ministers, 2016, Darbības programmas 'Izaugsme un nodarbinātība' 8.5.1.specifiskā atbalsta mērķa 'Palielināt kvalificētu profesionālās izglītības iestāžu audzēkņu skaitu pēc to dalības darba vidē balstītās mācībās vai mācību praksē uzņēmumā' īstenošanas noteikumi [Regulations on the implementation of the operational programme's Growth and employment specific objective No. 8.5.1. To increase the number of qualified vocational education students after their involvement in work based learning or work placement in enterprise]. Regulation No 483. last amended 16.10.2018, No 636.

⁽¹⁴⁾ In 2016, project activities included a SWOT analysis of the Latvian apprenticeship system (http://www.iddk.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/swotreport_latvia.pdf, 8.5.2016), an insight into the Finnish work-based learning model, and a seminar on work-based learning/apprenticeship models in Germany, Finland, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Latvia. In 2017, VISC organised a survey of vocational education students involved in apprenticeship on issues concerning acquired skills, attractiveness and quality assurance in apprenticeship (<http://www.iddk.lv/notikums/jauniesi-pauz-viedokli-par-darba-vidē-balstitam-macibam/>). LDDK organised discussion on raising the attractiveness of apprenticeship, qualification of school teachers and in-company trainers, assessment of skills acquired during apprenticeship. Project outputs include three different flexible WBL models (http://newwbl.eu/NewWBL-full_model_report-ENG.pdf) developed according to specific regional environment, sectoral needs and local development strategies, as well as common and country specific recommendations for policy action http://newwbl.eu/Policy_Recommendations_EN.pdf

⁽¹⁵⁾ <http://en.iddk.lv/projekts/vet-for-employment/> In 2016, work placements were piloted in the mechanical engineering and metal processing sector. In cooperation with the youth career portal *prakse.lv*, 19 higher and vocational secondary education institutions developed career e-platforms where employers can post work placements and job vacancies. In 2017, LDDK published a set of good practice examples in 28 companies offering work placements, created printed and video materials addressed at young people and entrepreneurs, conducted survey of employers on work placements issues (compared to 2014, the proportion of companies expressing interest in providing work placements in the near future has increased from 33% to 39%), organised the international conference Vocational education and business: cooperation for high-quality work placements and employment, and developed tools providing information about work placements including the largest career portal in Latvia (www.prakse.lv) which offers networking and evaluation e-tools for employers, young people and schools.

Sources:

<http://www.iddk.lv/notikums/pieaugusi-uznemumu-interese-nodrosinat-prakses-vietas/> and

In March 2016, a regional discussion entitled Labour market needs: the role of qualitative work placements and apprenticeship, was organised ⁽¹⁶⁾ by the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation ⁽¹⁷⁾. It focused on how to improve cooperation between local governments, employers, trade unions and education institutions, on making vocational education relevant to future labour market needs.

The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was a partner in the Erasmus+ project *Support for small and medium-sized enterprises engaging in apprenticeships: apprenticeship coaches for SMEs – AC4SME* (2016-18). During the project, focus group discussions were organised and methodological materials were developed for companies to implement apprenticeships.

In 2018, amendments in Cabinet of Ministers regulations ⁽¹⁸⁾ supported the involvement of entrepreneurs in apprenticeship-type schemes, by simplifying the procedures for providing personal protective equipment for students in vocational education institutions, as well as accident insurance for students.

1.3.4. Inter-Baltic cooperation

1.3.4.1. Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (BAfA)

The alliance was launched in June 2015 as a common framework for joint cooperation between the three Baltic countries ⁽¹⁹⁾. It aims to share experience in

Cedefop; ReferNet Latvia (2018). *Growing support for in-company training* <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/latvia-growing-support-company-training?src=email&freq=daily>).

⁽¹⁶⁾ *Labour market needs: the role of quality practices and work-based learning*, 18 March 2016: <http://www.lbas.lv/news/1213>

⁽¹⁷⁾ Friedrich Ebert Foundation is a German political foundation associated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), yet independent of it.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Cabinet of Ministers (2016). *Darbības programmas 'Izaugsme un nodarbinātība' 8.5.1. specifiskā atbalsta mērķa 'Palielināt kvalificētu profesionālās izglītības iestāžu audzēkņu skaitu pēc to dalības darba vidē balstītās mācībās vai mācību praksē uzņēmumā' īstenošanas noteikumi* [Regulations on the implementation of the operational programme's Growth and employment specific objective No. 8.5.1. 'To increase the number of qualified vocational education students after their involvement in work based learning or work placement in enterprise']. Regulation No 483, last amended 16.10.2018, No 636.

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/283736-darbibas-programmas-izaugsme-un-nodarbinatiba-8-5-1-specifiska-atbalsta-merka-palinelinat-kvalificetu-profesionalas-izglitiba>

⁽¹⁹⁾ Cedefop ReferNet Latvia (2018). *Baltic cooperation for developing work-based learning*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/latvia-baltic-cooperation-developing-work-based-learning>

implementing vocational education reforms introducing work-based learning and apprenticeships, and to promote examples of good practice. A study was carried out which noted the difficulties facing apprenticeship (confusing regulations, uncertainties about wage issues) and employer needs (in terms of tax incentives and targeted funding). From December 2016 to February 2017, a campaign took place to inform on apprenticeship opportunities. In May 2017, the funding for the Erasmus+ project *Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning*, TTT4WBL (2017-20) was approved. The project aims at supporting the implementation of apprenticeships by putting emphasis on training in-company trainers and vocational education teachers ⁽²⁰⁾. Learning brings together business representatives and teachers from vocational education institutions to explore various aspects that would improve the work-based learning experience. Since the start of the project, the following activities have already been completed:

- (a) development of a 16-hour training programme approved by the MoES. The programme may be taught as a separate module or part of a 32- or 72-hour competence development programme;
- (b) a study visit on WBL tutor training in Finland, organised by Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences in May 2017 for 18 participants from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia;
- (c) development of methodological materials and training programmes for joint/tandem training;
- (d) training of lead trainers in Latvia (four), Lithuania (six) and Estonia (four);
- (e) development of an experimentation methodology to identify the impact of joint learning on school-business cooperation.

Seventeen seminars were also organised, during which more than 800 WBL trainers over the three countries were trained (300 in Latvia of which 131 were from vocational schools and 169 from enterprises). Company executives, students and lead trainers are still being surveyed; the collection of research data for the final report and drafting conclusions was still in process in 2019.

⁽²⁰⁾ TTT4WBL - Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work based learning: <https://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/ttt4wbl.shtml> (in Latvian). See also the informative report on additional State budget commitments for the implementation of the EU Erasmus+ programme co-financed project *Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work based learning* (TTT4WBL); protocol decision 40§. See the draft legislation of the Cabinet of Ministers of 30.5.2017: <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/mksedes/saraksts/protokols/?protokols=2017-05-30>

1.3.4.2. *2018-20 Interreg Estonia-Latvia project Cross-border work-based learning in Estonia and Latvia (ESTLAT-WBL)*

On 1 April 2018, the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as leading partner, launched the ESTLAT-WBL project ⁽²¹⁾. The project is aimed at promoting the mobility of apprentices and teacher/trainers between Estonia and Latvia. The sectors covered include hospitality and catering, timber and construction, retail, and IT. Estonian vocational education learners will visit several companies in Latvia, and Latvian vocational education learners will visit companies in Estonia. 80 apprentices will participate: 40 from Latvian vocational schools to Estonian SMEs and 40 from Estonian vocational schools to Latvian SMEs. They will also be offered support for improving language skills (Estonian, Latvian, English). The initiative is meant to be a step towards a more integrated and flexible labour market. It is expected to improve the access of vocational education graduates to jobs, and enterprises' recruitment pool. A range of stakeholders is involved ⁽²²⁾. The model, results, conclusions, training programme and success stories will be published to promote mobility after the project ends. Further cooperation between employers and vocational education schools in Latvia and Estonia is expected to develop in the long run and sustain a regional cross-border approach to apprenticeship.

⁽²¹⁾ <https://chamber.lv/en/content/2138>

⁽²²⁾ [Võru County Vocational Training Centre \(Estonia\)](#); [Baltic Bright Ltd. \(Latvia\)](#); [Smiltene Technical School \(Latvia\)](#); [Civitta Estonia AS](#); [Tartu Vocational Education Centre \(Estonia\)](#); [Valga County Vocational Training Centre \(Estonia\)](#); [Cesis Vocational Secondary School \(Vidzemes tehnoloģiju un dizaina tehnikums\) \(Latvia\)](#).

