

Spotlight
on VET 
SLOVAKIA

Vocational education
and training systems
in Europe

2023

VET in Slovakia

Despite growing interest in general education, secondary vocational education and training (VET) remains a strong pillar of the education system. In 2022, 68% of secondary education students graduated from VET; with 77.4% of them in programmes enabling continuation in higher education. In 2022/23, 440 approved VET programmes were available in secondary schools; including 24 regulated by health and interior ministries. The education ministry oversees initial VET (IVET). Secondary VET schools, typically maintained by self-governing regions, receive equal State funding, including private and church-affiliated ones. 'Dual VET' has been offered since 2015. From 2018/19, school-based and dual VET follow the same national curricula, opening the door for all secondary programmes to be offered in either format. IVET programmes at secondary level include:

- 4-year (occasionally 5-year) school-based programmes (150 in total; ISCED 354), mainly theory-focused leading to a *maturita* school leaving certificate confirming education level and VET qualifications;
- 4-year (occasionally 5-year) programmes (58 in total; ISCED 354) with extended practical training, leading to a *maturita* school leaving certificate, and a certificate of apprenticeship;
- 3-year (occasionally 4-year) programmes (106 in total; ISCED 353) leading to a certificate of apprenticeship;
- 2- or 3-year programmes (16 in total; ISCED 253) for low achievers without completed lower secondary education, potentially leading to a certificate of apprenticeship and the attainment of lower secondary education (ISCED 244).

Programmes at conservatories (31), specific arts and sports management programmes are not regulated by the Act on VET, despite offering VET qualifications. Special education schools also offer VET programmes tailored to SEN students.

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET programmes comprise:

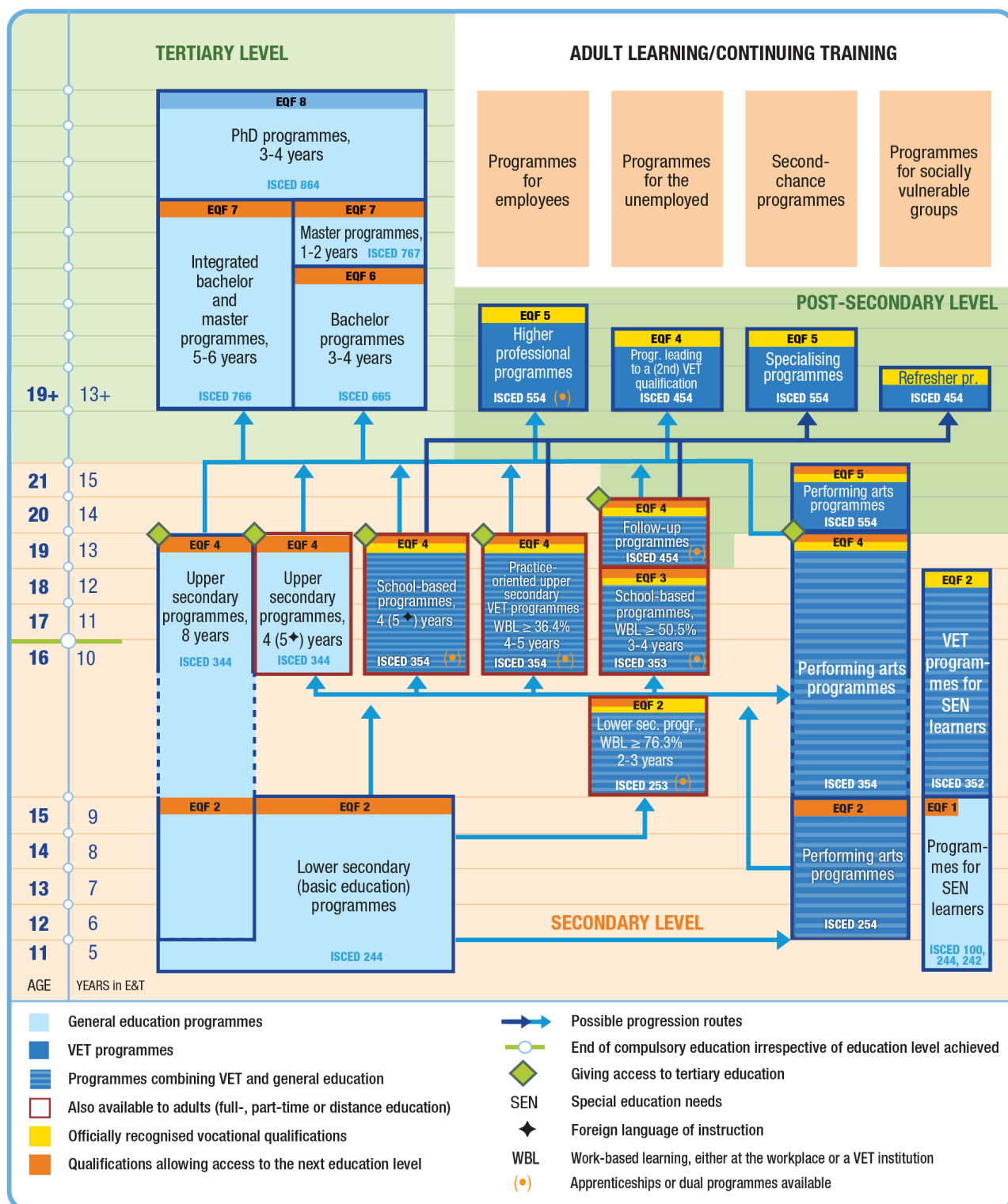
- 2-year follow-up study programmes (ISCED 454) for graduates of the ISCED 353 VET programme leading to a *maturita* school leaving certificate (30);
- 2-year qualifying programmes (ISCED 454) leading to a second VET qualification certified by a *maturita* and sometimes, a certificate of apprenticeship (16 including refresher programmes);
- refresher programmes (ISCED 454) with a minimum 6-month duration ending with a post-*maturita* exam;
- 2-year specialising programmes and 3-year higher professional programmes (ISCED 554) leading to a non-university diploma and title DiS - *Diplomovaný špecialista* / certified specialist (33), or in the healthcare, titles with specific wording .

