



spotlight on VET SPAIN

VET and employability

Modernising vocational education and training (VET), and making it more flexible as support to lifelong learning, are at the heart of Spanish education and employment policies. VET plays a significant role in dealing with the adverse effects of the economic crisis and in helping young people acquire qualifications that respond to labour market needs.

VET in Spain is mainly the responsibility of education and employment authorities. The national system for qualifications and vocational training forms the umbrella for VET programmes leading to formal qualifications awarded by them. The General Vocational Training Council is the national government's advisory body on VET policy. It comprises representatives of national and regional public authorities and social partners, such as enterprise organisations and trade unions.

Stakeholders were involved in developing occupational standards and creating a national register (*Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales*, CNCP), which serves as a reference for education and employment authorities when designing VET qualifications and programmes to ensure they are relevant to labour market needs.

VET qualifications awarded by the education authorities (VET diplomas) certify education level (from secondary to higher education) and occupational skills and competences. Those awarded by the employment authorities (professional certificates) comprise three levels and certify the occupational skills and competences acquired.

VET usually begins after the end of compulsory education (ISCED 2A), at age 16. Learners opting for school-based VET attend a two-year programme (ISCED 3B) which leads to an intermediate-level VET diploma. This diploma gives access to higher level VET (ISCED 5B) via an admission procedure. There are also VET options for those who have not completed compulsory education that award professional certificates at level 1.

Those older than 16 can also attend programmes (250-1 150 hours) awarding professional certificates. Access requirements and duration vary according to the level of learning outcomes to be achieved. These

programmes can be considered initial or continuing VET, depending on the learners' background and professional experience.

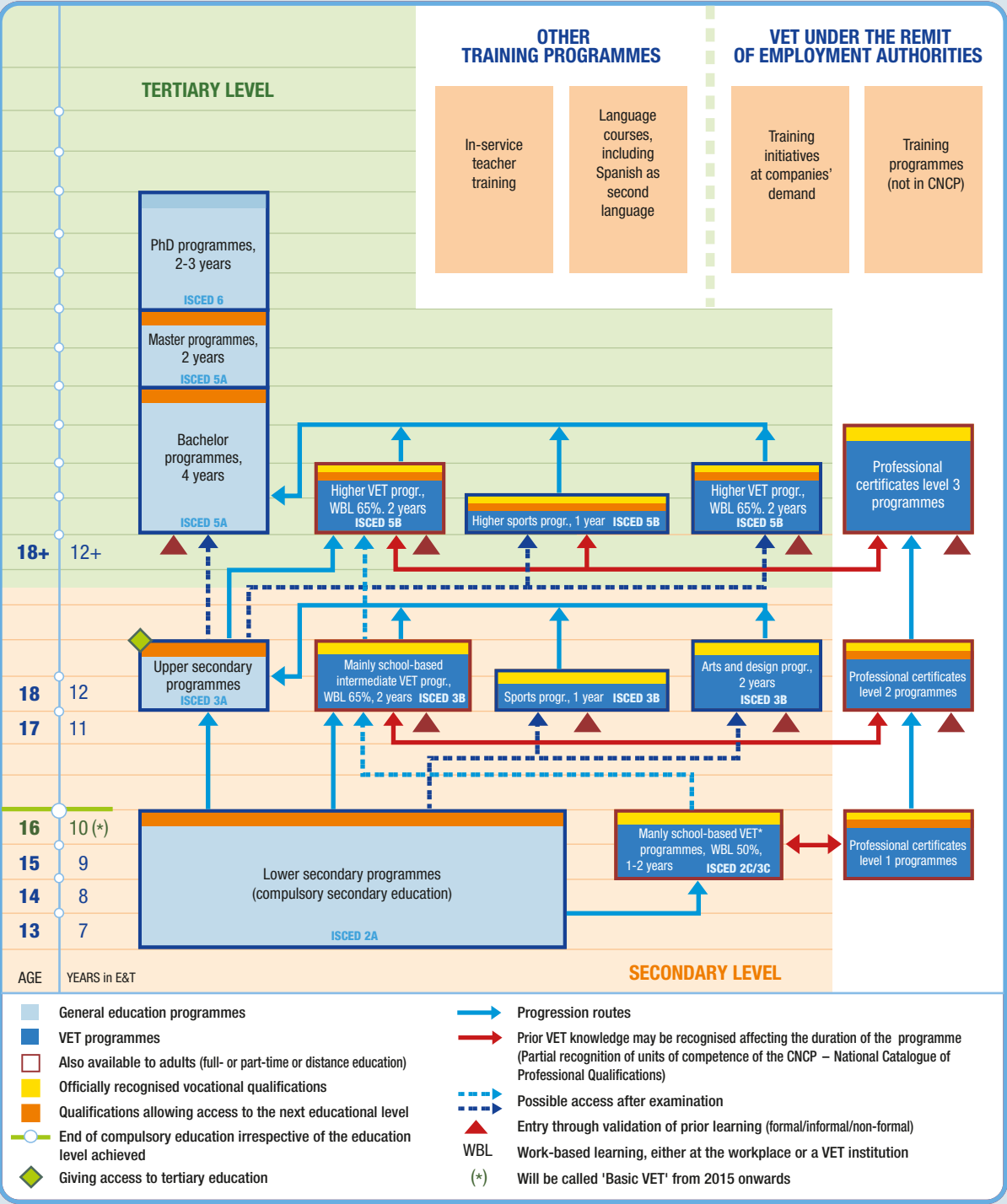
There are also intermediate and higher-level VET programmes in arts and design and sports (ISCED 3B and 5B).