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 quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) was in place; the State Education Quality Service (IKVD) had been appointed to this role in 2013. A national approach to quality assurance in IVET and CVET was also in place, aligned to the European quality assurance in vocational education (EQAVET). The quality of vocational education was ensured through the accreditation of vocational education institutions and programmes, carried out by the Accreditation Experts' Commission. Schools were accredited without time limit, while their programmes had to be accredited every six years⁽²³⁾ for awarding 'official' qualifications to be allowed. As a follow-up, education institutions were required to submit to the IKVD an annual self-assessment report on their progress in implementing the recommendations issued by the Accreditation Commission. IKVD's guidelines to help vocational education providers strengthen their culture of self-assessment and quality assurance were also in place.

Graduate tracking mechanisms in IVET and CVET did not exist in 2015 (EQAVET Secretariat, 2014). Training needs were assessed through cooperation with Sectoral Expert Councils which informed the government of sectoral skill needs and reviewed plans for vocational education entrants into government-funded vocational education programmes as well as the number of student places in each sector. The Ministry of Economy and the public employment service (State Employment Agency – NVA, operating under supervision of the Ministry of Welfare), were responsible for skills forecasting and reporting on the labour market demand and supply. NVA focused on short term forecasting (from three months to one year) while the Ministry of Economy focused on medium term and long term forecasting (from five to fifteen years). Data was provided by the Central Statistical Bureau and included sources such as the Labour Force

⁽²³⁾ Two years if serious drawbacks have been noticed.

Survey, the review of vocational education institutions and the review of universities and colleges.

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

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to promote and raise awareness of quality assurance issues and implement detailed quality assurance approaches.

The national approach to quality assurance was revised in 2016 and the outcomes of the review have been made publicly available. As a result of this revision, the Cabinet of Ministers approved new regulations concerning the procedures for accrediting education institutions, examination centres, general and vocational education programmes, and evaluating the professional activity of heads of schools. The revision also supports the increased use of EQAVET indicators ⁽²⁴⁾.

In the period from December 2016 to December 2021, VISC (the National Centre for Education) has an ESF project to elaborate a sectoral qualifications system. The project includes the development of occupational standards, vocational education content, modular vocational education programmes, teaching/learning aids and assessment methods.

From April 2017 to March 2019, the State Education Quality Service (IKVD) has carried out the Erasmus+ project *EQAVET for quality of skills* (QSkills) targeted at supporting quality assurance in work-based learning and the collection, compilation and analysis of data for EQAVET indicators 5 and 6 ⁽²⁵⁾. In 2018, IKVD organised a round table discussion on Examples of good practice for quality assurance in apprenticeship. Opportunities to assess the quality of

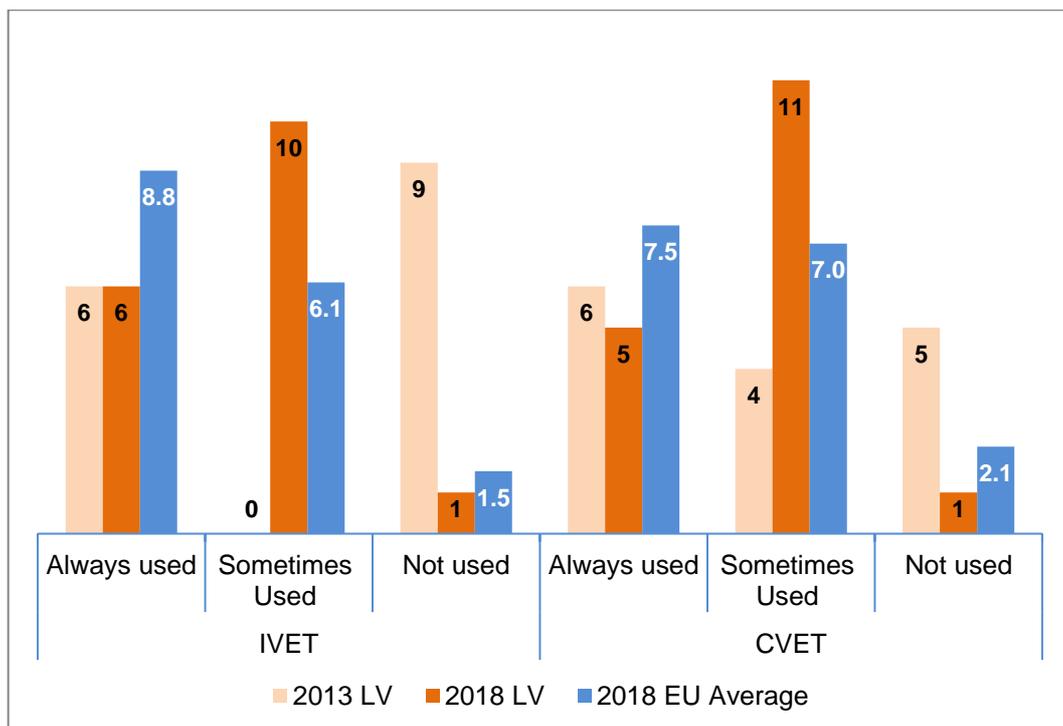
⁽²⁴⁾ Including those relating to teachers participating in further training; participation rate in VET programmes; completion rate in VET programmes; graduate employment; utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace; percentage of participants in VET classified as disadvantaged groups; identification of demand for vocational education programmes in the labour market; and increasing accessibility to vocational education programmes.

⁽²⁵⁾ In 2016-17, IKVD had developed and tested questionnaires addressed to employers, representatives of sectors and local governments, in-company trainers, students and graduates, on the use of acquired skills at the workplace and on the demand for vocational education programmes in the labour market. The piloting of questionnaires has provided information on improving vocational school cooperation with in-company trainers.

apprenticeship and to develop quality criteria for such training were discussed. IKVD has developed Recommendations for quality assurance in apprenticeship-type schemes, and an online tool for data collection and processing for the EQAVET fifth indicator (employment of graduates) and sixth indicator (using acquired skills in a workplace). The tool was piloted in the woodworking and tourism sectors. Regular courses were organised for sectoral experts participating in the accreditation of vocational education programmes.

Systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor vocational education development in Latvia was below the 2018 EU average both in IVET and CVET (Figure 1). In comparison to 2013, Latvia has increased its use of EQAVET indicators (mostly sometimes rather than always using them). Only the EQAVET indicator on the success rate of disadvantaged groups is reported not to be used in 2018 both in IVET and CVET.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, six were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2018 in Latvia compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

In 2013, no reply was provided for the use of two indicators both in IVET and CVET.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

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

2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET in 2015-19

The country's priorities in this matter for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

- (a) put in place governance mechanisms involving sectors and employers;
- (b) ensure quality of operation through the use of sectoral expert councils and convents.

In July 2016, the Minister of Economy, the Minister for Education and Science (MoES), and the Minister for Welfare established the Council on Employment, aiming to improve coordination between education and employment policies, both for initial and continuing vocational education, and support the involvement of employers in education development and delivery.

In December 2016, MoES submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers a draft legislative amendment stipulating that sectoral expert councils should give an opinion on vocational education programme compliance with labour market needs; this should apply whenever the profession is not included in the classification of professions or has no approved occupational standard or professional qualification requirements. The related regulation was still under discussion in the first semester of 2019.

From August 2016 to December 2021, NVA (the State Employment Agency), in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, is carrying out a national level ESF project Development of labour market forecasting system (2016-21). The aim is to inform policy-making, taking into account economic needs. The system will provide information on skills and professions in the short, medium and long term, as well as information on learning opportunities. The active labour market policy will be evaluated, and the offer of vocational education programmes will be based on the outcomes of skills forecasts. In 2017, discussions took place on the issue of supplementing the quantitative forecasts with qualitative forward-looking scenarios, further involving in the process sectoral expert councils, education institutions and regional forums for more precise identification of labour market needs at regional level ⁽²⁶⁾. In 2018, a study was carried out on the possibilities of improving the labour market forecasting system. Proposals have been made regarding the data to be used, exploring ways of integrating data from different registers into the forecast model.

⁽²⁶⁾ https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/es_fondi/ekonomikas_ministrijas_istenotie_projekti/darba_tirgus_proгноzesanas_sistemas_pilnveide/

A table for matching education and occupation for medium- and long-term labour market forecasting has been developed. Lists of skills relevant to the occupations have been developed for short-term forecasting. Responsibility of stakeholders and principles of cooperation have been formulated. Guidelines have been developed for career advisers and education providers for interpretation and practical use of medium- and long-term labour market forecasts. Recommendations were issued.

