



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

ITALY



National VET policy developments 2023-24

This vocational education and training (VET) policy brief was produced by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Department for VET [vocational education and training] and Qualifications under the supervision [Juergen Siebel](#), Acting Head of Department/Executive Director.

The report was drafted by [Aristos Theocharous](#), Cedefop policy officer, and peer reviewed by [Irina Jemeljanova](#), Cedefop expert.

This report is part of Cedefop's monitoring of VET policies and systems. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources. For additional information please visit Cedefop's online tool [Timeline of VET policies in Europe](#).

Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop. (2025). *Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024 – Italy*. National VET policy developments 2023-24.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/9005464>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<https://european-union.europa.eu/>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025



© Cedefop, 2025.

Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes made are indicated.



ISBN 978-92-896-3881-4 doi: 10.2801/9005464 TI-01-25-067-EN-N

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	4
2.	National VET context and challenges	4
2.1	National VET context.....	4
2.2	Challenges	5
3.	National VET policy priorities	6
4.	Main policy developments between 2020 and 2024.....	7
4.1	Increasing the attractiveness of VET provision	7
4.2	Making VET provision more flexible and learner-centred.....	8
4.3	Strengthening skills validation and certification services (IVC) and increasing adult participation in VET	9
5.	Statistical information in relation to EU targets.....	11
6.	Conclusion.....	13
	References	15

1. Introduction

This policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training (VET) policy developments in Italy between 2020 and the end of 2024 ⁽²⁾. It presents the context and the challenges the country faces, a selection of the latest VET-related statistics as well as the national priorities until 2030 identified in the Italy's [national implementation plan](#) (Government of Italy, 2022). This snapshot informs Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [VET Recommendation](#) and [Osnabruck Declaration](#) and contributes to shaping new EU priorities in VET as of 2026 and informing the mid-term evaluation of the Council Recommendation on VET.

2. National VET context and challenges

2.1 National VET context

Vocational education and training (VET) is characterised by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of education and labour have overall responsibility for the VET system. Regions and autonomous provinces oversee VET programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes. Social partners contribute to the development of employment policies relevant to VET and lifelong learning. VET schools are in charge of upper secondary VET school pathways (EQF 4, ISCED 354). There is permeability across VET programmes and within the general education system.

VET for adults is offered by different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications and ensures up- and reskilling opportunities targeting specifically the low-skilled. These programmes are provided by provincial centres for adult education (CPIA) under the supervision of the education ministry (Cedefop & National Institute of Public Policy Analysis [INAPP], 2022). Continuing vocational training (CVET) to meet enterprise, sectoral and regional needs is either co-funded by the European social fund or directly funded by regions and autonomous provinces. The social partners manage the joint inter-professional funds, established by employee and employer organisations through national agreements, supporting CVET focused on upskilling and reskilling employees (Cedefop & INAPP, 2022).

The 2023–24 rollout of Italy's 'Employment Decree' focused on strengthening employability and fostering social inclusion through the creation of the [Social and Employment Inclusion Information System \(SIISL\)](#) (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025), which integrates digital tools like the Support for Training and Labour (SFL) and the Inclusion Allowance (AdI). This way helps provide personalised, accessible services that support skills development, job placement, and active participation in the labour market.

⁽¹⁾ See also the previous edition: Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Italy](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.

⁽²⁾ For some developments, the information available until mid-2025 has been included.

[Apprenticeship](#) in Italy is available across all education levels and programmes, structured into three distinct types, and is defined as an open-ended employment contract. The validation of non-formal and informal learning was first introduced in 2013 through Legislative Decree No 13 (Cedefop & INAPP, 2022). A more recent advancement came with the adoption of [the 2024 Decree by the Minister for Labour](#), which establishes the regulatory framework for the identification, validation, and certification of competences related to non-formal qualifications under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025b).

