



Vocational education and training policy briefs 2024

ROMANIA



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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 Romania 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 Romania's national implementation plan. This 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

VET in Romania comprises initial and continuing programmes and qualifications. Initial VET (IVET) is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research. The National Centre for TVET Development coordinates the design of training standards for qualifications, validated by sectoral committees and approved by the ministry. Social partners participate in the committees and support VET implementation. 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) (Cedefop & National Centre for TVET Development, 2023).

IVET is offered at upper secondary and post-secondary levels; the latter is considered higher VET. IVET qualifications are based on training standards, including units of learning outcomes and, for each unit, an assessment standard. The standards help increase VET labour market relevance by ensuring a better match between qualifications and the reality of working life after graduation. Each IVET school has a [contractual relationship \(partnership agreement\) with employers](#) offering work-based learning (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Continuing VET (CVET) is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Authorised private and public providers offer adult vocational training, including 1- to 3-year continuing 'apprenticeship at workplace' programmes which 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 IVET. Theory and practical training of at least 70% are provided mainly by companies, in cooperation with authorised professional training providers (Cedefop & National Centre for TVET Development, 2023).

(1) See also the previous edition: Cedefop. (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Romania](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.
(2) Some developments include information up to mid-2025.

2.2 Challenges

According to the [national implementation plan](#), the main challenges for Romania's VET system are improving its quality, flexibility, relevance to labour market needs, as well as access and participation (Romania, 2022).

Key issues include high dropout rates compared to general upper secondary education, performance gap between VET and general education students, and low employment rates among recent graduates. Moreover, only a small share of VET students benefit from work-based learning opportunities, limiting their employment prospects (European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024) ⁽³⁾.

Another challenge is the need for stronger involvement of social partners in the design and implementation of VET programmes, including dual IVET and the recently introduced higher dual VET (ReferNet Romania & Cedefop, 2025).

3. National VET policy priorities

The Romanian [national implementation plan](#) that the country prepared in response to the [2020 Council recommendation on VET](#) and the [Osnabrück declaration](#) sets several priorities that can be grouped as follows.

- (a) Improving VET quality and its labour market relevance. This includes skills anticipation, graduate tracking, updating national training standards and curricula, supporting teacher training and work-based learning. It also refers to better monitoring of VET policies and emphasises the development of quality assurance mechanisms, especially in CVET at system and provider levels.
- (b) Improving VET access, flexibility and permeability. This includes extension of dual VET to EQF levels 4-7, upgrading the equipment in training labs, and financing the costs associated with in-company training. This also refers to developing a national CVET strategy and introducing a credit system in CVET.
- (c) Increasing IVET attractiveness and participation in VET. This includes implementing entrepreneurship education in VET, equipping ICT labs, improving digital skills of teachers, especially for hybrid teaching, and increasing VET learner and teacher international mobility. For the improved participation in VET, the priority also refers to financial support and support programmes for disadvantaged learners, dedicated training for their teachers, as well as counselling services and VET awareness campaigns for learners, teachers and parents.

These priorities are aligned with Romania's national [ESF+ programme for education and employment 2021-27](#) that invests in the development of the country's human capital. They are also supported by [Education Romania](#), a report of the President Administration setting a high-level vision and strategy for education until 2030, as well as by the investment projects of the [National recovery and resilience plan](#) and measures of the [National employment strategy 2021-27](#).

⁽³⁾ See also Section 5.

4. Main policy developments 2020-24

4.1 Improving VET quality and its labour market relevance

Since 2020, Romania undertook several reforms to strengthen the quality and labour market relevance of VET. The labour and education ministries launched the ReCONNECT project (2020-23), worth around EUR 3.84 million, to establish systems for skills forecasting, graduate tracking, and policy evaluation. The [ReConnect platform](#) was launched in 2023. By March 2025, its [public interface was still under development](#).

Complementary efforts focused on teacher professionalisation, including VET teachers: [the national teacher exam methodology to become a certified teacher \(Definitivat\)](#) was revised in 2022 to include digital competence assessment with 5-6 thousand teachers obtaining certification annually in 2022-24. By 2024, initial teacher training was expanded through [accredited master's programmes](#), with programmes running in multiple universities, while continuous professional development frameworks were updated to reflect diverse training pathways (Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025; ReferNet Romania & Cedefop, 2023b).

[Teacher mentoring](#) was institutionalised in 2022 through the PROF project, creating a national mentoring framework and register of mentor teachers. Targeted training has been provided annually to VET teachers and tutors through various projects. Meanwhile, the draft of the long-delayed [methodology on quality assurance in adult learning](#) (including CVET) was revised in 2022 to align with the [National Employment Strategy 2021-27](#), introducing common quality criteria and indicators. It was still not adopted by 2024.