On 15 January 2019, the MoES organised a discussion on the development of the education quality monitoring system in the framework of the ESF project *Education quality monitoring system development and implementation (2018-22)* ⁽²⁷⁾. Participants discussed the existing elements of the monitoring system: accreditation of education institutions, assessment of the quality of professional performance of teachers and heads of education institutions, and assessment of learner performance. They also discussed greater synergy and the need for new modern elements such as vocational education graduate tracking.

2.4. Continuous information and feedback loops in CVET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to:

- (a) put in place governance mechanisms involving sectors and employers;
- (b) ensure quality of operation through the use of sectoral expert councils and convents.

In May 2016, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the 2016-20 implementation plan of the adult education governance model. Following this plan, the Management Board of Adult Education (which includes representatives from relevant ministries, social partner organisations and regional governments) define priority learning areas according to economic trends and labour market short-, medium- and long-term forecasts. In 2017, in relation to the national ESF project *Competence development of employed persons (2017-22)*, the board, in close cooperation with sectoral expert councils, identified construction, timber industry, electronic and optical equipment manufacturing, information and communication technologies, and metalworking as sectors which – based on Ministry of

⁽²⁷⁾ <http://izm.gov.lv/lv/fondi/es-strukturfondi/izm-istenojamie-projekti/izglitibas-kvalitates-monitoringa-sistemas-izveide-un-istenosana>

Economy forecasts – are most short of skilled workers ⁽²⁸⁾ and need to be addressed. In 2018, the board and sectoral expert councils defined learning requirements in 11 other sectors in which education programmes for adults are offered within the framework of the project.

In August 2016, NVA (the State Employment Agency) approved the Strategy for cooperation with employers 2017-2019 ⁽²⁹⁾, targeted at strengthening the agency's capacity to monitor labour market needs.

A working group was set up in 2017 to prepare proposals for the involvement of State vocational education institutions in the provision of adult education ⁽³⁰⁾. In 2018, VISC (the National Centre for Education) developed methodological material entitled *Practical road map for working with adults in vocational education institutions* ⁽³¹⁾ and organised seminars for vocational schools.

⁽²⁸⁾ http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/pieauguso_izglitiba/jaunumi/?text_id=39684

⁽²⁹⁾ http://www.nva.gov.lv/docs/31_58c63ff834bcc9.50609020.pdf

⁽³⁰⁾ <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40434632&mode=mk&date=2017-08-29>. The Ministry of Finance prepared legislative amendments – adopted by Saeima on 23.11.2017, in force since 1.1.2018 – which provided for institutions financed from State budget including vocational education schools a flexible solution for simplifying the procedure of planning own revenue and transferring their unused balances to the following year: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=58057>

⁽³¹⁾ http://www.muzizglitiba.lv/sites/default/files/Praktisks-celvedis-darbam-ar-pieaugusajiem-profionalas-izglitibas-iestades-Metodika_elektroniska-versija_PDF_ISBN.pdf

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, the country's overall objectives in the MTD at large were to strengthen measures to increase the attractiveness of initial vocational education and adult participation in lifelong learning and improve the quality of vocational education (by increasing the offer for apprenticeship-type schemes and work-based learning and speeding up curricula reforms).

In 2015, Latvia was in the course of vocational education reforms and significant progress had been achieved in consolidating the school network and modernising infrastructure and equipment (European Commission, 2016). Curricular reform was ongoing, including developing occupational standards, modular programmes and the content of qualification exams.

The Implementation plan 2015-17 for the Education development guidelines 2014-20 ⁽³²⁾ was adopted in June 2015, setting up directions for enhancing access to education (especially for young people at risk of social exclusion) and preventing early school leaving in general and vocational education.

A range of policy documents were laying the foundations for the development of career management skills in learners, and greater availability of career guidance services. In May 2015, IKVD (the State Education Quality Service) amended the methodology for quality evaluation of education institutions to incorporate the evaluation of learners' career management skills development as part of quality assurance in general and vocational education.

Through the Erasmus+ project *National coordinators for the implementation of the European agenda for adult learning* implemented in 2014-15 (European Commission, 2015), the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) worked on improving the coordination of adult education policies across sectors and increasing adult participation in lifelong learning. An adult education supervisory

⁽³²⁾ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

council (bringing together ministries and organisations involved in adult education) was established to provide a comprehensive adult education monitoring system (European Commission, 2016).

Regarding transparency and recognition, a comprehensive national qualifications framework based on learning outcomes was in place. The Latvian qualifications framework (LQF) was adopted in 2010 and referenced to the EQF and the QF-EHEA in 2011. The continued development of a national qualifications framework towards including the vocational education sector was provided for by the policy planning document *Education development guidelines for 2014-20* ⁽³³⁾.

Measures for the validation of professional competences acquired outside the formal system were also in place, since their introduction by the 2007-13 lifelong learning strategy ⁽³⁴⁾. Methodological recommendations for the assessment of professional competences acquired through non-formal and informal education ⁽³⁵⁾ were published in 2015, targeted at education institutions and examination centres.

A major challenge still to be addressed was to increase the participation in learning of adults with no motivation for learning and adults from at-risk groups.

3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people:
 - (i) modularisation of programmes;
 - (ii) revision of sectoral qualification frameworks;
- (b) for adults:
 - (i) broadening access to various target groups;
 - (ii) critical review of the situation to identify and address gaps.

⁽³³⁾ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

⁽³⁴⁾ Source: Cedefop, 2017b and Rusakova, 2013.

⁽³⁵⁾ *Assessment of professional competences acquired through non-formal and informal education system, 2015* (Latvian: *Ārpus formālās izglītības sistēmas apgūtās profesionālās kompetences novērtēšana*):
https://ikvd.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/09_IKVD_RPUS_FORM_IZGL-1.pdf

3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-18

3.3.1. Adoption of the 2015-17 Implementation plan for the 2014-20 Education development guidelines

The implementation plan adopted in June 2015 provides directions for improving access to education, and preventing early school leaving from general and vocational education, especially for young people subjected to social exclusion. Measures include: scholarships in initial vocational education; a *Youth guarantee* scheme providing opportunity for young people to acquire a professional qualification in a short time (one to one-and-a-half year initial vocational education programmes); implementation of career education; developing modular vocational education programmes; and validation of non-formal and informal learning for young people by introducing the Erasmus+ *Youthpass* nationwide.

3.3.2. Guidance

Within the framework of the 2014-17 Erasmus+ project *VET for employment*, 19 vocational and higher education institutions developed e-career platforms where employers can advertise work placements and jobs offers for students ⁽³⁶⁾.

In May 2015, the inclusive employment guidelines for 2015-20 (prepared by the Ministry of Welfare) were adopted, including the aim of increasing the intensity of use of career services in the career planning processes for adults.

In December 2015, the Government adopted regulations on career education ⁽³⁷⁾. Within this framework, the State Education Development Agency (VIAA) launched a national ESF project *Career support in general and vocational education schools* (2016-20) to ensure accessibility of career education in all general and vocational education schools. New methodological materials were developed. In 2017-18, more than 20 seminars and two national conferences were held for school career guidance teachers/specialists. In 2018, a teacher continuing professional development course on effective career development support systems in school (32 hours) was developed and launched in cooperation with Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. 523 individuals have already completed this course. Schools have started

⁽³⁶⁾ See the Cabinet of Ministers regulation on the implementation plan for career education in the State and local government general and vocational education institutions for 2015-20: <http://www.iddk.lv/notikums/izstradatas-karjeras-e-platformas-19-izglitibas-iestadem/>

⁽³⁷⁾ <http://likumi.lv/ta/id/278999-par-karjeras-izglitibas-istenosanas-planu-valsts-un-pasvaldibu-visparejas-un-profesionalas-izglitibas-iestades-2015-2020>

implementation of career guidance activities with support of the project ⁽³⁸⁾. In parallel, VIAA organised annual 'career weeks' during which young people plan their future occupation, meet with different professionals, visit companies and receive career counselling. VIAA also organised annual national professional skills competitions for vocational education students and ensured their participation in the international competitions EuroSkills and WorldSkills.

Within the framework of *Euroguidance*, VIAA implemented in 2016-18 a range of guidance-related activities including seminars, conferences, and participation in education exhibitions. These helped guidance counsellors and individuals to understand better the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe.

