



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

**UNITED KINGDOM
WALES**



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

UNITED KINGDOM WALES

Developments in vocational education and training policy
in 2015-19

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: Wales*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies.

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/developments-vocational-education-and-training-policy-2015-19-uk-wales>

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

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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. The chapter also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training

(1) *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-20, 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

Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory 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 the United Kingdom was decreasing and below the EU average: 43.8% in 2013 (European Commission, 2015) against 48.9% in the EU; 42.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137); 40% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽³⁾. Yet, 56.4% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137). The employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was also higher than in the EU: 78.5% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) and 78.7% in 2015 (European Commission, 2016) compared to 70.8% and 74.1% on average in the EU in respective years. Adult participation in lifelong learning was above the EU rate: 15.8% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) and 15.7% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenge of regaining attractiveness. Of particular concern in Wales were the issues of measuring skills performance and upgrading skills supply to meet labour market demand.

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

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

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	UK ^f	EU ^f	Yr	UK ^f	EU ^f	Range	UK	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	42.7 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -1.1	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	56.4 ^b	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ -1.2	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	40.4	69.2 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ -9.7	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	31.0	38.0 ^e	'10	31.0	38.0 ^e			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	30.0	20.0 ^e	'10	30.0	20.0 ^e			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	20.1		'15	15.7	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -0.5	↗ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	80.0	66.0 ^e	'10	80.0	66.0 ^e			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	43.0 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -1.2	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	25.0	25.0 ^e	'10	25.0	25.0 ^e			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	33.2 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -1.9	▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	14.5	5.3	'15	12.1	6.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	6.8 ^b _C	4.3 ^b _C	'13-'15	↘ -0.6	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	19.5		'15	14.2	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -1.3	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	B	9.5 ^e _B	'11		9.5 ^e			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	81.6 ^B	80.2 ^e _B	'11	81.6	80.2 ^e			
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'12	30.46 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}	'12-'13	▪ -0.07	▪ -0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	6.1 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ -0.5	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.7	0.8 ^e	'10	0.7	0.8 ^e			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14		1.0 ^b _{E6}			
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14		30.0 ^b _{E7}			
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14		9.3 ^{E8}			
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)		41.5 ^{E9}	'12		41.6 ^{E9}			
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	79.0 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 1.0	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	-3.4 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -0.3	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	UK ^f	EU ^f	Yr	UK ^f EU ^f	Range	UK	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	21.9 ^b 23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 2.7	▪ -0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	84.9 83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	52.6	55.2	'15	57.8 57.3	'10-'15	▪ 1.0	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends							
Early leavers from education and training (%)		13.9	'15	10.8 ^b 11.0 ^c	'11-'15	↘ -1.0	↘ -0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)		33.8	'15	47.8 ^b 38.7 ^c	'11-'15	↗ 0.5	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	17.8	16.6	'15	14.5 15.8	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	9.9	13.1	'15	6.8 12.9	'10-'15	↘ -0.7	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	85.8 ^b 76.9 ^c	'11-'15	↗ 1.1	→ 0.0
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)		27.3	'15	20.3 ^b 23.5 ^c	'11-'15	↘ -0.8	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	76.9 ^b 70.0	'11-'15	↗ 0.9	↗ 0.4
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)		53.4	'15	59.7 ^b 52.6 ^c	'11-'15	↗ 1.1	↘ -0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	84.6 ^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 (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(^B) AES (adult education survey) 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, CY, FR, IE, 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. 137.

CHAPTER 1.

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

1.1. Baseline 2015

In Wales at the beginning of the reporting period, apprenticeships were available from EQF levels 3 to 7. Qualifications that could be reached through an apprenticeship programme were those from the *Business and Technology Education Council – BTEC* ⁽⁴⁾ and National vocational qualifications (NVQs), amongst others, registered within the competence qualifications framework of Wales (CQFW) ⁽⁵⁾. Apprenticeships could be offered in combination with school-based VET programmes.

Apprenticeships were based on a contract and employers had to pay at least the minimum wage. Apprentices successfully completing their training could be delivered a certificate from Apprenticeship Certification Wales (ACW) ⁽⁶⁾.

1.2. Main actions taken in 2015-19

1.2.1. The 2015 review of the apprenticeship system

A review of the apprenticeship system, including consultations (on aligning apprenticeships to the needs of the Welsh economy, was carried out in 2015. The review considered the following issues:

- (a) responsibility for design and accreditation;
- (b) moving more apprenticeship training above level 2 (European qualifications framework level 3);
- (c) making all apprenticeships occupation-specific;
- (d) how to include key competences and Welsh language in apprenticeships;
- (e) what assessment should look like within the apprenticeship frameworks;

⁽⁴⁾ Combining theoretical and practical vocational education and leading to awards, certificates and diplomas at first (QCF level 2), national (level 3) and higher national (levels 4 and 5) levels.

⁽⁵⁾ Cedefop (2014). [VET in Europe United Kingdom country report](#), page 14.

⁽⁶⁾ ReferNet United Kingdom (2014). [Apprenticeship-type schemes and structured work-based learning programmes – United Kingdom](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives.

- (f) to what extent compatibility with the apprenticeship system in England is a priority.

1.2.2. The 2017 apprenticeship development plan

An apprenticeship development plan *Aligning the apprenticeship model with the needs of the Welsh economy* ⁽⁷⁾ was published in February 2017. Development of the apprenticeship system will be achieved through a phased transition by 2022. Welsh Government will monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes to ensure the plan meets the set objectives and whether it needs to be strengthened and refined. In particular, the government will measure the impact of reforms in a number of areas, including gender, age and ethnicity of apprentices. Key indicators include benefits to learners and employers, particularly in terms of productivity; progression into employment following completion; and apprentice satisfaction ⁽⁸⁾. The plan sets specific targets:

- (a) to create 100 000 all-age new apprenticeships between 2016 and 2022 (funds of GBP 111 million have been committed in the draft budget ⁽⁹⁾ for 2017-18);
- (b) attract more school leavers and young people aged 16 to 19 to apprenticeships;
- (c) developing apprenticeships in growth sectors and emerging job categories;
- (d) developing higher-level skills including apprenticeships at level 4 (EQF level 5) and above. A digital degree apprenticeship was developed in 2018 ⁽¹⁰⁾;
- (e) integrating apprenticeships into the wider education system.

