



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

LATVIA



National VET policy developments 2023-24

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1. Introduction

This VET policy brief ⁽¹⁾ produced by Cedefop presents a snapshot of vocational education and training (VET) policy developments in Latvia 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 2027 identified in Latvia's national implementation plan. This VET policy brief provides information from Cedefop monitoring and analysis on the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on VET](#) and [Osnabrück 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

Initial VET (IVET) is centralised and highly regulated by the State. There are currently 54 VET schools. Most are founded and run by the State; around half are technical schools (tehnikumus), receiving substantial resources for investment in infrastructure and equipment, with the support of EU funds. Other VET school types are a vocational secondary school, an arts education competence centre, a vocational further education centre and a college. While programmes of vocational schools usually focus on one sector (e.g. metal, sales), the technical school offer is broader and, according to law, also provides adult education and methodological support to other VET providers. Technical schools may also offer EQF level 5 programmes, which are not available in vocational schools.

Since 2022, the [professional competence centre status \(PIKC\)](#) for VET providers has been abolished with the introduction of the current VET provider types (see above). This status was granted to high-performing large VET providers over the past decade.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the VET legal framework, governance, funding and curricula. Social dialogue and strategic cooperation are arranged through the National Tripartite Sub-Council for Cooperation in VET and Employment (PINTSA). Fourteen sector expert councils ensure that VET provision is in line with labour market needs; they participate in developing sector qualification frameworks, occupational standards, qualifications requirements, VET curricula and quality assurance procedures. VET school governing bodies (conventions) contribute to the school strategic development and cooperation with the labour market (Cedefop & Ministry of Education and Science, 2023).

VET in Latvia is nationally referred to as 'vocational education'. It is offered at secondary (lower and upper) and tertiary (professional higher) education levels. Post-secondary level does not exist. Most learners study at upper secondary level. Initial VET (IVET) includes practical training (50% to 65% of curricula) at schools and enterprises, and

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

⁽²⁾ Some developments include information up to mid-2025.

vocational and general subjects. Most programmes allow transition to the next education level after completion.

Since 2023, VET graduates receive two graduation certificates: a certificate or a diploma proving completion of a VET programme and a professional qualification certificate. Professional qualification certificates are digital. Learners successful in all general school subjects, professional modules and practice, but failing professional qualification examination, can receive a certificate or diploma of lower-level qualification. It is also possible to acquire a certificate of partial qualification and a module certificate (Cedefop & Ministry of Education and Science, 2023; ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2023b; see also Section 4.1).

Formal continuing VET (CVET) programmes enable adults with education/work experience to obtain a State-recognised professional qualification at EQF levels 2-4. These programmes are usually between 480 and 1 200 hours (2 184 hours in arts) depending on the field of study. Shorter professional development programmes do not lead to a qualification but provide the opportunity to improve professional competences (upskill). Craftsmanship (not part of apprenticeships) exists on a small scale, separate from the rest of the education system (Cedefop & Ministry of Education and Science, 2023).

2.2 Challenges

The main challenges of VET in Latvia include the need to modernise its content and provision, attract competent teachers and trainers, promote stakeholder collaboration, and ensuring VET quality.

VET programmes in the country not always promptly accommodate the changing labour market and adult education needs, according to the National education strategy 2021-27 (*Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2021.-2027. gadam: Nākotnes prasmes nākotnes sabiedrībai*). The strategy has identified the need for more science, technology, engineering, maths (STEM) and digital skills. It also calls for more career guidance and transformation of education institutions, including VET, into organisations that offer adult learning.

Despite recent improvements, assuring the quality of VET in Latvia still lacks a systemic approach. Various education quality monitoring data are available. However, they are poorly interconnected and don't form a unified system for regular, objective, methodologically based and transparent monitoring and evaluation of VET performance at provider, municipal, regional and national levels. The available data on employability of VET graduates and long-term learner performance are incomplete (Latvia, 2022; Latvia. Cabinet of Ministers, 2021).

The attractiveness and prestige of the teaching profession is comparatively low. While VET teachers are generally committed professionals, they are often **overloaded** and underpaid. The statutory salary of new teachers in Latvia was below EUR 10 000 per year in 2020/21 (European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice, 2022). Most are over age 50. According to the **OECD Teaching and learning international survey**, 2018, 38% of teachers

in Latvia would like to leave teaching within the next 5 years (OECD average 25%) (Latvia, 2022).

While there are well-established collaboration mechanisms among VET stakeholders, including the national tripartite council (PINTSA), expert councils for all economic sectors, and VET provider conventions with representatives from public authorities, local businesses and associations, there are few targeted activities currently supporting employers in promoting relevant skill development in VET and in-company training. VET providers don't cooperate sufficiently with adult education, research institutions and innovative enterprises to develop themselves as centres of excellence. Despite impressive IVET learner mobility abroad (11.2% in 2021), international cooperation has room for development (Latvia, 2022).