In 2016, *Virtual career days* ⁽³⁹⁾ were organised simultaneously in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, offering information about enterprises, and the opportunity to contact employers on-line.

In January 2017, NVA (the State Employment Agency) started the ESF 2017-22 project *Support for longer working life* ⁽⁴⁰⁾. The project aims to support prolonging the working capacity and employment of older workers. Activities include career counselling and the training of career counsellors for work with older persons. NVA also regularly organises the *Career days for job seekers*; these prepare interested individuals by participating in simulated interviews and introduces them to employers and representatives of economic sectors who talk about available job vacancies and current events in the labour market.

3.3.3. Permeability and flexibility

In 2017, amendments to the Vocational Education Law specified the legal framework for the modularisation of vocational education programmes ⁽⁴¹⁾. Modules are parts of a professional qualification and defined as a set of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Modular vocational education programmes lead to EQF qualifications at levels 2 to 4. Within the framework of the ESF project *Development of sectoral qualifications system for*

⁽³⁸⁾ http://viaa.gov.lv/library/files/original/Projekta_progress_01.07.2017.pdf

⁽³⁹⁾ www.karjerasdienas.lv

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <http://nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=2&mid=511&txt=4645>

⁽⁴¹⁾ Saeima (1999). *Profesionālās izglītības likums* [Vocational Education Law]. Last amended 5.7.2017 <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244>; and Cabinet of Ministers (2000). *Noteikumi par valsts profesionālās vidējās izglītības standartu un valsts arodizglītības standartu* [Regulations on the State vocational secondary education standard and the State vocational education standard]. Regulation No 211 (last amended 19.9.2017, No 564) <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=8533>

vocational education development and quality assurance (2016-21) ⁽⁴²⁾, the National Centre for Education (VISC) finalised the development of modular programmes for 31 qualifications, while 55 other modular programmes are still in development ⁽⁴³⁾. Vocational schools will have to issue a new type of certificate indicating the programme, module(s), achieved learning outcomes and their assessment. Stakeholders (representatives from employers' organisations, sectoral associations, trade unions, municipalities) were involved in the working group that developed the amendments to the Vocational Education Law.

3.3.4. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.3.4.1. National qualifications framework ⁽⁴⁴⁾

The development of the Latvian qualifications framework (LQF) started in 2009. Coordination of the referencing process was carried out by the Academic Information Centre. The LQF, comprising only qualifications from formal education, was established and referenced to EQF and QF-EHEA in 2011. In 2015, amendments to the Vocational Education Law stated the link between professional qualification levels and LQF levels, and the general regulation of the LQF. As a result, the LQF in its current version is a comprehensive eight-level framework based on learning outcomes and encompassing general, vocational, higher education as well as professional qualifications. In September 2016, new Cabinet of Ministers regulations called for developing occupational standards in line with LQF levels ⁽⁴⁵⁾. Regulations supporting the use of the learning-outcomes approach, while developing occupational standards, vocational education content and assessment methods, have been in force since May 2016 ⁽⁴⁶⁾. Since January 2017, vocational education certificates and diplomas include reference to LQF

⁽⁴²⁾ https://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/esf_852.shtml

⁽⁴³⁾ https://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/dokumenti/esf_852/20181217.pdf

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Regulation No 633 of Cabinet of Ministers of 27 September 2016 on procedure of elaborating occupational standards, requirements of professional qualification (if there is no approved occupational standard) and sectoral qualification structure. (In Latvian: *Profesijas standarta, profesionālās kvalifikācijas prasību (ja profesijai neapstiprina profesijas standartu) un nozares kvalifikāciju struktūras izstrādes kārtība*). <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=285032>

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Regulations on the implementation of the operational programme Growth and employment specific objective No 8.5.2 *To ensure the compliance of vocational education to the European qualifications framework* (in force since May 2016).

levels ⁽⁴⁷⁾. In 2017, the sectoral qualifications frameworks were revised within the framework of the ESF project *Development of sectoral qualifications system for vocational education development and quality assurance* (2016-21) implemented by VISC (the National Centre for Education): descriptors of sectoral qualifications levels were developed or revised in line with LQF levels, and general descriptions of sectoral occupations and specialisations were updated. Following agreement between education and sectors, 15 sectoral qualifications frameworks were then officially approved in April 2018 ⁽⁴⁸⁾; craftsmanship qualifications were also incorporated into sectoral qualifications frameworks. On 13 June 2017, the Government adopted new regulations on the classification of the Latvian education system, including reference to LQF/EQF, and LQF level descriptors in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, which replaced the previous version of regulations with the same title (approved in 2008).

3.3.4.2. ECVET ⁽⁴⁹⁾

A national team of ECVET experts ⁽⁵⁰⁾ has been in place since 2014 to promote general understanding of ECVET principles and provide informative support to vocational schools. In 2017-18, several seminars and an international conference were organised with the participation of ECVET experts on the practical application of ECVET principles ⁽⁵¹⁾. In 2018, ECVET national experts prepared an e-brochure entitled *Why ECVET* ⁽⁵²⁾ and organised a webinar which was addressed to representatives of vocational and adult education, teachers, policy makers, social partners and employers.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ <http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=111580>

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Sectoral qualifications frameworks descriptions are available on the website of the National Centre for Education (in Latvian).

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Source: the ECVET users group members.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ European credit system for vocational education and training.

⁽⁵¹⁾ http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/ek_izgl_programmas_iniciativas/erasmusplus/ecvet_aktivitate/ecvet_pasakumi/

⁽⁵²⁾ http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/ek_izgl_programmas_iniciativas/erasmusplus/ecvet_aktivitate/ecvet_brosura/

3.3.4.3. *Validation* ⁽⁵³⁾

The document *Lifelong learning policy guidelines 2007-13* included measures for the validation of professional competences acquired outside formal education. Legislation for the validation of learning outcomes has been in place for vocational education (EQF levels 2 to 4) since 2011 and for higher education (EQF levels 5 to 7) since 2012 ⁽⁵⁴⁾. By 2017, validation of prior learning could be undertaken in 155 professional qualifications ⁽⁵⁵⁾. In February 2017, an amendment to the *Procedures for organising and financing active employment measures* ⁽⁵⁶⁾ was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, aiming to compensate the cost of the qualification exam for validation of non-formal and informal learning for the unemployed. Since 2017, 90% compensation of the validation cost is awarded to people in employment, within the framework of the SEDA ESF-funded project on improving the professional competence of the employed (Section 3.3.5.2). The employed who have been recognised as in a situation of poverty can receive a 100% refund. The self-assessment report *Implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in Latvia* ⁽⁵⁷⁾ was published and presented to the European Commission's EQF Advisory Group in 2018.

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

3.3.5.1. *Reskilling people with disabilities*

Professional rehabilitation for people with disabilities is provided by the Social Integration State Agency. In February 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers approved new procedures by which a person receives State-funded professional rehabilitation services and professional suitability determination services ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

⁽⁵³⁾ Cedefop, 2017b; Rusakova (2016).

⁽⁵⁴⁾ In November 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science prepared draft amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions to specify the conditions for validation of non-formal and informal learning in higher education (adopted on 16.11.2017, in force since 1.1.2018, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/295397-grozijumi-augstskolu-likuma>).

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Source: the self-assessment report *Implementation of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in Latvia*, 2018.
http://www.aic.lv/portal/content/files/VNIL-report_LV_2018_final.pdf

⁽⁵⁶⁾ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=225425>

⁽⁵⁷⁾ http://www.aic.lv/portal/content/files/VNIL-report_LV_2018_final.pdf

⁽⁵⁸⁾ <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40395371&mode=mk&date=2017-02-21>

Each programme participant is trained for a new profession determined according to the type and level of functional disorders and their previous education and professional qualification. In September 2017, an amendment to the *Procedures for organising and financing active employment measures* ⁽⁵⁹⁾ was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, aiming to set requirements and costs for participation in the *Motivational programme* targeted at supporting long-term jobseekers with disabilities. This programme and social mentor support are part of the ESF project *Support for long-term unemployed (2015-21)* ⁽⁶⁰⁾ implemented by NVA (the State Employment Agency). The regulations also stipulate that a support assistant is provided to the disabled by the local government: sign language services are provided; special transport expenses for the young unemployed person with disabilities are covered; and personal support services for persons with mental disabilities are covered by the practice places.