The three regional skills partnerships feed into apprenticeship investment decisions by providing evidence of need. The learning content of apprenticeships is being informed through a combination of recommendations from the partnerships, labour market information and sector reviews carried out by Qualifications Wales. The Wales Apprenticeship Advisory Board (WAAB), formed

⁽⁷⁾ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/aligning-the-apprenticeship-model-to-the-needs-of-the-welsh-economy.pdf>

⁽⁸⁾ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/aligning-the-apprenticeship-model-to-the-needs-of-the-welsh-economy.pdf>

⁽⁹⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2016/161018budget/?lang=en>

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/news/press-releases/press-2018/uwtsd-the-first-university-in-wales-to-offer-digital-degree-apprenticeships.html>
<http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworkslibrary/index.cfm?id=FR04371&back>

under the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB) and employer based (it is chaired by the Confederation of British Industry and includes large employers and SMEs), provides strategic input, robust challenge on skills content and advice on the scope and range of apprenticeship frameworks.

The all-age apprenticeship strand of the plan started in August 2016, targeting those facing difficulties in (re)entering the labour market (mainly people over 50). Automatic progression from level 2 apprenticeships (EQF 3) to level 3 apprenticeships (EQF 4) is being considered.

1.2.3. Shared apprenticeship scheme

In September 2015, the Wales Millennium Centre (WMC), in partnership with Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC), submitted a proposal to the Apprenticeship Unit to establish a Shared apprenticeship scheme for a technical theatre apprenticeship programme in Wales.

The programme established new routes into backstage training in theatres across Wales, delivering practical and work-based skills.

This shared apprenticeship programme provided opportunities for technical theatre apprentices across Wales, especially with the smaller theatres that may not have recruited apprentices in the past.

WMC set up a limited company and employed 10 apprentices in January 2016 for the programme; the Welsh Government committed to the funding for one year and reviewed the outcomes of the project and learner sustainability. At the end of the year, nine learners completed the programme, of which six secured employment with theatre across Wales and one went into self-employment.

More broadly the Welsh Government has four shared apprenticeship projects being delivered, two in construction and two in engineering ⁽¹¹⁾. The first shared apprenticeship model in Wales has been in existence since around 2007. The shared model ⁽¹²⁾ is where apprentices move between different employers who share the responsibility for on-site training. Shared apprenticeship schemes

⁽¹¹⁾ There are currently four notable shared apprenticeship schemes in operation: Y Prentis, who are delivering construction within the Valley Task Force area; Aspire Blaenau Gwent and Aspire Merthyr, who are delivering Engineering within the South Wales Valleys; and Cyfle who are delivering construction in West Wales. A budget of GBP 250,000 to support the development of an apprenticeship scheme in North Wales was approved by the Ministry for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning in August 2018.

⁽¹²⁾ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/work-based-learning-wbl-programme-specification-and-guidance-2015-to-2019.pdf>

must have clear systems to ensure that host employers can give necessary and appropriate support to the apprentice. They have proven popular for enhancing the stock of skills required within a region to address market failure. They provide a delivery option for those employers who want to engage in the apprenticeship programmes but may be unable to provide the breadth and depth of experience that an apprenticeship framework requires.

Shared apprenticeship schemes are predominantly found within the construction and engineering industries but are becoming increasingly popular in other sectors.

1.2.4. Promoting apprenticeship

In July 2018, the Welsh Government launched the promotional campaign *The Answer is Apprenticeships* ⁽¹³⁾. The campaign aimed to attract more people to apprenticeships and contribute to meeting the target of reaching 100 000 apprenticeship starts in Wales. It ran for five weeks on digital channels, social media, radio, buses, trains and TV on demand. It highlighted that apprenticeships could be the answer to gaining the qualifications and skills young people might need for their chosen career. It also signposted people to the apprenticeship matching service on the Careers Wales website where details about levels and subjects are available, and individuals can search the range of opportunities and apply online for vacancies.

(13) <https://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2018/want-to-turn-your-passion-into-a-successful-career-the-answer-is-apprenticeships/?lang=en>
<http://www.careerswales.com/en/your-career/features-1/apprenticeship-options1/>

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 reference point was in place in Wales. It had been set up in 2009 and covered IVET, continuing vocational education and training (CVET)/adult learning and non-formal learning. A *Quality and effectiveness framework (QEF)*, also introduced in 2009, aimed to assure and improve the quality of post-16 learning in Wales. The QEF had been developed in cooperation with Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) to align with the common inspection framework. The QEF provided a set of key performance indicators to use for inspection as well as for self-assessment. All providers were required to carry out an annual self-assessment. Assessment was followed up with quality development plans. The QEF also promoted a continuous improvement culture and learner involvement. All providers were required to have a formal learner involvement strategy, based on guidance published in 2010.

Graduate tracking was in place. Data were collected at multiple measurement points (immediately and three months after graduation) covering all IVET and CVET ⁽¹⁴⁾ learners from post-16 education. Data were published annually (European Commission, ICF 2018).

In 2008, the Sector Skills Development Agency was replaced by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) which took over the task of identifying skills needs ⁽¹⁵⁾. Research work was usually carried out by external institutes, based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative sources including surveys of employers and relevant stakeholders. 21 Sector Skills Councils (SSC) across the United Kingdom would also provide information on skills needs in various sectors (EEPO, 2015).

