

## VET in Romania



Initial vocational education and training (VET) is provided at upper secondary and post-secondary levels.

The first two years of upper secondary education are compulsory for all learners. Enrolment, including VET (grade 9), requires grades from national exams in mathematics and the Romanian language, a lower secondary diploma, and a final mark transcript for all subjects. Some VET schools also have entry exams. To enrol in tertiary education, all upper secondary graduates need to pass baccalaureate exams.

Initial VET is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development (CNDIPT) coordinates the creation of training standards for qualifications, validated by sectoral committees (coordinated by the National Authority for Qualifications, NAQ) and approved by the ministry. Social partners participate in the committees and support VET implementation. Continuing VET is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

### Initial VET

At upper secondary level there are:

- three-year school-based VET programmes (ISCED-P 352), providing graduates with a professional qualification at EQF level 3 (such as cook). Programmes are offered by ‘professional schools’, cooperating with employers who provide compulsory in-company training for learners as part of work-based learning (WBL). WBL is also offered in schools, at an average of 50% per programme. Learners who interrupted their studies after completing lower secondary education may enrol in programmes up to age 26, free of charge. Since 2017/18, a dual form of VET is available, provided at the request of companies that participate in training provision. The share of learners in dual VET is 4.4% of the total VET population at upper secondary level. The programmes open access to the labour market. Graduates can also enrol in the third year of EQF level 4 technological programmes;
- four-year technological programmes (ISCED-P 354) offering graduates an upper secondary school leaving diploma and the EQF level 4 ‘technician’ qualification in services, natural resources, environmental protection and technical study fields (such as technician in gastronomy). The programmes are provided by technological high schools and sometimes by colleges. The WBL share is 25%. After completing compulsory education, learners may opt out and enrol in a short VET programme (ISCED-P 352) offering a professional qualification only;
- short VET programmes (ISCED-P 352), providing learners who completed two years of a technological programme (completed grade 10) with a professional qualification at EQF level 3 (such as cook) via 720 hours of work-based learning. The programmes are coordinated by VET schools and are provided mainly by employers. Young and adult early leavers from education and training can also access these programmes after completing a ‘second chance’ programme;

- four-year vocational programmes (ISCED-P 354, EQF level 4), providing graduates with a professional qualification in the military, theology, sports, arts and pedagogy as well as with an upper secondary school leaving diploma. These programmes are provided by colleges and the share of WBL is up to 15%.

Post-secondary VET provides one- to three-year higher VET programmes (ISCED-P 453), leading to a professional qualification at EQF level 5 (such as optician); these are organised by technological schools or colleges/universities. They provide secondary school graduates with an opportunity to advance in their qualifications.

### Continuing VET

Adult vocational training is offered by authorised private and public providers.

One- to three-year continuing ‘apprenticeship at workplace’ programmes have been managed by the public employment service since 2005. They offer adults (16+) without prior VET experience the chance to acquire a professional qualification at EQF levels 1 to 4, leading to a nationally recognised qualification certificate of the same value as in initial VET. Theory and practical training (WBL at least 70%) are provided mainly by companies, in cooperation with authorised professional training providers.