The dual principle was introduced in 2012 to increase access to VET and support young people in transition to the labour market. Some autonomous communities have already put it in place in specific occupation areas. Participants (16-25 year-olds) are considered employees covered by labour contracts (usually one to three years) and get at least a minimum wage: this is not necessarily the case in dual training schemes under the remit of the education authorities. People up to the age of 30 may also benefit until youth unemployment decreases. At least 25% (first year) or 15% (subsequent years) of the time specified in the contract should be devoted to acquiring complementary skills in a specialised or duly authorised training centre or in the company.

Tertiary or higher education comprises university studies and higher-level VET. Since 2011, higher-level VET diplomas have been assigned to the first of the four levels of the Spanish higher education qualifications framework (MECES). Recognition of certain European credit transfer and accumulation systems allows progression for higher VET graduates and complementary studies for those from university.

CVET for workers, employed or unemployed, can be demand-led either as in-company training or in the form of individual training permits for formal qualifications financed through a social security bonus. CVET can also be offered as part of active labour market policies, encouraging people to upgrade their skills and acquire professional certificates based on the occupational standards of the CNCP issued by the labour authorities. This supply side training is financed through public funds.

VET in Spain



NB: ISCED 1997 was used on the chart. Conversion to ISCED 2011 is ongoing.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Spain.

Distinctive features of VET

The Spanish Constitution provides the right to education and retraining, which public authorities have to promote. Two different qualifications systems have been developed under the remit of education and labour authorities. They share the same consultation bodies but the governance and objectives of their VET qualifications and programmes differ.

As the occupational standards in the CNCP apply to both qualifications systems, mutual recognition of some parts of the training is possible. There are also common regulations for recognising skills acquired through work experience and expanding the dual principle. VET programmes are generally modularised and include compulsory workplace learning at the end of, or during, the studies. Learners need to pass all the modules to obtain the relevant qualification. However, modularisation allows partial certification and re-engagement in a lifelong learning perspective.

On-the-job experience and other non-formal and informal learning may be recognised through validation of competences acquired mainly at regional level, depending on labour market needs. Demand for recognition may be driven by company needs, social partner requests or minimum qualification requirements from sectoral regulatory bodies. These procedures empower citizens to engage in further learning and acquire full qualifications.

VET under the responsibility of the education authorities was reformed in 2013. From 2014/15, it offers three different qualification levels: basic, intermediate and higher VET diplomas. Programmes last two years (2 000 hours), with a minimum of 20% spent in a firm and a maximum of 80% at a training centre. Overall, 70% of the time is devoted to work-based learning (workshops, labs, simulations or workplace), and 30% to applied theoretical training. The reform also opens up the opportunity to acquire IVET diplomas through dual track schemes (with or without a working contract). In this case, duration is up to three years.

Challenges and policy responses

In response to the significant increase in youth unemployment in recent years, current VET policy focuses on:

- reducing early leaving from education and training;
- improving citizens' qualification levels and employability;
- implementing the dual principle (apprenticeship-type training);
- implementing e-learning and appropriate assessment criteria and quality assurance;
- evaluating the VET system to improve its quality and efficiency;
- improving attractiveness of VET qualifications and maintaining their labour market relevance;
- developing a comprehensive national qualifications framework and improving implementation of the other European tools and principles to promote mobility and support lifelong learning.

The 2013 education reform aims to meet different learner interests and encourage them to progress in their qualification by introducing flexible learning paths in upper secondary education and VET diploma programmes. The aim of the new two-year basic VET diploma programme is to provide youth at risk of abandoning compulsory secondary education with the skills not only to obtain a job but also to follow further studies, giving them access to the intermediate VET programmes and increasing their employability.

VET is also the main pillar of the national strategy for entrepreneurship and youth employment (2013-16). Several VET-related short-term measures are being implemented at national and regional levels.

