

# Spotlight on VET **FINLAND**

Vocational education  
and training systems  
in Europe

2023

## VET in Finland

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for strategic and normative steering of vocational education and training (VET) and leads national development. National VET objectives and core subjects are determined by the government.

Authorisations to provide VET are granted by the ministry. They cover VET fields, number of learners, language of instruction, locations, special education tasks and other issues. VET providers may also be assigned tasks to organise training in compliance with the labour market policy.

A VET provider may be a local authority, municipal training consortium, foundation, other registered association or State-owned company. These organise training in their areas of competence, matching provision with local labour market needs. They decide independently on how the training is carried out, the use of learning environments and pedagogical solutions.

Around 40% of learners who completed basic education enrol in initial VET (IVET) immediately after; they obtain their VET qualifications at vocational institutions or through apprenticeships. Since 2021, it is compulsory for all to study at least until the age of 18 (previously 16), including VET. Vocational qualifications are available for both young learners and adults.

There are 42 initial vocational qualifications (EQF 4), 64 further (EQF 4) and 54 specialist vocational qualifications (EQF 5). Admission to IVET programmes is based on a basic education certificate; for continuing VET (CVET: further and specialist) it is on a case-by-case basis, taking work experience into consideration.

IVET suits adults without a formal qualification or those who want to change profession. CVET programmes are mainly for adults with previous work experience. Adults may benefit from study leave. Leave that is 2 months or longer qualifies for the adult education allowance for up to 15 months, depending on the applicant's work history. The allowance is equal to the amount of the earnings-related unemployment allowance.

An initial vocational qualification requires 180 competence points (cp) comprising vocational units (compulsory and optional) and common units (communication, maths, science, citizenship and skills for working life) included in all IVET programmes. The nominal duration is 3 years, depending on the individual personal competence development plan. Further vocational qualifications usually require 150 cp and specialist vocational qualifications 180 cp, consisting mainly of vocational units. All include work-based learning.

The legislation does not stipulate a maximum or minimum amount on work-based learning (WBL). It is planned as part of the learner's personal competence development plan and implemented through an apprenticeship agreement (written fixed-term employment contract) or a training agreement. The latter does not establish an employment relationship with the training company; learners do not receive salary and employers do not receive training compensation.

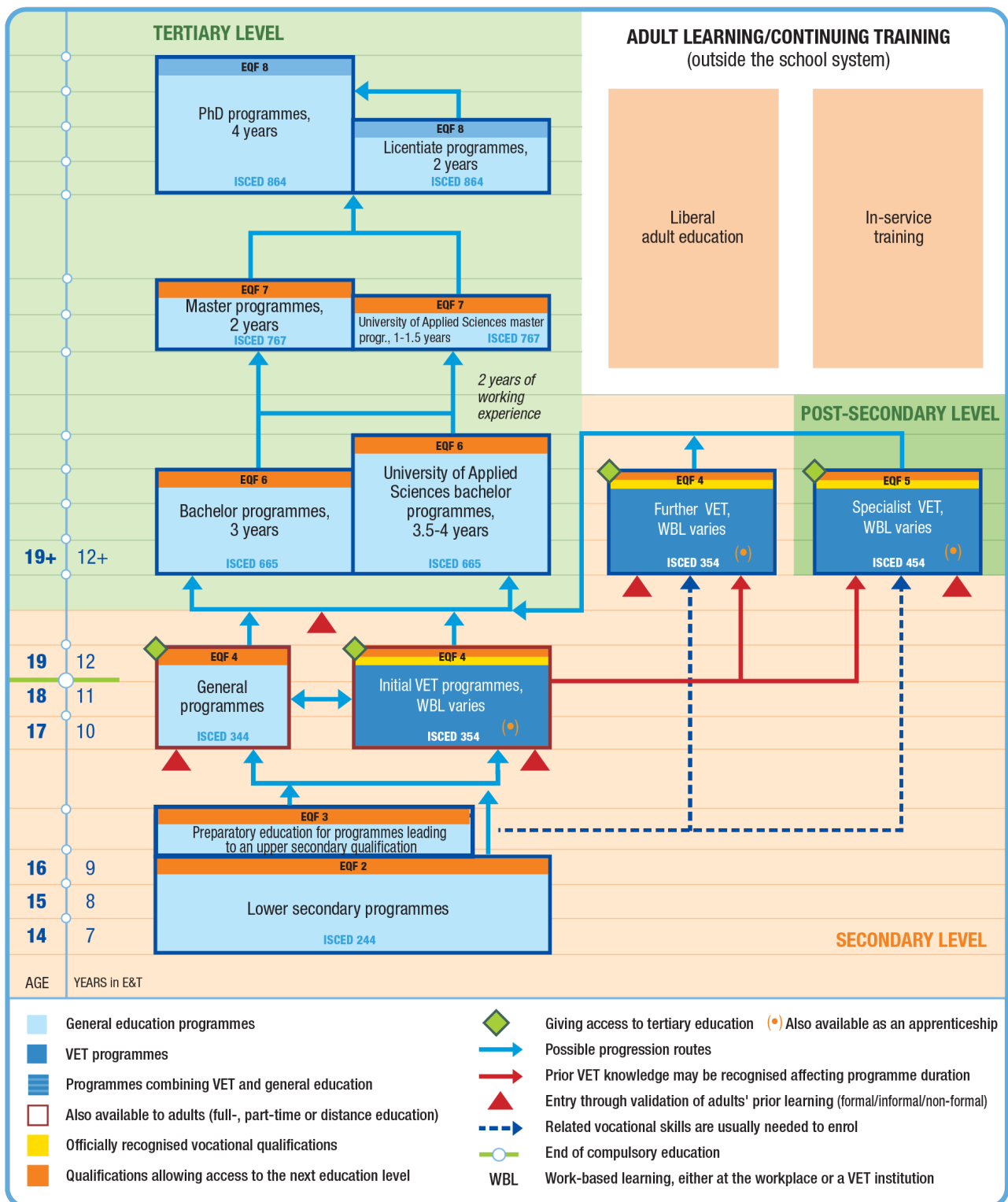
WBL forms may alter within a programme: a learner may transfer from training to apprenticeship agreement when the prerequisites for concluding such an agreement are met.

