

## VET in Italy



Vocational education and training (VET) is characterised by multi-level governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of education and labour lay down general rules and common principles for the system. Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of VET programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes. Social partners contribute in defining and creating active employment policies relevant to VET and lifelong learning.

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. At age 14 learners make a choice between general education and VET. They have the 'right/duty' (*diritto/dovere*) to stay in education until age 18 to accomplish 12 years of education and/or vocational qualification.

At upper secondary level, the following VET programmes are offered:

- five-year programmes (EQF level 4) at technical schools (*istituti tecnici*) leading to technical education diplomas; at vocational schools (*istituti professionali*) they lead to professional education diplomas. Programmes combine general education and VET and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Graduates have access to higher education;
- three-year programmes (*istruzione e formazione professionale*, IeFP) leading to a vocational qualification (*attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale*, EQF level 3);
- four-year programmes leading to a technician professional diploma (*diploma professionale di tecnico*, EQF level 4).

All upper secondary education programmes are school-based but could be also delivered as apprenticeships (Type 1).

There is permeability across VET programmes and also with the general education system.

On completion of a three-year vocational qualification, it is possible to attend one additional year leading to a four-year vocational diploma; this allows enrolling in the fifth year of the State education system and sitting the State exam for a general, technical or professional education diploma.

At post-secondary level, VET is offered as higher technical education for graduates of five-year upper secondary programmes or four-year IeFP programmes who passed entrance exams:

- higher technical education and training courses (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore*, IFTS): one-year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a high technical specialisation certificate (*certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore*, EQF level 4);
- higher technical institute programmes (*istituti tecnici superiori*; ITS): two- to three-year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma (*diploma di tecnico superiore*, EQF level 5).

These courses are organised by foundations that represent schools, universities, training centres, enterprises and local bodies.

VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure progression opportunities

for the low-skilled; these are provided by provincial centres for adult education (*centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti*, CPIA) under the remit of the education ministry.

Continuing vocational training (CVT) to meet enterprise, sectoral and regional needs is:

- supported by the ESF and is managed by regions and autonomous provinces;
- directly funded by the regions and autonomous provinces;
- financed by joint inter-professional funds, managed by the social partners.

### Distinctive features of VET

Italian VET is characterised by multiple institutional players at national and regional level.

Article 117 of the Constitution provides for ownership either by the State, the regions or mechanisms for cooperation between the different institutions, relative to the type of training:

- the State establishes general education standards;
- regions have exclusive legislative power over VET;
- education falls within the concurrent legislation, except for the autonomy of education institutions and vocational training.

Ministries of education and labour and the regions define, with formal agreements, matters of common interest with different responsibility levels.

Apprenticeship is available at all levels and programmes and is defined as an open-ended employment contract. Type 1 apprenticeship is offered in all programmes at upper secondary level and the IFTS. Type 3 apprenticeship (higher training/education apprenticeship) is offered in ITS programmes and all tertiary education leading to university degrees, ITS diplomas, and doctoral degrees. Type 2 apprenticeship does not correspond to any education level but leads to occupational qualifications recognised by the relevant national sectoral collective agreements.