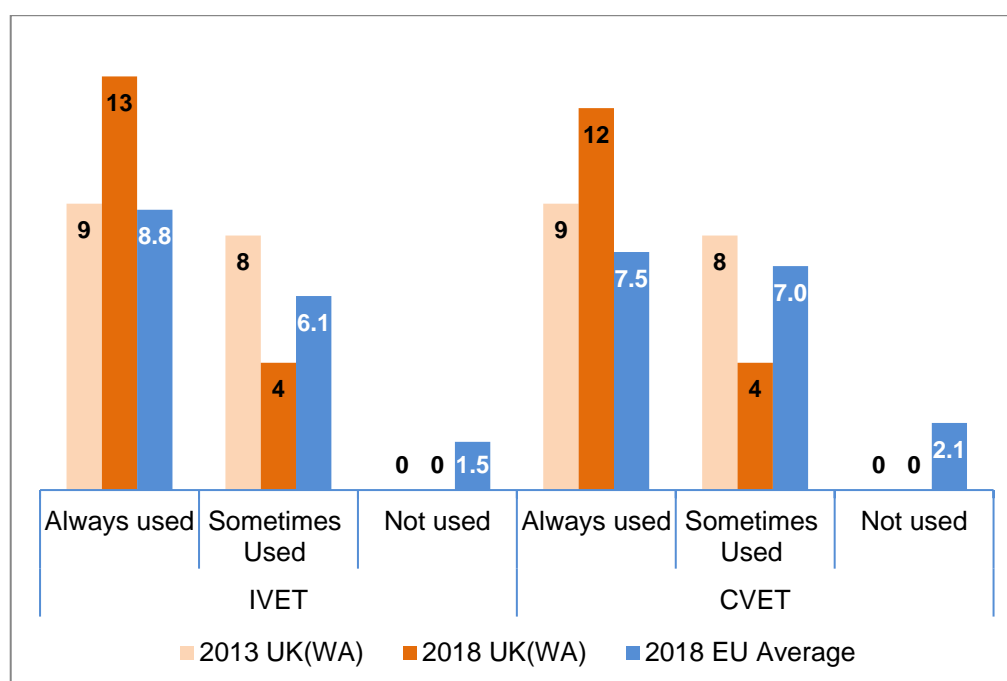
⁽¹⁴⁾ Except, however, CVET provided by companies to their employees.

⁽¹⁵⁾ UKCES ceased operations in March 2017.

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

The situation for the systematic use of the European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1) has remained unchanged compared to 2013. Wales was above the EU average in IVET and CVET in 2018. All EQAVET indicators are used (mostly always).

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



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

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 initial and continuing VET in 2015-19

An independent review of the oversight of post-compulsory education and training in Wales, published in 2016 ⁽¹⁶⁾, made recommendations on developing

⁽¹⁶⁾ *Towards 2030: a framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for wales*, published in 2016.

stronger links between education policy, provision, and social and economic goals to ensure the future needs of Wales are met. The Welsh Government has been developing measures to monitor achievement, post-16 value-added and destinations, with a view to giving a rounded picture of learner outcomes. This will provide comparable information on learners doing similar programmes in further education ⁽¹⁷⁾ and sixth form ⁽¹⁸⁾ settings. Baseline data has now been published on two of the new measures: achievement ⁽¹⁹⁾ and destinations ⁽²⁰⁾. Data on all three of the measures has been issued to schools and colleges. It is intended that information on learner outcomes at provider and course level will be made available to the public via an online portal, provisionally titled Post-16 Choices, to help inform learner choice. This portal is currently in development and it is intended that it will be launched during 2019.

As part of the work on the new performance measures, the Welsh Government has also agreed with the UK Government to take part in a data-linking programme known as the longitudinal education outcomes study (LEOS). The objective is to match learner records with the UK Department for Work and Pensions data on employment, earnings and benefits, giving a more comprehensive picture of learner destinations. The programme was piloted in 2017 and is being mainstreamed from 2018, with the first statistics on learner destinations published in autumn 2018.

In 2016-17, the quality assurance reference point has been using *Erasmus+* funds to carry out a research project in cooperation with the University of South Wales Business School to explore current and future skills and qualifications requirements as well as labour supply gaps.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Courses to students over 16 years of age.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Courses to students in the age range 16 to 19.

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-achievement-value-added/?lang=en>

⁽²⁰⁾ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/consistent-performance-measures-post-16-learning-achievement-learner-destinations/?lang=en>

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, Wales had in place guidance mechanisms. *Careers Wales* offered an all age careers guidance service. The Welsh strategy for further development of careers services was outlined in *Future ambitions: Developing careers services in Wales*. *Careers Wales* also had an Apprenticeship Matching Service available for employers and individual applicants. Careers education and guidance was also provided by schools and colleges in Wales for students aged 14-19. The *Careers and the World of Work* framework also formed part of the curriculum for 11-16 year-olds in maintained schools in Wales ⁽²¹⁾.

3.2. **Main actions taken in 2015-19**

3.2.1. Equal opportunity, equity and inclusion

3.2.1.1. More effective support to young people with learning disabilities

Reviews carried out by the inspectorate for education and training in Wales (Estyn), the Wales audit office and the National Assembly's former Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee identified that current assessment of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) is inefficient, bureaucratic and costly, as well as insufficiently child-centred/user-friendly. Needs are, consequently, sometimes identified late and interventions are not planned or implemented in a timely or effective way, resulting in children and young people not being able to reach their full potential.

⁽²¹⁾ VET in Europe country report for UK, ReferNet UK and Cedefop, pages 42 and 43.

The Welsh government has therefore developed the *Additional learning needs* (ALN) transformation programme ⁽²²⁾, to create a unified system for supporting learners with ALN from 0 to 25. A single statutory plan (the individual development plan) is to replace the variety of statutory and non-statutory SEN plans, as well as the assessment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in schools and further education.

An *Additional learning needs* bill was developed and introduced to an assembly committee in December 2016. A proposed implementation plan for this new additional learning needs system in Wales was published in December 2017 ⁽²³⁾. Royal Assent to the ALN Bill was gained in January 2018 and became an act of law ⁽²⁴⁾. The total investment planned for the programme amounts to GBP 20 million ⁽²⁵⁾. Implementation of The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 is expected to come into force from September 2020.

3.2.1.2. *Lifting barriers for disadvantaged people in apprenticeships*

To address equality issues in apprenticeships, the Welsh government has appointed an equality and diversity champion to work with education and training providers and under-represented groups within the community, taking forward action to help disadvantaged people overcome the barriers they encounter on apprenticeship programmes. A toolkit and bespoke equality and diversity training for the work-based learning network will be developed in response to a review carried out by the equality and diversity champion ⁽²⁶⁾.

In December 2018, the Welsh Government launched the *Inclusive apprenticeships action plan* (part of the Employability plan) aimed to removing the barriers that prevent disabled people undertaking apprenticeships ⁽²⁷⁾. Measures include:

⁽²²⁾ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/additional-learning-special-educational-needs/transformation-programme/?lang=en>

⁽²³⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/education-secretary-outlines-proposed-implementation-plan-for-new-additional-learning-needs-system-in-wales/?lang=en>

⁽²⁴⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2018/100121aIn-bill/?lang=en>

⁽²⁵⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/20m-investment-to-help-those-with-additional-learning-needs-announced/?lang=en>

⁽²⁶⁾ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/aligning-the-apprenticeship-model-to-the-needs-of-the-welsh-economy.pdf>, p. 21.