The quality and efficiency of publicly funded CVET is guaranteed through accreditation system of VET providers and formal qualifications development. Monitoring performance, including transition to employment, will support efficiency of training for employment. Social partners and regional authorities participate in CVET quality assurance.



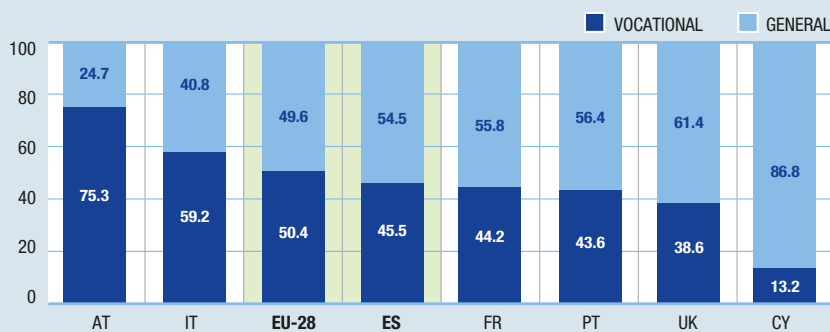
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Education and training in figures

Learners in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational and general programmes

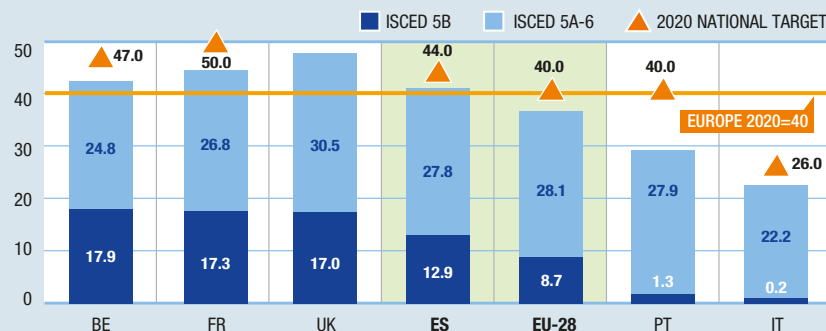
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2012



Source: Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction 30.5.2014.

Tertiary education by type

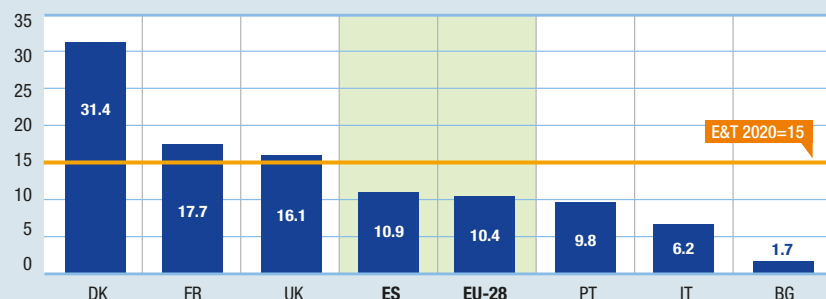
% of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education by type, 2013



Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Lifelong learning

% of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2013

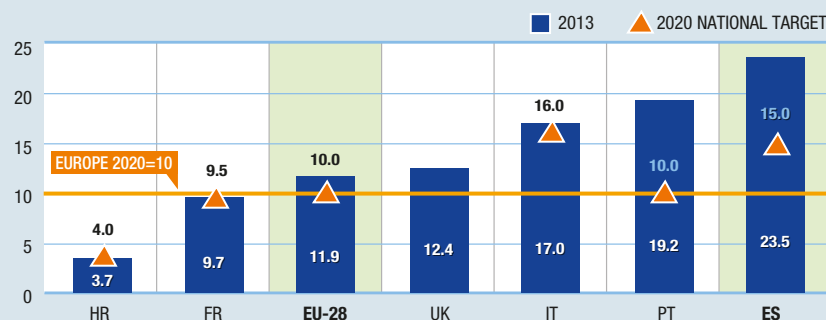


NB: Break in series for France.

Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.

Early leavers from education and training

% of early leavers from education and training, 2013



NB: Break in series for France.

Source: Eurostat, labour force survey, date of extraction 19.5.2014.



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Further information

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www.empleo.gob.es/en/	Ministry of Employment and Social Security
www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion.html	Education statistics from the ministry responsible for education
www.todofp.es	Web portal on guidance and information in VET from the ministry responsible for education
www.sepe.es	State Public Employment Service (SEPE)
www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_incual_ing.html	National Institute of Qualifications (INCUAL)
www.oapee.es	Autonomous national agency responsible for European education programmes (OAPEE)
www.fundaciontripartita.org	Tripartite Foundation for Employment Training (FTFE)

This spotlight is based on input from ReferNet Spain.



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