All VET programmes ensure eligibility for higher education studies.

National qualifications requirements ensure standardised vocational competence and are the basis for evaluating learning outcomes. The Finnish National Agency for Education develops them in tripartite cooperation between teachers, learners and education providers, employers and employees.

Representatives from enterprises contribute to developing national qualification requirements through sectoral working-life committees; they also organise and plan workplace training and competence tests, as well as assessing the tests.

# VET in Finland's education and training system



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & Finnish National Agency for Education. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Finland: 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/finland-u3](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/finland-u3)

## Distinctive features of VET

Finnish VET is competence-based and learner-oriented. A personal competence development plan is drawn up for each learner. It charts and recognises the skills previously acquired by the learner and outlines any further competences the learner needs and how they can be acquired in different learning environments.

There are no final exams in VET. Once learners successfully complete their personal competence development plan, they acquire a qualification.

VET supports lifelong learning and learners' development as human beings and members of society. It provides learners with the knowledge and skills necessary in further studies and promotes employment.

VET is also an attractive choice because of its flexibility and good job and study prospects: graduates may enrol in higher education or enter the labour market. The fact that VET is developed and delivered in close cooperation with the labour market guarantees its quality and attractiveness. Guided and goal-oriented learning at the workplace takes place in versatile learning environments, both at home and abroad, and is based on practical work tasks.

VET teachers and trainers are respected professionals. A career as a VET teacher is generally considered attractive. This is reflected in the high number of learners applying for VET training programmes, which invariably exceeds intake. Around one third of eligible applicants are admitted to training.

## Challenges and policy responses

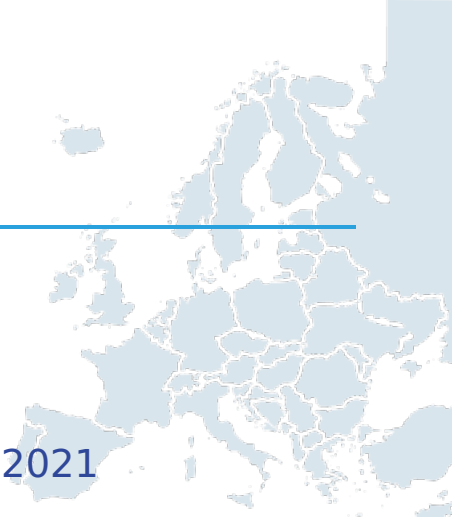
Finnish VET has recently undergone the most extensive reform in almost 20 years, aiming at more efficient and flexible, competence-based and customer-oriented VET that better matches qualifications to labour market needs.