⁽²⁷⁾ <https://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2018/inclusive-action-plan-to-increase-apprenticeship-opportunities-for-disabled-people/?lang=en>

- (a) raising awareness of apprenticeship provision amongst individuals, parents and carers;
- (b) promoting to employers the support available to disabled people entering into apprenticeships;
- (c) exploring options regarding how apprenticeship criteria can be modified to ensure flexibility to meet the needs of all apprentices while ensuring that the apprentice is still able to train to the required level to be competent in the particular sector;
- (d) reviewing the processes to encourage apprentices to disclose an impairment or health condition, creating a supportive and safe environment for apprentices who make this declaration;
- (e) through Careers Wales, improving assessment processes to identify barriers and, where barriers are identified, following up with individualised support;
- (f) improving routes into apprenticeships for disabled people, also through exploring options for an inclusive 'pre-apprenticeship' programme, which does not duplicate existing provision;
- (g) promoting inclusive recruitment procedures to employers;
- (h) encouraging and facilitating collaborative working between apprenticeship providers and specialist disability and employment organisations.

Specialist disability organisations and key disability stakeholders in Wales were involved in the preparatory phase.

3.2.2. Permeability and flexibility

In 2015, the Welsh Government published a review of programmes leading to levels 4 and 5 (EQF 5) in further education. Several recommendations resulted: taking on board employer needs; encouraging clear progression pathways to higher education; expanding higher education at further education institutions in certain sectors; involving the higher education funding body (Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, HEFCW) and regional skills partnerships in planning; and considering strengthening guidance on franchise arrangements between colleges and universities.

3.2.3. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.2.3.1. Clarifying and coordinating the post-compulsory education landscape

Published in 2016, *Towards 2030: a framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales* ⁽²⁸⁾ suggests that, while quality and performance of the further and higher education sector is good, the post-compulsory education and training landscape could support progression better. One issue is the variety of institutions often offering similar qualifications and courses and a range of different agencies, which render the landscape complex and confusing for learners and stakeholders. Pathways in general academic education are considered clearer than those in VET. The framework suggests setting up clear and flexible learning and career pathways and opportunities. Revision of age 16 as the end of compulsory schooling is also suggested, in view of increasing requirements in skills and competence levels.

The report emphasised the need for the post-compulsory education and training (PCET) sector to avoid operating as several discrete sectors in competition with each other. It advocated collaboration and partnership working between PCET providers of all types, to support learners to reach their potential and to achieve greater alignment with the needs of the labour market.

In *Taking Wales Forward 2016-21* ⁽²⁹⁾ a commitment was made to consult further on the specific recommendations of the report, including the funding, regulation and governance arrangements for further and higher education.

The majority of the report's recommendations were accepted in January 2017. In June 2017, proposals to create a new commission to oversee the higher and further education sector in Wales were published by the Education Secretary ⁽³⁰⁾ as a Welsh Government White Paper titled *Public good and a*

⁽²⁸⁾ <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/25750/1/160310-hazelkorn-report-en.pdf>

⁽²⁹⁾ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2017-08/taking-wales-forward.pdf>

⁽³⁰⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/new-commission-with-responsibility-for-higher-and-further-education-in-wales-to-be-created/?lang=en>
<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>

https://consultations.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultation_doc_files/171204-building-a-reformed-pcet-system-summary-of-responses-en.pdf

<https://beta.gov.wales/tertiary-education-and-research-commission-wales>

<https://beta.gov.wales/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/25750/1/160310-hazelkorn-report-en.pdf>

prosperous Wales – Building a reformed PCET system ⁽³¹⁾. It set out how the new body, referred to as the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER), would succeed the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and fund, monitor and regulate the post-compulsory education and training sector, as well as having responsibility for research and innovation.

It was proposed that the functions of the new commission will include:

- (a) protecting the interests of learners, ensuring that vocational and academic routes are equally valued and making sure Wales has the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive economy;
- (b) strategic planning of educational and skills delivery across all post-compulsory education and training in Wales;
- (c) overseeing and coordinating all Welsh Government research and innovation funding with the aim of creating a more dynamic and responsive-to-need research, innovation and knowledge environment in Wales;
- (d) funding, contracting, quality, financial monitoring and audit of higher education, further education, apprenticeships and adult community learning;
- (e) developing better links between higher and further education and Welsh business.

In addition to the written consultation, the Welsh Government hosted three roadshows around Wales where key stakeholders fed in their views and issues through a workshop format. The learner voice was considered at special sessions within two Skills Cymru events. There were representatives from across the economic sectors at these, too. Some young people under 16 also took part and offered their views in response to key questions.

A specific consultation aimed at young people and protected groups was also commissioned. This consisted of 13 interactive workshops across Wales, involving almost 200 learners ⁽³²⁾.

The workshops gathered information in a non-standardised way; this therefore does not allow for statistical analysis but it does offer a rich qualitative narrative with some useful insights from those directly affected. The consultation was open until 23 October 2017 and received 92 written responses. Following this, a technical consultation *Public good and a prosperous Wales – The next*

⁽³¹⁾ https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-02/170620_consultation-en.pdf

⁽³²⁾ <https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/reformedpost-compulsory-education-and-training-system>

steps, was open between 24 April and 17 July 2018. This consultation explained in more technical detail how the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) might operate. The responses will now be taken into account as the policy develops during the legislative process ⁽³³⁾.

3.2.3.2. *National qualifications framework* ⁽³⁴⁾

The credit and qualifications framework for Wales (CQFW) was launched in 2003. Its module and credit-based approach eases learning and recognition. It can be seen as a second generation framework, based on learning outcomes, and encompassing higher education, general education and vocational qualifications. It is also open to both formally and non-formally acquired qualifications. In 2010, it was linked to EQF as part of the overall UK referencing and is being re-referenced during 2018-19. A review ⁽³⁵⁾ of the CQFW was carried out in 2014. Qualifications Wales, a new Welsh government-sponsored ⁽³⁶⁾ body, was established by the 2015 Qualifications Wales Act as an independent regulator of the Welsh regulated qualifications system. The Welsh Government is in charge of managing the CQFW, in cooperation with Qualifications Wales and HEFCW ⁽³⁷⁾. Also, the regulated qualifications framework (RQF), which was adopted in England and Northern Ireland in 2015, influenced the CQFW. Since 2015, all regulated general and vocational qualifications refer to the knowledge and skills level descriptors, while higher education and non-regulated qualifications continue to refer to the descriptors in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills, autonomy and accountability.