3. National VET policy priorities

The Latvian [national implementation plan](#) prepared in response to the [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück declaration](#) sets a number of priorities until 2027 that can be grouped as below.

- (a) Further developing modern and high-quality VET. This includes high-quality, flexible and labour market-tailored IVET and CVET programmes based on modules and learning outcomes. The priority also refers to improving VET learner performance and graduate tracking data, and introducing more flexibility to CVET for adult learning.
- (b) Equipping VET with highly qualified, competent and excellence-oriented teachers and trainers. This priority refers to creating conditions for sufficient supply and retention of competent and excellence-oriented teachers, trainers and school management. It also promotes inclusive VET through equipping teachers with competences needed to support at-risk learners.
- (c) Improving relevance through VET stakeholder cooperation. This includes supporting employers, so they stimulate the relevant skills development in VET and offer quality work-based learning. The priority also refers to international cooperation and developing partnerships between VET providers, research institutions, adult education providers and businesses. The cooperation also aims at strengthening the role of VET providers as centres of excellence and innovation.

These priorities are aligned with the [national education strategy 2021-27](#) (follow-up to the 2014-20 strategy) steering the developments in education and training, including VET. The strategy is implemented through 2-year action plans. In addition to the above priorities, the strategy includes a horizontal priority addressing promotion of green skills and digitalisation throughout VET.

4. Main policy developments and progress 2020-24

4.1 Further developing modern and high-quality VET

2020-22 marked a phase of modernisation, institutional restructuring, and stronger labour market alignment in Latvia's VET system. In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science set up a taskforce to design a graduate tracking system, and by 2021, consultations and a government report laid the groundwork for its implementation. The system was formally mandated in the 2022 [VET law](#), which also led to regulatory amendments defining data scope and publication, marking a step toward evidence-based VET policy.

In 2022, major VET law amendments redefined VET institution types and required providers to specify [their specialisations](#). The same year, the ministry approved the 2021-27 investment and development strategies for [every VET provider](#), emphasising alignment with regional and sectoral needs. Modularisation in VET, initiated in [2017](#), was reinforced with more modular programmes (Cedefop, 2024).

In 2023-24, Latvia advanced the implementation of its major VET reform based on [the 2022 VET law amendments](#), aiming to make VET more flexible, inclusive, and aligned with labour market needs through outcome-based curricula (Buligina & Zvejniece, 2024). In 2023, over 20 VET regulations were revised to enhance flexibility and inclusion, introducing micro-qualifications and shifting from programme to provider accreditation. Work-based learning and Sector Expert Councils were also strengthened. In 2024, updates to the Latvian Classification of Education were proposed to align with international standards and expand continuing VET at higher levels (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023, the [regulation on VET and professional qualification documents](#) updated the types of certificate issued by VET providers. Before this change, VET programme graduates received one document, either a certificate or a diploma, depending on the level of the programme. Now, they can also receive a professional qualification certificate. Module certificates and certificates proving completion of a part of a VET programme for non-graduates have also become available. Module certificates acknowledge learner professional competences that are important in the labour market and in further studies. Since September 2023, professional qualification certificates have become available in digital format. Gradual transition to all-digital VET diplomas/certificates is also under way (ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2023b).

VET providers continued implementing their [development and investment strategies](#), which were approved in 2022. In August 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science allocated funding to VET institutions for programme modernisation, infrastructure upgrades, and digitisation. In September 2024, the government approved [regulation No 611](#), introducing support for climate-neutral solutions in VET, aimed at improving energy efficiency, sustainability, and reducing environmental impact, further reinforcing the strategic and future-oriented development of the VET system (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In May 2023, new [government regulations](#) enabled the recognition of competences for VET admission, aligning national regulations with the EU Council recommendation *Upskilling pathways*. The legislation introduces a three-step process: skills assessment,

learning offer, and validation and recognition, allowing individuals to enter VET programmes without repeating previously acquired competences. This promotes faster qualification acquisition and supports flexible, individualised learning pathways, particularly benefiting NEETs and early leavers. Admission can now occur through various routes, including after breaks or competence recognition, with procedures in place for those lacking formal documentation, making VET more inclusive and responsive to learner needs (ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2023a).

