



Spotlight on VET ITALY

Vocational education
and training systems
in Europe

2023

VET in Italy

Vocational education and training (VET) is characterised by multilevel governance with broad involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders. Ministries of education and labour lay down general rules and common principles for the system. VET schools are in charge of upper secondary VET school pathways (EQF 4-ISCED 354). Regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of VET programmes and most apprenticeship-type schemes. Social partners contribute in defining and creating active employment policies relevant to VET and lifelong learning.

Compulsory education lasts 10 years, up to age 16. At age 14 learners make a choice between general education, secondary VET school pathways and regional IVET pathways (*Istruzione e Formazione Professionale*, leFP). They have the 'right/duty' (*diritto/dovere*) to stay in education until age 18 to accomplish 12 years of education and/or vocational qualification.

At upper secondary level, the following VET programmes are offered:

- 5-year programmes at technical schools (*istituti tecnici*) or vocational schools (*istitute professionali*) leading respectively to technical or vocational education diplomas (EQF level 4). Programmes combine general education and VET and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Graduates have access to higher education;
- 3-year regional IVET programmes (leFP) leading to a professional operator certificate (*attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale*, EQF level 3);
- 4-year regional IVET programmes (leFP) leading to a technician diploma (*diploma professionale di tecnico*, EQF level 4).

All upper secondary education programmes are school based but could be also delivered as apprenticeships (Type 1).

There is permeability across VET programmes and also within the general education system. On completion of a 3-year regional IVET path, it is possible to attend 1 additional year leading to an EQF level 4 vocational diploma; this allows enrolling in the fifth year of the State education system and sitting the State exam for an upper secondary technical or vocational education diploma (EQF level 4).

At post-secondary level, graduates of 5-year upper secondary programmes or 4-year leFP programmes who passed entrance exams may enrol in

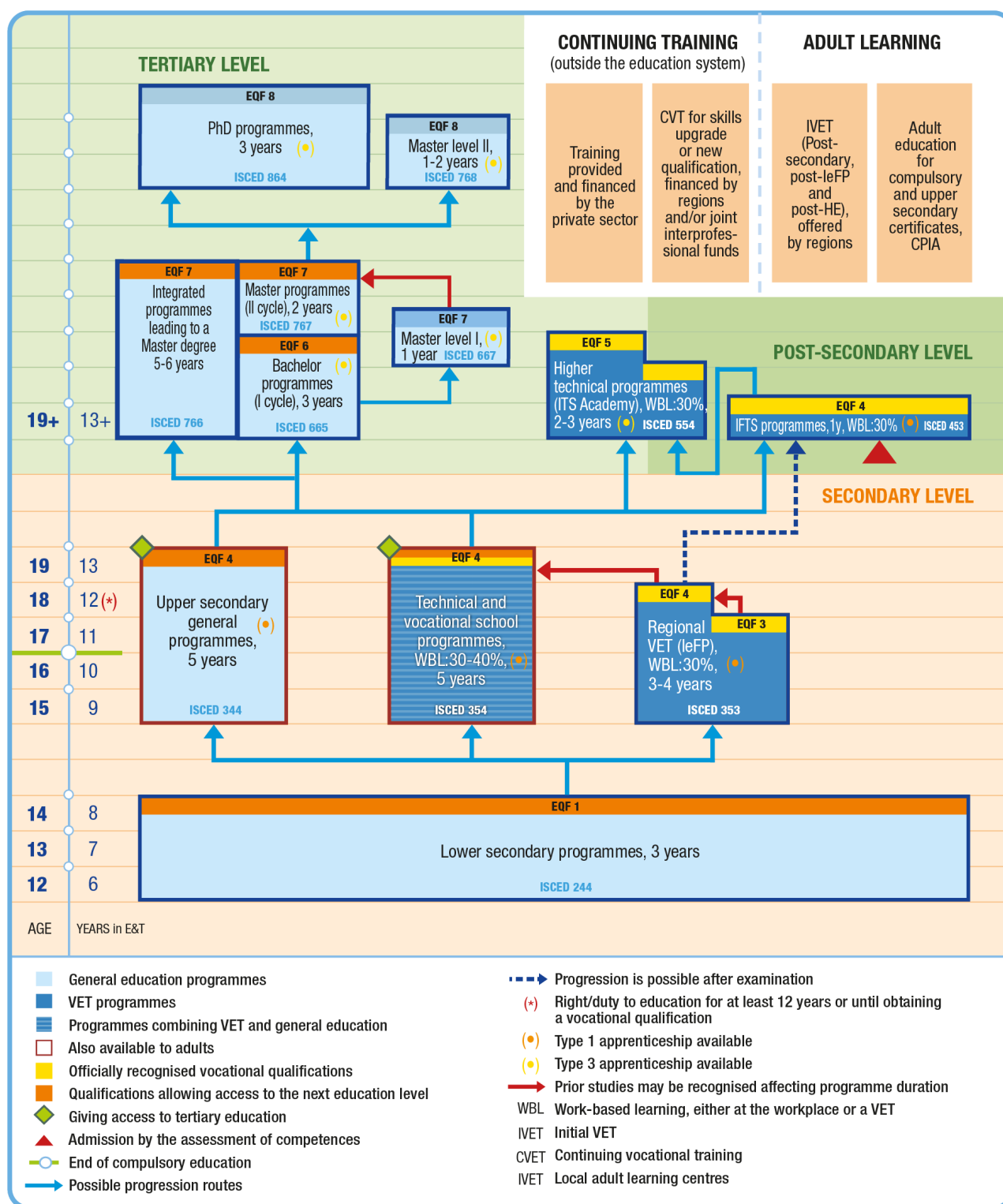
- higher technical education and training courses (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore*, IFTS): 1-year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a high technical specialisation certificate (*certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore*, EQF level 4).
- higher technological institute programmes (*istituti tecnologici superiori*; ITS academy): 2-year tertiary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma (*diploma di specializzazione per le tecnologie applicate* - EQF level 5 Implementation of the recently (2022) reformed system of higher technological institutes is ongoing in 2023; it foresees introduction of 3-year programmes leading to an applied technologies qualification (EQF level 6).

VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure progression opportunities (upskilling) for the low-skilled; these are provided by provincial centres for adult education (*centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti*, CPIA) under the remit of the education ministry.

Continuing vocational training (CVT) to meet enterprise, sectoral and regional needs is:

- supported by the ESF and is managed by regions and autonomous provinces;
- directly funded by the regions and autonomous provinces;
- financed by joint inter-professional funds, managed by the social partners.

VET in Italy's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Italy: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). *Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions* [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/italy-u3

Distinctive features of VET

Italian VET is characterised by multiple institutional actors at national and regional levels.

Article 117 of the Constitution provides for ownership either by the State, the regions or mechanisms for cooperation between the different institutions, relative to the type of education and training: the State establishes general education standards; regions have exclusive legislative power over VET; and education falls within the concurrent legislation, except for the autonomy of education institutions and vocational training.

Ministries of education and labour and the regions define, with formal agreements, matters of common interest with different responsibility levels.

Apprenticeship is available at all levels and programmes and is defined as an open-ended employment contract. Type 1 apprenticeship is offered in all programmes at upper secondary level and the IFTS. Type 3 apprenticeship (higher training/education apprenticeship) is offered in ITS programmes and all tertiary education leading to university degrees, ITS diplomas, and doctoral degrees. Type 2 apprenticeship does not correspond to any education level but leads to occupational qualifications recognised by the relevant national sectoral collective agreements.

Challenges and policy responses

The Italian VET system is characterised by multilevel governance that requires effective coordination and synergies. Learner exposure to work-based learning is low, while the labour market is [facing](#) skill shortages and skill gaps at regional level. In this context, new funds are allocated for the expansion of the dual system in regional (IeFP) programmes through quality in-company training /virtual business simulations and career guidance schemes (individualised training plans). In turn, the educational value of IeFP programmes is guaranteed through the [transversal skills and guidance pathways](#) (PCTO) scheme in place in upper secondary.

