

Delivering VET – The way forward

**Terence Hogarth, Institute for Employment Research,
University of Warwick**

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forward**

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Research questions

1. How can we increase the responsiveness of VET institutions to rapid changes in the labour market and the demand for skills?
2. How has the balance between local autonomy versus central control changed over time?
3. To what extent is the dividing line between VET and general upper secondary education and training blurring and what kind of institutional solutions can be associated to this?
4. To what extent can the existence of combined schools and programmes, delivering both VET and general education be observed?
5. To what extent can 'hybrid' institutions and programmes, seeking to combine vocational and general subjects be observed?

Method

General approach

1. Review of pan-European evidence on changes in the VET institutional landscape
2. Series of country case studies
3. Survey of VET providers
4. Historical perspective

Country case studies

Market oriented:

England

Coordinated systems:

Norway

Finland

Germany

Netherlands

System with strong regional components:

Italy

Former Soviet bloc countries:

Czechia

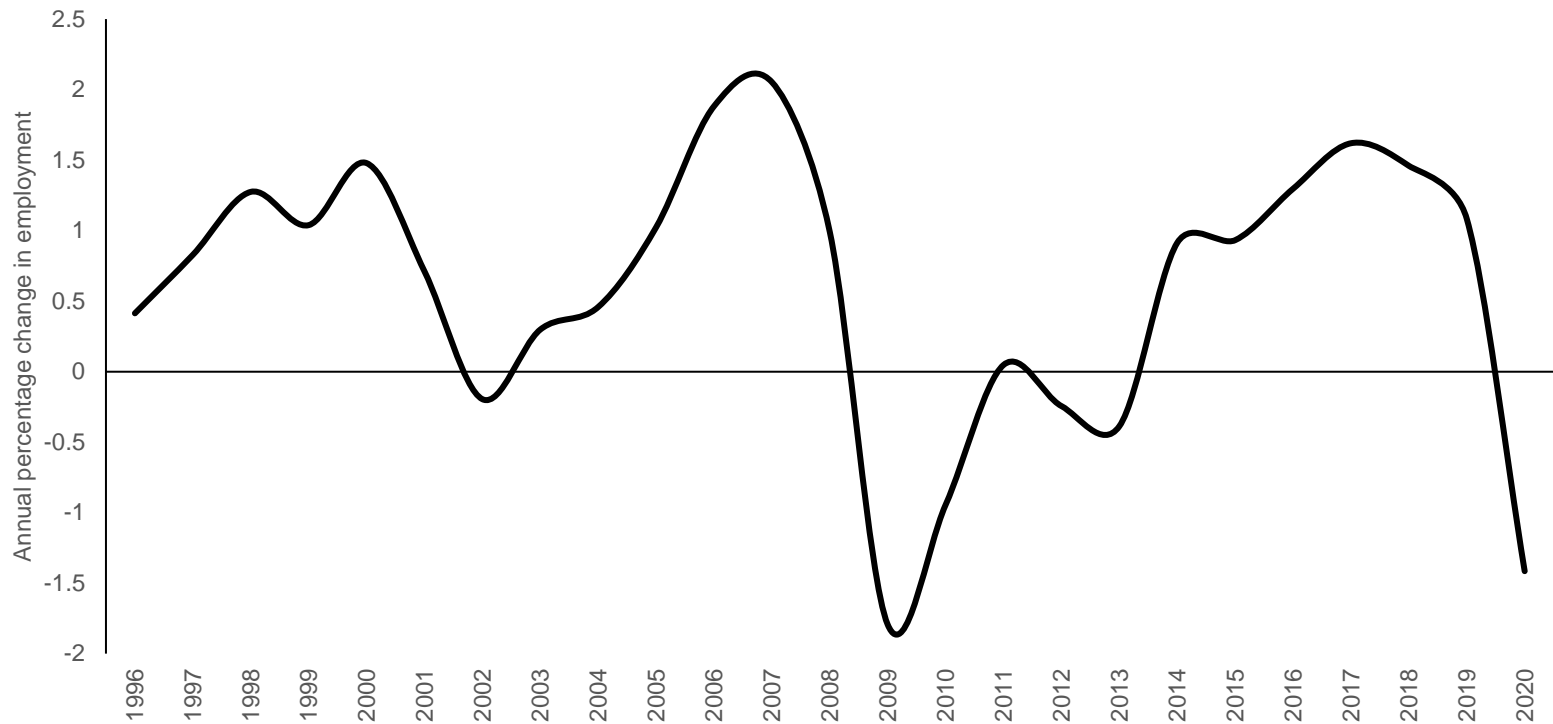
Lithuania

Context: Uncertainty and shocks

- Recovery from financial crisis (particularly slow in some countries)
- COVID-19 and its economic aftermath
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- The unfolding energy crisis and the potential for recession

