CZECH REPUBLIC

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

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

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

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

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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.

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.
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 VET is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Most VET schools are public and funded by regions. VET 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 programmes are organised following the completion of compulsory education, usually at age 15. All upper secondary VET programmes are provided at upper secondary vocational and technical schools, which are designed primarily for students with special education needs. Upper secondary level vocational and technical programmes (EQF 3–4) last for three to three-and-a-half years and are completed by a final examination leading to a Vocational Certificate for Professional Performance (maturita) or another vocational certificate in a different field. Those with a vocational certificate (maturita) can only acquire another vocational certificate in a different field. Shorter 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 an EQF level 6 examination (maturita). These programmes provide practical-oriented tertiary education and are closely aligned to employers’ skill needs. Although most graduates enter the labour market, a good number return to higher education. Therefore, they also include programmes aimed at more academically oriented students. Graduates who, on completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at universities, may have some of their study credits recognised by tertiary professional school recognised.

(d) programmes offered by conservatories have a different set, preparing students for performing demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. Studies are either completed by matriculation (secondary education – EQF 4) or by diploma (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 students of three-year vocational programmes with an EQF level 3-4 vocational certificate. The two-year course is completed with a matriculation examination (EQF 4).

Learners who have already completed upper secondary education and intend to acquire a qualification in a different field, can have secondary general education and intend to get a vocational qualification, may opt for so-called shortened programmes. Those with a maturita (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. Shorter 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 an EQF level 6 examination (maturita). These programmes provide practical-oriented tertiary education and are closely aligned to employers’ skill needs. Although most graduates enter the labour market, a good number return to higher education. Therefore, they also include programmes aimed at more academically oriented students. Graduates who, on completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at universities, may have some of their study credits recognised by tertiary professional school recognised.

Technical programmes include healthcare, pedagogy, economy, services, agriculture, technical fields (construction, electrical and mechanical engineering), ICT, etc.

Technical programmes (*)

Work-based learning, either at the workplace or a VET institution

WBL

3-37%

Tertiary education

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 matriculation examination, which enables access to higher education.

(b) four-year technical programmes (completed by a maturita examination) prepare graduates to continue learning in higher education or perform middle-level technical business and other similar jobs (such as civil engineering technician, IT system administrator).

(c) lycée programmes with a high proportion of general education (up to 70% of total credits) prepare their graduates for studies at higher education institutions;

(d) programmes offered by conservatories have a different set, preparing students for performing demanding artistic activities in music, dance, singing and drama. Studies are either completed by matriculation (secondary education – EQF 4) or by diploma (tertiary professional education – EQF 6).

VET in the Czech Republic’s education and training system

Early tracking: pupils choose between general and vocational educational pathways at upper secondary level (EQF 4) by admission to a vocational programme or by general education (EQF 6).

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 employees, 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 a reform in financing schools, with the State budget being discussed to promote quality as the primary criterion as opposed to the current cap financing principle.

A crucial challenge is the generally low attractiveness of teaching jobs up to tertiary level as the teaching profession is considered underpaid. This is caused mainly by low average salaries compared to other high skilled occupations, and becomes better linked to active employment opportunities.

Challenges and policy responses

Giving access to tertiary education

Qualifications allowing access to the next education level

Officially recognised vocational qualifications

Also available to adults (full-, part-time or distance education)

VET programmes

General education programmes

Tertiary professional programmes

Technical programmes

WBL

3-13%

Technical programmes, WBL 3-37%

Tertiary professional programmes, WBL 3-13%

Technical programmes

TERTIARY LEVEL

ISCED 354

ISCED 655

ISCED 353

ISCED 746

ISCED 747

ISCED 645

ISCED 554

ISCED 344

ISCED 13

ISCED 15

ISCED 16

ISCED 17

ISCED 18

ISCED 19

ISCED 12

VET in the Czech Republic

Spotlight on VET

CZECH REPUBLIC

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 employees, 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 a reform in financing schools, with the State budget being discussed to promote quality as the primary criterion as opposed to the current cap financing principle.

A crucial challenge is the generally low attractiveness of teaching jobs up to tertiary level as the teaching profession is considered underpaid. This is caused mainly by low average salaries compared to other high-skilled occupations, and becomes better linked to active employment opportunities.