In 2023-24, the employment strategy efforts focused on tackling labour shortages and boosting employment, especially for youth, women, and Ukrainian refugees. Key actions included updating labour market analyses, creating employer profiling tools, improving counselling and case management procedures, and implementing training and employment programmes (Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In December 2023, the [National strategy for adult training 2024-27](#) was adopted by the government aiming at 12% adults participating in lifelong learning by 2027. Its 2024 action plan focused on strengthening sectoral committees, enhancing data collection and career management systems, and introducing measures such as individual learning accounts (ILA), transferable credits, improved guidance, and tailored training for individuals with low or no formal education (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2024, Romania's [ILA entered the design phase](#), aiming to expand adult access to training, increase learner ownership of skills development, ensure transferability of training rights across jobs, and reduce reliance on employer approval and financing. The pilot, focused on the construction sector, involved feasibility studies, simulations, an online portal, promotional campaigns, and peer-learning activities with authorities and social partners, while negotiations were ongoing to secure ESF+ funding for implementation from 2025 to 2027 (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2022, the [transferable credit system](#) supporting lifelong learning, mobility, and recognition of adult professional training was approved. In 2023, new education laws and a detailed methodology aligned the system with ECTS guidelines and VET recommendations, specifying how credits are granted for different types of qualifications. In 2024, the

methodology was updated to refine the calculation of study hours into transferable credits, further facilitating competence recognition and learning mobility (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2023-24, Romania also strengthened [VET relevance to labour market needs](#) by adopting new education laws ⁽⁴⁾, establishing and funding Regional Consortia for Dual Education, and developing [dual VET pathways](#) at EQF levels 3–5 and dual higher education at levels 6-8. The consortia fostered cooperation between schools, universities, employers, and local authorities, guided curriculum updates, and supported IVET programmes aligned with employer demand. Enrolment in dual IVET slightly increased but remained below 7% of all IVET learners in 2024/25 (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

4.2 Improving VET access, flexibility and permeability

In 2020-22, Romania introduced a range of measures to strengthen VET and improve access to lifelong learning. A key development in 2022 was the approval of a national methodology that expanded the [dual initial VET \(IVET\) pathway](#) to qualifications at EQF levels 4 and 5. In 2023, a full dual pathway up to EQF level 8 was introduced showcasing wider opportunities for students' personal and professional growth. This created smoother progression routes for graduates, opening pathways to higher levels of study. At the same time, the Ministry of Labour launched a two-year [Erasmus+ project](#) to design a [national adult training strategy 2024-27](#) (Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025; ReferNet Romania & Cedefop, 2023a).

In 2024, Romania's new education laws ⁽⁴⁾ came into force, expanding access to [second chance education](#) by lowering the age gap requirements for learners at different education levels and allowing flexible study arrangements to accommodate working students (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Other reforms have targeted adult continuing VET (CVET) in 2022-22, including a [methodology to grant transferable credits](#) for adult professional training, allowing learners to accumulate and recognise competences through a [credit-based system](#). Additionally, in 2023, the National Qualifications Authority drafted new legal acts to modernise the validation of non-formal and informal learning, replacing outdated 2004 legislation. The updates aim to enhance the validation process by integrating learning outcomes and micro-certifications, as well as strengthening the accreditation framework for assessment centres (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

4.3 Increasing IVET attractiveness and participation in VET

Romania has been implementing measures to increase attractiveness and participation in VET through information, financial and methodological support actions.

In 2020-24, the National Centre for TVET Development [promoted IVET](#) as a first choice through campaigns, fairs and career guidance. By 2021, over 2 400 county-level events had been organised, followed by around 250 regional events annually in 2022-23, along with teacher networks under the EQAVET project (Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Since 2021, the [legal framework for awarding the performance scholarships](#) (Government Decision No 1.094/2021 and Ministerial Order No 3073/2022) has set the minimum monthly scholarships: from EUR 30 to 100 per month depending on type, spending EUR 130 million in

⁽⁴⁾ The pre-university (Law no. 198/2023) and higher education (Law no. 199/2023) laws.