Context of uncertainty

Employment growth



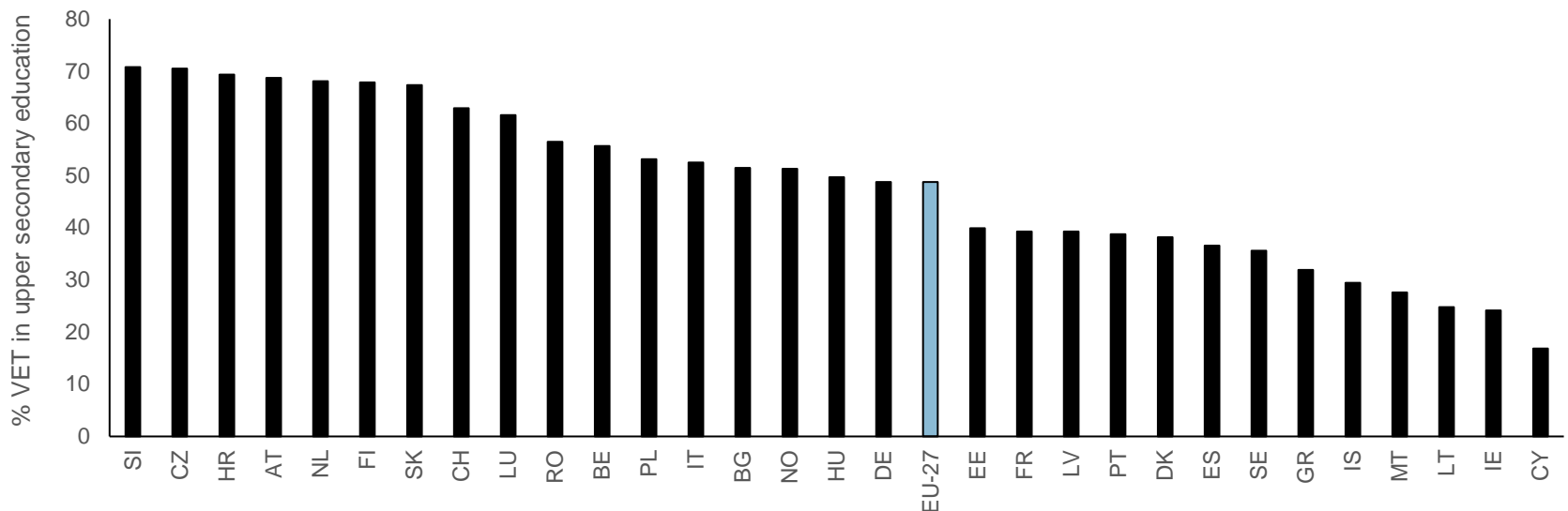
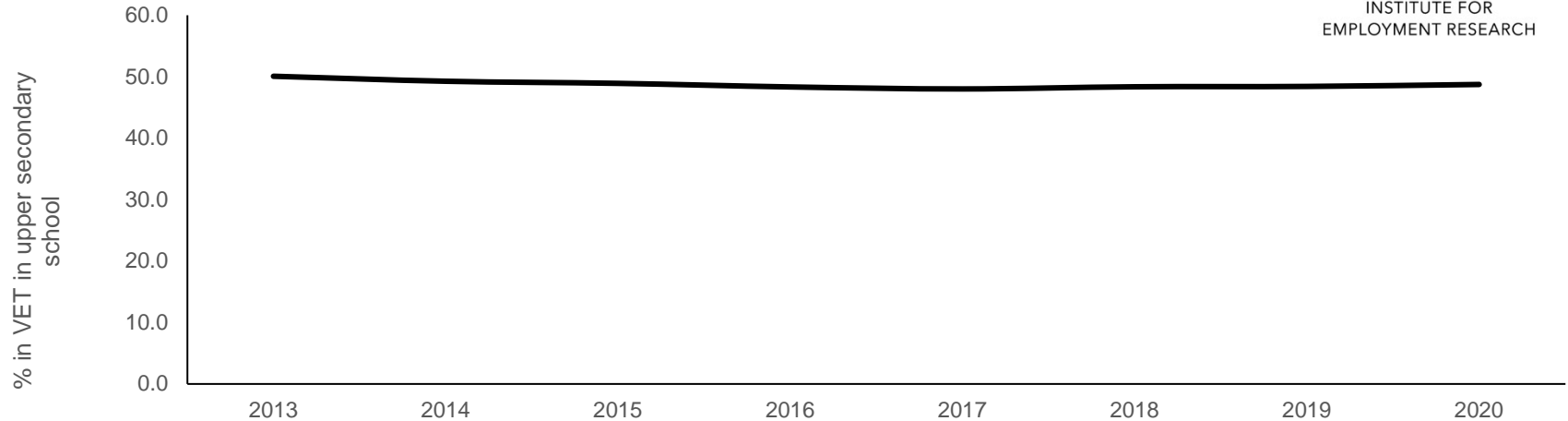
Context: Factors particularly pertinent to VET