The defining policy shift in Italy's VET system was the adoption of the [Good School reform](#) in 2015, which introduced a stronger focus on alternating classroom learning with workplace training. It laid the foundation for integrating key competences into VET curricula and established a dual training system known as the Initial Regional Vocational Education and Training Pathway (Istruzione e Formazione Professionale, leFP). The reform also stimulated the launch of the [National Plan for Digital Education](#) (PNSD) (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2023). Building on this foundation, Italy implemented a broad set of reforms in 2023–24 to modernise its education and training system. The reforms included aligning vocational pathways with national qualification standards, creating the 'Liceo del Made in Italy' to promote cultural and economic heritage, establishing a technological-professional training chain aligned with Industry 4.0, and extending workplace accident insurance to all students. Collectively, these initiatives aim to improve employability, foster social inclusion, and enhance the relevance of educational provision (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

2.2 Challenges

The main challenges that Italy faced between 2020 and the end of 2024 include labour market shortages and mismatches, poor educational outcomes, with evident regional and local disparities, and low adult participation, especially of young adults, in education and training despite the range of training possibilities that are offered. The Italian adult population is also characterised by an insufficient level of basic digital skills (European Commission, 2023; European Commission, 2025; Cedefop, 2025).

Employment surged in 2024, boosting labour market activity despite late-year slowdowns, with rising permanent jobs and falling unemployment, though regional and demographic disparities persist. Skills shortages and low upskilling hinder Italy's job and productivity growth, with high number of vacancies unmet due to, amongst other reasons, limited graduates with vocational skills, low participation in adult learning, and a fast-ageing workforce (European Commission, 2025).

Early school leaving is declining, but significant regional and school-type disparities in student performance remain, highlighting the need to improve educational equity and support for underperforming areas and vocational tracks. Italy's continued decline in basic science and math skills, especially among students from disadvantaged groups, underscores the importance of strengthening its education system through targeted support, improved teacher geographical allocation, and enhanced Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teaching strategies (European Commission, 2025).

Italy also struggles with the low participation of adults in training. Italy's economic performance and long-term competitiveness are constrained by structurally weak productivity growth, pronounced territorial disparities, adverse demographic trends intensified by the emigration of highly skilled individuals, and the insufficient labour market integration of underrepresented groups, notably women, older adults, and young people (European Commission, 2025). Tertiary education attainment among 25-34-year-olds remains well below the EU average (31.6% compared to 44.2% in 2024), highlighting the need for continued efforts to expand access and improve higher education outcomes (Cedefop, 2025). Also, digital skills lag behind the EU average, even among groups usually expected to score higher, like young people and urban residents. Only 59% of Italians aged 16–24 and 54% of those aged 25–54 have basic digital skills, compared with 70% and 64% in the EU (European Commission, 2024).

3. National VET policy priorities

The [Italian Recovery and resilience plan \(NRRP\)](#), approved in 2021, is the national strategic reference framework which sets the basis for the national implementation plan (NIP) the country prepared in 2022 in response to the [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück Declaration](#). Among the priorities considered in the NIP, the following can be highlighted.

- (a) Increasing the VET attractiveness. In this respect, the current VET system reform is regarded as a major priority for the country. Raising awareness of the benefits of vocational training is another area that needs to be addressed. Regional cooperation is also seen as area that needs strengthening.
- (b) Personalising education and training provision making it more flexible, and learner-centred. Italy plans to adapt its learning and training provision by making it more tailored to the individual's learning needs, to invest further in the acquisition of digital skills by its population and to [expand the dual system including apprenticeships](#), with the aim of at least 90 000 additional enrolments by 2025.
- (c) Strengthening skill validation and certification services (IVC) and increasing adult participation in VET. Having a long tradition in validating prior knowledge, Italy has set as a priority strengthening its IVC and increasing adult participation in VET. More specifically, Italy has set a quantitative national target to increase the participation rate of adults in VET to 60% by 2030. In support, the country plans to mobilise regional and local actors and ensure their involvement in developing a skills intelligence mechanism which would align training provision with the regional and local needs.

4. Main policy developments 2020-24

4.1 Increasing the attractiveness of VET provision

Italy is continuing its efforts to increase the attractiveness of its VET system, by continuing the system reform, raising awareness and promoting the benefits of VET and by strengthening cooperation at regional level.

In 2022, the [reform of the VET system continued](#) with Law No 99 which introduced the tertiary system of higher technological education and changed the status of former post-secondary [higher technical institutes](#) (Istituti Tecnici Superiori, ITS). The institutions have been renamed to ITS Academy and their role is seen as ensuring close connections with local and regional labour markets (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2022, the education ministry continued its [cooperation with sectoral stakeholders](#) by signing several memoranda of intent, including with the Association of Italian Maîtres, Restaurants and Hotels, the Italian Sommelier Association, and the Italian Union of Hotel Conciergerie, on different kinds of cooperation to strengthen links with regional and local labour markets in the relevant sectors. Building on this approach, between 2023 and 2024, the ministry further deepened its cooperation with both public and private entities through strategic partnerships designed to enhance employability and promote social inclusion. Key priorities included aligning education and training with labour market needs and advancing adult vocational training for transport professionals. Additional priorities focused on fostering technical and managerial skills among students, strengthening school–industry collaboration to support talent development, career guidance, and the alignment of educational pathways with economic and territorial priorities (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

