CEDEFOP REFERNET 20 YEARS BULGARIA

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

BULGARIA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

VET IN EUROPE 2022

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Table of contents

- Chapter 1. Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET.
- Chapter 2. Main challenges and policy responses.
- Chapter 3. External factors influencing VET.
  - 3.1. Demographics.
  - 3.2. Economics.
  - 3.3. Labour market.
- Chapter 4. Education attainment.
  - 4.1. Share of high, medium and low level qualifications.
  - 4.2. VET learner share of the total VET population.
  - 4.3. VET learners by level.
  - 4.4. Female share.
  - 4.5. Early leavers from education and training.
  - 4.6. Participation in lifelong learning.
  - 4.7. VET learners by age.
- Chapter 5. VET within education and training system.
- Chapter 6. Apprenticeship.
- Chapter 7. VET governance.
- Chapter 8. VET financing mechanisms.
- Chapter 9. Teachers and trainers.
  - 9.1. VET teacher types.
  - 9.2. Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers.
- Chapter 10. Shaping VET qualifications.
  - 10.1. Anticipating skill needs.
  - 10.2. Designing qualifications.
- Chapter 11. Quality assurance.
- Chapter 12. Validation of prior learning.
- Chapter 13. Incentives for learners.
- Chapter 14. Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision.
- Chapter 15. Guidance and counselling.
- Vocational education and training system chart.
- VET Programme Types.
  - Initial mainly school-based, 3-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 352 (Рамкова програма А за начално професионално обучение с придобиване на първа степен на професионална квалификация).
  - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 4-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 352 (Рамкова програма Б за начално и продължаващо професионално обучение с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация).
  - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 1-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 352 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА Б за начално и продължаващо професионално обучение с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация).
  - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 5-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация).
  - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация).
  - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 5-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация).

    - Initial mainly school-based, 1-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация).
    - Initial, mainly school-based, 1 year VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 352 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА А за начално професионално обучение с придобиване на първа степен на професионална квалификация).
    - Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 1-year, VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация).
    - Initial/continuing mainly school-based, 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация).
    - Initial/Continuing, post-secondary, up to 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 454 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА Г за професионално обучение с придобиване на четвърта степен на професионална квалификация).
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements (1 **)**

The Ministry of Education and Science coordinates national policy on vocational education and training (VET). Sports and culture ministries are in charge of VET schools in the respective study fields. The VET Act defines two target groups: school-age learners and adults (16+ not in formal education and training). Young people usually enrol in VET from age 14.

Amendments to the VET Act from 2018 and 2020 defined new requirements related to VET quality assurance, work-based learning included.

VET programmes for school-age learners have a vocational and a general part; graduates acquire qualifications for both. VET programmes provided by training centres and colleges for adults do not include a general education part and lead to a VET qualification only. VET qualifications can also be acquired through validation of prior learning by passing an exam, as with regular VET learners.

The main VET providers are the State, municipal or private schools, vocational gymnasiums, art and sports schools, VET colleges, and licensed vocational training centres. State education standards specify the content of VET qualifications. Four national VET qualification levels are referenced to the European qualifications framework. The legal framework distinguishes six types of initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) programme types (called 'framework programmes'), that define EQF/NQF levels, age and entry requirements, and regulate education form, content and duration.

- A (А): 'second chance' IVET programmes lead to EQF level 2 qualifications at schools and training centres. The duration is 1 or 3 years for school-age learners and up to 6 months for adults;
- B (Б): IVET and CVET programmes leading to qualifications at EQF levels 3 (1 or 4 years) and 3 and 4 in adult learning (up to 1.5 years) at schools and training centres;
- C (В): mainstream IVET and CVET programmes leading to EQF level 3 and 4 qualifications at VET schools. Duration is 1 to 5 years, giving access to higher education, provided learners have passed final matriculation exams;
- D (Г): IVET and CVET programmes for adults only leading to qualifications at EQF level 5 at VET schools and colleges with a maximum duration of 2 years;
- E (Д): up to 1-year IVET and CVET programmes leading to partial qualifications at EQF levels 2 to 4 at schools and training centres;
- F (Е): CVET programmes for adults (16+) leading to qualifications at EQF levels 2 to 4: full or partial, updating already acquired qualifications. The programmes are provided by schools and training centres and duration is defined by training providers.

Work-based learning (WBL) forms a substantial part (50% to 70% or more) of all VET programmes. Most is offered by schools, with the WBL share decreasing with programme level. The current legal framework for dual VET is well defined and was upgraded in 2019. Practical training in a company alternates with periods of theory in a school or another VET provider. School-age learners are trained by companies at least 2 to 3 days per week in the final grades (11 and 12). Both school-age learners and adults receive remuneration from the employer.

Social partners have decision-making and advisory roles in shaping VET through their

participation in regional and national councils and their involvement in the development of State education standards and in updating the List of professions for vocational education and training (LPVET) and the Lists of State-protected specialties. They are also members of examination boards set up by VET providers.

Distinctive features (2 **)**

VET is provided at secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) levels. There are more learners in VET compared with general education: 50.4 % of the total secondary education population in 2019. Secondary general education schools may also open VET classes by a special order of the education minister, a popular option in small towns and rural areas.

Since 2016/17, secondary education has been offered in two stages; this improves access to VET, as learners may choose their education path twice, after completing grades 7 and 10.

State education standards play a major role in shaping qualifications and curricula. They are developed by the National agency for vocational education and training (NAVET) in units of learning outcomes for all VET qualifications (EQF levels 2 to 5).

Quality assurance criteria and procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning have been developed since the development of the relevant legal framework in 2015. Validation procedures may be organised by all VET providers on the condition that the process concerns qualifications from LPVET.

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[1] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443 [accessed 27.8.2021]

[2] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443 [accessed 27.8.2021]

[1] Based on Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

[2] This part is based on information collected by Fondazione Brodolini under Cedefop's service contract No 2020/0140. Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

[1] Based on Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

[2] Based on Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

The 2015-20 National strategy has focused on main challenges: wider use of a modular approach in VET, improved VET implementation flexibility, improved quality and more easily accessible career guidance services. According to industrial enterprises, there is still a high level of skills mismatch: in 2019, 37% pointed out labour shortages as a factor limiting their activity.

To increase VET labour market relevance, the pre-school and education Act (2015) increased the responsibilities of local and regional authorities in planning VET provision and defining occupations, funding staff salaries, organising VET for the unemployed and equipping VET schools. Employer organisations are also becoming more actively involved in implementing VET; since 2016 they have been able to propose changes to the list of VET qualifications.

Dual VET was introduced in 2016, with the number of apprentices almost doubling since. Participation in dual VET is also encouraged by fiscal policy interventions, with financial support for learners in grades 8-10 who receive monthly loans. Learners in 11th and 12th grade receive wages according to their contractual relationship with their employer. Measures such as specialised forums and media campaigns help attract learners and motivate employers to participate in dual VET.

The 2015 quality assurance regulation mandates VET providers of adult training to organise self-assessment based on a set of indicators.

The education ministry has a national programme to ensure professional development of teachers and trainers and to attract more young people to the profession.

The COVID-19 virus highlighted the need for increasing digital readiness of VET institutions.

The VET development Strategy 2030 (3) is under development (4).

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[3] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443 [accessed 27.8.2021]

[3] This part is based on information collected by Fondazione Brodolini under Cedefop's service contract No 2020/0140.
Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

[3] There is no final version of this document up to date. A draft strategy for 2019-21 is available on www.mon.bg. VET priorities are defined under Priority area 7 in the Strategic Framework for development of Education, Training and Learning (2021-2030) which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in February 2021.The strategy is available at the education ministry website https://mon.bg/bg/143

[4] Based on Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

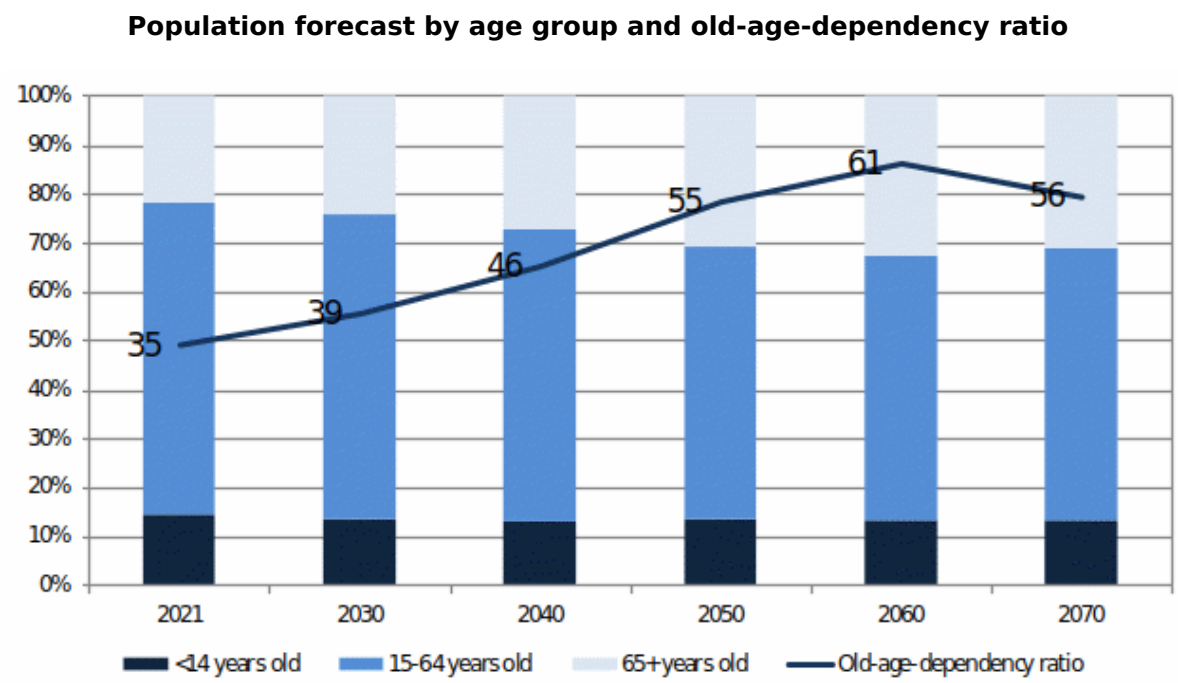
3.1 Demographics

Population in 2020: 6 951 482 (5).

It decreased by 3.5% since 2015 due to negative natural growth and migration (6).

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing.

An old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 35 in 2021 to 56 in 2070.