- Demographic change (ageing and a decline in the number of IVET age students in some countries)
- Digital and green transition
- Potential for deglobalisation
- More fluid labour markets
- Pressures on public finances (given that large parts of the VET system are publicly funded)
- Migration

Stable IVET Participation

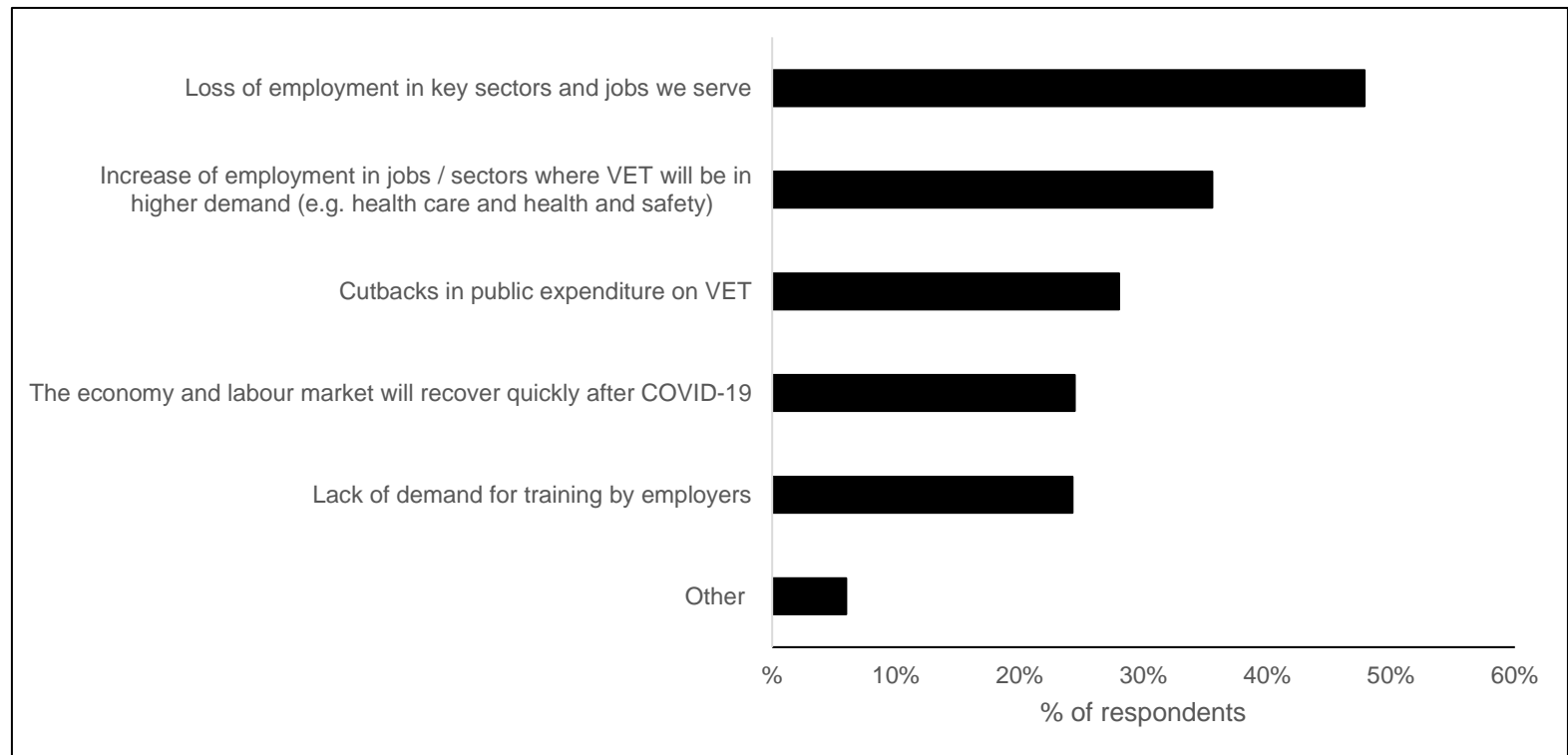
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Impacts on VET providers