The National Repertory of education and training and professional qualifications, legally established in 2013, laid the foundation for the development of the [Atlas of Work and Qualifications](#) ⁽³⁾ by the education ministry, regional authorities, and the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis (INAPP). In 2022, two new sections were added to the Atlas, accompanied by the production of an explanatory video outlining its maintenance procedures. During 2023-24, Italy continued to enhance the Atlas by updating descriptions of professional sectors, educational and vocational qualifications, and detailed profiles of regulated and apprenticeship-based professions. In 2021, the labour, education, and public administration ministries issued guidelines for the interoperability of awarding bodies in the National skills certification system, formally adopting the Atlas of Work and Qualifications as the official tool for accessing and organising the National Repertory of qualifications. (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In June 2022, Law No 79 and the [implementing Decree](#) defined new [requirements for teachers](#) that now include VET teachers. The law regulates the process of initial teacher

⁽³⁾ INAPP has created the *Atlas of Work and Qualifications*, an information and classification tool designed to organise and systematise data on qualifications and link them to labour market and sectoral needs. It serves stakeholders engaged in lifelong learning and active employment policies by offering standardised reference points for skills needs and gap analyses. The Atlas also supports services related to the identification, validation, and certification of competences, as well as the design of qualifications and career guidance.

training, required qualification(s), and access to the teacher profession in secondary schools, including tests and trial periods. Furthermore, in 2023–24, Italy advanced teacher training and recruitment through the activation of structured university qualification pathways and competitive public exams, aligned with Legislative Decree No 59/2017 and the NRRP. This resulted in the launch of new training programmes and the recruitment of over 70 000 teachers (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023 and 2024, [the implementation of the 3-year training guidelines](#) for school staff (2023-25), coordinated by the School of Higher Education Training (SAFI), marked a major step forward in Italy's education reforms under the NRRP. SAFI led the delivery of inclusive in-service professional development for school principals, teachers, and administrative, technical, and auxiliary staff. The initiative also introduced voluntary incentivised training pathways, aimed at improving teaching quality, fostering social inclusion, and promoting continuous professional growth throughout the national school system (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

During the same period, Italy advanced [quality assurance](#) in VET through several key measures. These included the dissemination of the findings of the [EQAVET peer review](#) Quality Assurance in the dual system in IVET. The outcomes of the peer review aimed to promote reforms to strengthen the dual training system and national qualifications framework and prompted the launch of a national debate on creating a unified technological-professional pathway. Additionally, the National Quality Plan was updated to reflect ongoing reforms and align with EU recommendations, particularly to enhance VET governance and improve implementation at the regional level (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

A further milestone was reached in 2023 with the formal adoption of the [revised referencing report](#) (ANPAL, 2022) via an inter-ministerial decree. This marked a critical advancement in the implementation of the [Italian Qualifications Framework](#) (Quadro Nazionale delle Qualificazioni, QNQ), ensuring that all national and regional qualifications are coherently referenced to both the QNQ and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This alignment contributes to a clearer, more transparent qualifications system, supporting better recognition and comparability of credentials across education, employment, and mobility contexts, thereby increasing the quality and attractiveness of VET (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

4.2 Making VET provision more flexible and learner-centred

Italy continues its efforts to making VET provision more flexible, personalised and responsive to individuals learning needs, adopting a learner-centred approach.

In 2022, the Unified Conference, a body which promotes cooperation between the State and regions and autonomous provinces, approved the [guidelines for regulating dual VET](#) (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025). These guidelines identified potential learners, eligible training providers and administrative actors for conducting dual training, explaining methods for the organisation and funding of dual training. Also in 2022, following consultation with relevant stakeholders, the labour ministry, issued a circular to clarify

regulations related to type 1 apprenticeship. A manual for employers intending to hire apprentices was published.