3.3.5.2. *ESF-funded project for the training of persons in employment*

For 2017-22, VIAA (the State Education Development Agency) is carrying out (in cooperation with local governments) a national ESF project on improving the professional competence of the employed ⁽⁶¹⁾ aged 25+. Activities include continuing vocational education, professional development, non-formal education and validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Participants who have low income or 'poor' personal status can receive financial compensation to cover travel expenses, not only from the declared place of residence, but also from the workplace to the place of learning and back. Employed young people aged between 17 and 24 are part of the project target group and can enrol in short (one to one-and-a-half years) initial vocational education programmes (at EQF level 3-4) ⁽⁶²⁾.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=225425>

⁽⁶⁰⁾ <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=275991>

⁽⁶¹⁾ http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/es_fondu_projekti/pieauguso_izglitiba/par_projektu/

⁽⁶²⁾ Cabinet of Ministers (2016). *Darbības programmas 'Izaugsme un nodarbinātība' 8.4.1. specifiskā atbalsta mērķa 'Pilnveidot nodarbināto personu profesionālo kompetenci' īstenošanas noteikumi* [Regulations on the implementation of the operational programme's Growth and employment specific objective No.8.4.1. To develop professional competence of employed persons]. Regulations No 474 (last amended 19.9.2017 No572). <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283669-darbibas-programmas-izaugsme-un-nodarbinatiba-8-4-1-specifiska-atbalsta-merka-pilnveidot-nodarbinato-personu-profesionalo>
www.macibaspieaugusajiem.lv

In 2017, an education offer of 770 programmes was developed in four sectors of the economy: construction; metalworking and mechanical engineering; wood industry; manufacturing of electronic and optical equipment, information and communication technologies. Participant intake amounted to 7 000 people in the second round of applications (January 2018) and 11 000 in the third round (September 2018). Education institutions to implement the programmes are to be selected in a further 12 economic sectors ⁽⁶³⁾.

3.3.5.3. *ESF-funded project for the training of jobseekers*

During 2015-21, NVA (the State Employment Agency) has a national ESF project Support to the education of the unemployed ⁽⁶⁴⁾. Activities include retraining and improving professional qualifications and skills of the unemployed, in line with changing labour market requirements, and validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. By September 2018, 31% of the programme participants had acquired a professional qualification and 35% had found a job within six months.

3.3.5.4. *Youth guarantee for NEETs*

The *Youth guarantee* measures (2015-18) were implemented to facilitate the employment and education of young people (aged 15-29) not in employment nor in education or training. Within this framework, the VIAA (the State Education Development Agency) arranged short (one to one-and-a-half years) initial vocational education programmes leading to qualifications at EQF level 3-4.

In 2017, the Government amended the *Youth guarantee* scheme ⁽⁶⁵⁾, introducing measures for the validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning as well as specific support measures for learners with disabilities (mental disorders), including grants for the purchase of equipment and technical aids to adapt learning places. The scheme was also prolonged until 31 December 2023.

⁽⁶³⁾ SEDA launched the application round in December 2017.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ <http://nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=2&mid=511&txt=4149>

⁽⁶⁵⁾ <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=274081>

3.3.6. Promoting VET participation through increased attractiveness

In January 2016, Cabinet of Ministers regulations on scholarships ⁽⁶⁶⁾ were amended to increase from EUR 71 to EUR 150 the ceiling of the one-time scholarship and the monthly scholarship for success in learning.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Noteikumi par stipendijām [Regulations on scholarships].
<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=93004>

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline 2015

Key competences have been traditionally promoted in vocational education, mainly through general study subjects. The level of acquisition of key competences was typically assessed through centralised examinations, e.g. in languages and maths, compulsory for vocational education learners. In 2015, modules ⁽⁶⁷⁾ comprising key competences were being integrated in vocational subjects ⁽⁶⁸⁾.

The education development strategy 2014-20 ⁽⁶⁹⁾ does not include promoting key competences in vocational education. However, the strategy has supported a shift towards a competence-based education model that has implicitly promoted the development of key competences for work, but also for inclusive education and lifelong learning.

A recent survey ⁽⁷⁰⁾ showed that, compared with general education graduates, those who completed vocational education programmes felt they had:

- (a) stronger (ranged by priority):
 - (i) ability to be creative;
 - (ii) ability to work with others;
 - (iii) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- (b) weaker:
 - (i) foreign language speaking;

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Initiative and entrepreneurship; safety of society and person; language, cultural awareness and expression; social and civic competences; information and communication technologies.

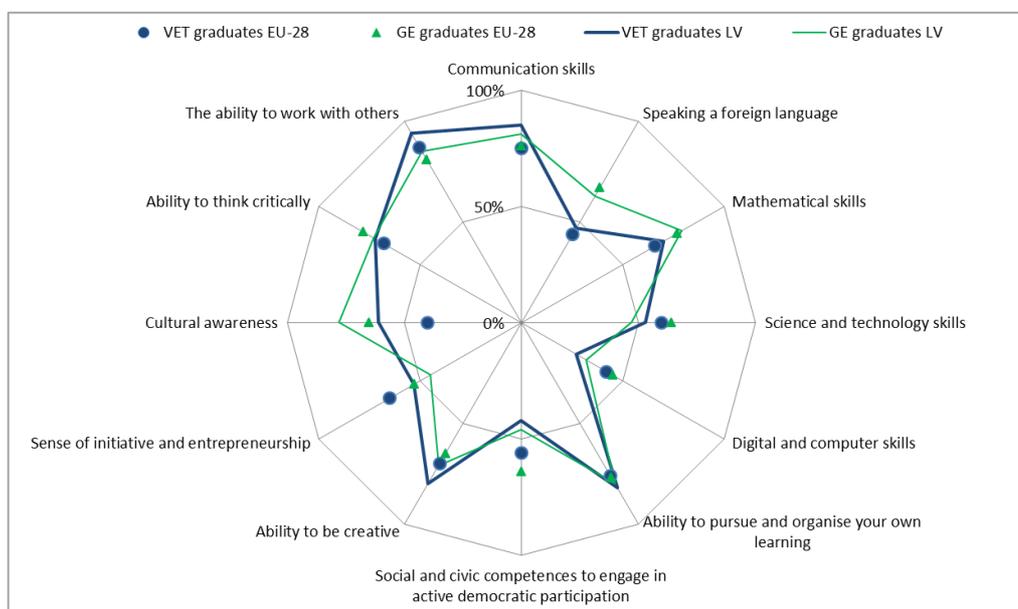
⁽⁶⁸⁾ Following the ESF pilot project for the development of sectoral qualifications and increasing the efficiency and quality of VET. This process developed along with the introduction of modular approach in VET that was at its early stage in 2015. For more information on key competences in VET see: Daija et al. (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Latvia*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_LV_KC.pdf

⁽⁶⁹⁾ <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Cedefop (2017). *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>

- (ii) cultural awareness;
- (iii) mathematical skills (Figure 2).

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



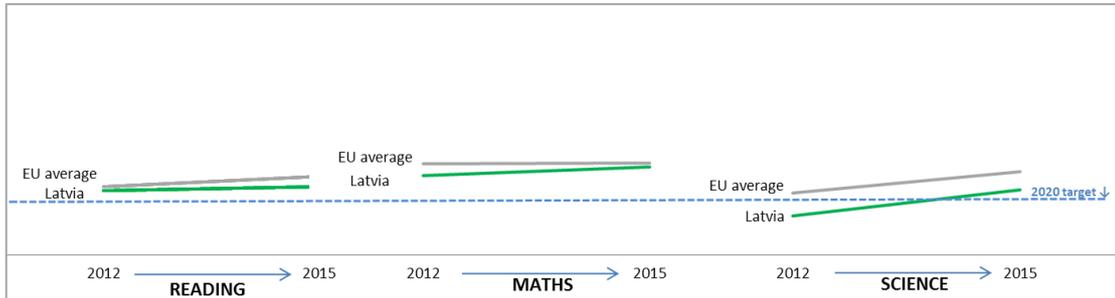
NB: GE stands for general education.

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 Latvia was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend was similar.

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 (PISA 2012 and 2015)

As vocational education enrolled 40% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽⁷¹⁾, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in vocational education programmes. This was happening against a background where acquisition of key competences in vocational education was a challenge. While key competences in vocational education were mainly promoted through general subjects, vocational education learners were often more interested in vocational skills than in general subjects and key competences ⁽⁷²⁾.

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 provides a summary of key competences in initial and continuing vocational education that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of policies is provided in the following sections.

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

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		
Foreign languages	YES	YES
Digital competence	YES	YES
Maths	YES	YES
Science	YES	
Technology	YES	

⁽⁷¹⁾ Calculated from Eurostat table educ_uae_enrs04; 2015 data.