Source: Eurostat, proj_19ndbi [Extracted 7.5.2021]

Demographic changes have an impact on vocational education and training (VET). Participation in secondary education has been decreasing. This has led to optimisation of a school network aiming at better efficiency while safeguarding the quality. In the academic year 2020/21 the number of VET schools has fallen by 2.79% since the academic year 2018/19. The licensed VET centres in 2020 number 974, down on 2019 (7).

3.2 Economics

Main economic sectors:

- manufacturing;
- wholesale and retail trade;

- construction;
- public administration;
- agriculture, forestry and fishing;
- transportation and storage;
- tourism.

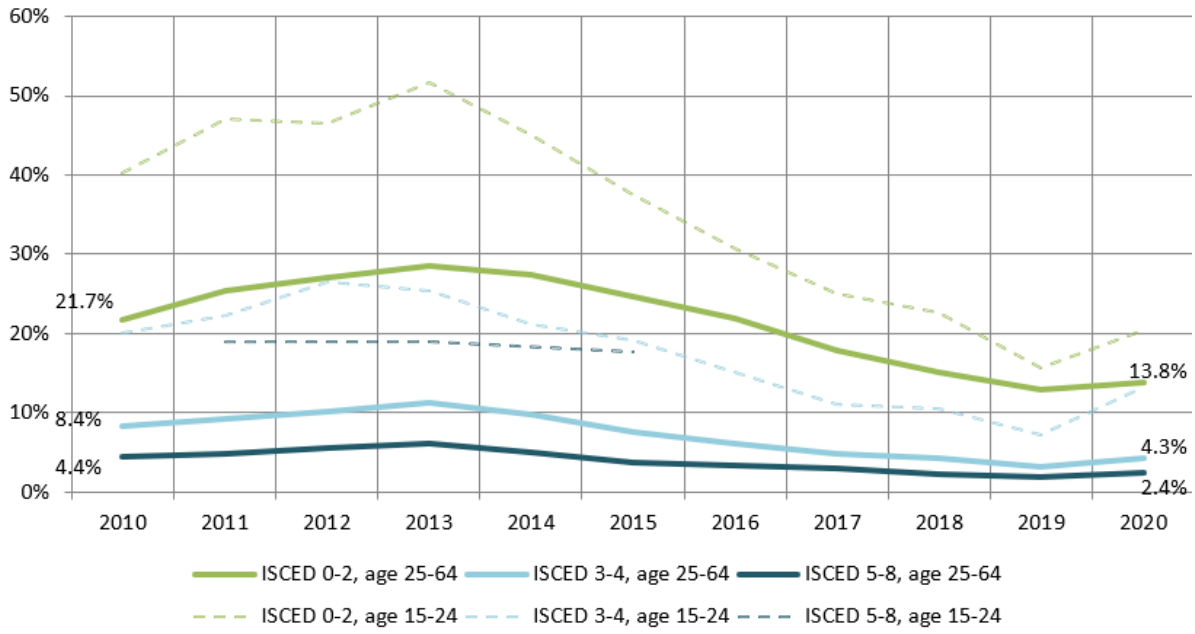
Exports comprise mainly manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, miscellaneous manufactured articles, food and live animals, chemical and mineral fuel, beverages and tobacco.

3.3 Labour market

Not many occupations/professions are regulated and the labour market is considered flexible.

Total unemployment (8) (2020): 4.7% (6.2% in EU-27); it fell by 2.4 percentage points from 2016 (9).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2010-20



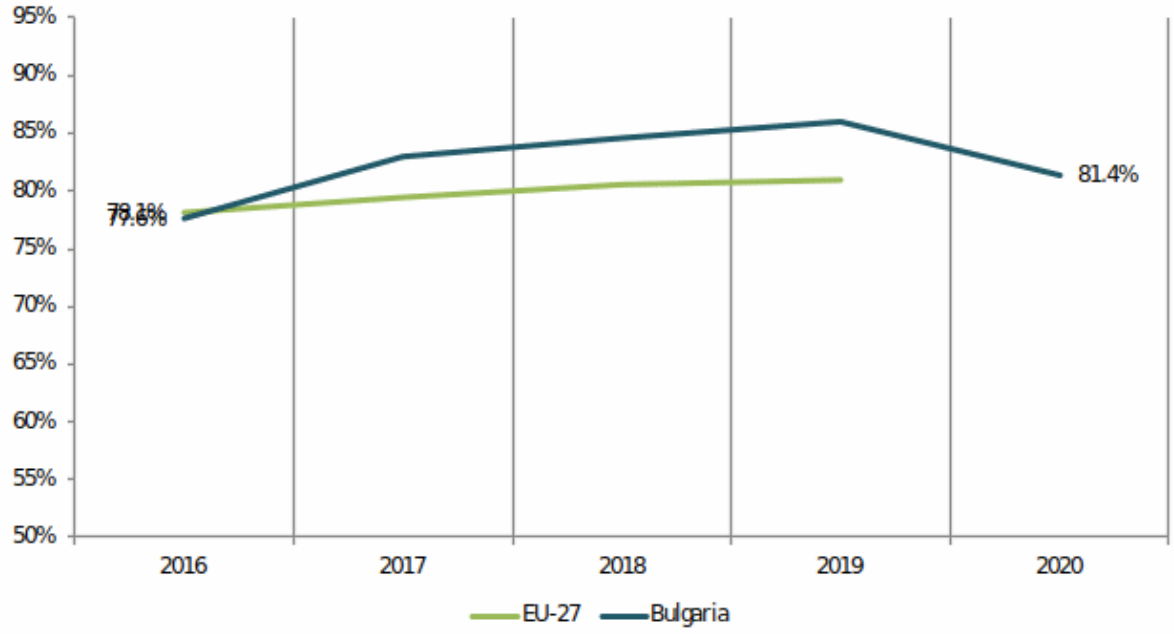
NB: data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 0-2 and 5-8, age 15-24.
ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education
Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed [Extracted 6.5.2021].

Unemployment is distributed unevenly between those with low- and high-level qualifications. The gap has increased after the economic crisis as unskilled workers are more vulnerable to

unemployment. People with low qualifications are more likely to be unemployed. In 2020, the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) is back to the levels of the pre-crisis years. Low-qualified people in Bulgaria are usually unemployed. In 2020 the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) is back to the levels of the pre-crisis years

The employment rate of 20 to 34 year-old VET graduates increased from 77.6% in 2016 to 81.4% in 2020.

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [Extracted 6.5.2021].

The increase (+3.8 pp) in employment of 20 to 34 year-old VET graduates is lower compared to the increase in employment of all 20 to 34 year-old graduates (+4.2 pp) in the same period in Bulgaria (10).

[4] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[6] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 27.8.2021]

[8] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[10] See https://www.wko.at/site/fachkraeftepotenzial/b_mobile.html

[16] See http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm

[17] Source: Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted27.8.2021].

[18] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[19] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[21] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[4] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[5] Source: Statbel.be

[6] https://economie.fgov.be/fr/publications/apercu-de-leconomie-belge-note

[7] https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/emploi-formation/marche-du-travail/les-professions-en-belgique

[8] Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[5] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 7.5.2021].

[6] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 7.5.2021].

[7] National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). Annual reports on the activities of NAVET. https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/doklad-NAPOO-2020_VK-3.pdf

[8] Percentage of active population, 25 to 64 years old.

[9] Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 6.5.2021].

[10] NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series. ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education; Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 6.5.2021].

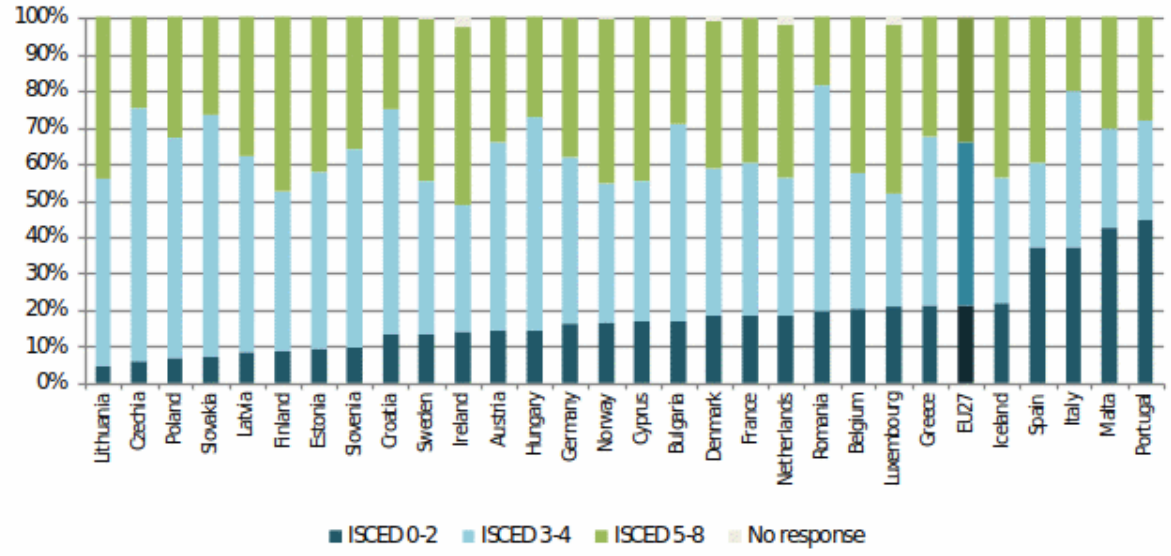
CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

The share of the population aged up to 64 with higher education (29.2%) places Bulgaria below the EU-27 average. The share of those with low, or without, qualifications places Bulgaria (16.9%) almost in the middle of EU-27 Member States.

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2020



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011. Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia and Latvia
ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education
ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education
Source: Eurostat, lfsa_pgaed [Extracted 15.6.2021].