Some of follow-up and higher professional programmes are offered as dual VET.

Tertiary education currently lacks universities of applied science. However, the government's 2023 strategy plans to develop practice-oriented bachelor programmes, aiming to make up 10% of all bachelor programmes by 2025.

Continuing VET is semi-regulated: the Lifelong Learning Act requires programmes for adults who wish to start a business regulated by the Trade Licensing Act to be approved by the education ministry's accreditation commission. Some qualifications are regulated by sectoral authorities, while many training programmes and adult education are not regulated. The labour ministry regulates labour market training via the central and district labour offices.

VET in Slovakia's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & ŠIOV/SNO - State Institute of Vocational Education/Slovak National Observatory of VET. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovakia: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/slovakia-u3

Distinctive features of VET

Combining provision of general education and developing key competences with vocational skills within a broad variety of upper secondary programmes, predominantly school-based, is a result of tradition and historical development. The characteristic pattern of the education system, featuring a high share of secondary education and a low share of tertiary, has changed since EU accession. The share of population aged 15 to 64 with ISCED 3 to 4 levels of education was 68.7% in 2005 and 61.2% in 2022, while the data for the same cohort and years for ISCED 5-8 levels were 11.4% and 26.0%.

Ties between VET schools and the business world loosened during the economic transformation in the 1990s. Since 2015, specialised legislation supports the involvement of companies in the provision of 'dual VET' via direct financing from the State budget; it explicitly sets the rights and duties of professional and employer organisations regarding VET. Stronger engagement of the business world in informing VET schools about skill needs via sectoral (skills) councils should help VET adjust better to a rapidly changing labour market.

A 10-year compulsory education generally guarantees that learners should attend at least 1 year of upper secondary education after completing 9-year integrated primary and lower secondary general education. Despite a negative trend, this contributes to preventing early leaving from education and training. While there has been a slight improvement in the indicator (from 7.8% in 2021 to 7.4% in 2022), it still exceeds the national benchmark of 6%. The improvement can be attributed to the provision of new programmes combining completion of lower secondary general and vocational education.

Challenges and policy responses

Several international indicators calls for action:

- PISA 2022 results across all three domains (reading, maths, science) shows a further decline compared to 2018; this challenges technical VET programmes, impacting the supply of technically skilled graduates;
- early leaving from education and training in Eastern Slovakia has surpassed the EU 2020 target of 10% since 2015, indicating the need for alternative pathways to qualifications alongside formal education;
- adult participation in learning, long-term well below the EU-27 average, increased dramatically to 12,8% in 2022, largely due to revised data collection methodology and massive ESIF support for labour market training. A voucher scheme piloted by labour ministry could be a game changer.

