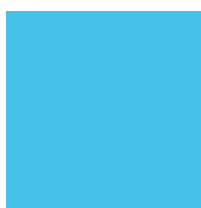
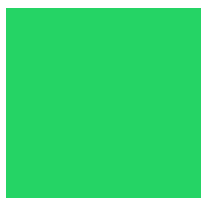
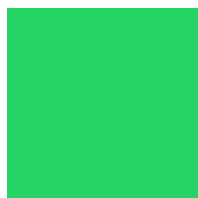

IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN PRIORITIES IN VET

Making national VET agile,
flexible, innovative, attractive,
inclusive and quality assured

HUNGARY



Thematic perspective

on implementing European priorities in VET in line with national
implementation plans (NIPs)
HUNGARY

[Thematic perspectives](#) provide national overviews of specific themes in a common format and offer comparative dimension across the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

This thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) policies and systems provided in [VET in Europe database](#) and the [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#). The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2023.

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction

The VET 4.0 Strategy and its Action Plan lay the foundation for VET developments in Hungary until 2030. The strategic objectives laid down in these documents form the priorities set out in the NIP.

Taking into account the experiences of the reformed VET system introduced from the 2020/21 school year and the expectations of the European Union regarding vocational and adult education, the VET 4.0 Strategy, initially endorsed in 2019, was refined, its indicators were revised, adapted to the legislation in force and its interventions were updated in 2023. An Action Plan to the VET 4.0 Strategy was also prepared. On 16 November 2023, the Government adopted the [revised VET 4.0 Strategy and the related Action Plan](#) by Government Decision 1499/2023 (16.11.). The Action Plan, which covers the period up to 2030 and contains measures and specific deadlines for implementing the Strategy's interventions and objectives, helps to monitor the implementation of the commitments included in the Strategy.

The review of the VET 4.0 Strategy and the preparation of the Action Plan ensure that the strategic objectives set out in the NIP are updated and developments are aligned with the priorities of the [VET Recommendation](#) and the objectives of the [Osnabrück Declaration](#).

The Action Plan 2030 sets out measures and specific deadlines for implementing the interventions and targets of the adopted Strategy, and also helps to monitor their implementation. This allows for continuous feedback and fine-tuning.

The Strategy outlines 10 priority areas for developing VET and adult training to enhance competitiveness, sustainability, and progress. These priorities, aligned with EU goals and forming the basis for the NIP, are as follows.

- (a) Adapting to the fourth industrial revolution: VET and adult training must equip graduates with skills required by companies. A focus is placed on promoting the green transition by identifying and teaching green skills.
- (b) Cooperation in VET policy: policies should address regional economic needs. Labour market forecasting, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), and economic chambers play a key role in defining workforce needs of the economy.
- (c) Strengthening dual VET: The dual VET model should attract both learners and providers, especially large companies with educational resources. Sectoral Training Centres is a way forward to engage SMEs in practical training, by facilitating joint participation.
- (d) Renewing career guidance: modernising career guidance nationwide is essential, including experience-based counselling and using Digital Community Creative Workshops (DCCWS).
- (e) Modernising VET infrastructure: the 21st Century VET School development programme aims to upgrade state-run VET schools with modern facilities and digital teaching materials for advanced technologies.
- (f) Reducing school dropout rates: tackling early school leaving requires flexible education pathways like the Orientation year, the Springboard programme and the School workshop programme. Real-time monitoring of school leaving and financial incentives for learners, such as scholarships and vocational employment contracts aim

to support these efforts.

- (g) Improving VET school management: VET institutions must adopt a comprehensive Quality Management System (QMS) for better efficiency and professionalism.
- (h) Partnerships between VET and higher education: strengthening connections between upper secondary VET and higher education includes harmonising programme content and supporting further studies in higher education for students with technician qualifications in the same specialisation.
- (i) Supporting VET teachers: a comprehensive career development initiative aims for a specialised career model, evaluation system, continuing professional development (CPD), and involvement of industry experts in VET.
- (j) Flexible adult education and training: Adult education and training should meet economic demands by recognising prior learning to shorten training time and ensuring training outcomes match labour market needs.

CHAPTER 2. Main policy developments in 2023

2.1 Agile and resilient VET, adaptive to labour market needs

In 2023, the [Register of vocational qualifications](#) (nationally referred to as the Register of vocational occupations) was further expanded, thus, the effective register now contains 177 vocational qualifications.