4.3 VET learners by level

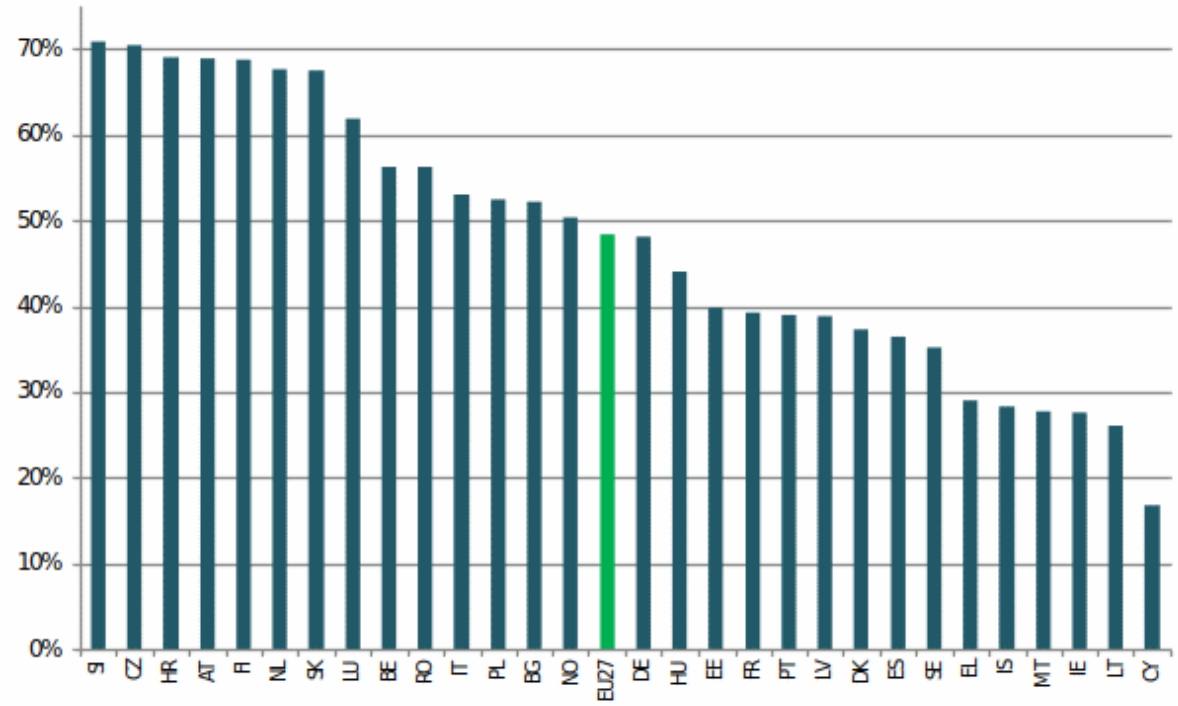
Share of learners by VET by level in 2019

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
4.6%	52.1%	100%

NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 6.5.2021]

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper-secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2019



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.
Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [Extracted 6.5.2021].

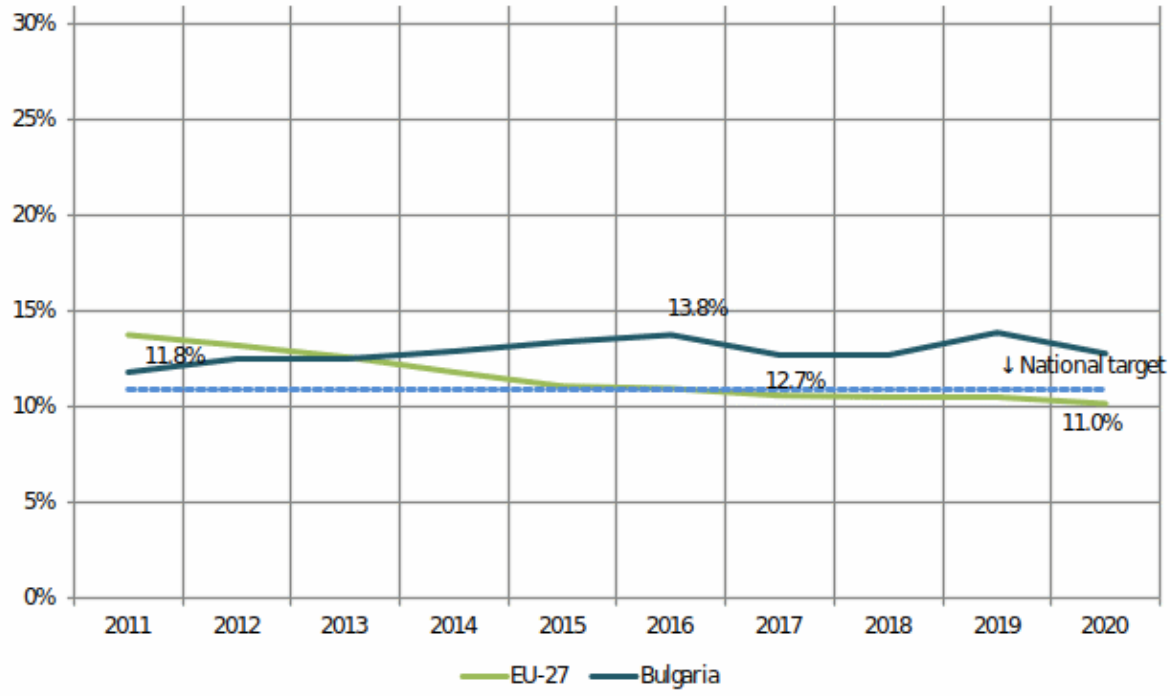
4.4 Female share

Traditionally there are more females: 59.6% for 2020 in VET (11). Females enrol more often in economics and administration programmes (the most popular options), services (tourism, hotels and restaurants) as well as design and clothing industry. Males prefer programmes related to computer systems and coding (the most popular options), transport, agriculture, economy, construction.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has increased from 11.8% in 2011 to 12.8% in 2020. It is 2.6 pp above the EU-27 average (10.2%) and also below the national country target of 11.0%.

Early leavers from education and training in 2011-20

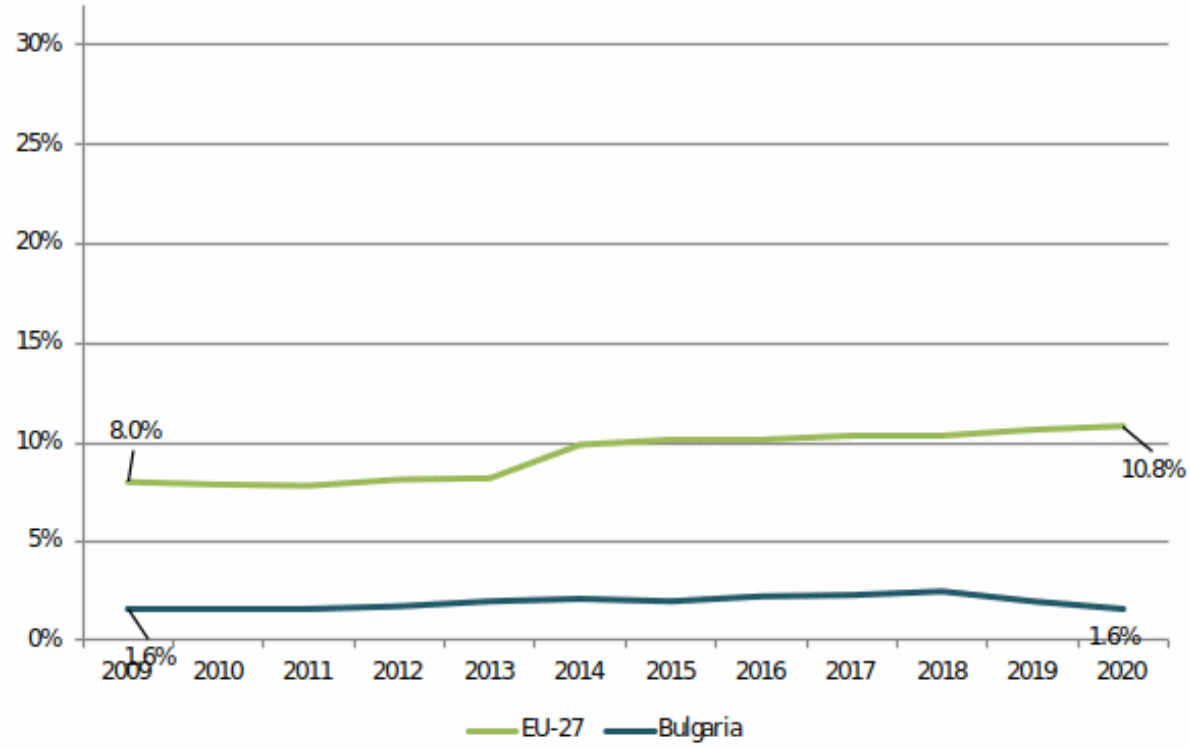


NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training
Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_14 [Extracted 6.5.2021] and European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-progra... [Accessed 14.11.2018]

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning offers training opportunities for young people and adults.

Participation in lifelong learning in 2009-20

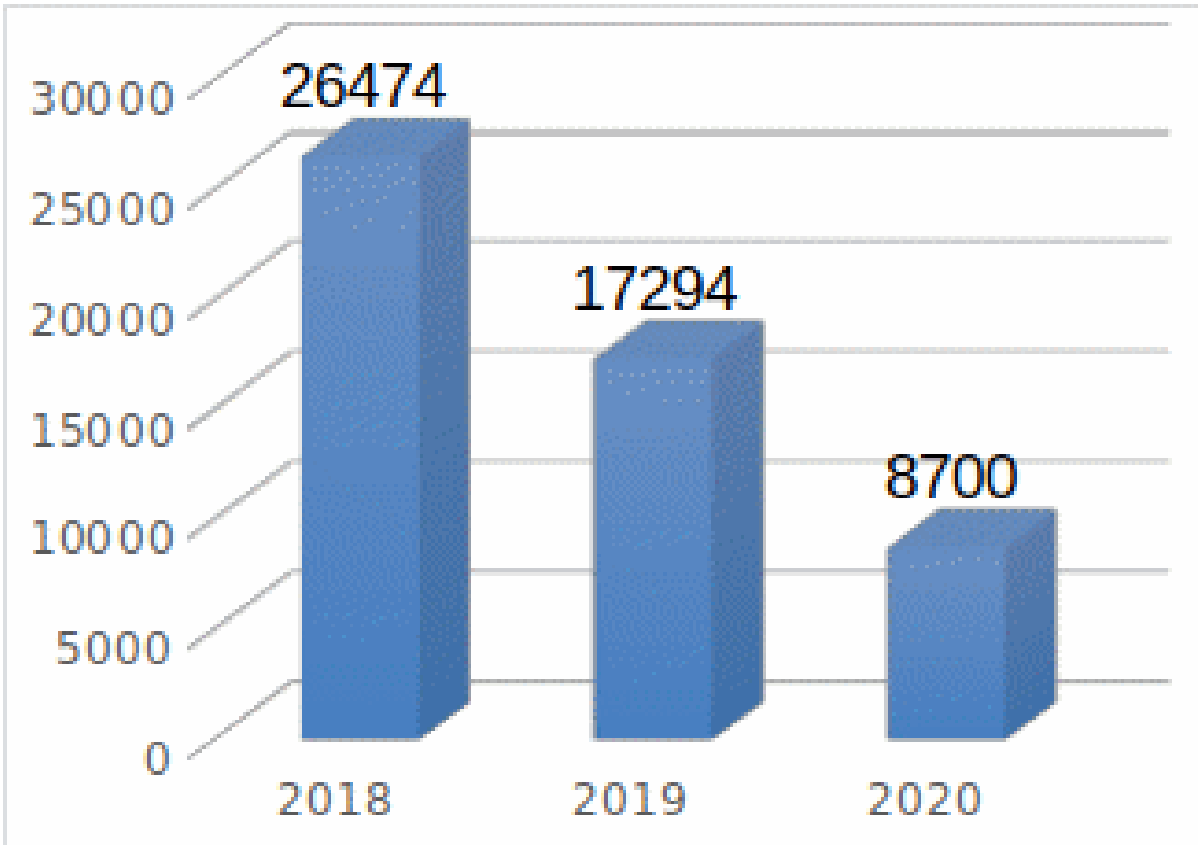


NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training
Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [Extracted on 6.5.2021].

