



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

UNITED KINGDOM



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

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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, p. 9) 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 ⁽¹⁾. 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, p. 2) and 78.7% in 2015 (European Commission, 2016, p. 2) 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, p. 9) 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. The relevance of funds availability, guidance structures, work experience provided and complexity of pathways in the VET sector was also being questioned in public and policy debate. In Scotland, increasing the number of apprenticeships, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and in the areas of economic growth and job opportunities, was being considered.

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in the United Kingdom and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (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 ^b	'10-'15	↘ -0.3	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			'15	6.8 ^c 4.3 ^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				
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)			'13	0.46 ^b 0.56 ^b _{E4}	'12-'13	▪ 0.07	▪ 0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 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	^z 1.0 ^b _{E6}			
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	^b 30.0 ^b _{E7}			
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	^b 9.3 ^{E8}			
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)		41.5 ^{E9}	'12				
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			'15	-3.4 ^b 5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -0.3	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	UK ^f	EU ^f	Yr	UK ^f	EU ^f	Range	UK	EU
(over general stream)								
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			

(^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: HR, IT, UK).

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

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

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

(^u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(^z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'. (e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

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

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 137.

CHAPTER 1.

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

1.1. Reforming the apprenticeship system

A Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) was put in place in 2016. It is led by employers to strengthen their engagement in apprenticeships and aims to ensure that apprenticeships will be closely linked to areas of economic growth and job opportunities. Skills investments plans and regional skills assessments support this work, providing the board with regional level assessment (for the first time) to help make better-informed decisions and support apprenticeship leading to sustainable employment. The SAAB:

- (a) provides advice and makes recommendations;
- (b) liaises with and supports employers (through its employer engagement group);
- (c) oversees the development of apprenticeship frameworks and standards (through its employer equalities group and frameworks and standards group).

Members of SAAB include employers, employer and trade union representatives, Scottish authorities at central and regional level, training providers and schools ⁽²⁾.

The types of apprenticeship programme were also renewed through the introduction of graduate level apprenticeships (GLAs), a new apprenticeship model designed in 2015-16. Its distinctive feature is the potential to obtain a higher national diploma (HND) qualification (European qualifications framework, EQF 5), or a bachelor (EQF 6) leading to professionally recognised qualifications, as part of the apprenticeship programme. GLAs also offer more work-based learning and are intended to provide more apprenticeships in key sectors ⁽³⁾. The

⁽²⁾ Representatives from the *Developing Scotland's young workforce* national group, Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Institute of Directors, Scottish trades union congress, and the convention of Scottish local authorities, in addition to representatives from the Scottish qualifications authority's accreditation function, Scottish Training Federation, Colleges Scotland and key sectors.

⁽³⁾ Bachelor honours degree level at the Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) level 10 (EQF level 6) and leads to degrees or to degree level, professionally

first four graduate level apprenticeships were introduced in Scotland in 2017 in information technology (IT), computing and engineering subjects.

1.2. Widening access of disadvantaged groups and areas to modern apprenticeships

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) launched its five-year *Equalities* action plan for modern apprenticeships in Scotland in December 2015 ⁽⁴⁾. It sets out action to address:

- (a) the low numbers of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds;
- (b) young disabled people and care leavers entering modern apprenticeships;
- (c) gender imbalances, such as females in science, technology, engineering and maths related apprenticeships.

The *Equality challenge* fund, also launched in 2015, supports projects aimed at widening access to modern apprenticeships. Organisations including charities, colleges and training providers have received funding to help boost modern apprenticeship numbers among the above groups in certain sectors ⁽⁵⁾.

As of 2017-18, a rural supplement will be set up, as an incentive to encourage training providers to do more in rural areas.

1.3. Work placement changes in school-based VET

Education Scotland, in partnership with college representatives, employer bodies and Skills Development Scotland, developed the work-placement standard for VET students. The standard recommends that school-based VET programmes (EQF 2 to 4) should include at least one work placement relevant to the programme training pathway, to enable young people gain real-work experience and make informed decisions about their future careers. The standard was

recognised, qualifications, or leads to an HND short-cycle higher education qualification at SCQF level 8 (EQF level 5).

⁽⁴⁾

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40691/2869_sds_equalities_action_plan_digital_v7.pdf

⁽⁵⁾

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2015/september/improving-equality-and-diversity-in-modern-apprenticeships/>

launched in August 2016 and will be extended in 2016-17 to introduce work placements in colleges ⁽⁶⁾.

