



spotlight on VET SPAIN

VET in Spain

Education authorities are responsible for formal VET programmes and qualifications. Labour authorities are responsible for VET within active labour market policies. They share the same consultation bodies but keep their own respective governance and objectives.

Organic Law 3/2022 establishes a single, modular and flexible offer of formal vocational training, structured in training pathways, from 'micro-trainings' to full qualifications. Gradual implementation is foreseen as of 2023/24.

The General Council for Vocational Training is the national government advisory body on VET policy. It comprises representatives of national and regional public authorities, employers' organisations, and trade unions. Stakeholders collaborate in the design of occupational standards in all sectors of the economy and are involved in VET qualifications design.

Initial VET offers basic, intermediate and higher VET qualifications as part of the education system. Programmes last 2 years (2 000 hours) and include work-based learning in a company and at a VET school. More specifically:

- basic programmes (ISCED 353) are available in the last year of compulsory education. They allow students at risk of dropping out to develop basic skills, prepare for an occupation (such as agro-gardening) and obtain a basic VET qualification. Students may move on to upper secondary VET and attain the compulsory secondary qualification, opening up the general education path;
- intermediate programmes lead to technician qualifications at ISCED 354 (such as cookery and gastronomy). Access to higher VET in the same field of study is possible, via an admission procedure;
- at tertiary level, higher programmes (ISCED 554) lead to an advanced technician qualification (such as logistics coordinator). Graduates can progress to bachelor programmes through an admission procedure.

Graduates from intermediate and higher VET programmes can enrol in short specialisation courses in the same field of studies to acquire occupation-specific and digital skills in line with the emerging needs of the economy.

All IVET programmes allow learners to spend time in a real working environment. The 2022 law introduced two schemes (*régimen general y régimen intensivo*) including social security contributions for apprentices and a paid contractual relationship if training in the workplace exceeds 35% of the programme duration (*régimen intensivo*).

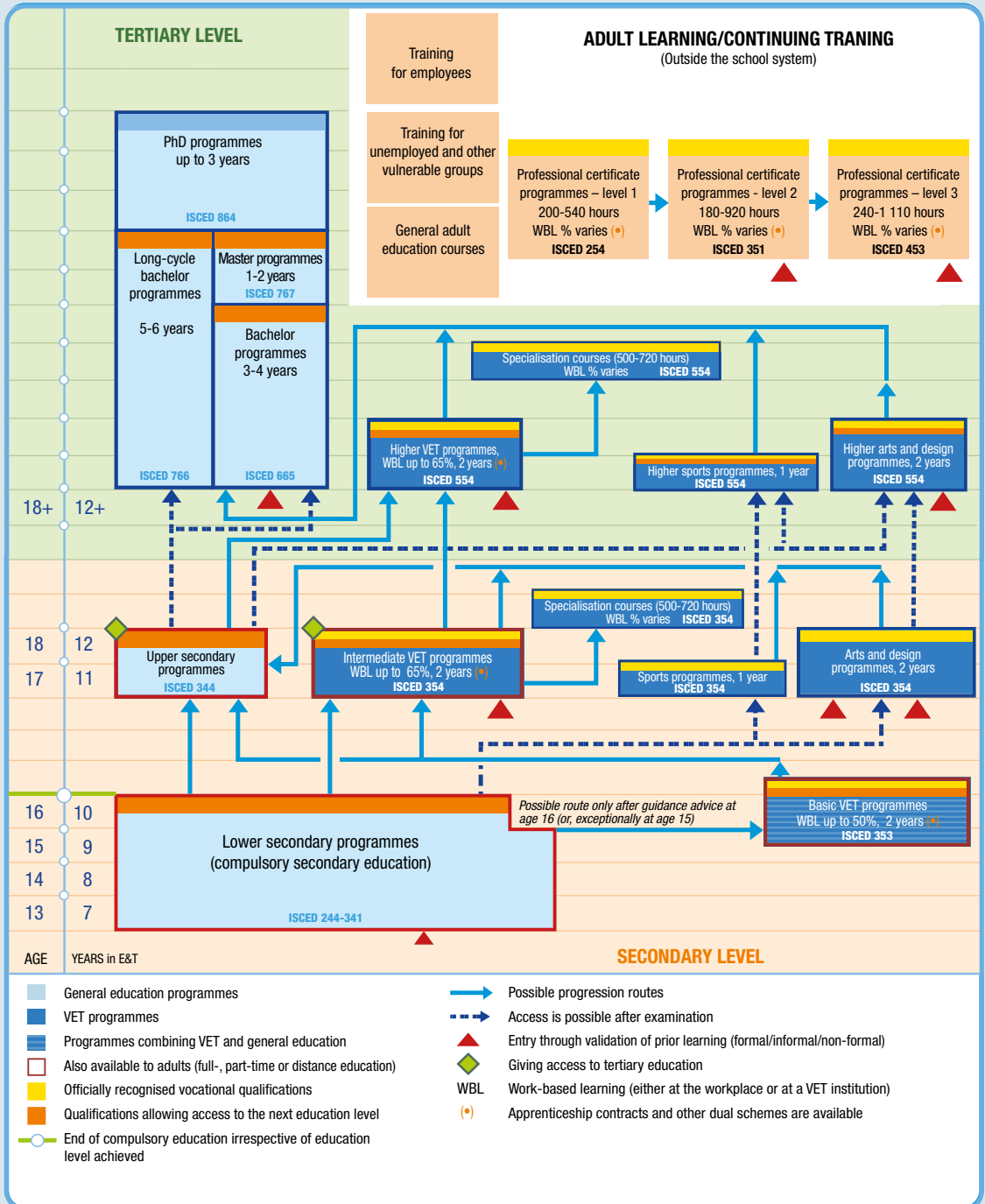
There are specific training programmes in arts and design and sport (4% of the VET population in 2021/22).