The range of business entities eligible for registration as [dual training placements](#) has been expanded under the 2023 amendment to the VET Act, now including small-scale farmers.

Under the 2023 amendment to the VET Act, if a VET student does not hold a vocational employment contract by the end of the first month of the school year, it is presumed that the student's participation in [dual training](#) cannot be ensured. Economic chambers assess registered companies to determine their capacity to accommodate students. They issue certificates in justified cases, confirming that placements could not be ensured, thereby contributing to efforts to support student participation in dual training.

2.2 Flexible VET, providing progression and lifelong learning opportunities

If a student or adult acquires a partial qualification through a School workshop (*Műhelyiskola*) programme and wishes to pursue a full vocational qualification, they may continue their studies in specialised vocational education at the VET institution without a special admission process (for more information on specialized vocational education, see Chapter 4). A partial qualification, defined in the Programme and Outcome Requirements, represents a component of a vocational qualification (though not all qualifications have one). It equips learners with competences for at least one job, whereas full vocational qualifications prepare them for multiple roles listed in the Hungarian Standard Classification of Occupations (FEOR). VET institutions and adult training providers can offer training for partial qualifications, supporting [permeability and flexibility in VET](#).

Under the 2023 amendment to the VET Act, [sectoral foundational education](#) for adults

allows up to half of the compulsory hours required under student status to be delivered via distance learning (For more information on sectoral foundational education, see Chapter 4.).

As of 1 July 2023, under the amended VET Act, participation in the Springboard (*Dobbantó*) programme is now possible from the age of 15 instead of 16, with no upper age limit. The programme enables progression to upper secondary VET without a lower secondary certificate and aims to reintegrate early school leavers into education promptly, before the end of compulsory schooling.

Under the 2023 amendment to the VET Act, from the 2023/24 school year onwards, the [organisation of the school year](#) in general education and VET is governed by separate ministerial decrees. This allows for the specification of unique time frames and dates for IVET, reflecting the distinct nature of VET, such as the scheduling of summer apprenticeships.

The 2023 amendment to the VET Act allows dual training placements to conclude fixed-term (shorter term) vocational employment contracts twice a year, each lasting at least two weeks but not exceeding a total of 12 weeks per year. Workers aged 18 and over may participate in dual training for up to eight hours a day, while those under 18 are limited to seven hours a day. This supports the [provision of practical training through vocational employment contracts](#) (formerly apprenticeship contracts) by dual placements.

The 2023 amendment to the Adult Training Act allows registered businesses to reduce their tax liability by 100% of the base amount established for this purpose. Dual training placements qualify for the tax reduction based on the hours spent in dual training, even if the adult participant has an existing employment contract elsewhere.

As of 1 July 2023, under the amended VET Act, [companies have two options for training their employees](#):

- If the employer is registered as a dual training placement by the economic chambers,
- (a) the employer may maintain the existing employment contract and, in addition, conclude a vocational employment contract with the employee for the duration of specialised vocational education;
 - (b) alternatively, the existing employment contract can be modified to accommodate the training; however, such a modified contract is not considered a vocational employment contract and does not qualify for tax relief.

If the employer is not registered as a dual training placement, only the second option (modifying the existing employment contract) is available.

2.3 Innovative and excellent VET

In 2023, a VET school ranking was developed for the first time to support career guidance. The ranking includes the TOP 100 technicums and is based on six indicators, making it a useful tool for monitoring academic performance. It also [enhances the schools' marketing efforts](#) and visibility while aiding students in making informed career choices when selecting a vocational path. The electronically available VET school ranking is published once a year ⁽¹⁾.

In 2023, a total of 11 expert working groups were set up on a sectoral basis in Wood and furniture industry, Education, Electronics and electrical engineering, Mechanical engineering,

(1) <https://ikk.hu/p/technikumi-rangsor-20232>

Specialised mechanical and vehicle engineering, Chemical industry, Environmental preservation and water, Food industry, Transport and freighting, Sport and Creative sectors. The groups focus on two new VET programmes: flexible learning pathways and certified technician programmes. These initiatives involve 52 VET teachers who are recognised in their profession and bring an innovative approach. The expert working groups help the [professional development of VET teachers](#) in the given sector by organising professional days, developing model documents, project tasks and further training programmes. PD: VET teacher initial and continuing training requirements and career opportunities.