1.4. **Strengthening cooperation between schools and businesses**

A guidance document for school/employer partnerships was published by *Education Scotland* in September 2015. The aim is to create meaningful and productive school/employer partnerships in all secondary schools by 2018-19. Partnerships are expected to help young people's readiness for work ⁽⁷⁾.

1.5. **Funding apprenticeship and work-based learning**

Since April 2017, employers in Scotland with a pay bill in excess of GBP 3 million have to contribute each year to an apprenticeship levy (0.5% of the employer's annual pay bill) to supplement government apprenticeship funding. The Scottish government announced ⁽⁸⁾ its intention to use the new apprenticeship funding model in a more flexible way than in England. From a total of GBP 221 million levy funding in 2017-18, less than half will be used for apprenticeships ⁽⁹⁾ (with a commitment, however, to increase the number of modern apprenticeships by 2020), and the rest will be used to support skills, training and employment. Employers, through the Scottish apprenticeship advisory board, will play a key role in shaping the new workforce development fund (GBP 10 million will be allocated in autumn 2017) to help employers upskill and reskill their workforce. The fund will also address skills gaps and the training needs of older workers where a full apprenticeship might not be appropriate ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511602.pdf>, p. 25.

⁽⁷⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485679.pdf>
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485674.pdf>
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485693.pdf>

⁽⁸⁾ Scottish government response to the UK government, December 2016:
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00512714.pdf>

⁽⁹⁾ <https://www.apprenticeships.scot/take-on-an-apprentice/apprenticeship-levy/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/news-events/latest-news/january-2017/scottish-apprenticeship-advisory-board-to-play-key-role-in-shaping-new-workforce-development-fund/>

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2016/december/saab-to-play-key-role-in-shaping-new-workforce-development-fund/>

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET ⁽¹¹⁾

A quality assurance reference point was set up in 2010. It covers IVET, continuing vocational education and training (CVET)/adult learning and non-formal publicly funded learning. A quality assurance framework was launched in 2014 and applies to IVET, CVET and related work-based learning. The framework builds on previous models of quality assurance used by the inspectorate of education (HMIE) for the inspection of colleges. The approach adopts a plan-action-review cycle. Quality standards for VET providers have been used as a condition for funding; standards and guidelines have been used to promote a self-improvement culture. Providers self-assess their performance periodically under the framework but also at their own initiative.

Data on monitoring transitions from education to work is collected by various agencies and bodies. Skills Development Scotland works on sharing data on transitions from schools and further education colleges to higher education. Sector skills councils identify priorities and keep qualifications up-to-date. VET colleges make available information on graduate employability and transitions to the labour market.

<http://news.gov.scot/news/gbp-10-million-to-support-workforce-development>

(¹¹) Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for the 2016-20 period;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

2.1. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET

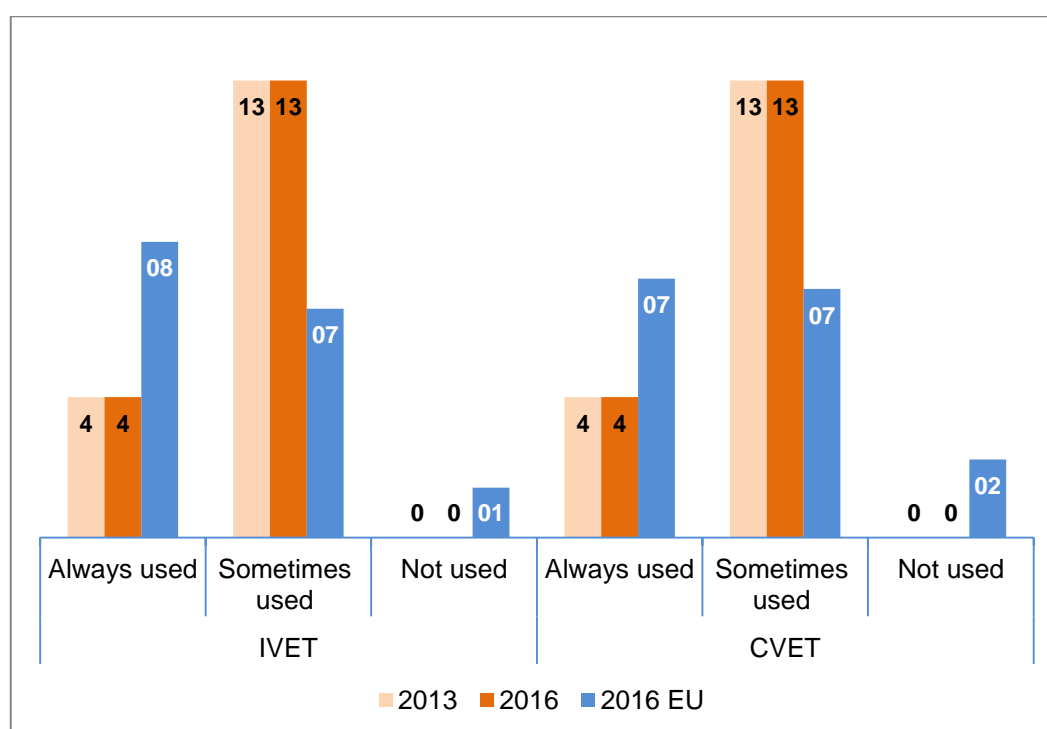
In 2016, the Scottish government published a national improvement framework developed in consultation with teachers, parents, children and other stakeholders to:

- (a) support learning and teaching;
- (b) provide robust, consistent and transparent data across Scotland to understand what works and drive improvements.

A review of the quality assurance framework is under way following the new regional governance structure resulting from the creation of regional colleges by the Scottish government.

The situation on the systematic use of 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. Scotland was below the EU average in IVET and CVET in 2016. All EQAVET indicators are used (mostly sometimes).

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, four were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Scotland, compared to 8.4 in the EU on average in 2016. 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 2016 data.

2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial and continuing VET

Following a review of external inspections of education and training providers and considering stakeholders' views, the 'neighbourhood model' was introduced in September 2016 to review learner transition and progress in learning.

The *College leaver destination* survey for 2014-15 was published in September 2016 to provide information on the 16-24 year-olds for whom destinations (higher study, training, work or modern apprenticeships) were confirmed.

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. Equal opportunity, equity and inclusion

3.1.1. The *Scottish attainment challenge* and the *Attainment Scotland fund*

The *Scottish attainment challenge*, issued by the Scottish government in 2015, aims to ensure young people reach their full potential. It supports literacy and numeracy at school level, improving conditions for learning and achievement of pupils from deprived areas, (re)integrating more early leavers into education and training (for example via VET), and increasing vocational subjects in schools. It sets quantitative targets, such as:

- (a) 95% of young people within each school cluster go on to positive participation destinations on leaving school by 2018;
- (b) increase to 100% the number of young people acquiring an appropriate, industry-recognised vocational qualification while at school by 2018.

The *Attainment Scotland fund* 2015-19 is targeted at supporting learners in local authorities and schools with the highest concentrations of pupils living in deprivation. Its focus is on primary schools (improving literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing). It supports the *Scottish attainment challenge*. The amount allocated to the fund will rise from GBP 80 million to GBP 160 million for the three-year period as of 2016, and to GBP 180 million over four years. The scope of the programme is being extended in 2017 to support up to 133 secondary schools across Scotland ⁽¹²⁾.

3.1.2. Including underrepresented groups: the *Attracting diversity* project

Between 2015 and 2018, the *Equality challenge* unit is running the *Attracting diversity* project ⁽¹³⁾ supporting Scottish colleges seeking to increase the

⁽¹²⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment>

⁽¹³⁾ <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Guide-to-Expression-of-interest-Attracting-diversity-colleges.docx>

participation of underrepresented groups. Project activities include reviewing data to assess underrepresentation, setting targets in relation to improving participation, developing an understanding of barriers, and delivering and evaluating positive action initiatives to improve participation.

3.1.3. Addressing gender imbalances: the *Gender action plan*

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published its *Gender action plan* in August 2016 outlining how to address gender imbalances at subject level in colleges and universities. Colleges in Scotland experience female under-representation in areas such as construction, engineering and IT, while men are under-represented in childcare and hair/personal care services. Targets included in the plan aim to increase by 4.2% the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced classes among 16- to 24-year-olds by 2019-20, and to remove extreme imbalances greater than 75% of one gender in any subject by 2030. The SFC will ask all institutions to develop their own gender action plans. SFC plans to develop a school engagement strategy seeking to offer careers advice, pathways and bridging programmes ⁽¹⁴⁾.