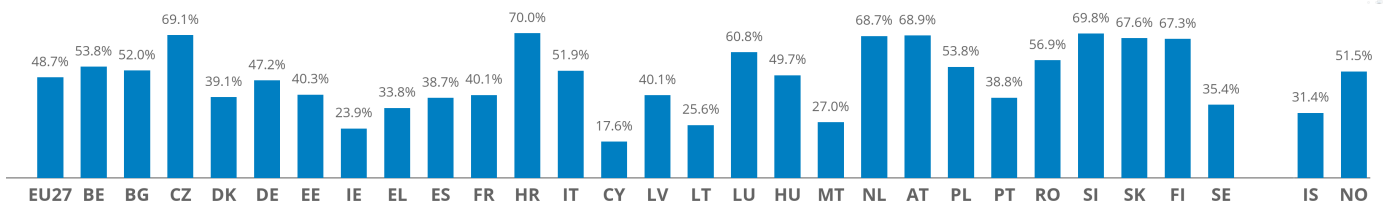
The 2020 Council country-specific recommendations advocated for strengthening digital skills and ensuring equal access to quality education. The shift to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic renewed focus on inclusive education and the acquisition of digital skills within the [Recovery and resilience plan](#) . Introduced in 2021, the new position of school digital coordinator aims to support schools amidst ongoing digital transformation, bolstered by the National broadband plan's goal of gigabit connectivity for schools by 2030.

The pandemic also highlighted the inadequacy of digital educational content across all education levels, particularly in VET. There is a pressing need for well-organised repositories of open educational resources, suitable for offline learning. Retraining teachers to cope with the digital transformation and diverse learners needs is also a critical challenge .