In 2023, the priority project, 'RRF-2.2.2-23 – Professional support for the 21st century VET school development programme', was launched ⁽²⁾ enabling the renovation of additional vocational training institutions. This initiative builds on the [earlier 21st century VET school development programme](#), a nationwide initiative to [modernise state-owned VET institutions](#) ⁽³⁾. The programme aims to create an attractive learning environment in VET centres, by improving the quality of vocational education, upgrading institutional buildings, and developing classrooms, workshops, laboratories, and community spaces with energy-efficient solutions. It also focuses on modernising the equipment used in these schools. The developments will take place across 34 locations belonging to 31 institutions within 18 VET centres nationwide, with a total investment of nearly HUF 96 billion (EUR 243 633 600).

In 2023, the Digital Renewal Operational Programme Plus (DIMOP Plus) projects were launched ⁽⁴⁾, focusing on the digitalisation and digital competence development of businesses, educational institutions, and the general population. In education, these initiatives include the development of a unified service for managing cross-sectoral educational records, such as digital platforms like KRETA - an electronic school management system that enables VET teachers to standardise teaching records. Additionally, the programme will support the creation of a new learning support platform and related services, alongside the development of training content on digital pedagogical methodologies, aligning with the priorities of [green and digital transition in Hungarian VET](#).

A higher education institution (HEI) may establish a pre-study student status for students enrolled in a certified technician IVET programme. This status allows students to take part in partial studies or courses within a degree programme offered by the HEI, supporting the goal of [improving the permeability and flexibility of VET](#). Additionally, they can gain admission to the higher education institution without going through the central admission procedure. HEI can collaborate with VET institutions to support these students, particularly by utilising digital curricula in line with the Act on VET. Upon successfully completing their studies, students with pre-study status receive a micro-credential, which recognises the knowledge they have gained. If the micro-credential aligns with the same field of study as the student's IVET programme and they pass the central higher education admission procedure, this knowledge may be credited towards a bachelor's degree programme at the issuing institution. Pre-study student status concludes once the student earns their certified technician certificate.

⁽²⁾ https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10040&Itemid=322

⁽³⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/hungary-modernising-vocational-schools-meet-21st-century-sectoral-skill-needs>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://kormany.hu/hirek/huszonot-felhivassal-elindult-a-dimop-plusz>

2.4 Attractive VET, based on modern and digitalised provision

In 2023, the first intensive communication campaign was launched to promote the dual training model to both companies and students. Using campaign films, billboards, and social media channels, the initiative effectively delivers information about vocational training opportunities to target audiences, supporting [guidance-related objectives](#).

2.5 Inclusive VET promoting equal opportunities

As part of efforts to [improve the permeability and flexibility of VET](#), the scholarship for students participating in flexible learning pathways was doubled starting from the 2023/24 school year. Additionally, the general vocational scholarship for talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds, supported under the Apáczai Scholarship Programme, was also doubled for students in the ninth and tenth grades of technical schools.

Since 1 July 2023, the wages and other benefits for individuals participating in training under a vocational employment contract are determined in proportion to the duration of the contract. For full-time work, the minimum gross wage is HUF 100 000 (EUR 260), and the maximum is HUF 168 000 (EUR 437). Wages earned through a vocational employment contract are exempt from social contribution tax and personal income tax but are subject to social insurance contributions. These measures align with efforts to [strengthen work-based learning \(WBL\) and apprenticeship approaches](#).

According to the Adult Learning Act, amended in 2023, students enrolled in higher VET, any cycle of higher education, or professional courses after graduation—regardless of their work schedule—may be eligible for a Hungarian state (partial) scholarship.

2.6 VET underpinned by quality assurance

According to the government's decision, VET teachers' salaries increased by 10% from January 2023 and by another 5% retroactively from May. These raises were linked to the teacher performance evaluation system introduced in the 2022/23 school year, which is a key component of the [quality management system developed by VET schools](#) in 2022.