3.1.4. Improving inclusion of those with educational support needs

From 2017, the Scottish Funding Council outcome agreement guidance requires colleges and universities to produce an access and inclusion strategy that defines their inclusive practices and the impact this has on learners. As part of this work, SFC expects colleges to evidence how they use funds to support students with educational support needs, including disabled students, to ensure they have an equal chance of successfully completing their programme of study. This approach will gather outcomes by type of needs/disability which will enable SFC to target interventions directly if required ⁽¹⁵⁾.

3.1.5. Supporting the inclusion of apprentices with disabilities

Disabled young people up to age 29 will receive the highest level of modern apprenticeship funding for their chosen framework. As part of the Scottish government's disability delivery plan, this December 2016 announcement means

⁽¹⁴⁾

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Corporate_publications_SFCCP052016_GenderActionPlan/SFCCP052016_Gender_Action_Plan.pdf

⁽¹⁵⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00510948.pdf>, p. 16;

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCD212016_CollegeOAGuidance1718/SFCD212016_College_Outcome_Agreement_Guidance_2017-18.pdf, p. 24.

greater support for apprentices from these key groups, with more individuals and employers experiencing the benefits of a diverse workforce. This increased contribution rate supports the delivery of the equalities action plan for modern apprenticeships, launched in 2015 by SDS and partners ⁽¹⁶⁾.

3.2. Guidance

3.2.1. Skills Development Scotland's expanded offer

Skills Development Scotland's career information, advice and guidance (CIAG) service includes the career education standard available to all schools since 2016-17. The career education standard for the three to 18 age range, published in 2015, sets out what children and young people will learn and what parents/carers, teachers/practitioners, employers and SDS will do to:

- (a) support their learning, building on what had been achieved by then;
- (b) reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and complexity;
- (c) address concerns about workload through the provision of support and resources.

Prior to implementation of the expanded offer, SDS worked with 35 demonstrator schools across Scotland during 2015-16 to evaluate the service offer and develop it further. SDS assessed the effectiveness of delivery and partnership working, usefulness of services with key audiences, outcomes, benefits and challenges of the expanded offer; they then developed it further in advance of its introduction. Young people, teachers, parents and carers and SDS staff were an integral part of the process of developing the offer ⁽¹⁷⁾.

3.2.2. Nutshell guide to career conversations

Career conversations in a nutshell is a guide to career conversations ⁽¹⁸⁾ by the national parent forum of Scotland and SDS under preparation in 2017. It will provide guidance on how to have constructive career conversations with children and where to look for further information.

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2016/december/more-apprenticeship-opportunities-for-disabled-people-and-care-experienced-young-people/>

⁽¹⁷⁾ http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20160902SDS.pdf

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/news-events/2017/february/cracking-career-conversations-with-nutshell-guides/>

3.3. Permeability and flexibility

3.3.1. Recognising alternative pathways to higher education

The final report of the commission on widening access, published in March 2016, recommends that the admissions processes of post-16 institutions recognise alternative pathways to higher education and do not unnecessarily disadvantage those who choose them; by 2018, a framework for fair access should be published. The Scottish government accepted all of the commission's recommendations in the report and proposed national and institutional targets to ensure that, by 2030, students from the 20% most deprived areas make up 20% of higher education entrants ⁽¹⁹⁾.

3.3.2. Flexibility in the career education standard

The career education standard for the three to 18 age range (Section 3.2.1) recognises that all young people will not progress in the same way, and not all face the same challenges and will require appropriate support.

3.4. National qualifications framework ⁽²⁰⁾

The Scottish credit and qualifications framework (SCQF) was adopted in 2000-01. It is based on learning outcomes and comprises 12 levels. It is open to qualifications from the private sector and has reached full operational stage. In 2010, the SCQF was linked to EQF as part of the overall UK referencing process. It is defined through its qualification database ⁽²¹⁾, the SCQF credit system ⁽²²⁾, arrangements for recognition of prior learning ⁽²³⁾ and extensive guidance and support material for employers. In 2015, the use of the SCQF by higher education institutions and colleges was evaluated. Results show that the framework is well embedded into course development and quality assurance procedures in colleges. It also supports curriculum planning and development of merged curriculum portfolios. The resources of the SCQF are especially used developing progression pathways and highlighting gaps in curriculum provision.