Participation in lifelong learning in Bulgaria has slightly increased in the past decade. However, it is well below the EU-27 average (10.8%) with 1.6% participation in lifelong learning in 2020). Increasing participation is one of the biggest challenges that the country faces.

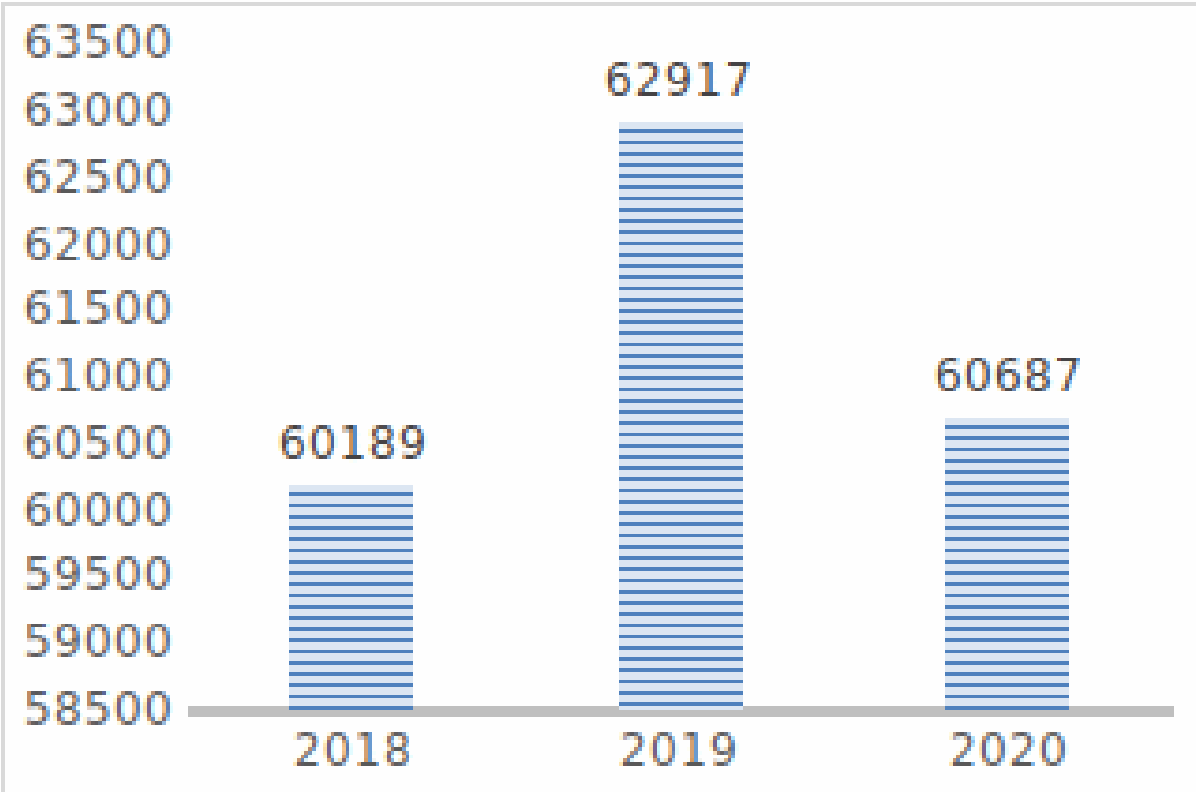
As the figure below demonstrates, 8 700 adults acquired a vocational qualification in 2020 (compared to 26 474 in 2018).

Adults acquiring a VET degree in VET centres 2018-20



Source: NAVET

Adults acquiring a partial qualification in VET centres 2018-20



Source: NAVET
As the figure above shows, 60 587 adults acquired a partial qualification in 2020 (against 60 189 in 2018).

[24] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 17.8.2021]

[25] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 17.8.2021]

[27] https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie1.pdf[accessed 27.8.2021]

[9] Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07

[11] National Statistical Institute. Education statistics. https://infostat.nsi.bg

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- primary and lower secondary education (EQF 1 and 2);
- secondary education comprises general (profiled) (ISCED 344 and 342) and VET programmes (ISCED 352 and 354) in two subsequent stages: the first (3-year, grades 8-10) and the second (2-year, grades 11-12). It is compulsory for learners until they reach age 16. At the end of stage two, learners who pass State matriculation examinations (*matura*) (Bulgarian language in addition to another subject or – for VET learners – State qualification examination) receive a secondary education diploma (EQF level 4) and certificate for VET qualification after passing the State qualification examination. Others receive a certificate for the completion of secondary education with access to vocational training for adults but not to higher education. VET programmes provide graduates with a general education diploma in addition to a VET qualification certificate;
- post-secondary non-tertiary VET (ISCED 454);
- higher education (ISCED 645, 655,766,767,864);
- apprenticeships, internships and dual VET (range of VET qualifications ranging from ISCED 352 to 454).

Primary and lower secondary education (grades 1-7) is compulsory (12). Primary education starts at age seven and is provided by State, municipal and private schools. There are no VET programmes at this level. Graduates may continue to general or vocational secondary education.

In 2016/17, all general secondary education programmes became 'profiled': they specialise in a selected subject, for example, mathematics, natural sciences or foreign languages.

Secondary education comprises general (profiled) (ISCED 344 and 342) and VET programmes (ISCED 352 and 354) in two subsequent stages: the first (3-year, grades 8-10) and the second (2-year, grades 11-12). It is compulsory for learners until they reach age 16. At the end of stage two, learners who pass State matriculation examinations (*matura*) (Bulgarian language in addition to another subject or – for VET learners – State qualification examination) receive a secondary education diploma (EQF level 4) and certificate for VET qualification after passing the State qualification examination. Others receive a certificate for the completion of secondary education with access to vocational training for adults but not to higher education. VET programmes provide graduates with a general education diploma in addition to a VET qualification certificate.

Higher education comprises the following programmes:

- professional bachelor (ISCED 655, EQF level 6; NQF level 6a);
- bachelor (ISCED 645, EQF level 6; NQF level 6b);
- master (ISCED 766, 767, EQF/ NQF level 7);
- PhD (ISCED 864, EQF/ NQF level 8).

School-based VET is provided only at secondary level. Out-of-school adults (16+) can acquire the lowest VET qualification level (VET qualification level 1, EQF level 2) before secondary education.

Secondary VET aims at obtaining a vocational qualification but also comprises a general education part that is required to acquire a secondary education diploma.

Vocational education and training complies with the requirements of the State education standards and consists of theory and (study and production) practice.

Post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational qualifications (ISCED 454, EQF level 5) can be acquired only by people with completed secondary education. The qualification acquired at this level provides access to the labour market.

Examples of such qualifications are company manager, hotel manager, restaurant manager as well as sports and military/defence qualifications.

Training in real work environments: apprenticeships, internships, dual VET

There are several types of training in real work environments.

In 1992, so-called apprenticeships for employees were introduced. These often guarantee a job at the end of training, according to the contract with the employer. The duration of this type of apprenticeship is up to 6 months.

In 2014, internships were introduced for young people (up to 29 years old) who have already acquired a VET qualification (or higher education degree) but have no work experience in the profession. The duration of internships is between 6 and 12 months.

Since 2014, dual VET has started to evolve. It allows learners to acquire VET qualifications. The practical training in a company alternates with periods of theoretical training in a school or another VET provider. In-company trainers (mentors) are responsible for the practical training.

For adult learners, the following options are available in order to acquire a VET qualification:

- 300 hours for EQF level 2;
- 660 hours for EQF level 3;
- 960 hours for EQF level 4;
- 1 260 hours for EQF level 5.

The legal framework distinguishes six types of initial and continuing VET (IVET and CVET) programmes, defines age and entry requirements, and regulates content and duration.

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[10] IFAPME: Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises – The Walloon Institute for dual training and self-employment in small and medium-sized enterprises.

[11] SYNTRA: Vlaanderen The Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training.

[12] Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung des Mittelstandes – the Institute for Vocational and Educational Training.

[13] Zentrum für Aus- und Weiterbildung.

[14] Socio-professional Integration Centres – Centres d'insertion socioprofessionnelle.

[15] Socio-professional Integration Organisations – Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle.

[12] Education is compulsory until the age of 16.

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

There are several types of training in a real work environment.

In 1992, so-called apprenticeships for employees were introduced.

In 2014, internships were introduced for young people (up to 29 years old) who had already acquired a VET qualification (or higher education degree) but had no work experience in the profession.

Since 2014, dual VET has started to evolve.

The legal framework for dual VET is well defined and was upgraded in 2019. The education ministry has adopted a programme for mentors in enterprises. Also, a register of companies, eligible for partners in dual training is maintained on the website of the economy ministry (13).

In the beginning of 2020, a new project started: *Support for the dual training system* (14).

More information for Bulgaria is available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/country-fiches/bulgaria

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches

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[16] Information is based on following publication where you can find also further information on this topic:
Allinckx, I.; Karno, A.; Monico, D. (2019). Vocational education and training in Europe – Belgium. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.
http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2019/Vocational_Education_Training_Europe_Belg

[18] Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung des Mittelstandes – the Institute for vocational and educational training in small and medium-sized enterprises.

[13] Cedefop; ReferNet (2021). VET REF: developments in vocational education and training policy database. [Unpublished].

[14] Almost 10 000 learners from over 140 schools will be covered by planned project activities.