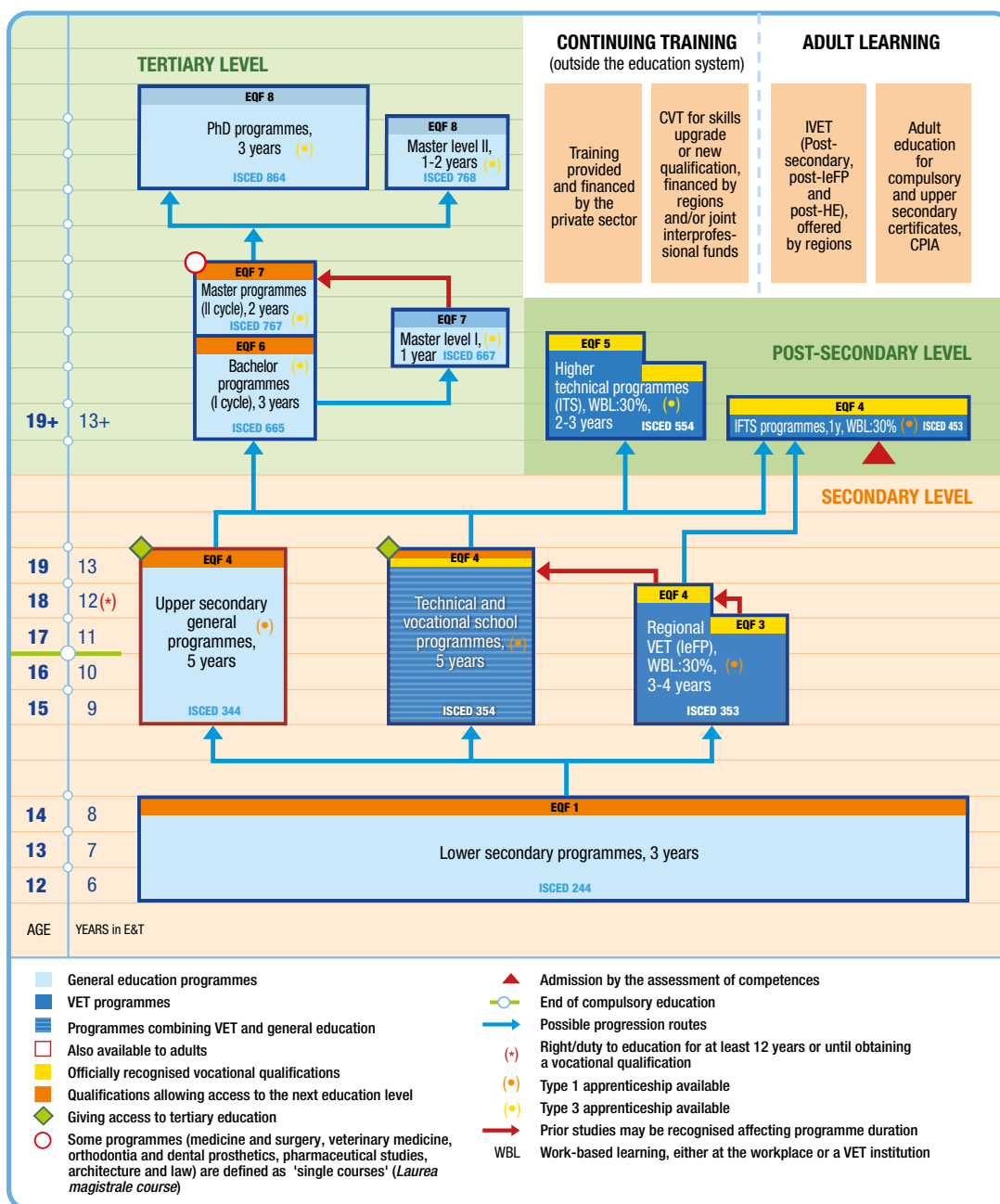
### Challenges and policy responses

In order to raise the level of digital skills, the first national strategy for digital skills, covering both the education and labour market sectors, was adopted in 2020.

The Italian VET system is characterised by regional complexity. In order to reduce regional diversities, the education ministry introduced an action plan in 2020.

The promotion of the dual system in IeFP aims to relaunch apprenticeship with the allocation of new resources from the Government (MLPS) for the realisation of paths characterised by a high amount of in-company training (minimum of 400 hours per year) or virtual business simulation, and new individualised training plans.

To increase the formative value of work-based learning pathways, school-work alternance (ASL, *Alternanza Scuola-Lavoro*) has been replaced by transversal competence and guidance pathways (PCTO, *Percorsi per le Competenze Trasversali e per*



NB: ISCED-P 2011.  
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Italy, 2020.

*l'Orientamento*) in 2019. This will support the acquisition of interdisciplinary skills and raise learners' vocational awareness.

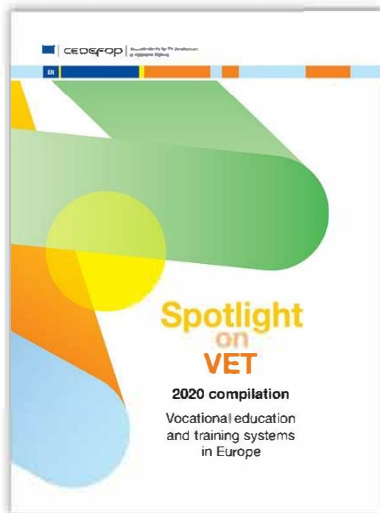
Due to the Covid-19 breakout, the government allocated EUR 201.7 million to support distance learning. Measures included the acquisition of digital devices for schools to enable learners to participate in distance learning. Other measures aimed to ensure equal access to all learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, the labour ministry has created a 'new skills fund' to supplement reduced working shifts with worker training.

In order to improve the labour market relevance of VET provision the National repository for regional vocational qualifications

(*Repertorio nazionale delle figure nazionali di riferimento per le qualifiche e i diplomi professionali*) was updated in 2019 and in 2020. Professional profiles have been revisited and new qualifications and minimum training standards were introduced.

In order to tackle the high number of low-skilled people, the education ministry has promoted the national plan for 'guaranteeing the skills of the adult population'.

The collaboration of training providers and SMEs is identified as a challenge. In order to improve this collaboration, regions and joint interprofessional funds have supported the training of teaching staff for developing new skills within the framework of enterprise 4.0 national plan and the new (digital) transition 4.0 plan.



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