



Vocational education and training in Hungary

Short description





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The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications. We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.

Cedefop was originally established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75. This decision was repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 establishing Cedefop as a Union Agency with a renewed mandate.

Europe 123, Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
Postal address: Cedefop service post, 570 01 Thermi, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020
Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu
www.cedefop.europa.eu

Jürgen Siebel, *Executive Director*
Mario Patuzzi, *Chairperson of the Management Board*

Foreword

As Hungary takes on the presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second semester of 2024, it steps into a crucial role, shaping the direction of the EU during a new parliamentary cycle following the June elections. This period faces significant challenges, including enhancing EU competitiveness, strengthening the single market, addressing enlargement, and improving European defence and security. The Hungarian Presidency will also address important issues such as demographic change and migration in a changing global political and economic environment.

In this context, vocational education and training (VET) stands as a cornerstone of Hungary's educational priorities. The emphasis on VET fits with Hungary's broader priorities for the presidency, such as adapting to digital and green transitions and fostering competitive higher education through strategic partnerships. The Hungarian Presidency aims to promote VET alongside higher education to drive European competitiveness and economic growth.

Hungary's VET system is uniquely positioned to address these challenges, thanks to a major reform initiated in 2019. This reform made VET an independent pillar of the economy, now managed by the minister responsible for VET under the Ministry of Culture and Innovation instead of the minister responsible for education. This change underscores the strategic importance of VET in Hungary's economy, allowing it to meet labour market needs better and encourage innovation.

A key feature of the Hungarian VET system is its ability to respond to labour market demands. This is achieved through mechanisms that ensure curricula are closely aligned with industry requirements. The introduction of dual VET, which involves active participation by companies, has been crucial in making VET more relevant and effective. This approach not only improves students' practical skills but also ensures a smoother transition into the workforce, with students being employed during their dual training and receiving payment.

Hungary emphasises the partnership between VET and higher education to promote excellence. These partnerships help develop high-quality, innovative VET programmes that meet the changing needs of the economy. The certified technician programmes, a special track within the technician programme, aim to make VET the main pathway to engineering studies. Inclusivity is another key priority, with lifelong learning initiatives ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have access to continuous education and training opportunities.

The professional development of VET teachers is another crucial element of Hungary's strategy. By investing in the professional development of VET teachers, Hungary ensures that they are equipped with the latest teaching skills and industry knowledge, which – as a knock-on effect – improves the quality of VET provision.

The comprehensive reforms and strategic initiatives detailed in this publication provide valuable insights into the Hungarian VET system. This overview is useful not only for understanding the Hungarian context but also for inspiring other EU Member States. It shows how VET can help achieve common European goals of economic resilience, competitiveness, and social inclusion.

This publication aims to encourage dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in VET. Researchers, policy-makers, VET providers, and stakeholders across Europe and beyond will find this resource invaluable as we work towards a brighter future for vocational education and training in the EU.

Jürgen Siebel
Executive Director

Loukas Zahilas
*Head of Department
for VET and qualifications*

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Hungary



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Area	93 012 km² ⁽¹⁾
Capital	Budapest
System of government	Hungary is a republic. The prime minister is the head of the government and exercises executive power. The president is the Head of State. The government is accountable to Parliament. ⁽²⁾
Population (01.01.2023)	9 599 744 ⁽³⁾
Real GDP per capita (2023)	14 370 ⁽⁴⁾
Legislative power	Parliament

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat [Accessed on 20.6.2024].

⁽²⁾ Fundamental Law of Hungary (25 April 2011) and Eurydice (2024).

⁽³⁾ Eurostat [Accessed on 20. 6.2024].

⁽⁴⁾ Eurostat [Accessed on 20.6.2024].

CHAPTER 1.

External factors influencing VET



1.1. Demographics

In 2023, the population of Hungary was 9 599 744. It has declined by 1.8% since 2019 due to negative natural growth ⁽⁵⁾. The population is also ageing. According to latest available national statistics, the share of young people under age 15 has changed little since 2011, while the share of people in the age range 15-64 has fallen, and the share of people aged 65+ has increased ⁽⁶⁾. The old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 32.1 in 2024 to 49.6 in 2070 (Figure 1) ⁽⁷⁾.