CHAPTER 3. Involvement of VET stakeholders in the implementation of policy developments related to NIP

The Ministry of Culture and Innovation (KIM) ⁽⁵⁾ is responsible for the governance of VET and Adult Learning (AL), with additional involvement from ministries responsible for various sectors. E.g. the Ministry of Interior (BM) ⁽⁶⁾ is responsible for the healthcare, and artistic sectors, and manages police training. Military cadet training is governed by the Ministry of Defense (HM) ⁽⁷⁾, while agricultural training by the Ministry of Agriculture (AM) ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://kormany.hu/kulturalis-es-innovacios-miniszterium>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://kormany.hu/belugyminiszterium>

⁽⁷⁾ <https://kormany.hu/honvedelmi-miniszterium>

⁽⁸⁾ <https://kormany.hu/agrarminiszterium>

VET is managed by the Government through the Minister responsible for VET and through the VET Centres. The IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Nonprofit Plc. (IKK), the National Office for VET and AL (NSZFH), and the metropolitan and county government offices are involved in the management. In 2023, there were 41 VET Centres and their 362 VET institutions under the responsibility of the KIM, and 5 VET Centres and their 55 VET institutions under the responsibility of the AM.

VET can be provided in schools run by churches and foundations. In Hungary, higher vocational education is part of the universities.

According to the above, vocational education is provided in state VET institutions and in non-state VET institutions maintained by a maintainer with a cooperation agreement signed by the Minister responsible for VET.

The IKK ⁽⁹⁾ (the IKK Nonprofit Plc. operates under the founding authority and professional guidance of the KIM) provides methodological support for the operation of VET. It serves as a professional and information centre for the development of the digital vocational VET system. Its activities include supporting the planning and implementation of developments in VET, career guidance, revising training and examination requirements, and enhancing the expertise of VET teachers through the Teachers' Continuing Training System (OTR). The IKK also plays a key role in renewing adult training and VET by developing and maintaining online platforms that facilitate digital learning, resource sharing, and collaboration.

The National Office for VET and Adult Learning (NOVETAL) ⁽¹⁰⁾, an agency of the KIM, undertakes maintenance and state administration tasks. It is responsible for the expert and methodological development of activities related to the functions of the state administration body for VET. In this capacity, it regularly performs analysis and evaluation tasks for the Minister responsible for VET, VET Centres, and VET institutions, either with specified content or upon request. NOVETAL also manages the VET textbook register and oversees the distribution of VET textbooks. It contributes to developing requirements for vocational baccalaureate examinations, ensuring alignment with uniform principles, and supports the preparation of examination papers, assessment guidelines, and related documents. Additionally, it operates and develops the career development system to support the continuous improvement of vocational education and training.

The Metropolitan and County Government Office ⁽¹¹⁾ performs the tasks of the authorities at the territorial level.

The State has set up and operates the National Employment Service (NFSZ) ⁽¹²⁾ to carry out its labour market related tasks. The aim of the Labour Market Forecasts and Barometer (MMPP) operated by the NFSZ is to provide workers, jobseekers, employers and training providers with useful information on expected labour market trends. They assist in job search, career guidance, labour management decisions and the planning of training programmes by making available on-line aggregated data on business opinions and expectations on expected labour demand and employment.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://ikk.hu/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.nive.hu/>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://kormanyhivatalok.hu/>

⁽¹²⁾ <https://nfsz.munka.hu/>

Since its establishment in 2018, the VET Innovation Council (SZIT)⁽¹³⁾ has been continuously operating as a high-level professional forum for stakeholders in VET. National strategic issues in VET are coordinated through the SZIT. It works with stakeholders to formulate proposals to policy makers for a demand-driven approach to the reform of the VET system. It has an important role in monitoring the transformation of VET. Through its thematic working groups, it assists the processes supporting the VET operation and development. The members of the SZIT are governmental bodies, trade unions and professional organisations, representatives of VET teachers and students, representatives of nationalities, churches with cooperation agreements, VET institutes and higher education institutions and their maintainers, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, economic chambers and large companies.

Economic stakeholders, coordinated by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, established SSCs⁽¹⁴⁾ in July 2018. These councils play a key role in developing new vocational education and training (VET) content, ensuring it aligns with evolving labour market needs. As the 4th industrial revolution introduces new jobs and professions, the training structure and content must be continuously updated to reflect the required new skills and competences. The SSCs contribute expert proposals from business organisations in each sector to support the ongoing modernisation of VET curricula, ensuring they meet the changing demands of the economy. In 2023, SSCs operated in 19 sectors.