The need to increase the share of WBL is one of the challenges it addresses. Further developing pedagogical thinking and practices, improving learning environments, and cooperation between workplaces and VET providers is required to achieve this objective. A sufficient number of workplaces and competent trainers, support and guidance and [quality assurance](#) are also key.

The COVID-19 pandemic has complicated the organisation of WBL, especially in the service branch where it has become difficult to find workplaces for learners. VET provider own facilities, such as school restaurants, can be utilised in this exceptional situation. In 2021, the situation normalised as vaccinations affect the picture.

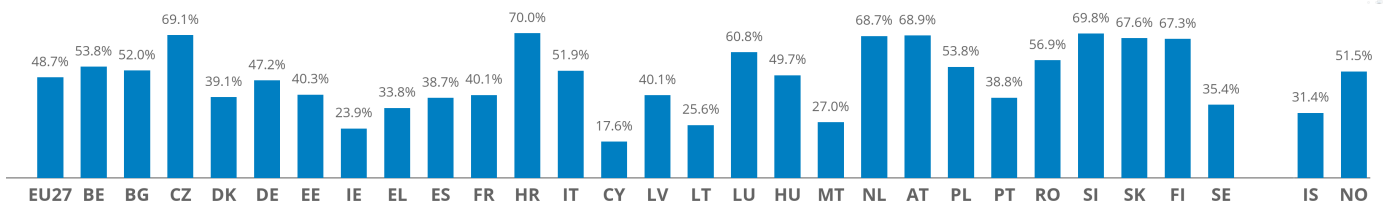
Teachers' jobs include more guidance: individual study paths increase the importance of the guidance and support provided for learners. EUR 80 million has been allocated through the government programme for recruiting vocational teachers and instructors in 2020.

The reform also changes how VET is financed. Since 2018, a single funding system with uniform criteria has covered all VET programmes, including [CVET](#) and apprenticeships. The financing model has gradually started to move towards performance and efficiency funding; this will increase to 20% and 10% respectively by 2022, reducing the core funding to 70% from the current 95%. Performance funding is based on the number of completed qualifications and qualification units; effectiveness funding is based on learners' access to employment, pursuit of further education and feedback from both learners and the labour market.