3.2.3.3. *Validation* ⁽³⁸⁾

Although there are opportunities to have non-formal and formal learning recognised, Wales does not have an overall policy specifically for validation. The application of validation is generally devolved to the learning provider, or at times to departments within the learning provider. In principle, all qualifications are open to validation/recognition. The credit and qualifications framework for Wales

⁽³³⁾ <https://beta.gov.wales/tertiary-education-and-research-commission>

⁽³⁴⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽³⁵⁾ Implementation of changes is overseen by the Welsh Government, a CQFW Advisory Group (2015) and Qualifications Wales.

⁽³⁶⁾ But independent of government and accountable to the National Assembly for Wales.

⁽³⁷⁾ Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

⁽³⁸⁾ Cedefop, 2017b; Howley (2016).

is a way of recognising prior non-formal and formal learning through its lifelong learning (LL) pillar. Full qualifications are rarely awarded through validation/recognition: it is most commonly used for admission and can also be used to award higher education credits. Awarding organisations are responsible for quality assurance. In higher education, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) oversees how well individual universities and colleges meet their responsibilities, including for validation/recognition. During 2014-16, a project – *RPL Wales* – has been carried out in the higher education sector, bringing together a consortium of higher education providers to improve their recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures.

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

Within the *Prosperity for all: economic action plan* published in December 2017, the Welsh Government pledges to adapt the national funding formula for further education colleges to support the expansion of courses where there is higher employer and learner demand, as evidenced by regional skills partnerships and where the prospects for learners who complete these courses are good. The objective is to ensure alignment of VET provision with local and regional labour markets' needs ⁽³⁹⁾.

In March 2018, the *Employability plan* ⁽⁴⁰⁾ outlined the framework to support employability, putting emphasis on:

- (a) providing an individualised approach responsive to individual needs and taking account of personal circumstances, barriers, aptitudes and ambitions;
- (b) supporting employers in providing inclusive and fair work while underlining their responsibility to upskill their own workers and secure in-work progression;
- (c) responding to current and projected skills gaps and adapting policies to the changing needs of the market and society;
- (d) preparing for a radical shift in the world of work to ensure the workforce is ready for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow such as automation, artificial intelligence and robotics.

⁽³⁹⁾ <https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-economic-action-plan>

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/employability-plan-progress-report-2018.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2018/new-employability-plan-to-tackle-unemployment-and-economic-inactivity/?lang=en>

The plan addresses those furthest from the labour market, the economically inactive and those in work but at risk of redundancy. It brings together and builds on several existing programmes ⁽⁴¹⁾ to help people build the skills and confidence to find and stay in work and to ensure employers can find the skills they require for their businesses to flourish.

In September, a skills development fund was established ⁽⁴²⁾. With a GBP 10 million budget, the fund aims to boost regional skills provision, targeting job-specific skills gaps as identified by the regional skills partnerships (RSPs). Particular emphasis is on the unemployed and those in low-paid employment. Bids have been made from across Wales, especially by further education colleges working closely with RSPs on key regional priorities. Successful bids began delivery for the 2018/19 academic year in September 2018.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Such as Communities for Work, PaCE, Jobs Growth Wales, ReAct, Better Jobs Closer to Home and Lift.

⁽⁴²⁾ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/employability-plan-progress-report-2018.pdf>
<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5258#C114942>

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, key competences were addressed through the Welsh Baccalaureate, which comprised academic and vocational subjects at EQF level 4, including three Key Skills / Essential Skills Wales qualifications. At least one of the skills had to be Application of Number, Communication or Digital Literacy. The 2015 Welsh government's skills implementation plan focused on ensuring that the future workforce has not only skills valued by employers but also literacy, numeracy and digital skills at least at EQF level 3 ⁽⁴³⁾.

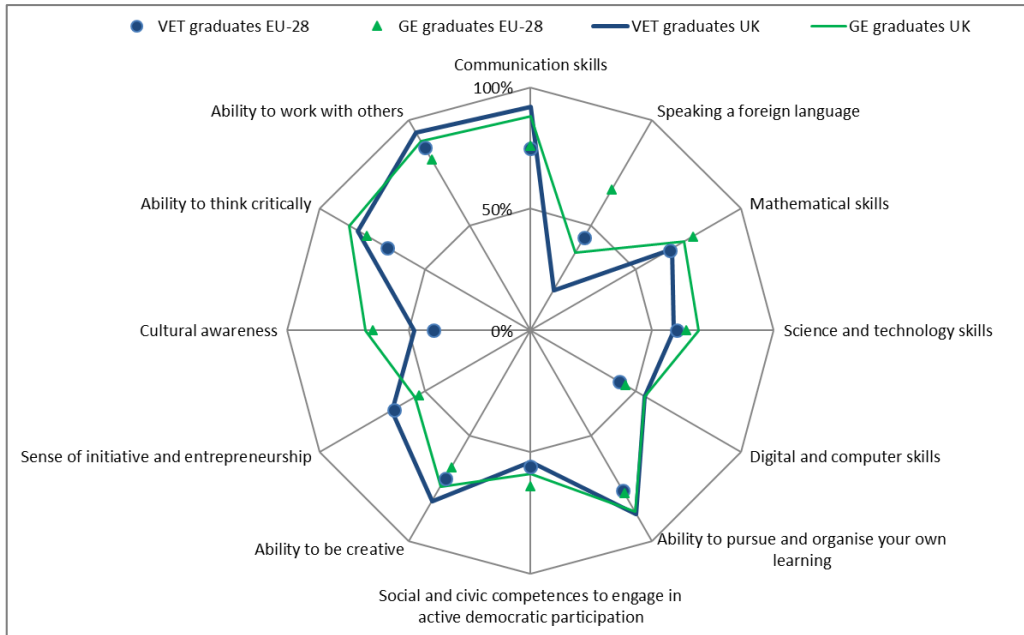
A recent survey ⁽⁴⁴⁾ showed that, in the United Kingdom, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes felt they had:

- (a) stronger (ranged by priority):
 - (i) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
 - (ii) ability to be creative;
 - (iii) ability to work with others;
 - (iv) communication skills;
- (b) weaker:
 - (i) cultural awareness;
 - (ii) foreign language speaking;
 - (iii) science and technology skills (Figure 2).