Adults can follow the same VET programmes as young people or enter a vocational programme leading to a professional certificate corresponding to an occupational profile, organised on three levels. Learners can move from one level to the next in the same field. Levels 2 and 3 programmes require having completed, respectively, compulsory or upper secondary, or equivalent, education. Duration varies according to the learning outcomes. All three level programmes include work-based learning and can be taken as an apprenticeship.

Adults may also have their skills recognised through validation. Only authorised public and private VET providers can deliver programmes leading to formal vocational qualifications.

Non-formal VET includes a wide range of courses, designed for different needs and skill profiles, allowing upskilling or reskilling. It may be financed through public funds, mainly from company and worker contributions to social security. Publicly funded programmes (*Especialidades*) not linked to the national catalogue (CNCP) are included in a catalogue of training specialties of the State Public Employment Service; providers need to be registered accordingly.

VET in Spain's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011. The Spanish education system is not referenced to EQF levels.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Spain, 2023.

Distinctive features of VET

The national system for qualifications and vocational training is the umbrella for VET programmes leading to qualifications awarded by the education authorities: VET diplomas and professional certificate programmes. These take as reference the learning outcomes of the national catalogue of occupational standards, allowing mutual recognition of parts of the training (modules) and transfer of (units of) competences gained in one VET programme to another, shortening its duration.

Modularisation allows accumulation of learning outcomes towards (partial) certification and re-engagement in education and training later in life. Besides occupational skills, programmes include training in transversal competences, entrepreneurship, and socio-professional maturity, facilitating school-work transitions and career development, as well as mandatory work-based training. Programmes can be taken face-to-face or through virtual learning environments and platforms, facilitating access to VET.

Occupational standards and programmes are continually updated, and new specialisation courses are developed to meet emerging needs.

Procedures for validating skills empower citizens to engage in further learning and acquire full qualifications. The process is coordinated at different levels, with regional authorities playing an important role in policy implementation and social partners taking an active role both in the design of qualifications and in the governance of the system.

Upskilling and reskilling measures are an important feature of active labour market policies in responding to current and future needs, with extensive social partner involvement in management.

Challenges and policy responses

Spain has an ageing workforce that includes many low-skilled adults. Technological developments and global changes put pressure on businesses and people to upskill and reskill. The share of the labour force with intermediate skills is low compared to the EU average, a risk for the country's future development as [skills demand forecasts](#) point to the need to increase this share.

In recent years, policy initiatives have focused on boosting VET attractiveness and responsiveness to the labour market, resulting in a new VET framework, reflected in the 2022 law. This seeks to unify the two subsystems of VET qualifications, overcome regional disparities, and create more opportunities for young people and adults, employed and unemployed, facilitating lifelong learning through different training pathways, recognition and accreditation of competences, and career guidance.

Improving and expanding apprenticeships, which currently account for only 4% of enrolments in VET, aims to provide young learners with better opportunities to enter the labour market and reduce unemployment.

It reinforces validation procedures to enable people in employment who are underqualified for their jobs to demonstrate and capitalise on the skills they have acquired through work experience.

A new comprehensive guidance system, outlined in Law 3/2022, is under way.