⁽⁷²⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see Daija et al.(2016).

Social and civic competences	YES	YES
Learning to learn		YES
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence		YES
Cultural awareness and expression		YES
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

Since 2015, legislation has allowed secondary education students to choose between nationally organised centralised State exams for foreign languages and recognised international foreign language exams.

In early 2016, State vocational education standards were amended to promote the acquisition of competences in maths, science and technology, communication in foreign languages, and social and civic competences. Compulsory general subjects in all vocational education programmes have been complemented by natural sciences, second foreign language and literature.

In December 2016, the ESF-funded project *Development of sectoral qualifications system for vocational education development and quality assurance* ⁽⁷³⁾ was launched to develop modular vocational education programmes comprising key competences: initiative and entrepreneurship, security of society and person, information and communication technologies, social and civic competences, and language and culture awareness and expression.

4.4. Key competences in continuing VET

In May 2015, the [Inclusive employment guidelines for 2015-20](#), prepared by the Ministry of Welfare, were adopted. They provide for acquisition of qualifications and key competences by jobseekers in line with labour market needs.

Developing the key competences of the unemployed is also part of the ESF projects *Active labour market policy measures to promote the employment of unemployed young people* (2014-18) and *Support to the education of the*

⁽⁷³⁾ http://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/esf_852.shtml

unemployed (2015-21) implemented by NVA, the State Employment Agency ⁽⁷⁴⁾. The NVA website provides an education institution search engine where learners can find appropriate institutions by specific competences, such as foreign languages, computer sciences, and business basics. They also offer e-learning for financial literacy.

In November 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science – in collaboration with a range of stakeholders ⁽⁷⁵⁾ – elaborated adult education content for the development of key competences, within the framework of the 2017-19 Erasmus+ project *National coordinators for the implementation of the European adult education programme* ⁽⁷⁶⁾. Sector experts identified the required general skills for workers in 15 sectors ⁽⁷⁷⁾. Key competences corresponding to the general skills were identified. Twenty modular programmes for the acquisition of seven categories of key competences ⁽⁷⁸⁾ and six modular programmes for the acquisition of professional competences ⁽⁷⁹⁾ were designed. The programmes are based on the modular principle, with each module consisting of the following:

⁽⁷⁴⁾ EUR 91.9 million, including EUR 2.2 million private and EUR 11.6 million State budget

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Including representatives from the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare, VIAA, VISC, IKVD, 86 sectoral experts nominated by sectoral expert councils, and vocational education experts.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ <https://izm.gov.lv/lv/eiropas-savieniba/erasmus-2014-2020/nacionalie-koordinatori-eiropas-programmas-istenosanai-pieauguso-izglitiba-joma> and <http://www.muzizglitiba.lv/node/191>

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Building; manufacture of electric and optical equipment; electricity and energy; wood industry; chemical and allied industries; agriculture; art and media; metalworking and mechanical engineering; food industry; printing and publishing; manufacture of textiles, clothing, leather and leather products; transport and logistics; tourism and beauty care; and business, finance, accounting and administration.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Multilingual competence (two programmes);
Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering (four programmes);
Digital competence (three programmes);
Personal, social and learning to learn competence (two programmes);
Entrepreneurship competence (three programmes);
Cultural awareness and expression competence (three programmes);
Sustainability competence (two programmes).

⁽⁷⁹⁾ SPA and wellness (basic);
SPA and wellness (advanced);
Good hygiene practice in food production;
Flour confectionery for beginners;
Placement of a trading venue;
Modern approach to the preparation and presentation of confectionery products (basic).

- (a) module description, including the module's purpose, tasks, module entry conditions, module acquisition assessment and module relevance and applicability;
- (b) the content of the module, which summarises the topics to be learned within the module and the outcomes to be achieved: what a learner must be able to do, know and understand when learning a specific topic. Descriptions of the medium and optimal level of module acquisition are also provided, as well as those providing different ideas for the implementation of module;
- (c) a description of the tests, including an initial assessment (clarification of the needs of the learner, assessment of preliminary knowledge for the purpose of adapting to the needs of the learner), current evaluation (if provided for in the module content) and the content of the final examination work and evaluation criteria.

The initiative is fully operational and guidelines for upskilling have been produced. Providers of adult education can implement one single module (by developing the curriculum according to the number of hours); integrate content of the modules into other lifelong learning modules; develop the content of professional development programmes by assembling several modules; include modules in continuing vocational education programmes in the lifelong learning competence section or use them for in-service training. Providers of adult education can also use these materials as samples for developing other modules for non-formal adult education. The modules were published on the lifelong learning website hosted by MoES ⁽⁸⁰⁾. Stakeholders were introduced to the developed modules on 22 August 2018 in the first Adult education forum, as were heads of vocational education institutions at the seminars held on 22 November 2018 and 17 January 2019.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ <http://www.muzizglitiba.lv/node/198>

CHAPTER 5.

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

5.1. Baseline 2015

The Education development guidelines for 2014-20 (Latvian parliament – Saeima, 2014) included specific actions addressing CPD (continuing professional development) for vocational education teachers, administrators and supervisors of practical placements in thematic areas like the modular approach and the modernisation of vocational education programmes. They also foresaw traineeships in enterprises to be arranged in close cooperation with employers⁽⁸¹⁾, and in-company trainer CPD.

In 2015, four main categories of teachers and trainers were at play in vocational education programmes:

- (a) teachers of general subjects;
- (b) teachers of vocational subjects (responsible for theoretical and practical teaching in school workshops in initial and continuing vocational education at basic and secondary education level);
- (c) in-company trainers (tutors who worked with students during in-company apprenticeship); and
- (d) supervisors of practical placements (employees of education institutions or enterprises who accompanied students during qualification practice).

5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training

Entry requirements for vocational education teachers had been set by the Education Law (1998) and the Vocational Education Law (1999). According to the Cabinet of Ministers regulations on education of, and professional qualification required from, teachers and the procedure for improving the

⁽⁸¹⁾ Education development guidelines for 2014-20 supported provision of VET teachers' CPD in key competences; foresaw improvement of VET teacher competences of working with adults; and included VET teacher training (entrepreneurship, financial literacy, leadership) provided by employers.

professional competence of teachers (2014), teachers of vocational subjects had to have successfully completed:

- (a) tertiary education in a relevant field plus a pedagogical course (of at least 72 hours); or
- (b) secondary vocational education (or a master of crafts certificate) plus a pedagogical course (of at least 72 hours). The requirement for a pedagogical course does not apply to supervisors of practical placements (teachers) with less than 240 teaching hours per year.

Teachers of general subjects at vocational education institutions had to have successfully completed:

- (a) tertiary education in pedagogy/education, and had to hold a teaching qualification in the subject; or
- (b) tertiary education in the relevant field of study and either a pedagogical course (of at least 72 hours) or a teaching qualification in the subject (they could also be in the process of completion).

In 2015, there was a single initial teachers' education programme that prepared students to teach in vocational education institutions. It was provided by the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.

5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training

According to a Cabinet of Ministers regulation (2012) ⁽⁸²⁾, employees who were working in the corresponding occupation could be appointed as supervisors of practice placement. They were responsible for monitoring the course of qualification practice, and approving learners' practice diary entries or practice itself. There were no national qualifications, competence profiles or initial education programmes for these professionals.

Cabinet of Ministers regulations (2014) specified that supervisors of practice placements had to meet the same requirements as vocational education teachers if their workload was more than 240 teaching hours per year.

In-company trainers (apprenticeship tutors) were a relatively new category of vocational education professionals that appeared in 2013.

5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD

Cabinet of Ministers regulations (2014) determined that vocational education teachers had to develop their competences through regular CPD. Teachers were required to take at least 36 hours of CPD courses every three years. Education

⁽⁸²⁾ <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252862>

institutions would register teachers' CPD in the database of the State education information system.

There were two types of competence development programme:

- (a) programme A could include: general competences modules (such as inclusive and special education, health and safety); pedagogical and didactical modules; education process management modules (such as school management); and participation in conferences, seminars, traineeship in enterprises;
- (b) programme B included courses (at least 72 hours long) provided by higher education institutions in areas such as basics of pedagogy for vocational education teachers. Programme B courses would focus on teachers' professional/pedagogical competences.

CPD courses for vocational education teachers were mainly provided by VISC (the National Centre for Education), which arranged seminars in technical competences, such as innovative products in the construction industry; pedagogy/didactics; transversal competences; and seminars for deputy heads. Another way to support teacher CPD was through mobility and Erasmus+ projects.