The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MKIK)⁽¹⁵⁾ coordinates the work of the SSCs, and is responsible for, among other things, the registration of dual training places and the monitoring of the conditions of training places, the latter being the responsibility of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (NAK)⁽¹⁶⁾ for the agricultural sector. For health professionals, the Hungarian Chamber of Health Professionals⁽¹⁷⁾ is responsible.

The tasks and competences of the above-mentioned ministries, authorities and public bodies involved in VET are structured in such a way that they jointly support, coordinate, monitor and follow up the aims, objectives and implementation of the NIP.

CHAPTER 4. Achievements of implementation

With the adoption of Act LXXX of 2019 on VET and Government Decree 12/2020 (7. II.) on the implementation of the VET Act, the implementation of the VET 4.0 Strategy has resulted in the development of a professionally managed, efficient VET model. Within this framework, the structure of VET, including the types of institutions and qualification levels, as well as the educational framework, encompassing curriculum design and teaching methods, have been transformed, along with the management and cooperation systems.

The transformation of VET has seen the further development of the dual VET model and a complex human resource development in VET through the restructuring of the status, benefits and CPD system of VET teachers.

In the summer of 2020, the institutional system of VET was restructured in line with the

⁽¹³⁾ <https://ikk.hu/p/szit>

⁽¹⁴⁾ <https://mkik.hu/agazati-keszsegtanacsok>

⁽¹⁵⁾ <https://mkik.hu/>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://www.nak.hu/>

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://meszk.hu/>

new legal framework that came into force at the beginning of 2020. In the new, more flexible VET system, eighth graders can now choose between technicums, offering a vocational qualification along with a secondary school leaving certificate that provides access to universities, and vocational schools, which offer a shorter timeframe for preparing for vocational qualifications through practice-oriented programmes. Students who choose VET, first choose only a sector according to their interests. After two years of sectoral foundation education in a technicum and one year in a vocational school, they can make a more informed choice about which vocational qualification best suits their plans and skills. Technicums, which replaced the former vocational grammar schools, provide young people with 5 years of continuous training (vocational and general) leading to a combined baccalaureate and technician diploma. Vocational schools provide young people with a 3-year vocational qualification. The technician system has been extended with new tracks: the [certified technician](#) training, developed jointly with universities and the [creative technicum course](#). As an indication of the popularity of the certified technician training, in the 2021/22 school year, 917 students enrolled in 27 technicums of VET centres in cooperation with 13 universities in 10 sectors chose this programme. From the school year 2023/24, 97 technicums in 16 VET centres in cooperation with 24 universities offered certified technician training in 20 sectors. The creative technicum course allows students to develop their talents while acquiring vocational qualifications in the creative industries, including visual techniques, arts, and sound technologies. The Ministry responsible for VET (KIM) launched a project to support the institutional development of 'Creative Technicums' in collaboration with Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design. The goal of this programme is to strengthen the integration of a creative pedagogical approach within these technicums.

Experience clearly shows that VET teachers, students and their parents have become receptive to the changes introduced by the new system. Over the years, the number of enrolments in VET has been steadily increasing, and academic results have been improving. Currently, six out of ten primary school leavers choose VET, with technicums being the most popular option. This trend may also be influenced by efforts to enhance the popularity of VET, such as the scholarship system and improvements in educational conditions.

In the new legislative framework, the state offers free access to the first two vocational qualifications obtained through school-based VET under the VET Act, as well as the first qualification from training programmes under the Adult training Act, if provided by a public VET institution or one with a state cooperation agreement. The new legal framework allows closer cooperation between VET and the stakeholders of the industry. Stakeholders have also been involved in the renewal of training provision and the number and content of vocational qualifications through the work of the SSCs and other organisations and representatives involved in VET Innovation Council (SZIT). This allowed labour market expectations to be integrated into the development process. The VET Innovation Council has played a significant role in the development of the VET 4.0 Strategy, which was the basis for the implementation of the VET reform.

As part of efforts to enhance the structure of VET, the modernisation of VET content has begun through the development of [digital curricula](#) supported by EU development funds.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Digital Curriculum Library ⁽¹⁸⁾ was established, hosting nearly 8 000 curricula created by trainers. The system now serves a community of 80 000 users. Currently, 760 digital learning materials are available on the VET information system.