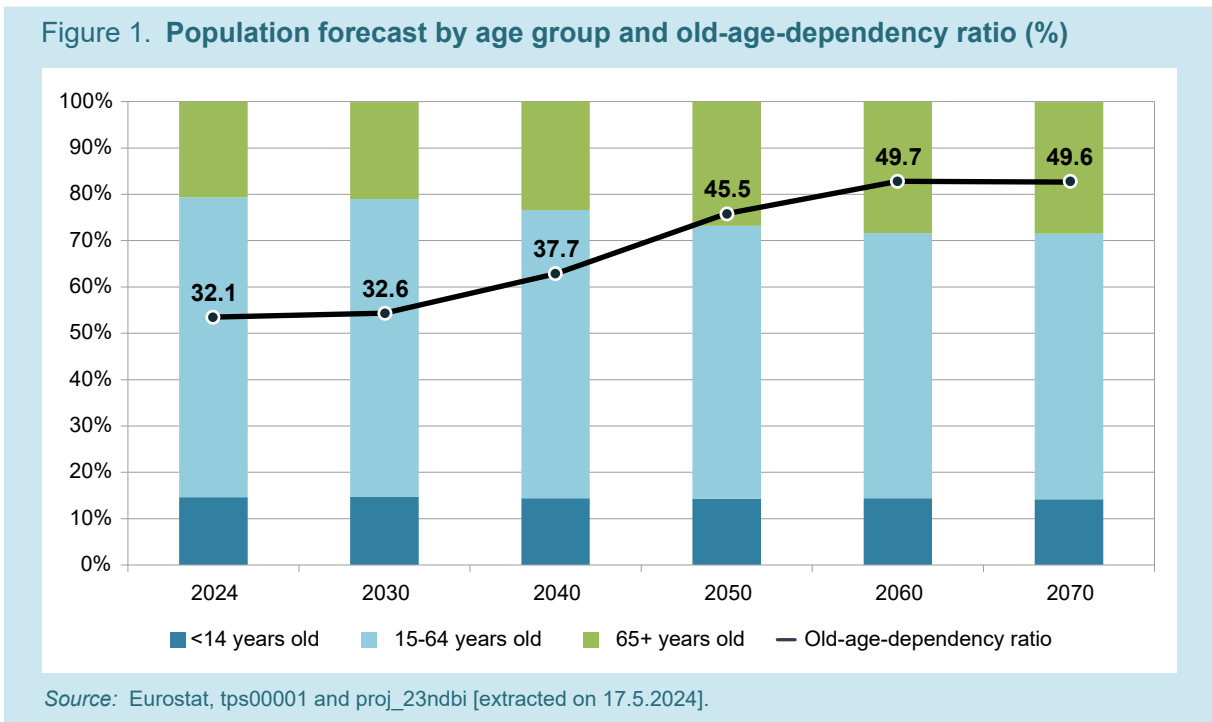


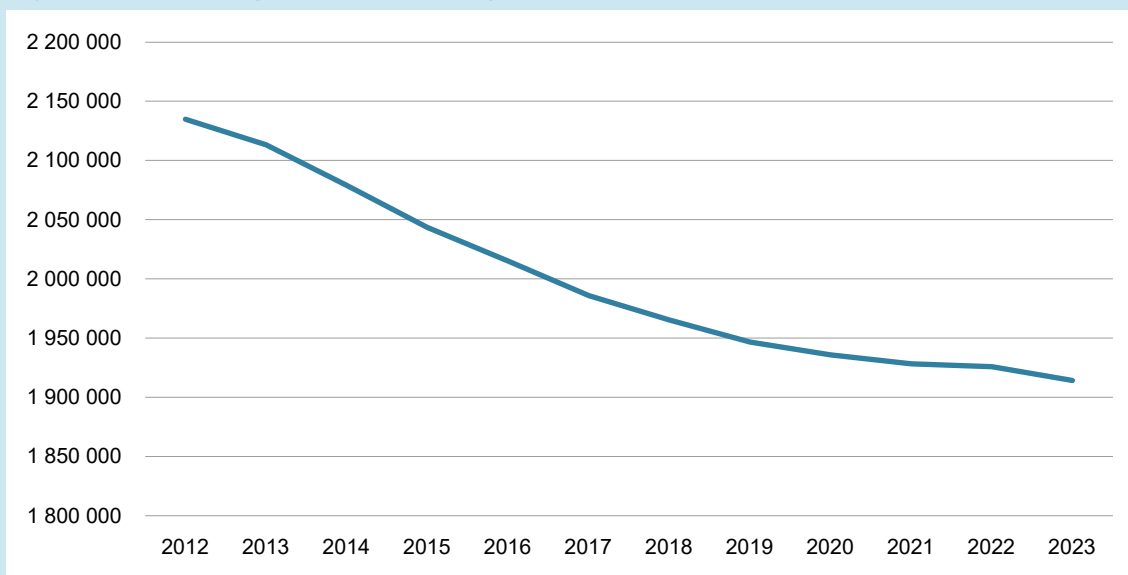
Figure 2 shows the school-age population (ages 3 to 22) from 2012 to 2023. Over this period, there is a clear decline in the number of school-age children.

⁽⁵⁾ Population on 1 January. Source: Eurostat [tps00001] [extracted on 30.4.2024].

⁽⁶⁾ Source: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. *A népesség összetétele főbb korcsoportok szerint, eltartottsági ráták, öregedési index* [Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Population composition by main age groups, dependency ratios, ageing index].

⁽⁷⁾ 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).

Figure 2. School-aged population (ages 3-22), 2012-23



Source: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. Az iskoláskorú népesség vármegye és régió szerint [Hungarian Central Statistical Office. School-age population by county and region] [extracted on 18.6.2024].

During the 2022 census, 86% of the population answered the optional questions on nationality ⁽⁸⁾. According to the 2022 census, the largest national minority is the Roma (2.5% or 209 909 people). The number of Germans was 142 551, Slovaks 29 881, Romanians 27 554, and Ukrainians 24 615 in 2022 ⁽⁹⁾.

1.2. Economy and labour-market indicators

1.2.1. Economic structure

The Hungarian economy is relatively small and open.