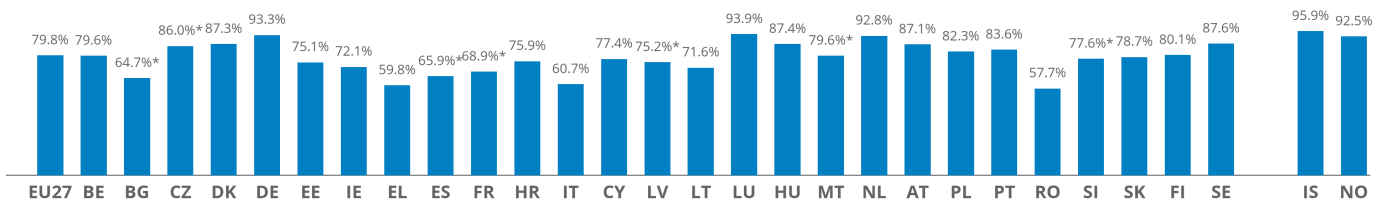


## Education and training in figures

### IVET students as % of all upper secondary students, 2021

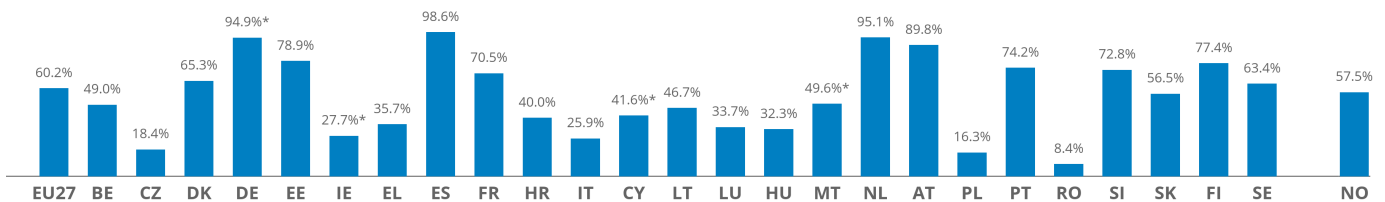


### Employment rate for recent IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds) (%), 2022



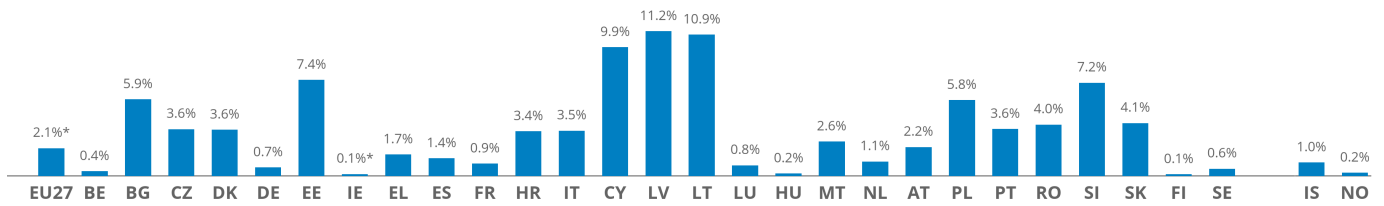
Notes: Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia: (u) low reliability, Czechia: (b) break in time series, Spain and France: (d) definition differs

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



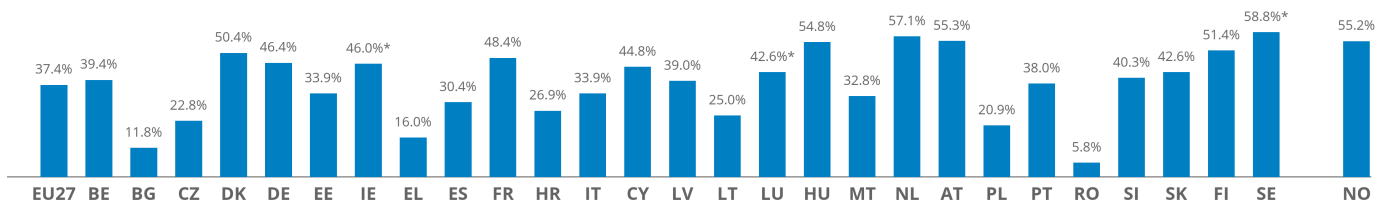
Notes: Germany, Ireland and Cyprus: (u) low reliability

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



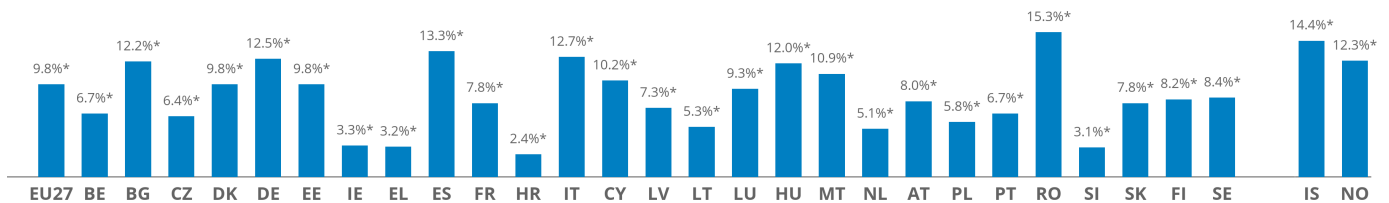
Notes: EU27: (d) definition differs (V) Cedefop estimate, Ireland: (d) definition differs, Croatia, Cyprus, Netherlands and Slovenia: (z) not applicable

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



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

## Early leavers from education and training (%), 2021



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. *Country description: Finland*
- Cedefop and ReferNet (2023). *Timeline of VET policies: Finland*
- European Commission (2023). *Education and training monitor: Finland*
- Eurydice (2024). *National education systems: Finland*

<a href="https://www.oph.fi/en">https://www.oph.fi/en</a>	Finnish National Agency for Education
<a href="https://okm.fi/en/frontpage">https://okm.fi/en/frontpage</a>	Ministry of Education and Culture
<a href="http://www.stat.fi/index_en.html">www.stat.fi/index_en.html</a>	Statistics Finland
<a href="https://tem.fi/en/frontpage">https://tem.fi/en/frontpage</a>	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/finland-u3>

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