Under the reformed system, students begin their studies with sectoral foundation education conducted within the school environment. During this phase, they receive a general monthly scholarship of HUF 8 000-16 000 (EUR 20-40). After completing this phase, students can pursue specialised studies during grades 11, 12, and 13 in technicums, or grades 10 and 11 in VET schools. These studies can take place in school workshops or through dual training placements with registered businesses. For students in dual training placements under a vocational employment contract (formerly apprenticeship contract), the scholarship is replaced by a wage ranging from HUF 100 000 to 169 000 (EUR 260-440). If dual training is not an option, students remain in the scholarship scheme, where they can receive a monthly grant of HUF 8 000–59 000 (EUR 20-150), depending on their academic performance.

Upon successful completion of the final vocational examination, the vocational employment contract can be converted into a permanent employment contract by mutual agreement, ensuring continuity in the employment relationship.

Additional benefits, such as performance-related scholarships, a one-time career starter allowance, and minimum wages for vocational training in dual systems, significantly enhance the appeal of VET and encourage better academic performance among students.

Hungary has implemented measures to address early school leaving through a reformed VET system offering flexible learning pathways for at-risk students. These include the Orientation Year, aimed at students uncertain about their career choices or lacking basic competencies, the Springboard Programme for reintegrating young people with no basic education or learning difficulties, and the School Workshop Programme, which focuses on practical training for partial vocational qualifications. These programmes demand additional effort from teachers, including further training, increased administrative tasks, and intensive mentoring.

All VET schools use a unified school management system called KRÉTA, which includes an Early School Leaving (ESL) module. This module acts as a warning system, identifying changes in student performance and other risk factors in a timely manner. By leveraging the ESL module, schools can provide targeted educational and social support to prevent students from leaving school without qualifications.

The national competence assessment in VET measures the competences of those entering IVET (in the areas of mother tongue, Mathematics and learning skills - attention, memory). Those who perform below average receive individualised support throughout the year. The results for 2021 show an improvement of 8-10% in the results of students in development over a year.

Sectoral monitoring of VET started in 2022, with the aim of producing a set of fine-tuning proposals per sector at the national level, to be submitted to the ministry responsible for VET. During this process, the SSCs identified five key focus areas: career orientation and enrolment, sectoral foundation examinations and education, vocational education, vocational

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://tudasbazis.ekreta.hu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=46763799>

examination and labour market situation of qualified workers. The labour market focus included a survey conducted by the Institute of Economic and Business Research of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MKIK GVI) on the role of enterprises in VET and in competences required for various jobs. Detailed analyses and findings from the 19 SSC-monitored sectors are available in the GVI studies ⁽¹⁹⁾.

In 2022, the structure of [the VET Career Tracking System](#) ⁽²⁰⁾ (*Szakképzési Pályakövetési Rendszer*) was developed. The questionnaire module of the career tracking survey engaged over 11 000 learners from 442 VET institutions during April-May 2022. The questionnaire had three target groups: students in grade 9, those aged 16 or over and graduates, who gave their reasons for choosing VET, their satisfaction with the training and their future plans after finishing their studies. As part of the career tracking system, the labour market and educational career path of all VET and adult education leavers will be tracked anonymously for 9 years.

The employment and pay of VET teachers has become much more flexible than before, they work on a contract basis rather than as civil servants. This step also helps the VET system to respond more quickly to economic changes. In addition to the 32.2 percent increase at the beginning of 2024, there has already been a 30 percent pay rise in 2020 and a 15 percent rise in 2023, meaning that teachers' salaries have almost doubled in three years. The pay increase is based on a performance-based evaluation of VET teachers in May-June 2023, and has been taken into account for the 2024 increase as well.

From the school year 2022/23, VET institutions have introduced and continue to operate local [Quality Management Systems](#) (QMS) ⁽²¹⁾ based on central guidance, and have set quality targets and indicators to measure their achievements in order to ensure and improve the quality of the provision of basic VET tasks. Key elements of of quality assurance in VET institutions include:

- (a) self-assessment every two years,
- (b) evaluation of VET teachers every three years, and
- (c) external evaluation every four years, conducted by the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Nonprofit Plc.