Between 2023 and 2024, Italy introduced a wide-ranging set of legislative and institutional reforms to [strengthen apprenticeships](#) and promote youth employment, offering financial incentives for hiring disadvantaged groups, expanding access to public sector apprenticeships for graduates, and proposing a unified 'supply chain' apprenticeship model to support continuous education and employment, while enhancing regional flexibility in managing training resources to better align with local labour market needs (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Alongside these reforms to strengthen apprenticeships and youth employment, Italy also advanced its efforts to enhance digital competences in education through the [National Plan for Digital Education](#) (PNSD), the main strategy for improving learner digital (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025). It is comprised of 35 actions divided into three areas of intervention:

- (a) tools: actions aimed at transforming schools to innovative learning environments based on new digital technologies, where innovative teaching methods can be tested and implemented;
- (b) skills and content: actions aimed at promoting and improving students' digital skills and fostering the development of quality content for digital education;
- (c) training: actions designed to support learning and digital innovation through training school staff.

The implementation of the PNSD continued, and in September 2022, a Technical-Scientific Expert Committee was set up to assess it, to support the systemic organisation of the activities included in the plan and to improve the digital innovation strategies developed by schools. In 2023–24, Italy advanced the implementation of PNSD through consultations, seminars, and partnerships. Key actions included identifying good practices, promoting digital skills via events and memoranda, and supporting schools through training and innovation projects. By 2024, several long-term PNSD projects were concluded, shaping a renewed strategy focused on improving student competences and supporting digital transformation in education (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Furthermore, in the same period, [Italy strengthened entrepreneurship and civic education](#) in schools by launching successive editions of the National entrepreneurship championships for upper secondary and VET students, in collaboration with Junior Achievement, and by adopting new civic education guidelines (Ministerial Decree No 183/2024) that set updated learning objectives across all education cycles, promoting responsible citizenship from early childhood (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

4.3 [Strengthening skills validation and certification services \(IVC\) and increasing adult participation in VET](#)

The first regulatory framework on skills validation and certification services was introduced in Italy in 2013. On 5 January 2021, the labour ministry, issued a decree that put in place the guidelines for the interoperability of awarding bodies of the [national system of certification of competences](#). This legislative act completed the architecture of the national

system of the certification of competences and provided a common reference framework for awarding bodies as regards:

- (a) minimum standards of the system;
- (b) essential performance levels;
- (c) criteria for the implementation and regular updating of the National repertory of educational and training qualifications and vocational qualifications;
- (d) the interoperability of central and territorial databases for the workers' electronic booklet.

In 2022, Italy's regions and autonomous provinces began refining the implementation of skills certification in line with the 2021 Decree. Building on this groundwork, significant progress was made between 2023 and 2024 in strengthening the National Skills Certification System. Key developments included the expansion of IVC services and the publication of a national monitoring report (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025). An important development was the adoption of the decree on the 'Regulation of Services for the Identification, Validation, and Certification of Competences Related to Qualifications'. This development establishes the functions and responsibilities of the labour ministry within the national system for competence certification (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025b).

Italy has in place [several strategies/initiatives](#) to increase adult participation in VET and lifelong learning (LLL). More specifically, in 2020, the New Skills Fund was set up to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, more initiatives were launched:

- (a) the National strategic plan for the development of skills of the adult population;
- (b) the New skills plan (PNC), which is developed in line with the above plan and defines a strategic coordination framework for upskilling and reskilling pathways;
- (c) the Employability guarantee reform programme (GOL), a pivot of the active employment policies reform action. Related to GOL, are the PNC's measures that are directed to the vocational training beneficiaries of the GOL.

In 2022, several components of the GOL programme started being implemented and additional functions were taken over by the New Skills Fund. In 2024, a new decree updated GOL programme expanding access to all unemployed individuals and enhanced personalised training, aiming to boost employability and address adult skill gaps through inclusive, outcome-focused learning pathways. By early 2025, over 3.2. million people had been benefited by GOL-related activities (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025c).

In parallel, during 2023-24, the country advanced its active labour market policies and skills development strategies. Key initiatives included increased investment in the New Skills Fund and the GOL Programme as well as the launch of the New Skills–Transitions Plan, which promotes work-based learning, the use of micro-credentials, and stronger partnerships with the private sector. In 2025, the New Skills Fund received additional funding to fully evaluate collaborative projects, double the support provided to enterprises, and enhance lifelong learning through ITS, universities, and accredited institutions (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025a). Supported by EU funding and updated regulatory frameworks, these initiatives aim to enhance employability and address labour market mismatches.