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

VET stakeholders are the following:

- the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria: implements VET legislative activity;
- the Council of Ministers sets out VET government policy;
- the education ministry manages, coordinates and implements VET policy;
- the Advisory Council for VET (provides advice to the education minister);
- the labour ministry participates in the implementation of national VET policy;
- the culture ministry implements VET policy in art schools;
- the sports ministry implements VET policy in sports schools;
- the health ministry participates in the coordination of the list of professions;
- the sectoral ministries are involved in the development, coordination and updating of the State education standards for the acquisition of qualifications; in the development, coordination and updating of the list of professions; in coordinating the admission plan for schools, funded by them;
- employer representatives participate in the development, coordination and updating of the State education standards for the acquisition of qualifications, the legislative framework and policy documents, as well as in the updating of the list of professions and in organising and conducting qualification examinations;
- the Economic and Social Council discusses and makes proposals with regard to issues, related to education, including VET in the context of lifelong learning;
- the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation discusses and gives opinions on draft legislation regarding employment and vocational qualifications and thus participates in the formulation of VET policy. The Council is formed according to the tripartite principle. It is a body for consultations and cooperation at a national level for labour, social insurance and living standard issues, consisting of two representatives of the government (of whom one is the Vice Prime Minister), two representatives of trade unions and two representatives of employers' organisations;
- the National Council for Vocational Qualifications at the labour ministry coordinates the development of national policies and strategies for training for the unemployed and employees, leading to the acquisition of professional qualifications;
- the National Council for the Promotion of Employment at the labour ministry is also constituted on the tripartite principle. Its functions are to discuss and give opinions regarding the development and implementation of employment policy and the national action plan for employment;
- the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) is a specialised body within the Council of Ministers. The Agency develops the State education standards for the acquisition of VET qualifications; it maintains the list of professions according to the needs of the labour market; it licenses and exercises monitoring over the activities of VET institutions for people over 16 years of age, and over the activities of vocational guidance providers – licensed VET centres and centres for information and vocational guidance;
- the Employment Agency implements the State policy on promoting employment and provides career information, counselling and training for employees and the unemployed;
- the Human Resource Development Centre is a national agency, which coordinates the management and administration of the EU Erasmus+ Programme;
- the National Inspectorate of Education (established in 2018). The inspectorate does not exercise control over the activities of directors and teachers in schools and kindergartens. Its inspection is the process of preparing a comprehensive independent assessment of the quality of services provided by kindergarten or school education at some point of their

activities, based on criteria and indicators, grouped into fields (15).

At regional level:

- the regional administration participates in the implementation of government policy for employment and acquisition of VET qualifications;
- the regional employment service directorates implement government policy for training of the unemployed and employed adults for acquiring a vocational qualification; they offer training measures and projects; provide coordination and support in vocational training, consultancy and guidance for the local employment offices;
- the regional management units of the education ministry (territorial administrative units of the education ministry, situated in the 28 district centres) implement VET State policy at a regional level through projects, programmes and strategies for VET development, functioning and improvement at district level;
- the permanent and temporary employment committees to the Regional Councils for regional development identify, organise and control the implementation of State policy on the promotion of employment and training for acquiring a vocational qualification at a regional level.

At local level:

- the municipalities participate in the development of a VET policy within their territories: the employment needs for vocational guidance and training of learners, unemployed and other groups; the necessary equipment for schools, vocational training providers and centres for information and guidance through funds from the municipal budget;
- the labour offices of the Employment Agency provide career services: career information; advice and guidance for inclusion in the appropriate programme/measure for employment and training;
- the cooperation councils at the labour office directorates monitor the implementation of programmes and measures included in the national action plan for employment.
- 947 licensed VET centres in the whole country and 40 licensed centres for information and vocational guidance

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[31] to learn more about the vocational training assistance see the flyer for Berufsausbildungsassistenz [Vocational training assistant] in English: https://neba.at/neba-leistungen/berufsausbildungsassistenz/warum-bas?task=callelement&format=raw&item_id=624&element=1bd14ef3-f766-4dad-843b-49437aa92d48&method=download&args[0]=0 [accessed 27.8.2021]

[20] Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding – Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training.

[21] Commission communautaire française, French Community Commission, responsible for some competences for French-speakers in Brussels.

[22] Minister for Vocational Training and Minister for Education at the COCOF; Minister for Higher Education and Adult Learning and Minister for Education at the French Community; Minister for Vocational Training and Employment at the Walloon Region. New governments decide about the distribution of tasks within its ministries (there can thus be one, two or three ministers involved).

[23] Service francophone des métiers et qualifications – the French-language service for jobs and qualifications.

[24] VDAB: Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency. Bruxelles Formation: The Brussels Institute for Vocational Training. SFPME: Service Formation PME: the training service for small and medium-sized entreprises, in Brussels. EFP (Espace Formation des Petites et Moyennes entreprises: the training centre in Brussels for SMEs).

[15] Cedefop; ReferNet (2021). VET REF: developments in vocational education and training policy database. [Unpublished].

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

According to the VET Act, sources of financing for State and municipal schools, vocational training centres for information and vocational guidance and training centres for trainers are:

- the State budget;
- the municipal budget;
- donations;
- own revenue;
- national and international programmes;
- other sources.

The funding mechanism for secondary VET schools is based on financial resources delegated to schools per student and varies between EUR 1 000 and 1 500 per year per student depending on the specifics of the VET programmes delivered.

The financing of vocational training offered after secondary education is provided by individuals under the terms and conditions set by the education minister. Training is financed by:

- learners;
- employers;
- the State budget (active labour market policy);
- EU programmes (mainly ESF).

Secondary VET is mostly State financed. Private VET schools may also apply for State funding. However, according to latest data, only 11 out of 350 VET schools were private in 2017/18.

Most (over 90%) adult VET providers are private. They may also receive public financing. In 2020, self-financing of training courses by learners was the most common source (59.8%) followed by employer financing (21.9%) and funding through national or European public resources (18.3%) (16).

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[25] See also: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-funding-3_en

[26] See also: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-funding-5_nl

[27] http://www.oecd.org/education/Education-Policy-Outlook-Country-Profile-Belgium.pdf

[28] IAWM: Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung im Mittelstand und in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen / Institute for vocational and educational training in small and medium-sized companies in BE-DE. ADG: Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, Public Employment Service of the German-speaking Community. Le Forem: Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi/ The Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Placement. VDAB: Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding/ Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency. Bruxelles Formation: Institut Bruxellois pour la Formation professionnelle / The Brussels Institut for Vocational Training. Actiris: Brussels Public Employment Service.

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In VET, there are:

- general subject teachers;
- vocational subject teachers;
- trainers who work in vocational centres;
- mentors for training that takes place at enterprises.

The qualification requirements are set by the relevant legislation. Strategic documents also contain provisions for teachers and trainers.

The required qualification of teachers in general studies subjects is a master, bachelor or specialist /professional bachelor (national qualifications framework level 6A, European qualifications framework level 6) higher education degree acquired in:

- a specialty of a professional field corresponding to the relevant school subject, with a professional qualification in teaching;
- a specialty of another professional field and additional professional qualification in teaching in the relevant school subject.

There is no special training provided to teachers in general studies subjects in respect of their work at vocational schools, since the mandatory general education background for a certain education level is the same for all types of schools in the country.

Teachers in a vocational training subject must hold a master, bachelor or specialist higher education degree in:

- specialties of vocational fields corresponding to the professions on the list of professions for vocational education and training taught at the relevant school, and an additional professional qualification in teaching;

- specialties of a professional field corresponding to the professions taught at the relevant school. This is applied in cases where specialists working in companies or prominent experts in the respective field are invited to participate in vocational training at VET institutions, aiming to provide up-to-date specialised knowledge and improve the link with practice and increase the attractiveness of VET.

The required qualification of trainers at vocational training centres is laid down in the State education requirements by professions in the Requirements for trainers. A trainer is required to be a university graduate with a master or bachelor degree in a specialty corresponding to the professional field out of the list of professions for vocational education and training in which the profession to be taught has been classified. There is no requirement for additional pedagogical qualifications for trainers at vocational training centres.

The conditions for professional development of staff within the public education system (in-service training) and also the procedures for acquiring professional qualification levels are set by Regulation No 5 (1996) (17).

There are five professional qualification levels (the highest being level one) and three types of teaching positions that depend on the experience and qualifications. These are: a teacher, a

senior teacher and a head teacher. The Ordinance No 15 (2019) sets the terms and conditions for acquisition of such position, the conditions for continuing teachers' qualification on the base of credit points. Training is provided by the approved training providers which are registered in the teacher training programmes informational system of the education ministry (18).

The VET teacher profession is not attractive in Bulgaria.

The fall in VET teachers aged up to 34, the fact that the profession was amongst those in high demand and the steady increase in the relative share of older VET teachers (aged 60+) poses a risk of staff shortage in the next 20 years. Every year the education ministry implements measures to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession (e.g. The national programmes *Qualification* and *Motivated teachers*).

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

The 2019 Ordinance No 15 (19) regulates the statute and the professional development of teachers, school headmasters and pedagogical staff. According to the ordinance, teachers (including VET teachers) are required to improve their competences continuously.

Teachers receive a certificate for continuing training or specialisation credit points. 16 training hours (academic) equals one credit point. At least 3 credit points acquired in external programmes are compulsory for each period of appraisal in addition to 1 credit point per year acquired in the institution where they work. The credit system ensures opportunities for accumulation, recognition and transfer of credits (for the forthcoming periods, or in the case of change of school, in application for higher qualification level). Teachers, headmasters and other pedagogical staff now have to create and maintain their professional portfolio.

According to the State requirements (Ordinance 162/1997), the basic training of teachers (10 hours) is designed to include obligatory practical training, which is carried out through doing teacher observation (60 hours), continuing teaching practice (60 hours) and an internship (100 hours).

The teaching practice relates to participation in the organisation of the education process under the direct supervision of a teacher at the higher education institution. The internship for people who would like to work as teachers is carried out under the supervision of a mentoring secondary education teacher and a teacher at the higher education institution.

European funds have been used for continuing vocational training of teachers.

More information is available in the Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspective on teachers and trainers (20).

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[35] For detailed information about the training of teachers and trainers in Austria, see Eurypedia: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teachers-and-education-staff-1_en[accessed 31.8.2021] and http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers[accessed 31.8.2021].

[36] See Federal Law Gazette https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=BgblAuth&Dokumentnummer=BGBLA_2013_I_211 [accessed 31.8.2021].

[29] IFAPME: Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises / Walloon Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium enterprises in Wallonia. Bruxelles Formation : Institut Bruxellois pour la Formation professionnelle / The Brussels Institut for Vocational Training. SFPME: Service Formation PME / the training service for small and medium-sized entreprises, in Brussels. Le Forem : Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi / The Walloon

Office for Vocational Training and Placement.