In 2023, Latvia concluded the ESF-supported project *Pumpurs*, which since 2017 had provided targeted prevention and intervention measures to [reduce early school leaving](#), supporting around 50 000 learners across 665 educational institutions with over 94 000 individual risk reduction plans and more than 131 000 counselling sessions. The project also delivered extensive support to educators and provided financial aid for transport, accommodation, and catering to thousands of at-risk learners. In 2024, the Parliament Committee on Education, Culture and Science supported the continuation of the initiative, launching a new project phase focused on enhanced stakeholder collaboration and proposing a one-year support programme for learners, aiming to sustain and build on the outcomes of *Pumpurs* (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023, Latvia advanced the implementation of its [VET graduate tracking system](#) by developing a digital tool that consolidates employment and income data of VET graduates one to four years after graduation, enabling its use for policy planning, programme development, labour market forecasting, and career guidance. The tool includes data from graduates of 2018 to 2021 and enhances transparency and relevance of VET provision. In 2024, the digital tool was made publicly available through the State Education Information System (VIIS) portal, supporting data-driven decision-making at individual, institutional, municipal, regional, and national levels (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023, the country also continued strengthening [career guidance in general and vocational education institutions](#), with 350 counsellors active in most VET schools. Activities included career days, graduate tracking, employer meetings, and professional development events supported by the State Education Development Agency and Euroguidance (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Latvia focused efforts on improving the [sustainability and flexibility of its work-based learning](#) (WBL) system. In 2023, the ESF project *Participation of vocational education students in work-based learning and training practices in companies* concluded, involving 4 150 companies, 40 VET institutions, and 4 804 students, with 80.45% of participants employed six months after graduation. Due to limited national funding foreseen for 2021-27, efforts shifted toward systemic improvements through the ESF project *Development of the system of professional qualifications for ensuring the quality of education*. In 2024, two pilot initiatives were launched. The first, supported by the Swiss government, tested shorter, dual-type WBL models for IVET, post-secondary, and adult learners to support faster labour market integration. The second, developed with German support, aimed to strengthen the capacity of sectoral expert councils (SEC) in identifying WBL-suitable companies, forecasting sectoral skills needs, and attracting learners (see also Section 4.3).

Both pilots emphasised more personalised, less bureaucratic approaches, supported by new electronic documentation and coordination from the National Centre for Education (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023, new licensing regulations simplified the process for general and vocational education programmes, allowing VET institutions to submit only implementation plans instead of full programmes. The shift from programme accreditation to provider accreditation reduced administrative burden and emphasised self-evaluation and reporting to boost innovation and performance. In 2024, the government approved updated accreditation rules for general and vocational education institutions, including evaluations of school leaders, aiming to strengthen institutional accreditation and [align quality assessments with modern educational trends](#) (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023, applications were submitted to the Ministry of Finance to increase the [base funding for VET programmes](#), expand state-funded places, and finance internships and work-based learning, but these proposals were not approved by the government. However, discussions on VET funding continued with the government and social partners. In 2024, amendments to government [regulation No 655](#) were proposed and partially approved, resulting in a 20% increase in base funding for VET reflecting actual costs, though limited by fiscal constraints. Additionally, new regulations mandated accident insurance coverage for all VET students throughout their entire study period, expanding protection beyond the previous restrictions (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

4.2 [Equipping VET with highly-qualified, competent and excellence-oriented teachers and trainers](#)

Between 2020 and 2024, Latvia focused on strengthening the quality of VET teaching by improving teacher competence and pay.

The ESF project, *The effective management of vocational education institutions and the improvement of personnel competence* (started in 2017), provided large-scale training to promote learner-centred and digital teaching, reaching 11 650 staff, including 1 920 leaders by 2021.

Meanwhile, the minimum VET teacher salary rose from EUR 790 in 2020/21 to EUR 830, with further gradual increases through 2021/22 and 2022/23 school years. Despite these efforts, teachers found the raises insufficient and went on strike in April 2023, prompting a new minimum salary of EUR 1 020 from September 2023.

As of September 2023, the [minimum VET teacher salary](#) was EUR 1 020 per month. In 2025, the [minimum salary for educators in Latvia rose by 2.6%](#) as part of amendments approved by the government. The EUR 30 million allocated in the 2025 State budget increased the hourly rate from EUR 9.54 to EUR 9.79, reaching EUR 1 566 per month for a 40-hour week. This marks the only additional funding outside national security objectives for 2025, reflecting the government's commitment to annual pay hikes for teachers. Further measures include allowances for transport and housing costs, as well as funding for teacher training. A new 'school programme funding' model replaced the 'money follows the

student' model from September 2025, ensuring fairer pay and more sustainable funding for educators.

4.3 Improving relevance through VET stakeholder cooperation

National and international stakeholder cooperation continued with the aim of improving VET relevance, including on sector curricula, work-based learning and stakeholder capacity building.

In 2020, the government revised procedures for work-based learning, expanding the responsibilities of sector expert councils, and the education ministry signed (and later renewed in 2021) a contract with the Latvian Employers' Confederation to coordinate their activities and boost engagement in VET policy. That same year, cooperation with the German Federal Ministry of Education and Science was established to support capacity building for these councils (Cedefop, 2024).