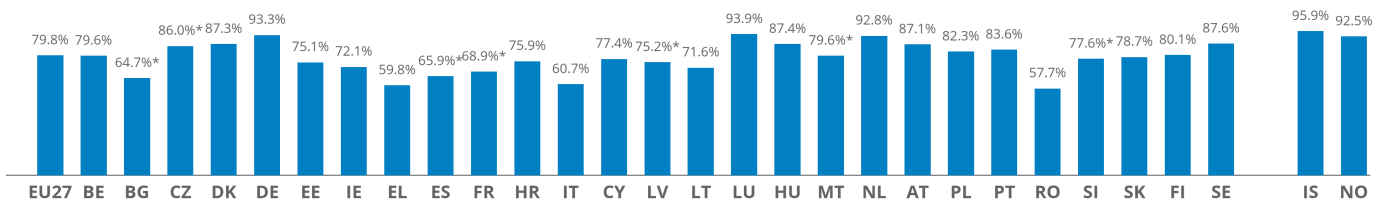


Education and training in figures

IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2021

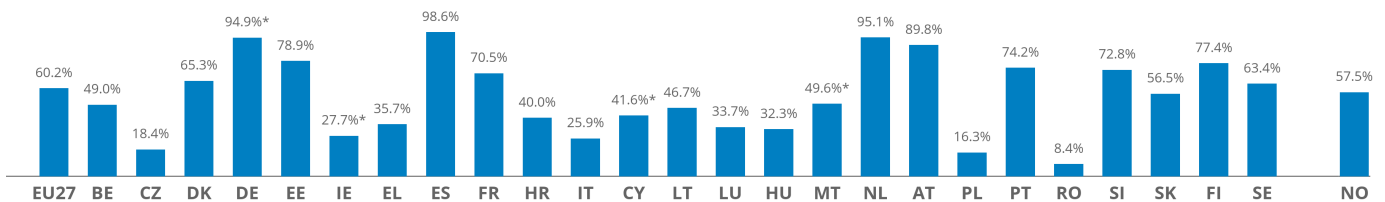


Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%), 2022



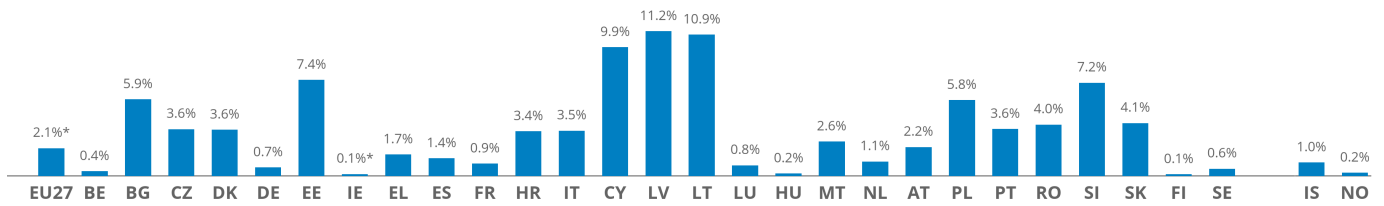
Notes: Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia: (u) low reliability, Czechia: (b) break in time series, Spain and France: (d) definition differs

Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%), 2022



Notes: Germany, Ireland and Cyprus: (u) low reliability

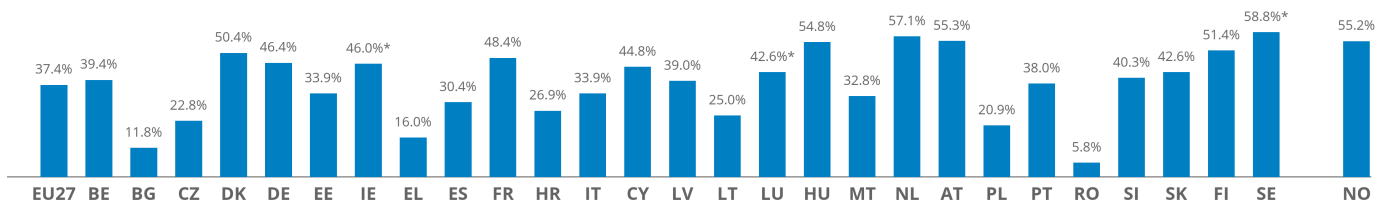
IVET learners who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%), 2021



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Notes: EU27: (d) definition differs (V) Cedefop estimate, Ireland: (d) definition differs, Croatia, Cyprus, Netherlands and Slovenia: (z) not applicable

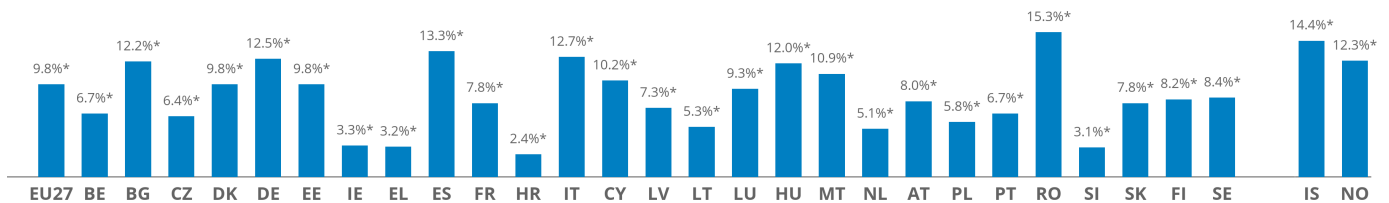
Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%), 2016



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Notes: All values: (b) break in time series

Early leavers from education and training (%), 2021



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Notes: EU27, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway: (b) break in time series, Croatia and Slovenia: (b) break in time series (u) low reliability

Source: [Cedefop's Key indicators on VET](#)



Further information

- [Slovakia's recovery and resilience plan](#)
- Cedefop and ReferNet (2023). [Timeline of VET policies: Slovakia](#)
- Cedefop (2022). [European skills index: Slovakia](#)
- Vantuch, J.; Jelínková, D. (2022). [Teachers and trainers in a changing world - Slovakia: Building up competences for inclusive, green and digitalised vocational education and training \(VET\)](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
- European Commission (2023). [Education and training monitor: Slovakia](#)
- Eurydice (2024). [National education systems: Slovak Republic](#)

https://www.minedu.sk/	Ministry of Education, Science Research and Sport
https://siov.sk/	State Institute of Vocational Education
https://www.cvtisr.sk/	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information
https://nivam.sk/	National Institute of Education and Youth
https://rzovp.sk/	Employer Council for Vocational Education and Training
https://www.employment.gov.sk/	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/	Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
https://slovak.statistics.sk/	Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
https://www.euroguidance.sk/	Euroguidance Centre

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