The evaluation criteria and tools of self-evaluation, external evaluation and teacher-trainer evaluation are developed in alignment with the EQAVET framework (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET), in such a way that the EQAVET indicative descriptors and the EQAVET indicators are integrated. Within the framework of this new system, the performance evaluation of VET teachers took place in spring 2023. The criteria for the assessment of VET teachers were created based on the EQAVET and the Hay (job evaluation) methodology.

CHAPTER 5. Challenges of implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns significantly impacted student ability to adapt to structured systems like school schedules, leading to fragmented attention spans and reduced ability to focus.

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://pbkik.hu/2022/12/01/egyeb/szakkepzettek-munkaeropiacyhelyzete-kutatas-idei-eredmenyei/>

⁽²⁰⁾ <https://ikk.hu/hirek/szakkepzesi-es-felnottkepzesi-palyakovetesi-rendszer-fejlesztese-magyarorszagon>

⁽²¹⁾ <https://ikk.hu/hirek/minosegbiztositasi-rendszer-a-szakkepzesben>

The inclusivity of the Hungarian school system is limited by the geographic concentration of young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This segregation prevents the formation of mixed-background classes, resulting in regional disparities in early school leaving and dropout rates.

Negative stereotypes about VET persist, including associations with low academic achievement, difficult manual work, low wages, and uncertain career paths. Additionally, frequent changes to the names of VET institutions and programmes over the past decade have caused confusion among parents. While enrolment rates are showing positive trends due to efforts by VET stakeholders, more promotional work is needed to improve perceptions among both young people and adults. For adults, the primary challenge is the low interest in reskilling or upskilling, especially among the low-skilled, coupled with a reluctance to relocate for opportunities. Children, on the other hand, often resist flexible learning pathways due to limited self-awareness, increasing their risk of dropping out.

Specialised vocational education in technicums (grades 11-13) and VET schools (grades 10-11) often struggles to keep pace with technological advancements. Consequently, students acquire many essential skills through practical training in companies during dual training. This highlights the need to modernise training environments in VET institutions, including machinery, equipment, and school workshops. Additionally, curricula and teaching methodologies must align with current technological demands, as requested by economic stakeholders. Strengthening cooperation between VET schools and dual training placements is critical to better align education with industry needs.

Despite ongoing efforts to integrate project-based learning and digital materials into VET, further progress is necessary. Policy actors are working with universities to address this, including plans to introduce preparatory classes in foreign languages and expand digital literacy training.

The ageing full-time teaching workforce is another significant issue. As digital curricula expand, teachers must receive updated training to effectively deliver education. Additionally, there is a shortage of professionals to support VET teachers, such as developmental educators, psychologists, and mental health experts. This shortage hinders efforts to reduce dropout rates and improve school inclusion.

To address these challenges, educating more support professionals and expanding the mentoring network are essential. Involving professionals familiar with the characteristics of disadvantaged communities—especially those who have overcome similar challenges—can inspire students through personal example and foster a more inclusive learning environment.

CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

The policy measures implemented in 2023 focused on creating a more flexible, attractive, and inclusive VET system. Significant steps were also taken towards the digital transition, including the development of digital learning materials and infrastructure, such as the establishment of Digital Community Creative Workshops during the COVID-19 pandemic. Green skills have been integrated into the qualification requirements (KKKs) of vocational programmes, published in November 2023. However, further efforts are needed to define and standardise the scope of green skills. This includes determining whether green skills encompass broader

environmental protection and awareness or are more narrowly defined as green technologies tied to specific occupations (e.g., solar panel installation for electricians or carbon farming in crop production). Such distinctions could help clarify whether these skills are best addressed through initial education or specialised training programmes. Innovation in VET is reflected primarily in modern educational methodologies, such as project-based learning, digital materials, and the use of advanced technologies like simulators. Vocational training excellence is fostered through certified technician programmes developed in collaboration with higher education institutions and initiatives like ZalaZone, a hub for integrated vocational and technological development ⁽²²⁾.

The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic—such as weakened interpersonal relationships, reduced socialisation opportunities, and difficulties in adapting to structured environments—highlight the need for targeted interventions. Emphasising cooperation, moral values, and the role of work in shaping character and career success is vital. Programmes promoting conscious career development can play a key role in addressing these issues and preparing students for long-term success.

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⁽²²⁾ <https://zalazone.hu/en/>

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