Since 2020, several international projects, including 4CHANGE on Industry 4.0, Skills for the Baltic Wood Industry, ExcellWBL, Dig4VET, and FinLat-Logic, promoted modernised curricula, digital tools, and stronger work-based learning. The outcomes of these collaborations were presented in February 2022 at the Baltic Assembly's Education Committee meeting in Vilnius, highlighting Latvia's growing role in regional VET cooperation (Cedefop, 2024).

In August 2023, the Latvian and German education ministries signed their third declaration of cooperation in VET and lifelong learning, reinforcing their commitment to sharing knowledge, best practices, and policy models (ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2024).

As a result, in 2024-25, the Latvian-German project *Strong VET through strong sector expert councils (SEC-pLus)* advanced efforts to strengthen VET in Latvia by enhancing the capacity of sector expert councils (SEC) to shape policy and align training with labour market needs. Focusing on three pilot sectors, metal work and machinery, agriculture, and the timber industry, the project is revising strategic goals, improving labour market forecasting methods, and setting criteria for company readiness in work-based learning. Mutual learning is central to the initiative, with exchanges between Latvian and German experts and collaborative workshops. The project ultimately aims to extend successful practices to all SEC, reinforcing sectoral ownership and system-wide impact (ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2025a).

In 2024, the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce (AHK) in Latvia, supported by the German Embassy in Riga, launched the project *Choosing a profession without prejudice* to promote gender-neutral career choices among young people. A key event was the Career Day at Daugavpils Technical School, where participants engaged in hands-on experiences across traditionally gendered professions, such as girls exploring electrical engineering and boys trying hairdressing and fashion design. The initiative aims to dismantle stereotypes and support more balanced enrolment in training programmes across all fields. These developments reflect a broader shift in attitudes driven by digitalisation and modernised work environments, fostering an inclusive vocational education landscape free from gender bias (ReferNet Latvia & Cedefop, 2025b).

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

While the overall employment rate in Latvia (77.4%) was higher than the EU27 average (75.8%) in 2024, the employment rate of recent IVET graduates (age 20-34, 69.7%) was 10.3 percentage points (pp) lower than the EU average (80%). Despite the increasing trend in IVET graduate employment since 2019, this signals that VET contribution to overall employment in the country may be lower than that of other education and training forms/types.

The share of unemployed adults with a learning experience in the past 4 weeks in 2024 (9.5%) was 5.8 pp lower than the EU average (15.3%). Reaching the EU target of 20% by 2025 seems unrealistic. The share for low-qualified adults with learning experience in the last 12 months in Latvia (13.6%) in 2022 was lower than the EU average (18.4%); this is also far off the 2025 EU target of 30%. The share of adult learning in Latvia in 2022 was 34.1%, 5.4 pp lower than in the EU on average.

Indicators and their progress compared to the EU targets are presented in Table 1.

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

Type of indicator ⁽³⁾	Indicator	Last available year	LV	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	34.1	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	13.6 ^u	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	9.5	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	2024	77.4	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	7.9	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15-29 year-olds (%)	2024	10.7	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	45.3	55.6	Skills Agenda ESPR Action Plan	70% (2025) 80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%)	2024	69.7 ^u	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	34.9 ^u	65.3	Council Rec on VET Council Resolution on EEA	60% (2025)
Context	25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	45	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	3.3	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	449	93 333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million decrease (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	43.1	10273.6 ^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	11.2	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	1.2 ^d		

Available flags: d – definition differs, e – estimated, u – low reliability, v – Cedefop estimate.

*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](#).

⁽³⁾ [Definitions](#) on the type of indicators are available.

6. Conclusion

Latvia made steady progress in modernising its VET system through reforms aimed at increasing flexibility, inclusion, and labour market relevance. Key developments in the past few years included digital certification, modular curricula, and improved access through competence recognition. However, further action is needed to expand inclusive learning pathways and ensure that new tools and structures, such as graduate tracking and work-based learning systems, are effectively integrated into long-term policy and practice.

Despite a clear focus on modernising infrastructure and increasing teacher salaries, limited measures were taken to attract and retain highly qualified VET teachers and trainers. Salary increases and funding reforms marked important steps, but broader support mechanisms, such as career development, mentoring, and innovative recruitment strategies, remain underdeveloped. A more comprehensive, long-term approach is needed to address systemic challenges in the VET teaching workforce.

Stakeholder cooperation gained momentum, especially through international partnerships and initiatives to strengthen sectoral engagement and promote inclusivity. Projects with German partners and gender-neutral career campaigns reflect growing efforts to align VET more closely with societal and economic needs. Still, sustained collaboration, especially with employers, and deeper institutional commitment will be crucial to maintain relevance and build sector-wide excellence.

Further steps in the above measures would allow the country to meet the objectives set in the National implementation plan in line with the Council recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück declaration.

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