- **VET providers' views on long-term impacts of COVID-19 on their activities**



Changes in skills provision

- **VET providers' reports of changes in their skills provision**

Changes in VET content	%
Digital / computer skills	55%
Depth of vocational expertise and specialisation	34%
Being able to work with others	30%
The breadth of vocational expertise	29%
Social and Communication skills	29%
Learning to take initiative	19%
English language	17%
Environmental / green skills	15%
Physical and manual skills, e.g. dexterity	14%
Literacy skills	6%
Numeracy skills	5%
Foreign languages (other than English)	5%

VET's resilience: Headlines

Policy makers have increasingly looked to VET as a means of remedying skill imbalances. A number of responses are evident.

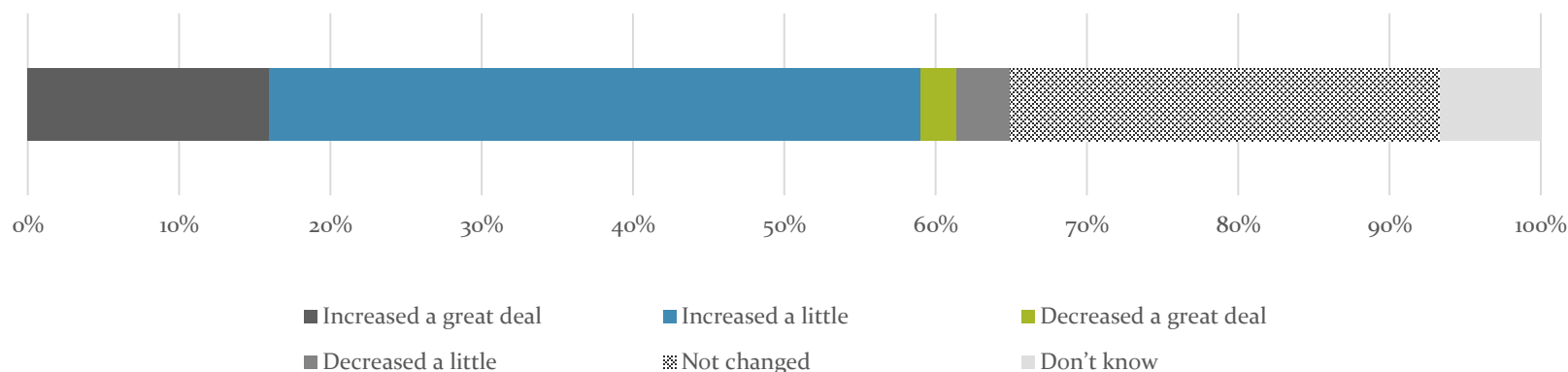
- VET institutions have obtained more influence over VET content and assessment
- Initiatives to combine general and vocational paths so students can pick and choose from each pathway to tailor teaching and learning to individual needs
- These changes are significant, but VET retains a strong distinct identity linked to and dependent on provision of occupationally oriented programmes
- Ensuring training content is linked to current and future labour market demand.
- National stakeholders have a relatively large amount of influence over curriculum content and the vocational schools have a degree of autonomy with respect to how those skills are delivered (to meet local labour market needs).
- Many countries have looked to strengthen the links to higher levels of education to make VET more attractive to young people
- Emphasis on work-based learning also proves attractive to employers and young people

Lots of variation between countries – in part because of path dependency

VET provider autonomy

- Evidence that VET providers now have more autonomy over content - 60% report that it has increased a little or a great deal...
- ... and 32% say influence over assessment has increased

Changes in the influence of the institutions on the content of the VET they deliver over the past 10 years



Dividing lines between general education and VET

Factors which affect the content and structure of VET provision include:

1. the preference for a sizeable workplace training element in IVET
2. the shift to competence-based systems
3. providing VET schools with a degree of autonomy with respect to what and how to teach
4. the individualisation of learning with learners being able to select a range of selected modules or options (including those from the general pathway where they are in the vocational one and vice versa)

Factors which affect the general content of training within vocational programmes include:

1. recognition that there are a range of general competences which confer economic value on the individual in the labour market
2. the importance attached to many general skills in promoting lifelong learning and promoting mobility in the labour market and accessing higher education
3. improving the attractiveness of VET to would-be learners mainly by granting access them access to higher education which can be dependent upon possessing a range of knowledge associated more with general education

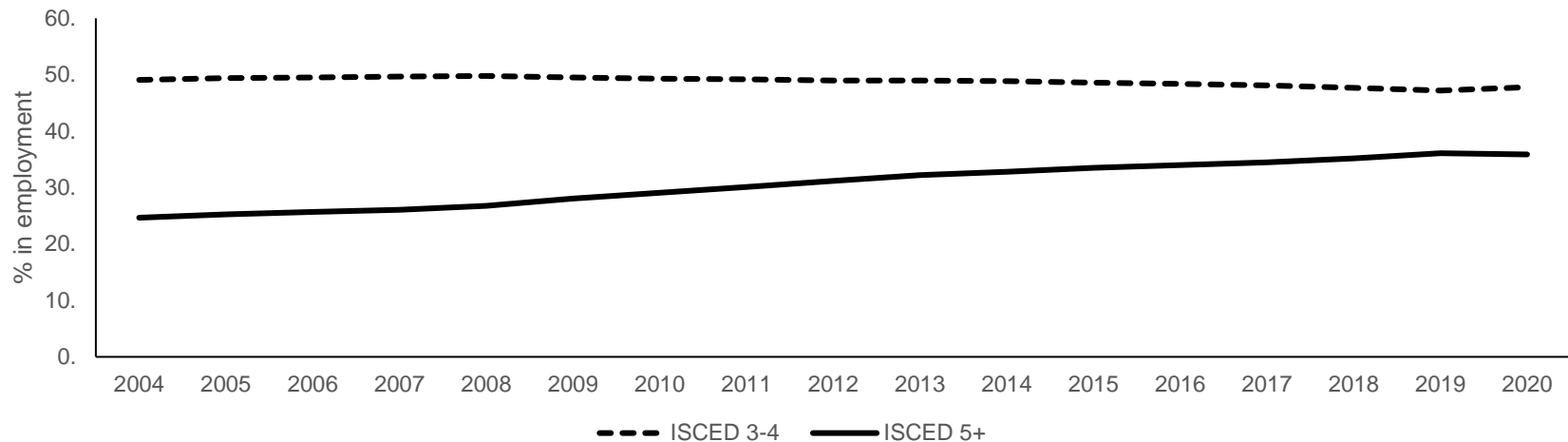
Combined schools and programmes

VET has provided flexible in the sense that it can respond in a timely manner to various changes taking place in the labour market

- The provision of VET content has proved flexible as indicated by the degree / experimentation with hybridisation and tailored learning
- VET systems have been able to mix and match courses from: (a) the general and vocational pathways; and (b) differing mixes of courses or modules wholly within the vocational pathway
- This is designed to ensure that VET better meets the needs of learners, employers and the local economy. It allows in many instances a higher degree of specificity so that individual learners are better placed to pursue their selected career and there is flexibility to address the signals emerging from the local labour market.
- School autonomy is linked to being able to meet local / regional labour market needs. VET caters to the local labour market so needs to be respond to local labour market needs to some degree

