



spotlight on VET

CZECH REPUBLIC

VET in the Czech Republic

Vocational education and training (VET) has always represented a fundamental part of the Czech education system. Benefiting from a long tradition of quality, it has developed intensively over recent decades. In the past five years curricula have been reformed and modernised.

The main body responsible for IVET is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Most VET schools are public and founded by regions. IVET is school-based, with a large proportion of practical training (at schools, in workshops, practical training centres, and authorised companies) and/or work placements. Representatives of employers are involved in sector skill councils and field groups that set occupational and qualification standards.

Upper secondary VET

VET predominantly begins following completion of compulsory education, usually at age 15. All IVET programmes are school-based but practical training and work placements are an integral part of curricula. Practical IVET programmes (EQF 2-3) are a small part of secondary VET, as they are designed primarily for students with special needs. Upper secondary level vocational and technical programmes (EQF 3-4) last for three to four years. The following options exist:

- (a) three-year vocational programmes at EQF 3 (completed by a final examination leading to 'vocational certificate') enable graduates to enter the labour market directly and perform manual occupations (such as bricklayer, hairdresser). Graduates of these programmes can follow a two-year follow-up programme (EQF 4) and pass a *maturita* examination, which enables access to higher education;
- (b) four-year technical programmes (completed by a *maturita* examination, EQF 4) enable graduates to continue learning in higher education or perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs (such as civil engineering technician, IT system administrator);
- (c) lyceum programmes with a high proportion of general education (up to 70% of the curricula) prepare their graduates for studies at higher education institutions;
- (d) programmes offered by conservatories have a different setup, preparing students for performing demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. Studies are either completed by *maturita* (secondary education – EQF 4) or by *absolutorium* (tertiary professional education – EQF 6).

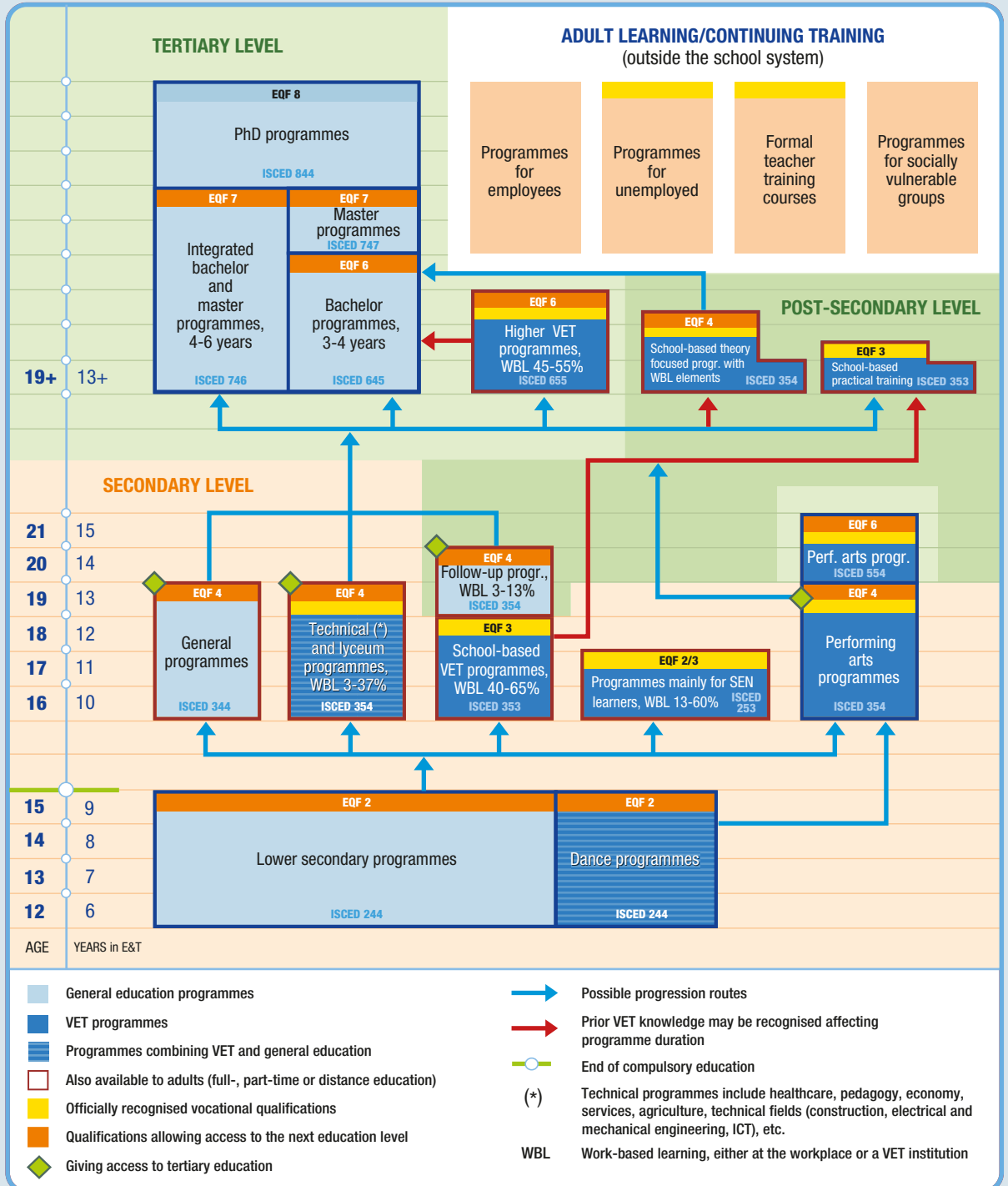
VET at post-secondary and tertiary level