⁽⁴³⁾ Welsh Government (2014). *Skills implementation plan*.
https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/20493/2/140714-skills-implementation-plan-en_Redacted.pdf

⁽⁴⁴⁾ 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>

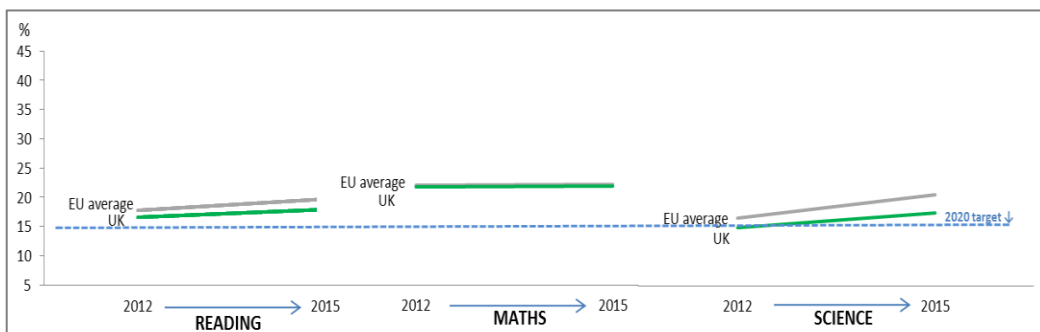
Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education (GE) and VET in 2016**



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 in the United Kingdom was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading and science compared with 2012 (Figure 2). The share of low achievers in the UK 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 (programme for international student assessment) scale.
 Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolled 40% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽⁴⁵⁾, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines the key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. 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	YES	
Foreign languages		
Digital competence		
Maths	YES	
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence		
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package		YES

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

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

4.3. Key competences in initial VET

Since 2015, a new Welsh Baccalaureate framework has supported achievement of a skills certificate, which consists of a community challenge, a global citizenship challenge and an enterprise and employability challenge, as well as a personal investigation. Through the challenges and personal investigation, the skills certificate assesses learner development in ⁽⁴⁶⁾:

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Calculated from Eurostat; data for 2015.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see UK NARIC, 2016.

- (a) literacy;
- (b) numeracy;
- (c) digital literacy;
- (d) critical thinking and problem solving;
- (e) planning and organisation;
- (f) creativity and innovation;
- (g) personal effectiveness.

A mathematics ‘task and finish group’ suggested in November 2015 that all schools should develop a strategic approach to teaching mathematics, if such an approach is not already in place. The Welsh Government accepted the recommendations of this report.

A consultation ⁽⁴⁷⁾ on a Welsh Government draft strategy *A million Welsh speakers by 2050* was held between 1 August and 31 October 2016. Responses in relation to the further education sector suggested expanding the provision of Welsh-medium education in colleges to meet demand and to increase the opportunities for people to continue with their education through Welsh. Comments also considered how to attract people to Welsh-medium courses in further and higher education, along with creating a clear route for students through the education system into jobs where Welsh language skills are needed in the workplace. The *A million Welsh speakers* strategy and accompanying work programme for the period 2017-21 were published in 2017 ⁽⁴⁸⁾. Plans are set out to increase Welsh-medium and bilingual (Welsh and English) course provision in terms of availability and learner uptake, including work-based learning and assessment, as well as developing marketing campaigns in collaboration with employers to raise awareness of the value of bilingual skills. Research by the Welsh education and training provider inspectorate from June 2017 found that while most of the teaching in lessons that are delivered in Welsh or bilingually was good, too few learners continued their studies in the Welsh language after compulsory schooling ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

The scope of the National Welsh College (Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol) was also extended. The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was established in 2011 in order to plan, develop, coordinate and promote Welsh-medium higher education. Through strategic and academic planning, the Coleg works with higher education

⁽⁴⁷⁾ <https://beta.gov.wales/consultations>

⁽⁴⁸⁾ <https://gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-our-plan-2017-2021>

⁽⁴⁹⁾ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Bilingual%20Teaching%20in%20FE.pdf>

institutions to develop Welsh-medium provision across Wales, building on the Welsh-medium provision which already existed and developing capacity within institutions where there was no previous provision. The Welsh Education Secretary announced in December 2017 that Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's role will now be expanded to include further education colleges and the work-based learning sector. This follows a review published in July 2017 that concluded the Coleg makes a key contribution to Welsh-medium provision in the higher education sector and that its remit should be expanded. A specialist planning board will be established to support the current staff of colleges and training providers to develop their skills in order to teach bilingually, develop Welsh-medium teaching resources, and promote the opportunities and benefits for learners. Consideration will also be given to how the capacity of the vocational sector to assess through the medium of Welsh could be developed ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

4.4. Key competences in continuing VET

Following a review of qualifications carried out in 2012, a set of essential skills ⁽⁵¹⁾ qualifications at levels 1 to 3 (EQF 2-4) was designed to assess the skills that learners need for successful learning, employment and life. Essential skills include communication, application of number, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, planning and organisation, creativity and innovation, and personal effectiveness. Guidelines for teaching and assessment of these essential skills entered into force in September 2015.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/coleg-cymraeg-cenedlaethols-role-to-be-expanded/?lang=en>

<http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2017/responsetocccctaskandfinishgroupreport/?lang=en>

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/welshmededuca/review-of-the-activities-of-the-coleg-cymraeg-cenedlaethol/?lang=en>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/review-of-the-activities-of-the-coleg-cymraeg-cenedlaethol-the-task-and-finish-group%27s-report-welsh-language-and-welsh-medium-education.pdf>

⁽⁵¹⁾ <http://qualificationswales.org/english/qualifications/essential-skills-wales/>

CHAPTER 5.

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

5.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, VET teaching in Wales was faced with the need for upskilling teaching staff, in particular to cope with the introduction of the new Welsh Baccalaureate ⁽⁵²⁾.

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

Lecturers in FE colleges were required to hold a teaching qualification, such as a certificate in education or postgraduate certificate in education.

VET teaching staff in Wales use the professional titles of lecturers, teachers, tutors, assessors and trainers.

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

Professionals providing training or coaching to apprentices in companies (in-company trainers) had to comply with the requirements of the employer and any regulations specific to the occupational area. Professionals and companies determined how they stay up to date on industry specific matters.

5.1.3. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD

The Common contract for further education (FE) colleges, introduced in 2013, required FE colleges in Wales to provide each member of their staff with a minimum 30 hours continuing professional development (CPD) per year. It was left at the discretion of each individual college to choose and organise the CPD activities. Needs for staff development were identified at national level by education provider inspectorates. However, the main responsibility for identification of training needs rested with individual education and training providers.