VET at Higher Levels

Educational attainment and the labour market

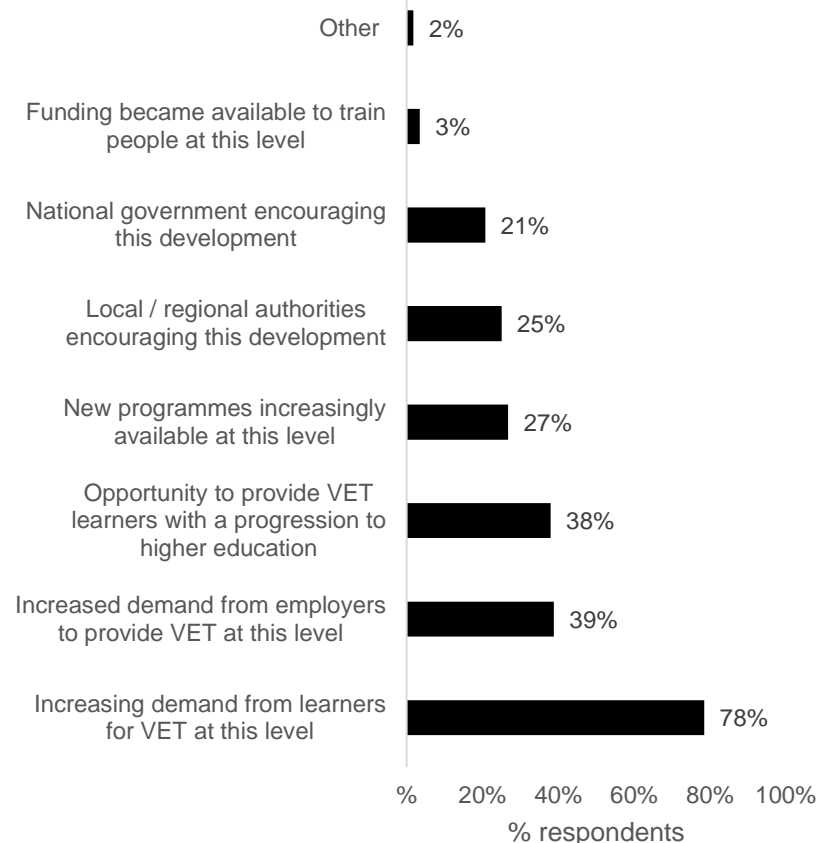
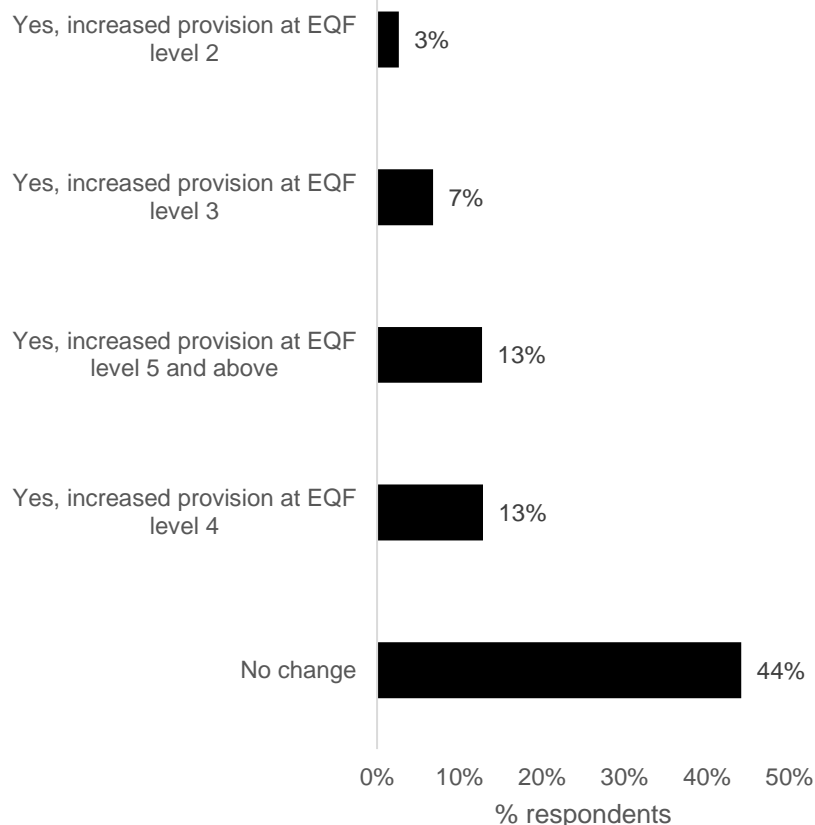


Students in upper secondary VET can access higher education through:

1. Vocational programmes such as the dual system / apprenticeships which now offer progression to levels 5+;
2. Gaining access to higher education in Universities of Applied Science
3. Progressing to general education in traditional universities

Evidence from case studies is that this is increasingly common

VET providers and higher level VET



Considerations for the future

- VET as an institution has undergone substantial change over a relatively short period of time with respect to:
 - Breadth of subject / skill provision
 - Autonomy of VET providers
 - Levels at which VET is delivered (and access to higher education)
 - Incorporation of general subject
- In doing so, it has increasingly met the aspirations of policy makers to better meet the skill needs of society

What next?

- Change versus stability?
- Increasing focus on meeting short-term skill needs at expense of long-term ones?
- VET serves economy **and** society versus VET simply as a servant of the labour market?
- VET as a first choice?
- VET retains its distinct entity?
- Higher levels of IVET at the expense of lower levels of IVET?

For more information

Cedefop – Future of VET website

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/future-vet>

Terence Hogarth
t.hogarth@warwick.ac.uk

www.warwick.ac.uk/ier


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