Follow-up courses, organised by secondary schools, last two years and are accessible for graduates of three-year vocational programmes with an EQF level 3 vocational certificate. The two year course is completed with a *maturita* examination (EQF 4).

Learners who have already completed upper secondary education and intend to acquire a qualification in a different field, or have secondary general education and intend to get a vocational qualification, may opt for 'shortened programmes'. Those with *maturita* (EQF 4) can achieve a vocational certificate or another *maturita* certificate in a different field; those with just a vocational certificate (EQF 3) can only acquire another vocational certificate in a different field. Shortened courses are especially suitable for adults and last one to two years.

Tertiary professional programmes prepare secondary school graduates (with a *maturita* certificate) for performance of demanding professional tasks (such as nutritionist, dental assistant). Studies last three to three-and-a-half years and are completed by *absolutorium* (EQF 6). These programmes provide practically-oriented tertiary education and are closely aligned to employers' skill needs. Although most graduates enter the labour market, vertical permeability to higher education institutions also exists. Graduates who, on completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at universities, may have some of their subjects and exams taken in tertiary professional school recognised.

VET in the Czech Republic's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Czech Republic.

Distinctive features of VET

Early tracking: pupils choose between general and vocational educational pathways at upper secondary level at age 15. By age 17 to 19, most VET students have acquired a vocational qualification recognised on the labour market.

General subjects are a strong component in all types of VET programme. Their proportion varies depending on the programme, representing 30% to 70% of instruction time.

Early leaving from education and training is very low (around 5.5%), partly due to a wide choice of education pathways and various education programmes combined with a high level of permeability.

Tertiary education attainment in the 30 to 34 age group is quite low (30.1% compared to 38.7% in 2015 in the EU-28 as a whole). In the past decade, the share of young people entering tertiary education has grown significantly (from 13% in 2005 to 28% in 2014). The introduction of bachelor studies is driving this trend.

Any adult can study any VET programme in the formal school system. Many programmes are designed to be combined with working life. The wide variety of continuing VET (CVET) programmes provided outside the formal system is not generally regulated but subject to the free market; nevertheless, a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes has been gradually developing since 2007, when the law on validation and recognition of CVET outcomes came into force.

Demographic developments have led to a decreasing number of young learners; IVET schools have become more active in providing CVET programmes for the general public. This not only provides school teachers with an opportunity to develop their skills in teaching adults, but also helps increase young and adult learners' awareness of CVET as an integral part of life.

Challenges and policy responses

One of the main challenges in VET is to improve the quality and attractiveness of secondary VET by encouraging practical training and work placement in companies, supporting the school-to-work transition of graduates.

Several recent measures have aided cooperation between schools and employers, including tax incentives, developing VET examinations in cooperation with employers, and legislative amendments to enable experts from the business world to be employed in schools. Linking VET programmes with qualifications in the national register of qualifications (NSK) is also expected to increase responsiveness to labour market needs. Revision of national upper secondary VET curricula is currently being prepared as is reform in financing schools, with the State budget being discussed to promote quality as the main criterion as opposed to the current per capita financing principle.

A crucial challenge is the generally low attractiveness of teaching jobs up to tertiary level as the teaching profession is considered undervalued. This is caused mainly by low average salaries compared to other high-skilled professionals and limited opportunities for career development. Adopting the framework for career development for teachers has been debated for many years. A new approach being developed proposes three progression levels and focuses on the quality of teaching.

Better matching of skills supply and labour market demand is another challenge. Twenty nine sector councils (established gradually since 2005) monitor the coverage of their sectors by qualification, identify new skill trends and propose new qualifications. Several projects targeting better skills matching have been introduced but a system at national level is still missing.

Creating CVET options catering to the needs of the low-skilled and socially disadvantaged segments of the population requires more attention. Foreseen changes in legislation are expected to ensure that CVET corresponds better to labour market needs, complies with the system of recognition and validation defined in the NSK, and becomes better linked to active employment policy instruments such as retraining courses.