The [Transversal competence and guidance pathways \(PCTO\)](#) focus on guidance and counselling systems as an integral part of the curriculum to help all individuals to develop their full potential. PCTO are compulsory for all in the last 3 years of upper secondary school. In October 2022, the [Guidelines for the implementation of the competence guarantee pathways](#) of the adult population were revised and approved by the P.A.I.D.E.IA. National Working Group. These guidelines were developed for the CPIAs so that they organise training activities aiming to assist adults to acquire basic and transversal skills (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Italy implemented a robust framework of legislative and institutional actions to improve employability, vocational relevance, and social inclusion within the education system. These included the integration of vocational training into the national qualifications framework, the launch of the '[Liceo del Made in Italy](#)' to celebrate and strengthen cultural and economic heritage, the creation of a technological-professional training chain aligned with Industry 4.0 priorities, and the extension of workplace accident insurance to all students (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

Employment prospects for IVET graduates remain challenging in Italy. In 2024, the employment rate for recent graduates (20–34-year-olds) was 63.7%, well below both the EU-27 average of 80% and the 82% target set in the Council Recommendation on VET for 2025. The share of recent graduates who had a work-based learning experience during their studies was 24.7%, also well below the EU-27 average, which for the same year was 65.3%.

Adult participation in learning also lags behind European goals. In 2022, 29% of adults (25–64 year-olds) had participated in learning in the previous 12 months, compared with the EU-27 average of 39.5%, and below the 50% target of the Skills Agenda. The figure was even lower for low-qualified adults (10.3% vs 18.4% in the EU-27), well short of the 30% target for 2025. Among unemployed adults, only 6.9% had participated in learning in the last four weeks in 2024, compared with 15.3% in the EU and the 20% target for 2025.

Digital skills remain another area of concern: in 2023, 45.8% of adults (16–74-year-olds) had at least basic digital skills, compared to the EU-27 average of 55.6% and below the 70% target for 2025.

On broader labour market indicators, in 2024 Italy's employment rate for 20–64-year-olds stood at 67.1%, lower than the EU average of 75.8% and the 78% target for 2030. The early leaving rate from education and training was 9.8%, slightly above the EU average (9.3%) and just above the less than 9% target for 2030. The NEET rate among 15-29 year-olds was 15.2%, well above both the EU average (11%) and the 9% target for 2030 set in the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action plan](#).

Table 1. **European vocational education and training policy dashboard: Italy**

Type of indicator ⁽⁴⁾	Indicator	Last available year	IT	EU-27	Policy Document	EU target (year)
VET for developing a lifelong learning culture						
Progress	Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) *	2022	29 ^b	39.5	Skills Agenda Council Resolution on EEA ESPR Action Plan	50% (2025) 47% (2025) 60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%) *	2022	10.3 ^b	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	6.9	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	2024	67.1	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	9.8	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15-29 year-olds (%)	2024	15.2	11.0	ESPR Action Plan	9% (2030)
VET for Resilience, transitions, sustainability and excellence						
Progress	Adults (16-74 year-olds) with at least basic digital skills (%)	2023	45.8	55.6	Skills Agenda ESPR Action Plan	70% (2025) 80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%)	2024	63.7	80.0	Council Rec on VET	82% (2025)
Progress	Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%)	2024	24.7	65.3	Council Rec on VET Council Resolution on EEA	60% (2025)
Context	25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	31.6	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	19.4	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	13 525	93 333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million decrease (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	945.4 ^e	10 273.6 ^e	2030 Digital Compass	20 million, with convergence between men and women (2030)
VET for the European Education Area						
Progress	Learners in IVET who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%) **	2021	3.5	2.1 ^{dv}	Council Rec on VET Skills Agenda Council Rec Europe on the Move	8% (2025) 12% (2030)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2023	1.4 ^d	1.2 ^d		

Available flags: b-break in time series, d -definition differs, e -estimated, V- Cedefop estimate, Special value: - not available

* Eurostat data (Adult Education Survey, special calculation excluding guided on-the-job training).

** Provisional estimates affected by the Covid19 pandemic.

Source: Cedefop. (n.d.) [European VET policy dashboard](#).

(4) [Definitions](#) on the type of indicators are available.

6. Conclusion

Italy advanced a coherent package of reforms and initiatives that collectively strengthened the visibility, quality, and labour market relevance of VET. Efforts focused on enhancing the attractiveness and permeability of vocational pathways, notably through the transformation of post-secondary higher technical provision into [ITS Academies](#) and the fostering of closer cooperation between schools and industry. At the same time, provision was made more flexible and learner-centred by expanding apprenticeships, promoting digital and transversal skills, and supporting personalised learning approaches. These developments were complemented by significant progress in reinforcing identification, validation, and certification (IVC) services and in broadening adult upskilling opportunities, supported by instruments such as the New Skills Fund and the GOL employability reform. (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025; Cedefop, 2023).