Employers also were engaged in providing teachers with CPD opportunities. Traineeships and study visits to companies for vocational education teachers were in place.

According to the 2013 OECD Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS), a very high proportion of teachers (96%) had taken part in some professional development activities in the year preceding the survey (European Commission, 2015).

5.1.4. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD

Supervisors of practice placements could also participate in study visits to companies and traineeships. If their workload exceeded 240 teaching hours per year, they were also required to take at least 36 hours of CPD every three years.

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

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to modernise training programmes.

In July 2016, a new model was adopted for calculating teachers' wages. It takes into account the workload, extra duties, excellence, and, in the case of

vocational education teachers, an additional payment of up to 20% of monthly salary. Further updates followed in December 2018 ⁽⁸³⁾. Cabinet of Ministers regulations regarding teacher salaries were amended on 18 December 2018, levelling salaries of heads of vocational schools with the salaries of heads of colleges. The reform was an important step towards making teachers' remuneration more transparent and fairer, reducing salary differences that penalised teachers in smaller schools.

In 2017, the government prepared a plan to reform the structure and content of the teachers' education system ⁽⁸⁴⁾. According to the plan, teacher education programmes, composed of competence-based modules in accordance with the teacher occupational standards and the learning outcomes approach, will be created at all levels of higher education. At EQF level 6, two alternatives for obtaining teacher qualification will be developed: an integrated professional bachelor study programme for upper secondary education graduates; and a study programme for obtaining a professional teacher qualification after obtaining a bachelor degree in another field of study. The latter route will be more specifically targeted at those aiming to become a vocational education teacher. The plan was elaborated by a working group established by the MoES, with participation of the Latvian Student Union, the Higher Education Council, the Foundation 'Possible Mission', and sectoral experts. Implementation has started at six higher education institutions.

On 11 September 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers approved new regulations on education and professional qualifications for teachers and the procedure for improving their professional competence ⁽⁸⁵⁾. The new regulations

- (a) extend the possibilities for teachers to work at both primary and secondary education levels and teach subjects within a single field;

⁽⁸³⁾ <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283667-pedagogu-darba-samaksas-noteikumi>

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Sources:

- Cabinet of Ministers (2018). *Informatīvais ziņojums 'Priekšlikumi konceptuāli jaunas kompetencēs balstītas izglītības prasībām atbilstošas skolotāju izglītības nodrošināšanai Latvijā'* [Informative report Proposals for providing conceptually new teacher corresponding to competence-based education requirements in Latvia]. Protocol decision 21§, 9.01.2018.
<http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/mksedes/saraksts/protokols/?protokols=2018-01-09>
- <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40444622&mode=mk&date=2018-01-09>

⁽⁸⁵⁾ <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301572-noteikumi-par-pedagogiem-nepieciesamo-izglitiba-un-profesionalo-kvalifikaciju-un-pedagogu-profesionalas-kompetences-pilnveides>

- (b) specify the requirements regarding the professional competence development of teachers involved in the implementation of special education;
- (c) update the requirements regarding the pedagogical education of vocational education teachers. The new regulations support the involvement of industry professionals in the implementation of vocational education programmes, as the requirements for pedagogical education do not apply to those vocational education teachers whose workload in an education institution is less than 360 working hours per year.

5.3. Initial training for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

The legal framework for apprenticeship was amended on 12 September 2017 to include changes to education requirements for in-company trainers. Since January 2019, in-company trainers involved in providing apprenticeship must have:

- (a) a master of crafts qualification;
- (b) vocational education or at least three years of relevant work experience;
- (c) completed:
 - (i) either a 72-hour teaching competence development course (on Practical pedagogy for implementing work-based learning or on Basics of pedagogical activities in music, dance and art);
 - (ii) or a special 32-hour teaching competence development course ⁽⁸⁶⁾ on Practical pedagogy ABC for work-based learning for in-company trainers for apprenticeships ⁽⁸⁷⁾.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ One reason for the change is the argument raised by the Latvian Employers' Confederation and sectoral expert councils that the requirement of a 72-hour teaching course is an obstacle for 50% of companies to conclude cooperation agreements.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Cabinet of Ministers. *Kārtība, kādā organizē un īsteno darba vidē balstītas mācības* [Procedure for organisation and implementation of work-based learning]. Regulation No 484. Last amended 12.9.2017.

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/283680-kartiba-kada-organizē-un-īsteno-darba-vidē-balstītas-mācības>

5.4. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

The country's priority in this area for the 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is the modernisation of training programmes.

The Implementation plan for 2015-17 of the Education development guidelines for 2014-20 included arranging CPD of vocational education teachers in work-based settings in cooperation with employers, particularly in the form of traineeships and study visits to enterprises. Schools can cooperate with individual enterprises, social partners, professional bodies, and chambers.

On 30 December 2015, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the *Career education implementation plan for State and municipal general and vocational education institutions* for 2015-20. The plan sets up opportunities for improving the professional competence of teachers, including vocational education teachers.

In 2017, the Lifelong Learning Centre of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies implemented the CPD programme *Teacher career counsellor* (160 hours) in cooperation with the Employers' Confederation of Latvia. The programme included study visits to companies in order to raise teachers' understanding of sectors ⁽⁸⁸⁾.

Cabinet of Ministers regulations on the implementation of the operational programme (OP) *Growth and employment* were adopted in May 2016. An objective of the programme is to support the improvement of teachers' general competences (such as entrepreneurship and ICT) and professional competences, in cooperation with employers (especially through traineeships in enterprises in Latvia and abroad).

Within the framework of the *Growth and employment* programme, VISC (the National Centre for education) launched a national level ESF project on the effective management of vocational education institutions and the improvement of personnel competence (2016-22) ⁽⁸⁹⁾. The project activities included various seminars, the first of which took place in December 2016. In 2017 there was a series of seminars entitled *Personnel growth opportunities at an education institution*; these were targeted at the heads of vocational schools, administration representatives and persons who coordinate staff development. Workshops were also organised for vocational education teachers in agriculture, chemistry, beauty

⁽⁸⁸⁾ <http://www.iddk.lv/projekts/karjeras-konsultantu-apmacibas/>

⁽⁸⁹⁾ http://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/esf_853.shtml

care, woodworking, hospitality, catering, construction and metalworking sectors. A seminar entitled *Good practices in implementing adult education at vocational education institutions* was also held. Several CPD courses on the development of modular vocational education programmes and the methodology for the implementation of apprenticeships also took place.

In 2018, VISC developed the methodological material *Practical road map for working with adults in vocational education institutions*. This material was piloted as of August 2018, with the participation of all vocational education competence centres.

Courses on developing and implementing modular education programmes within the framework of the ESF project *Development of sectoral qualifications system for vocational education development and quality assurance* are also available to vocational school teachers and trainers.

Within the ESF project *Effective management of vocational education institutions and improvement of personnel competence* (2016-22), 35 in-company traineeships for vocational school teachers were organised; 21 in Latvia (110 teachers participated) and 14 in other EU countries ⁽⁹⁰⁾(74 teachers participated).

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ ATTRACT-VET project ⁽⁹¹⁾, CPD programmes and guidelines on EQF, ECVET, EQAVET and their practical use in vocational education were developed ⁽⁹²⁾.

Within the framework of the 2018-20 Interreg Estonia – Latvia project *Cross-border work-based learning in Estonia and Latvia*, ESTLAT-WBL (Section 1.3.4.2), vocational education teachers who supervise apprentices in schools will go on mobility exercises. A total of 20 vocational school teachers (10 from Latvia and 10 from Estonia) will participate. They will also attend tandem training.

In the 2018-20 Erasmus+ project *Individual approach and individual learning plan in WBL: training for WBL tutors*, a professional development programme for in-company trainers and vocational education teachers is being designed to improve their competence and skills in setting up individual learning plans (based on the learning outcomes approach) for learners in apprenticeship ⁽⁹³⁾. 23 leading

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Germany, Estonia, France, Italy Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Finland and United Kingdom.

⁽⁹¹⁾ *Practical implementation of main transparency tools – EQF, ECVET, EQAVET – in European VET organisations* (September 2015 - August 2017), in cooperation with partner organisations from Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden (leading partner), Austria and Portugal.

⁽⁹²⁾ <http://www.attractvet.eu>

⁽⁹³⁾ <https://visc.gov.lv/visc/projekti/ilp4wbl.shtml>

trainers from Latvia, Lithuania and Finland will be trained and will then act as further educators in their countries. The project is carried out by the National Centre for Education (VISC) in collaboration with a range of partners ⁽⁹⁴⁾.