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 set up, but a system at national level is still missing.

Creating CVET opportunities for the needs of the low-skilled and socially disadvantaged segments of the population requires more attention. Forseen 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.
Upper secondary VET in the Czech Republic

Teaching and learning in VET is strongly work-based. Upper secondary vocational and general education follows the completion of compulsory education. Upper secondary education is divided into two programmes: the vocational programme (EQF 3) and the general programme (EQF 4). The vocational programme mainly consists of practical training and work placements which are an integral part of the curriculum. Practical IVET programmes (EQF 3) are a small part of upper secondary VET, as they are designed primarily for students with special needs. Upper secondary level vocational and technical programmes are public and founded by regions. VET schools are public and funded by regions. VET in the Czech Republic is a key part of the education and training system. Distinctive features of VET in the Czech Republic are:

- VET predominantly begins following completion of upper secondary education, usually at age 15. By age 17 to 19, most VET students have acquired a vocational qualification.
- General subjects are a strong component in all types of VET programmes, the proportion varies depending on the programme, representing 20% to 70% of the total programme.
- Early leaving from education and training is very low (around 5.5%), partly due to a wide choice of education pathways and various programmes, which enables access to higher education.
- A crucial challenge is the generally low attractiveness of VET courses up to tertiary level as the teaching profession is considered undervalued. This is caused mainly by low average salaries compared to other high-skilled employees and limited opportunities for career development. Also, 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.
- Challenges and policy responses
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 VET is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Most VET schools are public and founded by regions. VET 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 follows the completion of compulsory education, usually at age 15. All VET programmes are school-based but practical training and work placements are an integral part of curricula. Practical VET 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:

- 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 pursue manual occupations (such as bricklayer, hairdresser). Graduates of these programmes can follow a two-year follow-up programme (EQF 4) and pass a matura examination, which enables access to higher education.
- four-year technical programmes (completed by a matura examination, EQF 4) also enable graduates to continue learning in higher education or perform medium-level technical business and other similar jobs (such as civil engineering technician, IT system administrator).
- lyceum programmes with a high proportion of general education (up to 70% of the curriculum) prepare their graduates for studies at higher education institutions;
- 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 matura (secondary education – EQF 4) or by abilitum (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 year is completed with a matura examination (EQF 4).

- Those 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 ‘short-cycle’ programmes. Those with matura (EQF 4) can achieve a vocational certificate or another matura certificate in a different field; those with just a vocational certificate (EQF 3) can only acquire another vocational certificate in a different field. Shorter courses are especially suitable for adults and last one to two years.
- Tertiary professional programmes prepare secondary school graduates (with a matura certificate) for performance of demanding professional tasks (such as nutritionist, dental assistant). Studies last three to three-and-a-half years and are accompanied by matura examination (EQF 6). These programmes provide practically-oriented tertiary education and are closely aligned to employers’ skill needs. Although most graduates enter the labour market, a small part of the graduates are expected to continue learning in higher education. Institutes also exist. Graduates who, on completion of their studies, continue in bachelor programmes at universities, may have some of the credits of their previous tertiary professional school recognised.

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.

General subjects are a strong component in all types of VET programmes, proportion varies depending on the programme, representing 20% 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 (33.1% compared to 38.7% in 2015 in the EU-28 as a whole). In the past decade, the VET proportion in 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; VET schools have become more active in providing CVET programmes, which cannot be directly compared to the current per capita financing of schools, as the teaching profession is considered undervalued. This is caused mainly by low wages relative to other high-skilled professions and limited opportunities for career development. Although a 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 is one of the most important 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.

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.

Several recent measures have added cooperation between schools and employers, including tax incentives, developing VET examinations in cooperation with companies, 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 a reform in financing schools, with the State budget being discussed to promote quality as the main criterion as opposed to the current capa financing principle.

A crucial challenge is the generally low attractiveness of VET courses up to tertiary level as the teaching profession is considered undervalued. This is caused mainly by low wages relative to other high-skilled professions and limited opportunities for career development. Although a 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.

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 is one of the most important 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

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

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

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

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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

Note: 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.

Note: 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.

Note: 26.6 is respondent of the survey described the highest qualification as vocational; 73.4 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.
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