The ITS Academy reform, coupled with strengthened links between providers and local employers, has the potential to improve tertiary attainment and graduate employability. The reform is explicitly aimed at increasing ITS enrolments and graduate outputs (targeting 40 000 enrolments by 2026), which, in combination with the progress made in [dual training](#), helps close vocational skills gaps in key sectors (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Furthermore, Italy has made substantial progress in education and VET reform by enhancing teacher training and [recruitment](#), implementing inclusive professional development, strengthening quality assurance and governance in VET, and aligning national qualifications with the EQF, measures that collectively improved educational quality, promoted social inclusion, and increased the transparency and attractiveness of vocational pathways.

Italy's learner-centred and digitalisation efforts, framed around the [National Plan for Digital Education](#) (PNSD) and supported by NRRP funding, have strengthened teacher development, school infrastructures and pathways for digital competence. The roll-out of structured in-service training (2023–25) and recruitment measures expanded capacity in schools and VET providers; however, population-level basic digital skills and participation in adult learning continue to lag behind EU averages, highlighting a persistent implementation gap between policy measures and measurable upskilling outcomes (European Commission, 2024; Cedefop, 2025).

On [validation](#) and adult learning, the 2021 interoperability guidelines and subsequent 2023–24 regulatory developments have clarified institutional responsibilities and improved the functioning of the national skills certification system. The expansion of IVC services and the adoption of [several flagship initiatives](#) aiming specifically to up- and reskill the adult population, both unemployed and employed, and the existence of a [comprehensive career guidance and counselling system](#) aiming to enhance key competences regardless of age, demonstrate that the country has a potential to increase the adult participation in LLL (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025b). Complementary measures, such as the notably increased investment through the New Skills Fund and the GOL reform have broadened

access to personalised upskilling and activation services, though outcomes vary across regions and target groups (ReferNet Italy & Cedefop, 2025c).

Despite these advances, several persistent challenges require attention. Employment rates for recent IVET graduates and the share of IVET learners with substantial work-based learning remain below EU targets, adult participation in learning is still well under the ambitions of the Skills Agenda, and territorial disparities in educational outcomes and labour market integration are pronounced. Basic digital skills among adults and the participation of low-qualified groups in training remain especially weak (Cedefop, 2025; European Commission, 2025). Looking ahead, the next phase of implementation concentrates on scaling quality provision, closing territorial and demographic gaps in access and outcomes, and turning the considerable policy and funding momentum into higher rates of participation, learning completion and labour-market relevance, with the ambition to reach national and EU targets.

References

[accessed 22.7.2025]

ANPAL (2022). *Italian Referencing Report of the qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework*.

Cedefop. (2025). *European VET policy dashboard indicators and groups*

Cedefop, & National Institute for Public Policy Analysis [INAPP]. (2022). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Italy: system description*. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2022). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database].

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

European Commission. (2021). *The European Pillar of Social Rights action plan*. COM (2021) 102 final.

European Commission. (2023). *Commission Staff Working Document 2023 Country Report- Italy Accompanying the document Recommendation for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the 2023 National Reform Programme of Italy and delivering a Council opinion on the 2023 Stability Programme of Italy*. COM(2023) 612 final.

European Commission. (2024). *Digital Decade 2024: country reports: Italy*.

European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document 2025 Country Report- Italy Accompanying the document Recommendation for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the economic, social, employment, structural and budgetary policies of Italy*. COM(2025) 212 final.

European Commission. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2024). *Education and training monitor 2024 – Italy*. Publications Office of the European Union.

Government of Italy. (2022). *National Implementation plan Italy*.

ReferNet Italy, & Cedefop. (2023a). *Italy: new regulation for improving the skills and organising training for public servants*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Italy, & Cedefop. (2023b). *Italy: reform of higher technical institutes (ITS Academy)*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Italy & Cedefop. (2025a). *Italy: additional funding boosts upskilling and reskilling*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Italy, & Cedefop. (2025b). *Italy: new decree for national competence certification and active labour policies*. *National news on VET*.

ReferNet Italy, & Cedefop. (2025c). *Italy: VET access widens through GOL reform*. *National news on VET*.