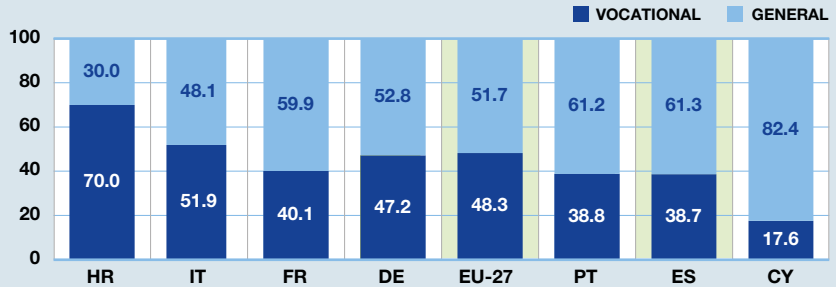
Teachers are also the subject of new measures, reinforcing their digital competence and setting the framework for digital competence in teaching.

Within active labour market policies, the policy intention is to adapt the training system to the new scenarios set by the education reforms.



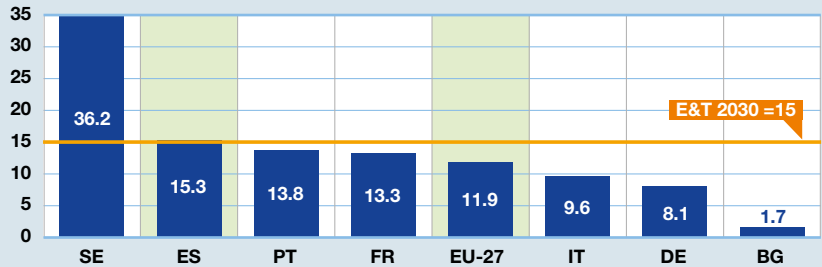
Education and training in figures

Upper secondary students (ISCED 2011 level 3) enrolled in vocational and general programmes
% of all students in upper secondary education, 2021



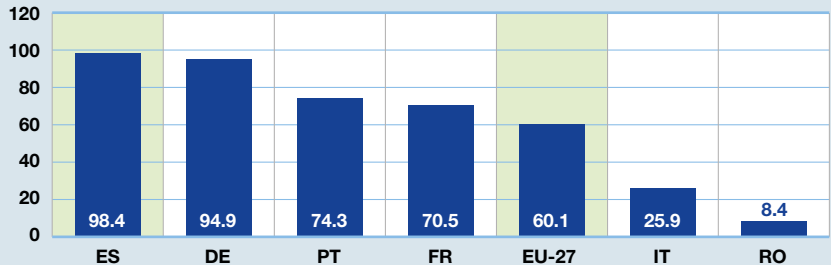
Source: Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat, UOE (UNESCO, OECD, Eurostat) data collection on education systems, date of extraction 9.6.2023.

Lifelong learning
% of population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training over the 4 weeks prior to the survey, 2022



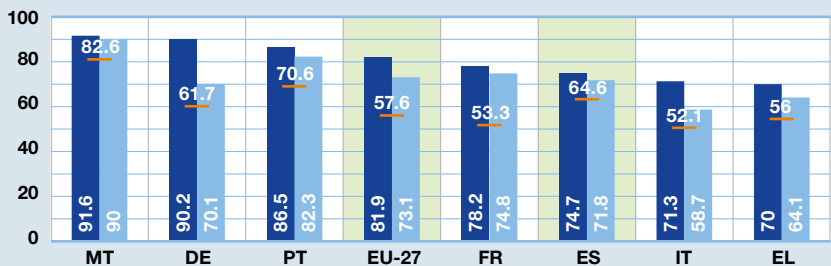
Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 9.6.2023.

Exposure of VET graduates to work-based learning
% of recent graduates from VET benefitting from exposure to work-based learning during their VET programme, 2022



Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 9.6.2023.

Employment rates of young graduates
% of 20- to 34-year-olds no longer in education and training, 2022



Legend:
 ■ Upper vocational secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)
 ■ Upper general secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)
 — Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)

Source: Eurostat, EU labour force survey, date of extraction 9.6.2023.



Further information

- Cedefop (2023). [Vocational education and training in Spain: short description.](#)
- Cedefop and Fundae (2022). [Vocational education and training in Europe: Spain: system description.](#)
In: Cedefop and ReferNet. Vocational education and training in Europe [database].
- Eurydice (2023). [National education systems: Spain.](#)
- European Commission (2022a). [Education and training monitor 2022: Spain.](#)

www.refernet.es	ReferNet Spain
www.educacionyfp.gob.es	Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
www.todofp.es	web portal for VET
www.sepe.es	Spanish Public Employment Service
www.fundae.es	Fundae – Fundación Estatal para la Formación en el Empleo
www.incual.educacion.gob.es	National Institute for Qualifications
www.euroguidance-spain.educacionyfp.gob.es	Euroguidance
www.sepie.es	Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education

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