[30] https://www.formaform.be/

[31] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers

[17] Ordinance No 15, active as of 22.07.2019: https://mon.bg/upload/27985/nrdb15-2019_statut_uchiteli-izm24092021.pdf

[18] http://iropk.mon.bg/

[19] https://mon.bg/upload/27985/nrdb15-2019_statut_uchiteli-izm24092021.pdf

[20] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

The demand for qualifications is forecasted based on the macro-economic model (for medium- and long-term forecasts) and the annual employer skill needs survey (for short-term forecasts).

The labour ministry is responsible for skills forecasting (medium- and long-term forecasts) and the Employment Agency for short term forecasts which are based on the employer skill needs survey provided twice in the year in accordance with the Employment Promotion Act.

Medium- and long-term forecasts take into account the demographic trends and changes in the educational attainment of the labour force and in the structure of the economy.

They provide information on labour demand and supply by:

- level of education (basic, secondary or higher);
- economic activity;
- profession;
- structural shortage/surplus of labour by education level.

Since 2018, the employment committees of the regional development councils biannually collect, process and submit to the Employment Agency information on employer demand for the labour force.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (21) and European Skills Index (22).

10.2 Designing qualifications

VET qualifications are classified in the list of professions by education field, vocational area, occupation and specialty.

According to the Pre-school and School Education Act (23) and the VET Act (24), the acquisition of vocational qualifications is regulated by the State education standards. The National Agency for VET (NAVET) designs the standards in coordination with the relevant ministries and departments, and the education minister endorses them. The standards are by occupation (profession).

State education standards are developed in units of learning outcomes. They include:

- requirements for the candidates: minimum entry level qualification and education requirements for pupils and adults;
- option for validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences;
- opportunities for continuing vocational training;
- description of profession, with core working activities, responsibilities, job conditions specification, equipment and tools used, special requirements;
- opportunities for professional development according to the national classification of professions and occupations;
- units of learning outcomes for general, sectoral and specific vocational training– with defined knowledge, skills and expected competences;
- defined assessment tools for theoretical and practical skills;
- execution of the examination conditions;
- assessment criteria;

- requirements for training facilities;
- requirements for trainers.

The approach to development of the State education standards in units of learning outcomes is compatible with the principles of the 2016 recommendation on the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). The standards are mandatory for all VET programmes leading to nationally recognised qualifications, as well as those for adults.

In 2019, NAVET's methodology guidelines for the development of State education standards were revised. In addition to the core development process, two more options were included:

- collecting information for the profession from employer organisations by online questionnaires;
- consultation with branch employers (before final acceptance), according to development or updating the standards.

The up-to-date State education standards are available for free use on the education ministry and NAVET websites (25).

Each time that the standards are amended, vocational training centres are obliged to update the relevant training programmes and curricula, which are based on framework programmes (26) and on State education standards.

The education ministry develops the compulsory part of the VET curricula for new professions or forms of learning in VET schools.

VET teachers and employers support designing the curricula.

The school-specific curriculum part is designed by VET providers in order to reflect the specificities of the local labour market for each programme.

Curricula for VET schools comprise a training schedule, subject distribution between general and vocational parts, graduation requirements, and explanatory notes to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Vocational training centres develop their own training programmes that also take account of prior learning. These programmes are evaluated (licensed) by NAVET.

In 2018, in the amended VET Act, added the requirement to update the modules of VET curricula once every 5 years.

In 2019 NAVET prepared, on behalf of the education ministry, an analysis with recommendations on the optimisation of List of professions for VET (LPVET) (27). The conclusions and recommendations of the analysis were presented to the Advisory council for VET.

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[37] See AMS. Qualification barometer http://www.ams.at/qualifikationsbarometer[accessed 31.8.2021].

[38] for more information on the new skills initiative and results see https://www.ams.at/newskills [accessed 31.8.2021].

[39] Cedefop. Skills forecast. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast [accessed 31.8.2021].

[40] Cedefop. Skills panorama. https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index [accessed

31.8.2021].

[32] Competent can be freely accessed at the following website: SERV. Sterk door overleg. https://www.serv.be/serv

[33] https://www.steunpuntwerk.be/

[34] Bassins de l'Enseignement qualifiant – Formation – Emploi, IBEFE.

[35] Previously Brussels Observatory of Employment and Training.

[36] Bruxelles Formation : Institut Bruxellois pour la Formation professionnelle / The Brussels Institut for vocational training.

[37] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast

[38] https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index

[40] Service francophone des métiers et des qualifications – the French-speaking Agency for Professions and Qualifications.

[41] IAWM: Institut für Aus- und Weiterbildung im Mittelstand und in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen / Institute for alternating training and small and medium enterprises.

[42] ADG: Arbeitsamt der Deutschprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens / Employment and Vocational Training Agency in the German-speaking Community.

[21] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast

[22] https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index

[23] https://www.mon.bg/bg/57

[24] https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/ZPOO-2018-1.pdf

[25] http://www.mon.bg and http://www.navet.government.bg

[26] Framework programmes include: general provisions, including the regulatory basis, the aim and purpose of the programme; requirements: entry (age, medical, previous education and qualification level), career and education pathways, form(s) of training (day full-time, evening, part-time, individual, distance, dual, self-learning); curriculum; training module content (theoretical and practical); graduation requirements (State examinations for full qualifications and final examinations for partial qualifications).

[27] National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). Optimisation of List of professions for VET. https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/lpvet-opt/

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The Pre-school and School Education Act (2015, in force since August 2016) and the VET Act (2014)) establish the process of quality management, including VET. Quality management is a continuous process of organisational development based on its analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. The evaluation is performed through self-assessment and inspection. It aims at preparing the internal evaluation of the quality of education provided through operations, procedures and criteria set by schools. It is carried out under terms and conditions determined by the State education standard for quality management in the institutions.

The process follows these steps:

- establishing a working group;
- defining activities, procedures, criteria, indicators and tools;
- contacting learners, teachers and parents;
- performing self-assessment and analysing the results that may lead to recommendations;
- preparing and validating the report.

The inspection is a process of preparing an overall independent expert evaluation of the education quality in schools at a given moment and guidelines for improvement. At least one inspection should be carried out in each school every 5 years.

All VET providers have to introduce an internal system for quality assurance to meet the requirement of the standards.

The system comprises:

- policy and goals for quality assurance;
- quality management responsibilities;
- rules for system implementation;
- annual schedule for self-assessment;
- rules and procedures for measuring the quality achieved through self-assessment.

A significant role is given to the improvement of the working environment, learning outcomes, interaction with the local community stakeholders, social partners, employers' organisations and universities, and staff training. The education ministry supports and monitors the implementation of quality assurance in VET schools, and the National Agency for VET (NAVET) in vocational training centres.

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[41] See Bmbwf. Quality management system for schools. https://www.qms.at/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

[42] With the Education Reform Act (Federal Law Gazette, I No 138/2017 https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_138/BGBLA_2017_I_138.pdfsi 31.8.2021]), in force since autumn 2017, new regulations regarding quality assurance at schools have been introduced. This act foresees the establishment of a monitoring system which comprises quality management and resource controlling. QIBB is to be merged with SQA, the quality management system of general education schools, and further developed. First results of this extensive reform are to be expected for 2020.

[43] for more information see Bmbwf. Quality management system for schools. https://www.qms.at/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

[44] see Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in the Austrian School System. https://www.iqs.gv.at/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

[45] See IBW. https://ibw.at/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

In 2014, the validation of informal and non-formal learning outcomes was introduced by the amendments to the VET Act (28).

The validation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning is regulated by Ordinance No 2/2014 (in force since 1.1.2015) (29), approved by the education minister.

VET providers organise validation for professions and specialties that are included in the list of professions for VET (LPVET) (30).

Introducing a new approach for the development of State education standards, based on units of learning outcomes in 2015 (31), made the validation process more transparent.

Applicants present the evidence for the learning outcomes they possess in order to acquire a full or partial qualification allowing their access to vocational training and/or to the labour market.

The methods for assessing the learning outcomes are essentially identical to those for assessing knowledge, skills and competences applied in formal education and training.

Two types of certificates can be issued as a result of the validation:

- a certificate validating a full qualification. By means of examination it certifies that all units of learning outcomes defined in the State education standard have been achieved;
- a certificate validating a part of vocational qualification (partial qualification). It certifies, through an examination, that one or several units of learning outcomes included in the State education standard have been achieved.

Holders of these certificates have the same rights as those who have attained corresponding certificates through the formal education system.

Validation procedures are monitored by the regional education authorities and the National Agency for VET (NAVET). These bodies also consult and guide providers methodologically.

Validation procedures can be funded by beneficiaries (individuals), companies and projects.

The validation fee for individuals cannot exceed the actual expenditure incurred by a provider.

According to NAVET data in the period 2016-20, 858 adults have acquired a full qualification and 249 adults a partial one (32). The professions most preferred for validation in licensed VET centres are:

- real estate broker;
- chef;
- pastry chef.

Latest data from the education ministry show that 280 persons have undergone a validation procedure in schools for the period 2017-19.

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, please visit Cedefop's European database (33).

[47] See https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie_zur_Validierung_nicht-formalen_und_informellen_Lernens.pdf [[accessed 31.8.2021].

[44] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/european-database-on-validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning

[28] https://www.mon.bg/bg/57

[29] https://www.mon.bg/bg/59

[30] https://www.mon.bg/bg/100053

[31] https://www.mon.bg/bg/100305

[32] National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). Annual reports on the activities of NAVET. https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/dokumenti/dokumenti-na-napoo/

[33] https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_validate_BG.pdf

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

VET is attractive because, after graduation, learners receive both a diploma for secondary education (giving access to higher education) and a certificate for vocational qualification.

Allowances, grants, vouchers and travel subsidy

Secondary VET learners may receive grants:

- performance scholarships are awarded to learners with high learning achievements;
- social allowances support access to education and prevent early leaving from VET of disadvantaged learners, e.g. with special education needs or orphans.

The grants are offered on a monthly basis and vary between 5% and 15% of the minimal national salary.

Learners in dual VET and in State-protected specialties and specialties with labour market shortages receive monthly remuneration from the companies they are trained in, based on their contract. In addition, secondary VET learners can participate in European Social Fund (ESF) projects for work-based learning where they can also receive an additional grant of EUR 150.

All secondary VET learners are entitled to receive discounts when using public transport, including trains and in-city public transport. The discount can be up to 60% and is decided by each municipality.

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[48] For more information about funding in education, see Eurypedia: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-1_en [accessed 31.8.2021].