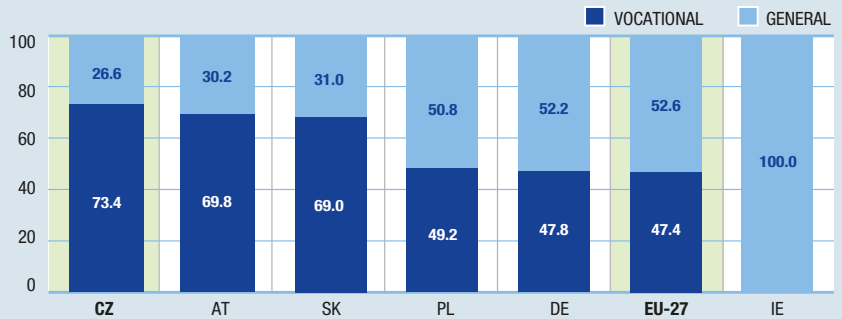


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Education and training in figures

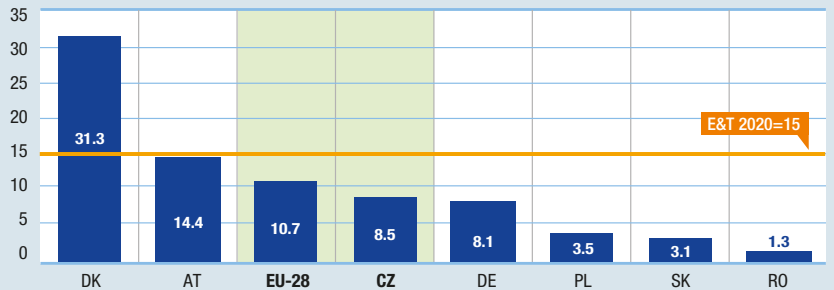
Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2014



NB: 47.4% is the provisional weighted EU average for 2014 based on available country data (27 countries).

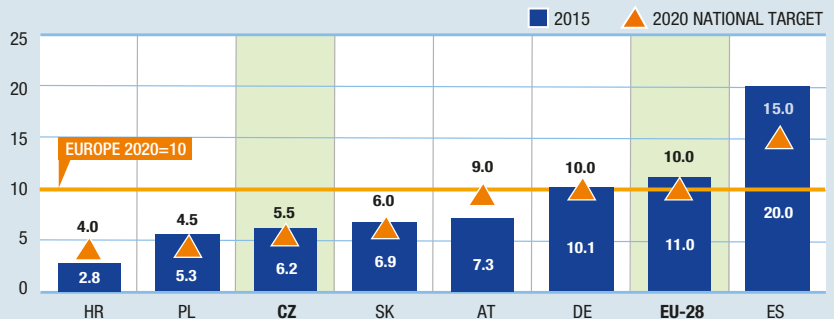
Source: Cedefop calculations, based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 22.4.2016.

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2015



Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

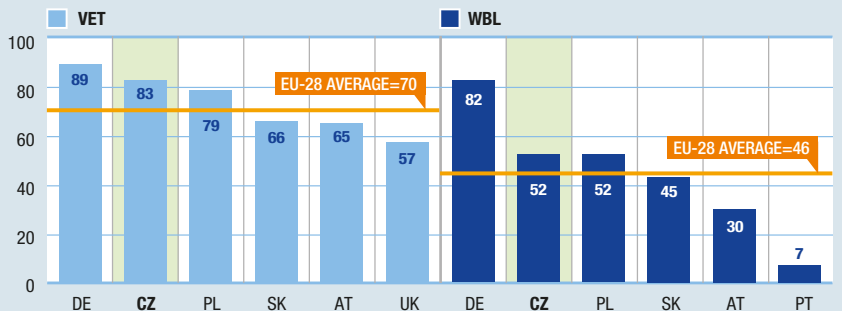
Early leavers from education and training
% of early leavers from education and training, 2015



NB: Low reliability in HR; definition for national target differs in DE, ES and SK.

Source: Eurostat labour force survey, date of extraction 16.5.2016.

Share of employees (aged 24 to 65) with medium-level education (ISCED 3-4) who obtained a vocational qualification, and whose highest level of education involved some learning in a workplace (% , 2014)



NB: VET: respondents of the survey described their highest qualification as vocational;

WBL: studies involved some learning at a workplace (such as apprenticeships, internships, other forms of work-based learning).

Results may differ from those reported in national statistics and international surveys, as the online data collection method used does not always lead to fully representative findings.

Source: Cedefop European skills and jobs survey, 2014.



Further information

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www.refernet.cz	ReferNet Czech Republic
www.msmt.cz	MŠMT – Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
www.mpsv.cz	MPSV – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
www.nuv.cz	NÚV – National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers
www.nvf.cz	NVF – National training fund
www.czso.cz	ČSÚ – Czech Statistical Office
www.vupsv.cz	VÚPSV – Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs

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