The Erasmus+ pilot project *Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning*, TTT4WBL (2017-20) offers joint (tandem) training for teachers and in-company trainers (Section 1.3.4.1).

5.5. CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to develop training programmes.

The implementation plan for 2015-17 of the education development guidelines for 2014-20, adopted in June 2015, provides for CPD for vocational education mentors in work-based settings to be arranged in cooperation with employers.

The Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) was involved in the Erasmus+ project *Developing apprenticeship: in-company trainer training and apprenticeship promotion* (2015-17). An objective of the project was to design an in-company trainer training programme model, aiming to equip in-company trainers with knowledge enabling them to train apprentices in the most effective way. A survey of 30 enterprises ⁽⁹⁵⁾ was carried out, covering in-company trainer qualifications, use of training in the workplace, and needs of enterprises regarding employee training. In 2017, LDDK, together with partners from other countries, developed an education programme (16 hours, 9 modules) which was piloted ⁽⁹⁶⁾.

The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (leading partner) in cooperation with partners from Germany, Estonia and Finland, has implemented the 2016-18 Erasmus+ strategic partnership project *Training programme and OER for VET and enterprise tutors*. The aim is to develop training on the learning-outcomes approach and ECVET principles for assessment and validation of work-based learning and apprenticeships. In May 2017, workshops

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Learning and Consultation Centre 'Baltic Bright', Ltd (Latvia); Ogre Technical School (Latvia); Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (Lithuania); WinNova, Ltd (Finland); Kaunas Vocational Education Centre (Lithuania); 'Omnia' (Finland).

⁽⁹⁵⁾ http://www.lddk.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/questionnaire-summary-form_latvia_eng.pdf

⁽⁹⁶⁾ <http://en.lddk.lv/projekts/developing-apprenticeship-in-company-trainer-training-and-apprenticeship-promotion/>

were held for in-company trainers and vocational school teachers. Participants learned about the principles of apprenticeship provision and student assessment according to ECVET principles. Open education resources for ECVET were developed ⁽⁹⁷⁾.

The Erasmus+ pilot project on *Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning*, TTT4WBL (2017-20) also offers joint (tandem) training for teachers and in-company trainers (Section 1.3.4.1).

Within the framework of the 2018-20 Interreg Estonia-Latvia project *Cross-border work-based learning in Estonia and Latvia*, ESTLAT-WBL (Section 1.3.4.2), in-company trainers who supervise apprentices in companies will go on mobility exercises. Twelve in-company trainers (six from Latvia to Estonia and six from Estonia to Latvia) will participate. They will also attend tandem training.

The Erasmus+ project *Individual approach and individual learning plan in WBL: training for WBL tutors* (Section 5.4) also offers in-company trainers opportunities for training in the setting-up of individual learning plans.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ <http://qualityplacements.eu/open-education-resources/>

Statistical overview – 2019 update

The table below 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 Latvia and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	LV	f	EU	f	Yr	LV	f	EU	f	Range	LV	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	39.8		47.3	ce	'17	38.6		47.8	ce	'15-'17	-1.2	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	100		28.3	ce	'17	100		27.9	ce	'15-'17		-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	87		68.1	ce	'17	87.4		68.6	ce	'15-'17	0.4	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	27.2		40.8		'15	27.2		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	28		34		'15	28		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	5.7		10.7		'18	6.7		11.1		'15-'18	1	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	99.9		72.6		'15	99.9		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	33.5		42	ce	'17	32.6		42.7	ce	'15-'17	-0.8	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	15.7		30		'15	15.7		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	27.3		33		'18	20.6		33		'15-'18	-6.7	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.2		6.9		'18	3.8		7.3		'15-'18	0.6	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	2.4		4.3		'18	2.5		4.3		'15-'18	0.1	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	5.3		9.5		'18	6.8		10.7		'15-'18	1.5	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	16.9		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	76.4		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	LV	f	EU	f	Yr	LV	f	EU	f	Range	LV	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.4		0.5	ce	'16	0.4		0.5	ce	'15-'16	0	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	5.6		7.1	ce	'16	5.7		7.4	ce	'15-'16	0	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.4		0.9		'15	0.4		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.3		1	ce	'17	1.3		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	37.5		29.2	ce	'17	38		29.1	ce	'15-'17	0.6	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates	29.8				'17	26.4		14.3	b ce	'15-'17	-3.4	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	37		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	81.2		77.2		'18	83.3		80.5		'15-'18	2.1	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	3.9		5.4		'18	9.7		6.6		'15-'18	5.8	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	18.9		23.7		'18	23.5		23.3		'15-'18	4.6	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	88.5		83.7		'15	88.5		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	60.7		57		'15	60.7		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	9.9		11		'18	8.3		10.6		'15-'18	-1.6	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	41.3		38.7		'18	42.7		40.7		'15-'18	1.4	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	13.8		15.8		'18	11.2		13.7		'15-'18	-2.6	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	10.6		12.9		'18	9		9.4		'15-'18	-1.6	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	78.7		75.9		'18	83.1		80.6		'15-'18	4.4	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	9.9		23.5		'18	9.3		21.9		'15-'18	-0.6	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	72.5		70		'18	76.8		73.1		'15-'18	4.3	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	53.2		52.6		'18	57.5		56.1		'15-'18	4.3	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	87.8	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, 38.6 % of all upper secondary students in Latvia were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 9.2 points below the EU average. It appears that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by 1.2 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 100% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting, the same percentage as in 2015. The EU average is 27.9 %.

In 2018, 6.7% of the adults participated in LLL activities, which is slightly higher (1 point more) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1 %.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 83.3 %. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 2.1 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5 %.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Latvia has taken diversified actions to develop work-based learning and apprenticeships, building on Baltic and international cooperation. Steps have been taken to reinforce quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education, along with data collection systems and feedback loops to inform the vocational education development strategy and keep close to labour market needs. Initiatives were also taken to make vocational education and qualifications further accessible to all through a range of guidance-oriented projects, stepping up modularisation in vocational education programmes, implementing a comprehensive national qualifications framework, and supporting the retraining of groups in need. Measures were taken to support the development of key competences in vocational education and adult learning. Measures were taken to update and upgrade the initial and continuing training of vocational education teachers and trainers, with constant reference to cooperation with employers.

The main changes in 2017 have taken place in MTDs 2, 3 and 5. In MTD 2, the implementation of the Erasmus+ project EQAVET for quality of skills (QSkills), targeted at improving quality assurance in VET, was started (Section 2.2). An initiative was taken to boost the offer of high-quality adult education through further involving State vocational education schools (Section 2.4). In MTD 3, an ESF-funded project was launched, targeted at improving the professional competence of people in employment (Section 3.3.5.2). In MTD 5, a plan to reform the system of teacher pre-service training was set up (Section 5.2).

Compared to 2015-17, the main changes in 2018 have taken place in MTDs 1, 4 and 5. In MTD 1, the Erasmus+ project *Cross-border work-based learning in Estonia and Latvia* was launched, aimed at offering mobility opportunities for apprentices (Section 1.3.4.2). In MTD 4, sectoral specific programmes for key competences of adults were developed (Section 4.4). In MTD 5, the requirements for the initial training of in-company trainers involved in apprenticeship were reinforced (Section 5.3). The Erasmus+ project *Individual approach and individual learning plan in WBL: training for WBL tutors* was launched to provide vocational education teachers and in-company trainers with opportunities for training in the setting-up of individual learning plans (Section 5.4).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. Information currently available to Cedefop suggests that an issue which could be worth

further consideration is that of expanding the use of EQAVET indicators in monitoring the development of vocational education.

Acronyms

BAfA	Baltic Alliance for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for Vocational Education and Training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GE	general education
IKVD	<i>Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests</i> [State Education Quality Service]
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LDDK	<i>Latvijas Darba devēju konfederācija</i> [Employers' Confederation of Latvia]
LQF	Latvian Qualifications Framework
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science [<i>Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija</i>]
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
NVA	<i>Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra</i> [State Employment Agency]
OP	operational programme
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
QF-EHEA	qualifications framework in the European higher education area
QNQR	national framework of regional qualifications
SME	small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
T-TEP	technical education programme
UOE	UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat
VECC	vocational education competence centre
VET	vocational education and training

VIAA	<i>Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra</i> [State Education Development Agency]
VISC	<i>Valsts izglītības saturs centrs</i> [National Centre for Education]
WBL	work-based learning

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