### Distinctive features of VET

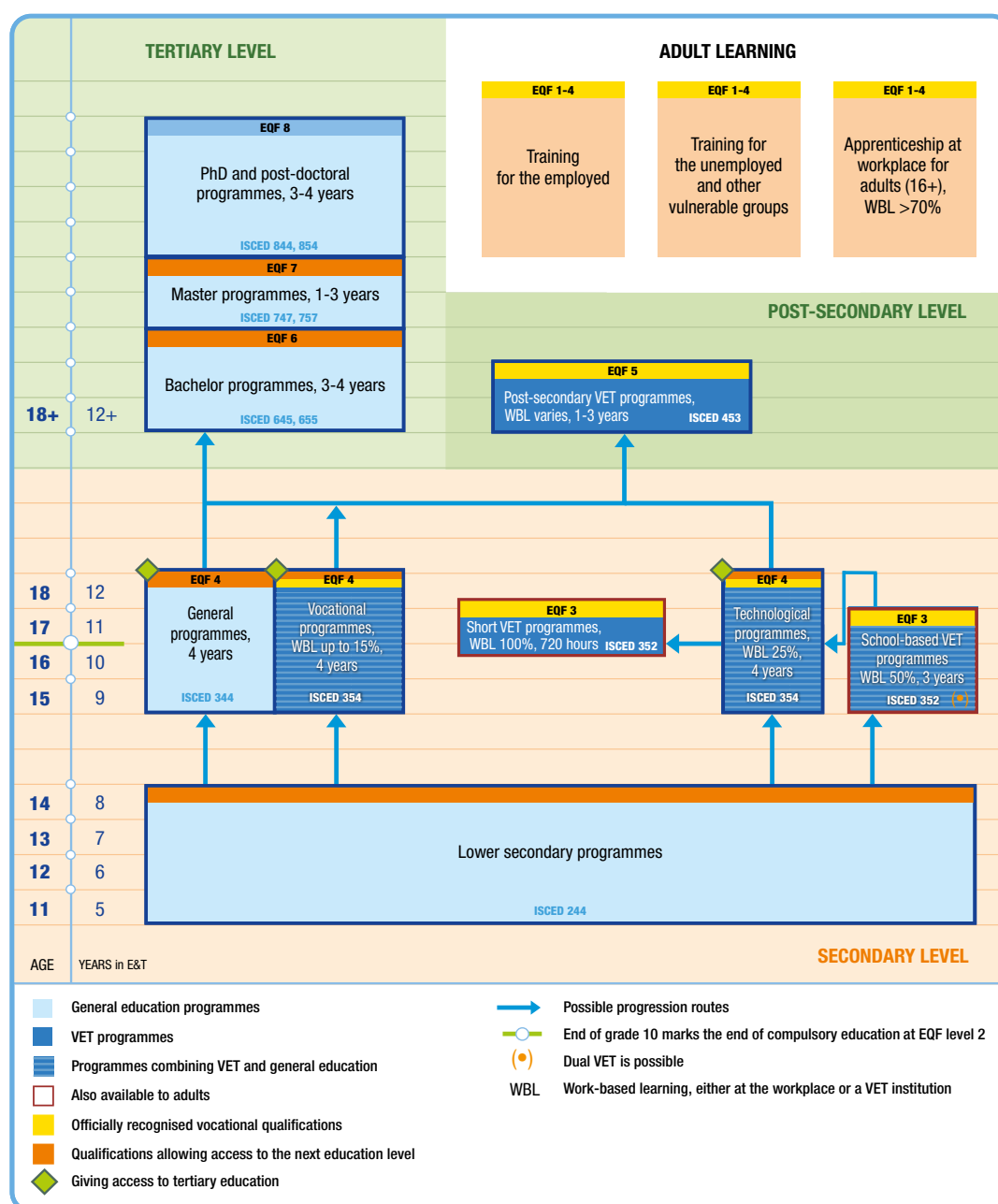
Distinctive features of initial VET are its inclusiveness and flexible pathways. Reflecting the double role of VET in promoting economic as well as social development, initial VET’s main goals are to ensure:

- learners’ personal and professional development;
- equal access opportunities to VET;
- high-quality provision, organisation and development.

Initial VET qualifications are based on training standards, including units of learning outcomes and, for each unit, an assessment standard. The standards were revised in 2016, to help increase VET labour market relevance by ensuring a better match between qualifications and the reality of working life after graduation.

Creating sector committees, which represent the various sectors of the economy, made the involvement of social partners in designing and assessing vocational qualifications more systemic. To ease education planning, social partners also participate in partnerships at regional level (regional consortia) and local level (local committees for social partnership development in VET).

Romania has developed a system for validating non-formally or informally acquired skills and competences. In line with guidelines adopted by the NAQ, procedures were put in place to create a network of providers acting as validation/ assessment centres. These centres are active in more than half of the counties.



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Romania, 2020.

## Challenges and policy responses

Investments to support the institutional development of education and training are still few, leading to unequal access to education and training and the high rate of early leaving from it; this particularly affects children in rural areas, from poor communities.

Another challenge is to reduce youth unemployment by supporting skills acquisition and securing smooth and sustainable transitions from education and training to the labour market. The CNDIPT introduced the dual form as part of initial VET, leading to level 3 EQF qualifications with a prospect to extend it to levels 4 and 5 EQF.

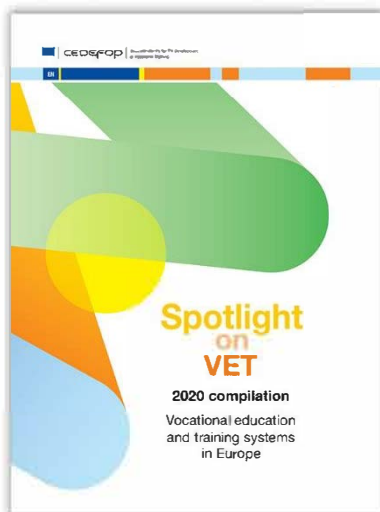
The VET Strategy 2016-20 supported by an ESF-funded project involves national authorities to help develop mechanisms for:

- monitoring VET and HE graduate insertion,

- anticipating labour market skills needs,
- evaluating and monitoring public policies on active measures and VET.

CVET also faces challenges such as unemployment and the lowest rates in lifelong learning participation in EU. The ministry of labour addressed them by:

- developing an elementary occupations list in November 2018, giving unskilled adults access to participate in six-month apprenticeship programmes leading to EQF level 1 qualifications;
- creating a framework for variable duration training programmes linked to labour market needs; these can be from 180 hours for level 1 to 1 080 for level 4 EQF qualification.



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