2021 and supporting 605 thousand learners, including VET. In 2022 the education ministry decided to expand the [warm meal programme](#) to further 300 schools in addition to the previously piloted 137. In July 2024, the education ministry also updated its scholarship framework, introducing six main types and covering both social need and performance. Schools, local authorities and private partners may top up the allowances/scholarships (Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

In 2022, the Digital competence framework for educators, [DigCompEdu](#), was [adopted as a frame of digital competences](#) in VET in the country. It provides a progress model to [help teachers assess and develop their digital competences](#) and was integrated in VET teacher profiles and other documents related to teacher training in 2022/23 (Ministry of Education Order No 4.150/June 2022).

5. Statistical information in relation to EU targets

While all initial [VET programme types](#) in Romania include work-based learning, the share of recent IVET graduates (aged 20-34) who had a work-based learning experience as part of their programme was relatively low (7.2%) in 2024, compared with the EU average of 65.3%. This trend is particularly concerning, as the EU average has increased while Romania's share has declined since 2022.

Although it has increased over the past 2 years, the employment rate of recent IVET graduates (aged 20-34) in Romania reached 65.7% in 2024, remaining below both the EU average (80.0%) and the EU 2025 target (82%). The overall employment rate for individuals aged 20–64 in Romania (69.5%) was higher than that of VET graduates, yet still 6.3 percentage points (pp) below the EU average (75.8%) and 8.5 pp below the EU 2030 target (78%).

According to the most recent data available (2022), participation of adults in learning activities in the past 12 months, despite increasing since 2016, leaves room for improvement. It was 19.1% compared to the 2025 EU target of 47%.

Early leaving from education and training remained high in Romania. In 2024, 16.8% of 18- to 24-year-olds who had completed, at most, lower secondary education (ISCED 0-2) and were not in further education or training were early leavers, compared to 9.3% EU-wide.

More indicators and their progress compared to the EU targets are presented in the below table.

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

Type of indicator ⁽⁵⁾	Indicator	Last available year	RO	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	19.1 ^b	39.5	Skills Agenda	50% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	47% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	60% (2030)
Progress	Low-qualified adults with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%)*	2022	3.9 ^b	18.4	Skills Agenda	30% (2025)
Progress	Unemployed adults with a learning experience in the last 4 weeks (%)	2024	2.6 ^u	15.3	Skills Agenda	20% (2025)
Context	Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	2024	69.5	75.8	ESPR Action Plan	78% (2030)
Context	Early leavers from education and training (%)	2024	16.8	9.3	Council Resolution on EEA	<9% (2030)
Context	NEET rate for 15-29 year-olds (%)	2024	19.4	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	27.7	55.6	Skills Agenda	70% (2025)
					ESPR Action Plan	80% (2030)
Progress	Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%)	2024	65.7	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	7.2	65.3	Council Rec on VET	60% (2025)
					Council Resolution on EEA	
Context	25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	2024	23.2	44.2	Council Resolution on EEA	45% (2025)
Context	Gender employment gap (%)	2024	18.1	10.0	ESPR Action Plan	To be halved (2030)
Context	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion (1000s)	2024	5294	93 333	ESPR Action Plan	15 million decrease (2030)
Context	Employed ICT specialists (1000s)	2024	221.6 ^e	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	4.0	2.1 ^{dv}	Council Rec on VET	8% (2025)
					Skills Agenda Council Rec Europe on the Move	12% (2030)
Context	Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	2023	2	1.2 ^d		

Available flags: *b* – break in time series, *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](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/european-vet-policy-dashboard/methodology)

⁽⁵⁾ Definitions on the type of indicators is available at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/european-vet-policy-dashboard/methodology>

6. Conclusion

VET in Romania is undergoing reforms. Comprehensive initiatives outlined in the national implementation plan, coupled with the challenges in meeting EU benchmarks, underscore the imperative for prompt action to improve quality, alignment with labour market needs, accessibility, flexibility, permeability, attractiveness, and participation in VET.

Between 2020 and 2024, Romania made efforts to strengthen VET quality and labour market relevance, but progress has been uneven. While teacher professionalisation, mentoring frameworks, and adult learning measures were introduced, implementation gaps remain, such as delays in adopting quality assurance methodology and limited public accessibility of labour market tools, such as ReConect. A complete dual VET pathway has been established and participation rates in dual VET slowly grow, while still remaining comparatively low. The full integration of labour market needs into VET curricula remains a work in progress.

Romania expanded access to VET and lifelong learning through reforms in IVET and adult training, including second chance education and transferable credits. Validation of non-formal and informal learning has been modernised.

Efforts to increase IVET participation and attractiveness have produced some positive outcomes, yet structural challenges persist. Financial and methodological support and initiatives to engage learners have not fully overcome perceptions of VET as a less prestigious or viable pathway according to statistics.

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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