⁽⁵²⁾ Department for Education and Skills (2012). *Review of qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales*.

<https://qualificationswales.org/media/1234/121127reviewofqualificationsen.pdf>

CollegesWales delivered CPD programmes for FE practitioners in areas such as preparing teachers for teaching new general qualifications, and a suite of essential skills including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. Courses in education leadership were available from the Centre for Continuing Professional Learning at the University of Wales. Colleges also developed virtual learning platforms with a range of online modules on topics such as health and safety and safeguarding vulnerable learners, as well as pedagogical training for part-time lecturers. Colleges could also provide training to support 'at risk' groups, disadvantaged learners, adult learners and the use of ICT to develop entrepreneurial skills. The Education Workforce Council (EWC) also had a service where external mentors were matched to non-qualified teachers.

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

Following the 2014 education (Wales) Act, a new Education Workforce Council (EWC) was set up in April 2015 as the independent regulator for further education teachers (who teach vocational subjects in school-based VET settings) and learning support staff. The EWC replaced the General Teaching Council Wales. Further education teachers have to register with the EWC. From April 2016, registration requirements were extended to further education learning support workers. Learning support workers who are eligible for registration but are not currently registered cannot commence work until they are registered. Any practitioner who is ineligible for registration in the category of registration for the work they wish to undertake should not be employed. Colleges and supply agencies are supposed, from this date on, to make pre-employment checks on the online EWC register ⁽⁵³⁾ to ensure that the practitioner is registered in the relevant category of registration prior to commencing work.

Professional standards were developed and launched for further education and work-based learning practitioners. These have several aims: improving the quality of teaching and learning; providing a framework for initial and continuing professional training; supporting improved practice informed by evidence-based reflection; aiding understanding of the professionalism of the sector; and providing a reference point for organisations to use in their thinking about professional development. The standards were developed with a working group

⁽⁵³⁾ <http://ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/registration/applying-for-registration>

of practitioners and other stakeholders, and were put in place for use by learning providers from November 2017 onwards ⁽⁵⁴⁾.

5.3. Initial training for VET trainers in enterprises 2015-19

The Welsh government decided to extend to all work-based learning practitioners the obligation to register with the Education Workforce Council as of 2017. Prior consultation was carried out from January to April 2016, as registration to the council has implications in terms of extending specific entry standards to work-based learning practitioners, providing them with professional status, and raising public trust and confidence. As a result, work-based learning practitioners are required since 1 April 2017 to register with the EWC. This includes any person employed to coordinate, deliver and assess or support work-based learning, for example as a trainer, assessor, learning coach or mentor, but not quality assurer (internal or external). Employers are required to employ only registered work-based learning practitioners and conduct pre-employment checks of the EWC register. There will be no qualification prerequisite for registration. Registration of work-based learning practitioners with the EWC will provide, for the first time, comprehensive information on the workforce, levels of qualifications, and development needs ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

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

The Education Secretary announced in November 2016 that a national network of excellence for mathematics ⁽⁵⁶⁾ was to be set up to boost standards in Welsh

⁽⁵⁴⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2017/new-teaching-standards-for-further-education-and-work-based-learning-workforce/?lang=en>
<http://learning.gov.wales/resources/collections/professional-standards?lang=en#collection-3>
<http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/171129-fe-wbl-professional-standards-en.pdf>

⁽⁵⁵⁾ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/aligning-the-apprenticeship-model-to-the-needs-of-the-welsh-economy.pdf>

⁽⁵⁶⁾ <http://gov.wales/newsroom/educationandskills/2016/new-national-network-of-excellence-for-mathematics-to-be-created/?lang=en>

schools. This was followed by an announcement in January 2017 to establish a national network of excellence for science and technology. The networks became operational in 2017 and involve schools, universities and regional consortia working together to provide a structured approach for support for ages three to 18 in schools and colleges. The networks support leadership development, helping teachers, teaching assistants, further education lecturers and others to develop improved classroom practice. They provide guidance, access to conferences and events on effective teaching practice for schools and colleges, as well as accredited evidence-based professional development programmes for staff to improve their subject knowledge and subject teaching and learning. Schools receive support and knowledge from experts and specialists, including information on tried and tested approaches to improving attainment and high-quality teaching resources ⁽⁵⁷⁾.

Implementation of the common contract for further education colleges, fully in place for general further education colleges since September 2016, has specified a requirement for a minimum amount of CPD per year for each member of staff.

The *Additional learning needs* transformation programme also focuses on skills development for the education workforce to deliver effective support to learners with ALN in the classroom. The programme focuses on core skills development for all practitioners. A two-year funding grant to local authorities and further education institutions will support developing person-centred practice skills across the workforce ⁽⁵⁸⁾. A small team of ALN transformation leads are responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the *Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018* across Wales ⁽⁵⁹⁾.

The EWC has developed the *Learning exchange*, launched in September 2016, as part of a centrally-funded platform allowing teachers and learners to access digital resources in the classroom. The *Learning exchange* provides practitioners with access to a searchable database of regional, national and international learning opportunities for science, technology, engineering and

⁽⁵⁷⁾ <https://hwb.gov.wales/nnem/about-us>
<https://hwb.gov.wales/news/articles/aac56056-1b6c-4404-95b2-fe09278c2694>

⁽⁵⁸⁾ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/additional-learning-special-educational-needs/transformation-programme/?lang=en>

⁽⁵⁹⁾ <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/additional-learning-special-educational-needs/transformation-programme/implementation-transition-support/aln-transformation-leads/?lang=en>

mathematics (STEM), information and communication technology (ICT) and computing subjects ⁽⁶⁰⁾.

The EWC was also commissioned by the Welsh government to develop the *Professional learning passport* (PLP), officially launched in September 2016. The PLP is an e-portfolio hosted on the EWC website as a free online resource available to all registered practitioners. It offers a national platform where registered practitioners can record their career-long professional learning centrally in a way which can be transferred easily if they move between employers. A key part of the professional development of the registered education workforce, the PLP will support practitioners with their professional learning through their careers, in recording and allowing for reflecting on the development of their practice at different career stages. The EWC highlights several benefits to using the PLP as central storage of all learning documentation: recording development activities; gathering evidence of individual performance reviews and development cycle; assisting progress towards a qualification or professional standard; helping plan career progression; accessing links to resources to help with planning, recording and reflecting; and possible sharing and collaboration of a group project, or sharing information with a line manager ⁽⁶¹⁾.