⁽¹⁹⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00496619.pdf>

⁽²⁰⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽²¹⁾ SCQF qualification database: <http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/search-database/>

⁽²²⁾ SCQF credit system: <http://scqf.org.uk/the-framework/scqf-credit-points/>

⁽²³⁾ Arrangements for the recognition of prior learning: <http://scqf.org.uk/more/rpl/>

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

The Scottish government announced in March 2017 that it is making changes to the current system of individual learning accounts. It is refocusing them as individual training accounts (ITAs) to meet the demands of the job market better and make it easier for jobseekers and low-paid workers to gain access to qualifications and skills training. From October 2017 onwards, Skills Development Scotland will provide ITAs and continue offering up to GBP 200 per year for training and skills development. A novel feature is that each course will result in a qualification recognised by the industry ⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽²⁴⁾ <https://beta.gov.scot/news/individual-training-accounts-launched/>

CHAPTER 4.

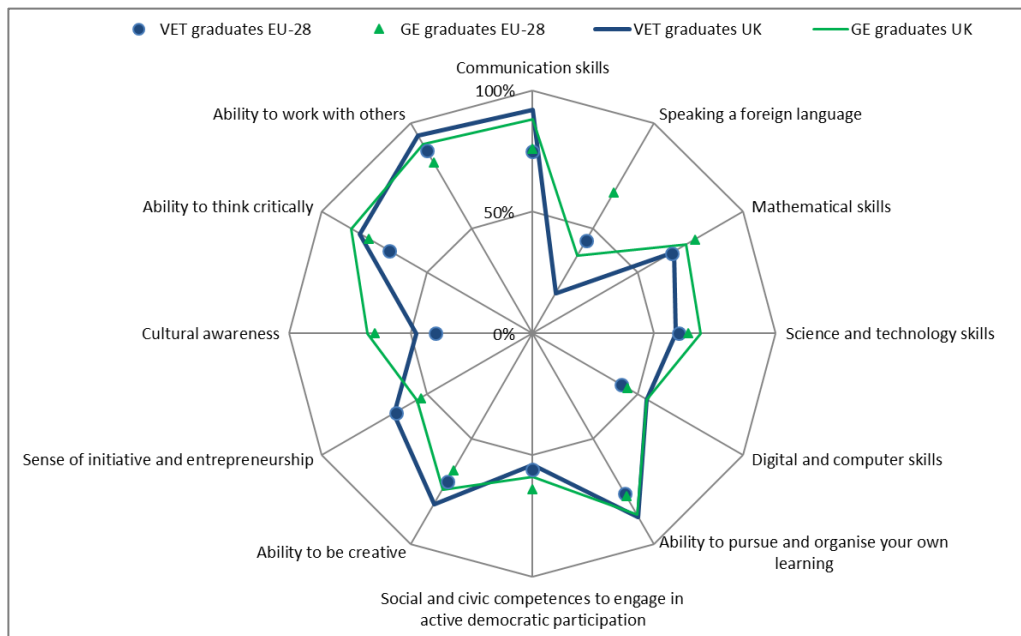
MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline

In the United Kingdom, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes feel they have:

- (a) stronger (ranked 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).

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



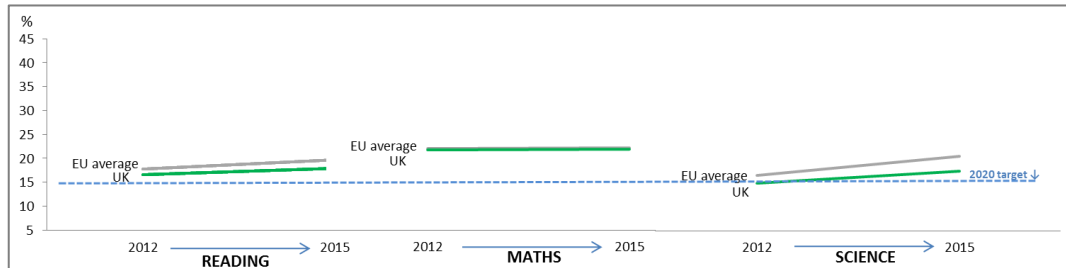
NB: GE stands for general education.

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, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). The share of low achievers in the UK was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend is 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 enrolls 40% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽²⁵⁾, this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes.