Supporting participation of adults in learning is high in the policy agenda. The [National Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) (NRRP) includes measures to reform active labour market policies, by implementing essential performance levels and promoting the employability of transitioning and unemployed individuals, particularly those considered vulnerable and distant from the labour market. The plan secures financial incentives and benefits for companies involved in dual training through regional calls for tender. NRRP investments in dual VET aim to facilitate entry of young people into the labour market, including in sectors linked to the digital and green transitions. The plan's ambitious target is to increase the number of participants in dual training from 39 000 (baseline) to 174 000 by 2025.

To tackle the high number of low-skilled people, education and labour authorities are running multiannual national plans for the upskilling of citizens; respectively, the [guaranteeing the skills of the adult population](#) plan for the acquisition of basic and transversal skills in the regions and the [2021-27 Strategic plan for the development of the adult population](#).

The operational plan for 2023 of the National Digital skills strategy provides digital education in schools and continuous training schemes, with emphasis to inclusion initiatives for disadvantaged groups. Focus is given to the digitalisation of SMEs through public-private partnerships. Actions are monitored at both national and regional level to ensure the effectiveness of those initiatives.

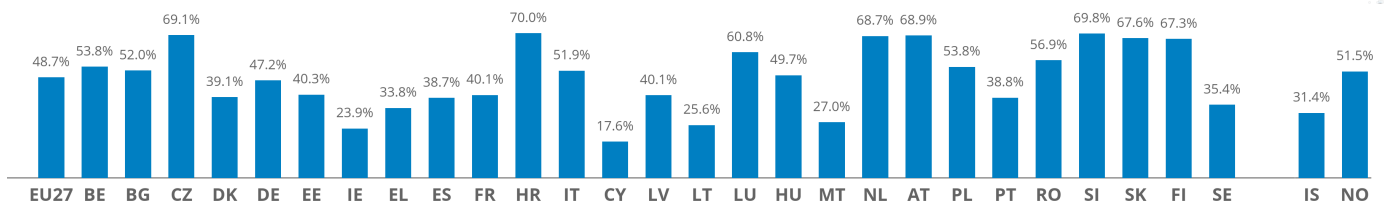
The update of the national qualifications framework (QNQ) referenced to the European Qualifications Framework in [2022](#) and implemented in national legislation in 2023, brings all qualification sub-systems together and sets common [criteria](#) for levelling national and regional qualifications. This increases the relevance and transparency of qualifications and facilitates European and international mobility of workers. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Regions work together to ensure that QNQ remains relevant to emerging needs at regional and national levels.



Italy

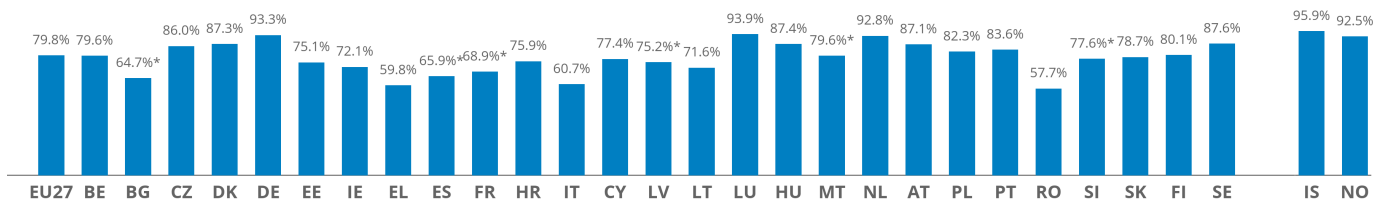
Education and training in figures

IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2021



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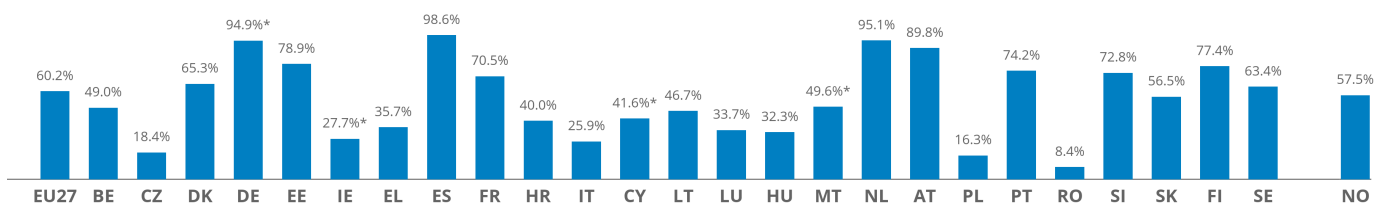
Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%), 2022