[49] See https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009531 [accessed 31.8.2021].

[50] See https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/Lehrlinge.html [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

According to the VET Act, provision of training is free of value-added tax for companies.

Financial support for offering dual VET

The Employment Promotion Act foresees financial benefits for employers for creating training places (jobs) for the unemployed. The State budget pays remuneration, social security and health insurance for apprentices for up to 36 months. It also covers the costs of the training institution that provides theory lessons to an apprentice and mentoring costs.

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[51] See https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/Gesamtuebersicht_Foerderarten_lehre.html [accessed 31.8.2021].

[52] See https://www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at/initiative-erwachsenenbildung/was-ist-das/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

[53] See https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/zentralmatura/bm.html [accessed 31.8.2021].

[46] Dienststelle für Selbstbestimmtes Leben (DSL).

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

According to the VET Act, the VET system includes vocational guidance, vocational education and vocational training.

Institutions, providing vocational guidance for learners are structured regionally for 28 regions.

The responsible institution for licensing centres for information and vocational guidance for adults is the National Agency for VET (NAVET).

Up to 31 December 2020, 40 centres for information and vocational guidance for adults were licensed.

The regional employment service directorates, which are part of the employment agency, provide vocational guidance to the unemployed individuals and for those who wish to change their current job.

The employment service directorates provide vocational guidance services in the form of:

- in-person vocational consultation;
- vocational consultation in groups.

The main goals of these services are to support individuals in making the right choice in terms of entering the labour market or choosing a suitable VET programme, the level of vocational qualification – initial or continuous – and the options for acquiring the desired qualification.

Please see:

- guidance and outreach Bulgaria national report (34);
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit (35);
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices (36).

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[54] BMS (Berufsbildende mittlere Schule): school for intermediate vocational education; BHS (Berufsbildende höhere Schule): college for higher vocational education.

[55] http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at [accessed 31.8.2021].

[56] Accessible online at the landing page https://www.karrierekompass.at/ [accessed 31.8.2021].

[58] https://www.bic.at [accessed 31.8.2021].

[60] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/guidance-and-outreach-inactive-and-unemployed-austria [accessed 31.8.2021].

[61] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere [accessed 31.8.2021].

[62] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices [accessed 31.8.2021].

[47] https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2018/guidance_outreach_Belgium_Cedefop_

[48] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere

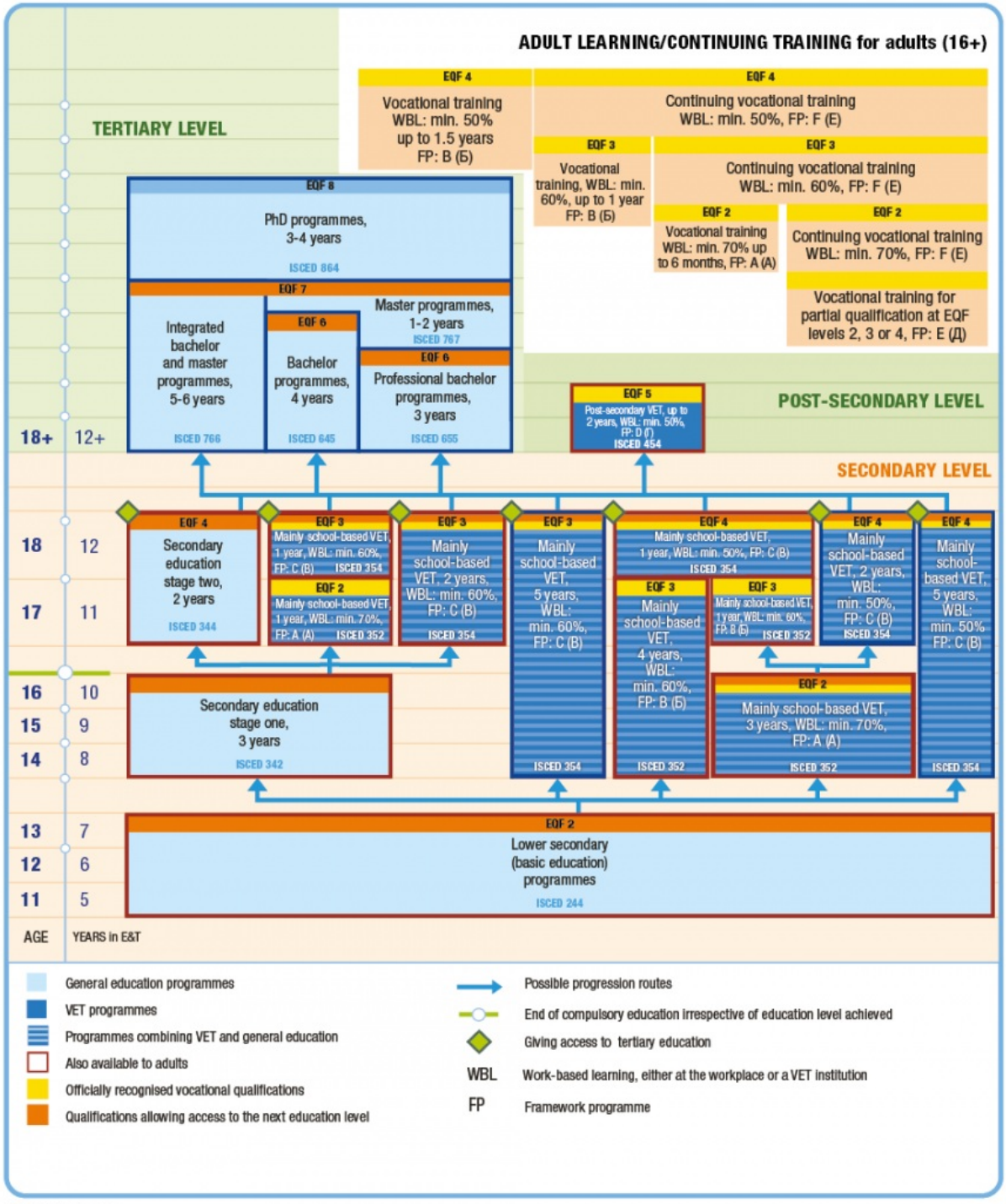
[49] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices

[35] http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-

more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere

[36] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Bulgaria, 2022.

VET Programme Types

EQF 3

Mainly school-based VET,

4 years,

WBL: min. 60%,

FP: B (Б)

ISCED 352

Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 4-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 352 (Рамкова програма Б за начално и продължаващо професионално обучение с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	3	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	352
Usual entry grade	8	**Usual completion grade**	11
Usual entry age	13 – Minimum age of the candidate in the year of application	**Usual completion age**	17
Length of a programme (years)	4		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✔ In Bulgaria education until the age of 16 is mandatory.	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	✔ This framework programme is applicable for both IVET and CVET.

Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✔ It is available for adult learners who cover minimum entry requirements.

ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• daily • evening • extramural • distance learning • work-based training • individual • self-learning The most common learning form is daily. • Apprenticeship is available after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	• schools; • schools in partnership with enterprises.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=60%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school – when the school uses its premises for practical training; • in-company practice – when learners go to external companies for practical training.
Main target groups	This VET programme is appropriate for learners who wish to enter the labour market holding a recognised professional qualification and also for those who wish to continue their studies at EQF level 4.

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools. The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. There is no limitation for maximum age. Completed basic education is also a prerequisite for this type of programme for current learners.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Vocational education finishes with State qualification examinations on theory and practice of the occupation. The education ministry develops and approves national examination programmes for the State qualification examinations. They include guidelines for content of the exams, task assignments and assessment criteria.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 3 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 2 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Waiter, cook, hair dresser (39).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may continue their studies at second stage of secondary education and VET qualification at EQF level 4 or can enter the labour market. However, progression in either VET or general education is subject to different prerequisites, rather than completion of this VET programme.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	✔ There are subjects for: • entrepreneurship; • foreign language and communication; • ICT (digital competences).
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[39] As described in national context.

EQF 3

Mainly school-based VET,

1 year,

WBL: min. 60%,

FP: B (Б)

ISCED 352

Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 1-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 352 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА Б за начално и продължаващо професионално обучение с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	3	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	352
Usual entry grade	11	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	17	**Usual completion age**	17
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✔ In Bulgaria education is mandatory until the age of 16.	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔ It is part of formal education and training system.
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	✔ This framework programme is applicable for both IVET and CVET.
Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✔

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• daily • evening • extramural • distance learning • work-based training • individual • self-learning The most common learning form is daily. • Apprenticeship is available after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	• schools • schools in partnership with enterprises • vocational training centres
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=60% – Min 60% – The share of practical training for these qualifications that require the performance of a complex set of activities (NQF/ EQF level 3) is no less than 60%.
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice – when learners go to external companies for practical training • practical training at school – when the school uses its own premises for practical training
Main target groups	Programmes are available for individuals above the age 16.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools. The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. Previous education requirements are at least a completed grade or stage from basic or secondary education, completed initial stage of lower secondary education or a completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act. For the particular programme stage 1 of secondary education and VET qualification level 2 is a prerequisite for admission for newly enrolled learners (after 2016).

Assessment of learning outcomes	Vocational education finishes with State qualification examination: The examination is both theoretical and practical and is relevant to the occupation. The education ministry develops and approves national examination programmes for the State qualification examination. They include guidelines for content of the exams, task assignments and assessment criteria.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 3 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 2 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност) if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Assistant trainer in sports, system programmer, tourist guide (40).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may continue their studies to the second stage of secondary education and VET qualification at EQF level 4, or can enter the labour market. However, progression in either VET or general education is subject to different prerequisites rather than the completion of this VET programme.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	✔ There are modules for: • entrepreneurship; • foreign language and communication; • ICT (digital competences).
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[40] As described in national context.

EQF 3

Mainly school-based VET,

5 years,

WBL: min. 60%,

FP: C (B)

ISCED 354

Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 5-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	3	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	8	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	14	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✔ In Bulgaria education is mandatory until age 16.	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	✔
Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✘

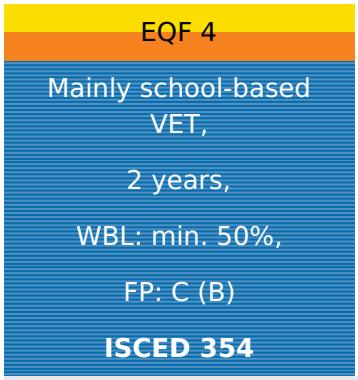
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	Schools
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=60%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people. Based on the type and school curriculum for learners with sensory disabilities, special curricula are developed. Typical curricula for framework programmes C apply depending on the student's specific abilities to reach the learning outcomes that are included in the State education standard for acquiring a qualification in the respective profession. For imprisoned learners, vocational education is organised for the acquisition of the second degree of professional qualification (EQF 3) in the first and second stage of secondary education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 13 years old in order to apply. Basic education is a prerequisite for admission to this VET programme.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a State matriculation examination in Bulgarian language and literature and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 3 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 2 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Electric fitter, cook, wood processing operator (41).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may: • continue their studies at tertiary level; • continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 4 or 5; • enter the labour market.

Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	=20% (42)

[41] As described in national context.

[42] 2018/19. Share of learners compared with the total number of secondary VET learners.



Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	4	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	11	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	17	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✔ In Bulgaria education is mandatory until the age of 16.	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	✔
Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✘

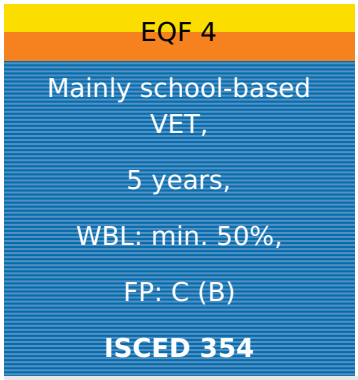
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12)
Main providers	Schools
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=50%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people. Based on the type and school curriculum for learners with sensory disabilities, special curricula are developed. Typical curricula for framework programmes C apply depend on the learner's specific abilities to acquire the learning outcomes that are included in the State education standard for acquiring a qualification in the respective profession. For imprisoned learners, vocational education is organised for the acquisition of the second degree of professional qualification (EQF 3) in the first and second stage of secondary education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 13 years old to apply. Basic education is a prerequisite for admission to this VET programme. For the particular VET programme completion of secondary education stage 1 and VET qualification level 2 are prerequisites for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• To complete this type of VET programme, learners need to pass a State matriculation examination in Bulgarian language and literature and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 4 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 3 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Electro-technician, restaurant keeper, wood-procession technician-technologist (43).

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may: - continue their studies at tertiary level; - continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 5; - enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔
General education subjects	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[43] As described in national context.



Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 5-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	4	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	8	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	14	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✔ In Bulgaria education is mandatory until the age of 16.	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	✔
Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✘

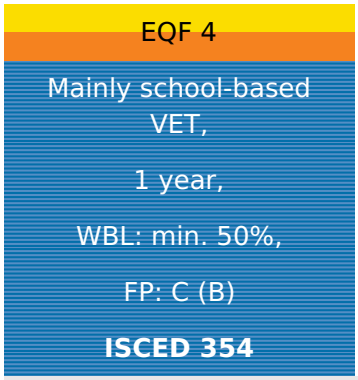
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	Schools
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=50%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people. Based on the type and school curriculum for learners with sensory disabilities, special curricula are developed. Typical curricula for framework programmes C apply depending on the student's specific abilities to acquire the learning outcomes that are included in the State education standard for acquiring a qualification in the respective profession. For imprisoned learners, vocational education is organised for the acquisition of the third degree of professional qualification (EQF 4) in the first and second stage of secondary education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must be at least 13 years old (when they apply) to enrol. For this type of VET programme, the completion of basic education is a prerequisite for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• The secondary VET is completed with State matriculation examinations in Bulgarian language and literature and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 4 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 3 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Electro-technician, restaurant keeper, wood-procession technician-technologist (44).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The graduates may: • continue their studies at tertiary level; • continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 5; • enter the labour market.

Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	>=75% (45)

[44] As described in national context.

[45] 2018/19. Share of learners compared to the total number of secondary VET learners.



Initial mainly school-based, 1-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на трета степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	4	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	12	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	17	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	Information not available	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✔
Is it initial VET?	✔	**Is it continuing VET?**	Information not available
Is it offered free of charge?	✔ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✔
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).		
Main providers	• schools • enterprises		

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=50%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools and 16 for vocational training centres (initial and continuous VET providers for employees and unemployed, without acquisition of an education level). The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. Previous education requirements are at least a completed grade or stage from basic or secondary education, completed initial stage of lower secondary education or a completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act. For the particular VET programme, completion of grade 11 and VET qualification level 2 or 3 are prerequisites for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• To complete the programme, learners need to pass a matriculation exam and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 4 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 3 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.

Examples of qualifications	Builder, electro technician, electronic equipment technician, cook, waiter, assistant trainer in sports and system programmer (46).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may: • continue their studies at tertiary level; • continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 5; • enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[46] As described in national context.

EQF 2

Mainly school-based VET,

1 year,

WBL: min. 70%,

FP: A (A)

ISCED 352

Initial, mainly school-based, 1 year VET programmes leading to EQF level 2, ISCED 352 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА А за начално професионално обучение с придобиване на първа степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	2	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	352
Usual entry grade	11	**Usual completion grade**	11
Usual entry age	16	**Usual completion age**	17
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	**Is it continuing VET?**	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	• schools • enterprises
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=70%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools and 16 for vocational training centres (initial and continuous VET providers for employees and unemployed, without acquisition of an education level). The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. Previous education requirements are at least a completed grade or stage from basic or secondary education, completed initial stage of lower secondary education or a completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act. For this type of programme, the completion of secondary education, stage 1, is a prerequisite for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• Information not available
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 2 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 1 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Builder, electro technician, electronic equipment technician, cook, waiter, assistant trainer in sports and system programmer (47).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete VET can enter the labour market or continue their studies at EQF level 3 (VET) or in general education stage 2. However, progression in either VET or general education is subject to different prerequisites rather than the completion of this VET programme.

Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[47] As described in national context.

EQF 3

Mainly school-based VET,

1 year,

WBL: min. 60%,

FP: C (B)

ISCED 354

Initial/Continuing mainly school-based, 1-year, VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация)

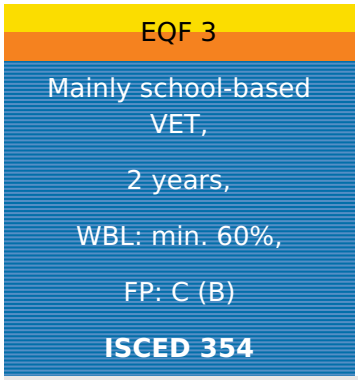
EQF level	3	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	11	**Usual completion grade**	11
Usual entry age	17	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	**Is it continuing VET?**	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships after the age of 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	• schools • enterprises
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=60%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools and 16 for vocational training centres (initial and continuous VET providers for employees and unemployed, without acquisition of an education level). The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. Previous education requirements are at least a completed grade or stage from basic or secondary education, completed initial stage of lower secondary education or a completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act. For this type of VET programme completion of upper secondary stage 1 and VET qualification level 2 are prerequisites for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• To complete this type of VET programme, learners need to pass a State matriculation examination and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 3 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 2 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност) – if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Builder, electro technician, electronic equipment technician, cook, waiter, assistant trainer in sports and system programme (48).

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The graduates may: • continue their studies at tertiary level; • continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 5; • enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[48] As described in national context.



Initial/continuing mainly school-based, 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 354 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА В за професионално образование с придобиване на втора степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	3	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	354
Usual entry grade	11	**Usual completion grade**	12
Usual entry age	16	**Usual completion age**	18
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	**Is it continuing VET?**	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships for ages after 16 (grades 11-12).
Main providers	• schools • enterprises
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=60%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The requirements for enrolment in VET programmes are minimum age, health condition, previous education and qualification level. The minimum required age is 13 (in the year of application) for vocational gymnasiums and schools and 16 for vocational training centres (initial and continuous VET providers for employees and unemployed, without acquisition of an education level). The health condition of the applicant is certified by a medical certificate proving the fitness for the selected occupation. Previous education requirements are at least a completed grade or stage from basic or secondary education, completed initial stage of lower secondary education or a completed literacy course under the Employment Promotion Act. For this type of VET programme completion of grade 11 and VET qualification level 2 or 3 are prerequisites for admission.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• To complete this type of VET programme, learners need to pass a matriculation examination and a State qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive: • diploma for secondary education (Диплома за средно образование); • certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 3 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 2 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate; • competence certificate (Свидетелство за правоспособност), if applicable for the particular qualification. All these documents are recognised by the education system (for the continuation of education) and by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Builder, electro technician, electronic equipment technician, cook, waiter, assistant trainer in sports and system programmer (49).

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The graduates may: • continue their studies at tertiary level; • continue their VET qualification at EQF Level 5; • enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[49] As described in national context.

EQF 5

Post-secondary VET,

up to 2 years,

WBL: min. 50%,

FP: D (Г)

ISCED 454

Initial/Continuing, post-secondary, up to 2-year VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 454 (РАМКОВА ПРОГРАМА Г за професионално обучение с придобиване на четвърта степен на професионална квалификация)

EQF level	5	**ISCED-P 2011 level**	454
Usual entry grade	12	**Usual completion grade**	12+
Usual entry age	18+	**Usual completion age**	18+
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	**Is it part of formal education and training system?**	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	**Is it continuing VET?**	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ For State-owned schools	**Is it available for adults?**	✓

ECVET or other credits	Not applicable
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer); • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • apprenticeships.
Main providers	• schools • enterprises
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	>=50%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for people who have completed upper secondary education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	This type of VET is available only for people who have completed secondary education.
Assessment of learning outcomes	Learners need to pass a vocational qualification examination.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduates receive certificate for vocational qualification for EQF level 4 (Свидетелство за професионална квалификация – 4 СПК). Learners may also ask to receive a Europass certificate supplement to the certificate. The document is recognised by the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Company manager, hotel manager, restaurant manager as well as sports and military/defence qualifications (50).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete VET can enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✔ According to Art. 40, para 1 of the VET Act, 'Validation of professional knowledge, skills and competences is the identification and recognition of professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or self-study and their compliance with the State education requirements for acquiring qualification in professions'. The validation procedure is carried out for professions and specialties included in the list of professions for vocational education and training under Art. 6 of the VET Act. The validation procedure starts with an application submitted by the person to the director of the institution entitled to carry out the validation. In order to prove the acquired professional knowledge, skills and competences declared for validation, the person shall submit copies of documents held by him/her together with the originals for reconciliation – employment record (workbook, service book, social security book), education diploma, attestations, references, certificates from previous professional trainings, artefacts, photos of artefacts. Validation includes informing the person requesting validation about the purposes, validation procedures and their sequence, identifying the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the person, and recognition of a degree of professional qualification or of qualification for part of a profession.
General education subjects	✔
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✔
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[50] As described in national context.

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