In November 2016, the EWC launched the first national education workforce survey on behalf of the Welsh government. Separate online surveys were developed for school and further education teachers and learning support workers. The surveys included questions in key areas such as awareness of curriculum reforms, workload, professional development and performance management. Results from the survey were published in May 2017 ⁽⁶²⁾.

5.5. CPD for VET trainers in enterprises 2015-18

The *Essential skills Wales* (ESW) document issued in April 2016 provides information and guidance on the rationale for qualifications and outlines their characteristics; it includes subject-specific guidance on assessment and access

⁽⁶⁰⁾ <http://www.ewc.wales/learningexchange/index.php/en/>

⁽⁶¹⁾ <http://ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/professional-development/professional-learning-passport>

⁽⁶²⁾ <https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/statistics-and-research/national-education-workforce-survey.html>

requirements for those involved in implementing and/or quality assuring the qualifications.

Registration with the EWC brings access to the professional learning passport (Section 5.3) and other CPD resources and opportunities exclusively available to EWC registrants.

The Welsh Government has commissioned a scoping study on professional learning in the post-16 sector, which will consider the initial qualifications and 'in service' professional learning needs of practitioners delivering further education, work-based learning and adult learning. The study, carried out by ICF Consulting and EWC, will be completed in 2019 and will make recommendations to inform future policy on post-16 professional learning.

Statistical overview: 2019 update

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

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in the United Kingdom and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	UK	f	EU	f	Yr	UK	f	EU	f	Range	UK	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	40.1		47.3	ce	'17	46.6		47.8	ce	'15-'17	6.5	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	54.1		28.3	ce	'17	48.8		27.9	ce	'15-'17	-5.4	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	39.2		68.1	ce	'17	49		68.6	ce	'15-'17	9.7	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	30.4		40.8		'15	30.4		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	52		34		'15	52		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	15.7		10.7		'18	14.6		11.1		'15-'18	-1.1	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	85.7		72.6		'15	85.7		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	40.1		42	ce	'17	47.6		42.7	ce	'15-'17	7.5	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	30.3		30		'15	30.3		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	33.2		33		'18	33.5		33		'15-'18	0.3	0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	12.1		6.9		'18	11.2		7.3		'15-'18	-0.9	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	6.8		4.3		'18	5.8		4.3		'15-'18	-1	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	14.3		9.5		'18	13.1		10.7		'15-'18	-1.2	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	83.6		79.4				

Indicator label	2015				Last available year				Recent change			
	UK	f	EU	f	Yr	UK	f	EU	f	Range	UK	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.5		0.5	ce	'16	0.5		0.5	ce	'15-'16	0	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	7.4		7.1	ce	'16	6.5		7.4	ce	'15-'16	-0.9	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	1.3		0.9		'15	1.3		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			1	ce	'17			1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)			29.2	ce	'17	23.3		29.1	ce	'15-'17	23.3	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates					'17	5.9	d	14.3	b ce	'15-'17		
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16			37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	79		77.2		'18	80.5		80.5		'15-'18	1.5	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	-3.4		5.4		'18	-2.4		6.6		'15-'18	1	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	22		23.7		'18	14.8		23.3		'15-'18	-7.2	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	84.9		83.7		'15	84.9		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	58.1		57		'15	58.1		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	10.8		11		'18	10.7		10.6		'15-'18	-0.1	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	47.9		38.7		'18	48.8		40.7		'15-'18	0.9	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	14.5		15.8		'18	13.4		13.7		'15-'18	-1.1	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	6.7		12.9		'18	5		9.4		'15-'18	-1.7	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	85		75.9		'18	86		80.6		'15-'18	1	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	20.3		23.5		'18	19.6		21.9		'15-'18	-0.7	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	76.8		70		'18	78.7		73.1		'15-'18	1.9	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	59.7		52.6		'18	65.1		56.1		'15-'18	5.4	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	88.4	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, 46.6% of all upper secondary students in the United Kingdom were enrolled in IVET. This percentage is 1.2 points below the EU average. However, it appears that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is higher by 6.5 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 48.8% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting, which is substantially lower (5.4 points less) than in 2015. In contrast, the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 14.6 % of adults participated in lifelong learning activities which is lower (1.1 points less) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 80.5%, equal to the EU average. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 1.5 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Wales has been reforming its apprenticeship system, aligning it to the needs of the economy. Information and feedback loops to guide the strategy for VET development have been reinforced. Initiatives were taken for more equity and inclusion in the access for all to VET and qualifications. Actions were initiated to support progression in further education and from further education to higher education. Work was carried out on the credit and qualifications framework for Wales and validation of prior learning. Developments took place in relation to the acquisition of key competences both in initial and continuing VET. Wales was also active in structuring and strengthening the initial and continuing training of further education teachers, learning support staff, and in-company trainers.

The main changes in 2017 have taken place in MTDs 3 and 4. In MTD 3, work on setting up a new Tertiary Education and Research Commission in charge of regulating the post-compulsory education and training sector was initiated (Section 3.2.3.1). In MTD 4, extension of the role of the National Welsh College in relation to supporting competence in the Welsh language was announced (Section 4.3).

Compared to 2015-2017, the main changes in 2018 have taken place in MTDs 1 and 3. In MTD 1, the promotional campaign *The answer is apprenticeships* was launched (Section 1.2.4). In MTD 3, an Inclusive apprenticeships action plan, aimed at removing the barriers that prevent disabled people undertaking apprenticeships, was started (Section 3.2.1.2). An Employability plan was set up (Section 3.2.4) and a skills development fund established (Section 3.2.4).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions are being addressed.

Acronyms

AES	adult education survey
ALN	additional learning needs
CPD	continuing professional development
CQFW	credit and qualifications framework for Wales
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESW	Essential skills Wales
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
EWC	Education Workforce Council
GDP	gross domestic product
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
ICT	information and communication technology
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
LDD	learning difficulties or disabilities
LEOS	longitudinal education outcomes study
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PLP	professional learning passport
PPS	purchasing power standards
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QALL	quality assured lifelong learning
QEF	quality and effectiveness framework
RPL	recognition of prior learning
RQF	regulated qualifications framework
SEN	special education needs
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VET	vocational education and training
WESB	Wales Employment and Skills Board

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