In Scotland, key competences are often called core skills (or also alternatively transferable, employability, process and generic skills). Communication, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), problem solving and working with others are part of vocational qualifications at levels 4 to 6 of the Scottish credit and qualifications framework. Core skills can be assessed as free-standing qualifications or as skills embedded into other study programmes ⁽²⁶⁾.

4.2. Key competences in initial and continuing VET

The 2016 digital learning and teaching strategy ⁽²⁷⁾ for Scotland sets out the government's approach, aiming at:

- (a) developing the skills and confidence of educators in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology to support learning and teaching;

⁽²⁵⁾ Calculated from Eurostat, data for 2015.

⁽²⁶⁾ For more information on key competences in VET see UK NARIC, 2016.

⁽²⁷⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00505855.pdf>

- (b) improving access to digital technology for all learners;
- (c) ensuring that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery;
- (d) empowering leaders of change to drive innovation and investment in digital technology for learning and teaching.

The Scottish government also consulted ⁽²⁸⁾ on the delivery of science, technology, engineering and maths education and training across the education system and the draft STEM education and training strategy for Scotland between November 2016 and January 2017. The strategy aims to improve levels of STEM enthusiasm, skills, and knowledge in order to raise attainment and aspirations in learning, life and work; and to encourage the acquisition of more specialist STEM skills required to gain employment in the growing STEM sectors of the economy, through further study and training. The STEM strategy also applies to CVET.

⁽²⁸⁾ <https://consult.gov.scot/stem/a-stem-education-and-training-strategy/>

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

A new teacher recruitment campaign was launched by the Scottish government in February 2017. *Teaching makes people* targets university undergraduates studying science, technology, engineering and maths, as well as people currently working in STEM industries. The government is also making over GBP 3 million available to train an extra 371 teachers in 2017-18. This will increase places at Scotland's teacher education universities, bringing the total intake in 2017-18 to 3 861, a rise for the sixth consecutive year ⁽²⁹⁾.

The Scottish government's GBP 12 million transition training fund was announced in February 2016 for people who face losing their jobs in the oil and gas sector as a consequence of lower oil prices affecting business. The fund will support workers to transition into other energy industry and manufacturing employment through retraining or further education. In September 2016, applications were also opened for teacher education training places for those workers made redundant and looking to change career, with courses starting in September and a guaranteed job at the end ⁽³⁰⁾.

5.2. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The 2016 digital learning and teaching strategy for Scotland ⁽³¹⁾ (Section 4.2) brings digital learning and teaching objectives, including improving teachers' skills and confidence in the use of digital technologies to support learning and teaching.

⁽²⁹⁾ <https://beta.gov.scot/news/extra-trainee-teachers/>

⁽³⁰⁾ <http://news.gov.scot/news/teacher-training-for-oil-and-gas-workers>

⁽³¹⁾ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/9494/0>

Over GBP 30 million has been earmarked to ensure that the further education staff has the skills needed to teach English and maths to a high level.

Conclusion

Since 2015, Scotland has adopted measures to reform its apprenticeship and work-based learning systems through:

- (a) strengthening governance, delivery and funding structures;
- (b) attracting new participant groups;
- (c) promoting work placement in school-based VET and partnerships between schools and businesses.

Steps have been taken to improve quality assurance in VET and information and feedback loops to guide the strategy for VET development. Strong initiatives in support to equal opportunity, equity and inclusion in the access for all to VET and qualifications were launched. Significant improvement was brought to the guidance system with the expansion of Skills Development Scotland's offer. More flexibility and further opening progression in education and towards higher education were encouraged. The individual training account was introduced to meet better the training needs of low paid workers and jobseekers. Development of key competences was supported through the strategies for digital skills and STEM. The continuing training of VET school teachers was supported.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions are being addressed, though information available to Cedefop at the time suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) making more systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor VET developments;
- (b) developing actions in relation to the initial and continuing training of in-company trainers and mentors.

Setting out policy priorities in the areas of all five Riga medium-term deliverables for the remaining period until 2020 could also be considered.

List of abbreviations

AES	adult education survey
CIAG	career information, advice and guidance
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GLA	graduate level apprenticeship
HMIE	inspectorate of education
HND	higher national diploma
ICT	information and communication technology
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IT	information technology
ITA	individual training account
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NEET	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
SAAB	Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board
SCQF	Scottish credit and qualifications framework
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VET	vocational education and training

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