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

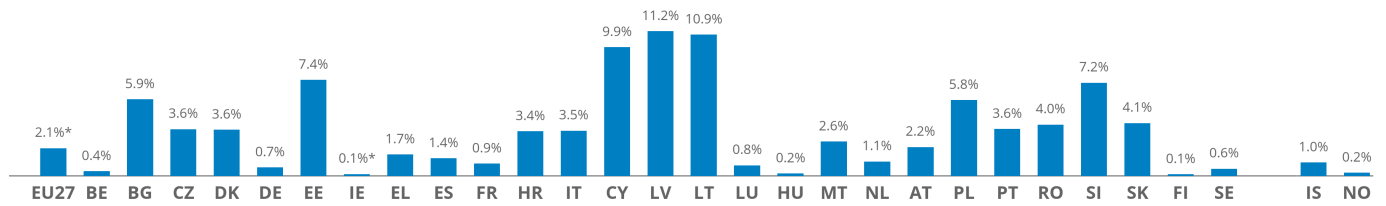
Recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) with a work-based learning experience as part of their vocational education and training (%), 2022



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

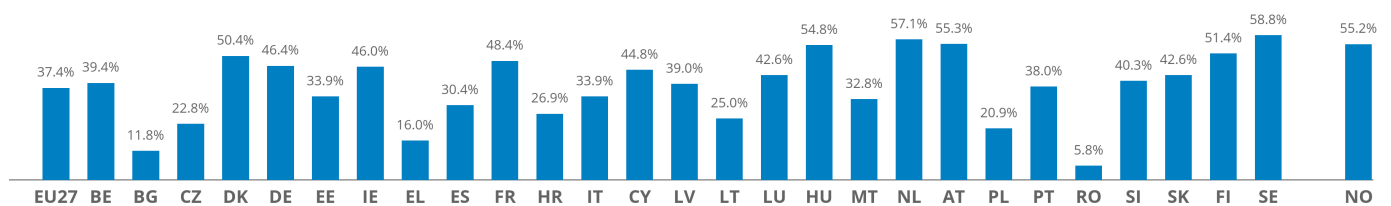
IVET learners who benefitted from a learning mobility abroad (%), 2021



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

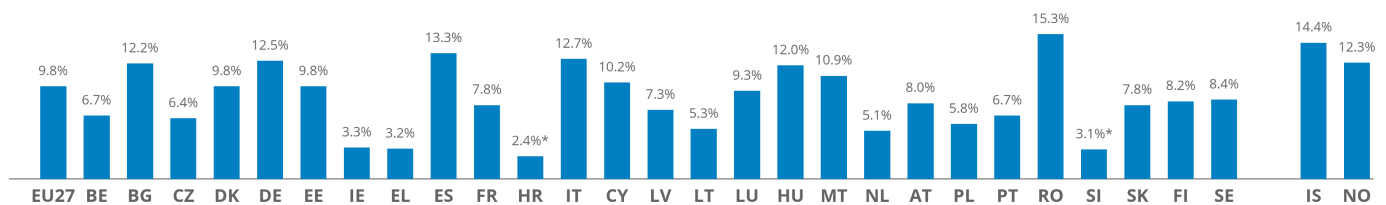
Adults (25-64 year-olds) with a learning experience in the last 12 months (%), 2016



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

Early leavers from education and training (%), 2021



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

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



Further information

- Cedefop. *Timeline of VET policies in Europe - Italy*.
- European Commission. (2023). *Education and training monitor 2023: Italy*.
- Eurydice. (2023). *National education systems: Italy*.
- Europass. *Italian referencing report of the qualifications to the European qualifications framework - 2022 update*.

www.lavoro.gov.it	Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
garanziagiovani.anpal.gov.it	Youth guarantee
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www.istat.it	Italian National Institute of Statistics
www.indire.it	National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research
www.inps.it	National Agency for Social Security
www.statoregioni.it	Italian State-regions conference
www.tecnostruttura.it	Regional structure for management of the European Social Fund
www.censis.it	Centre for studies on social investment

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