Almost all (98.7%) enterprises are small, of which 96.4% are micro enterprises (2022 data). Only 0.6% of all enterprises are medium-sized and 0.7% are large. In 2022, there were approximately 974 000 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in Hungary. Their number has been steadily growing in the past decade ⁽¹⁰⁾. Their employee numbers have also been growing between 2021 and 2022, reaching nearly 2.3 million in 2022. Small and medium-sized enterprises employ 67% of all employees (KSH, 2024, p. 50).

In 2023, Hungary's GDP decreased by 0.9%, while EU's GDP increased by 0.4%, compared to 2022. (KSH, 2024, p. 18). The GDP in 2023 was mostly influenced by the decline in performance of industry, trade, accommodation services, and catering.

The main export industries (2022) of the Hungarian economy are (KSH, 2022):

(a) road vehicles and vehicle parts;

⁽⁸⁾ Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the rights of nationalities lists 13 nationalities, granting them special rights. National minorities are defined as ethnic groups present in Hungary for at least a century, with their own language, culture, and traditions. Membership is based on self-identification.

⁽⁹⁾ Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. *Népszámlálás 2022. Végleges adatok. A népesség főbb jellemzői (országos és területi adatok)*. [Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Census 2022. Final data. Main characteristics of the population (national & regional data)]. More information on the latest census and demographic data can be found online.

⁽¹⁰⁾ KSH. *A vállalkozások teljesítménymutatói kis- és középvállalkozási kategória szerint (előzetes adatok)* [Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Performance indicators of enterprises by small and medium-sized enterprise category (preliminary data)].

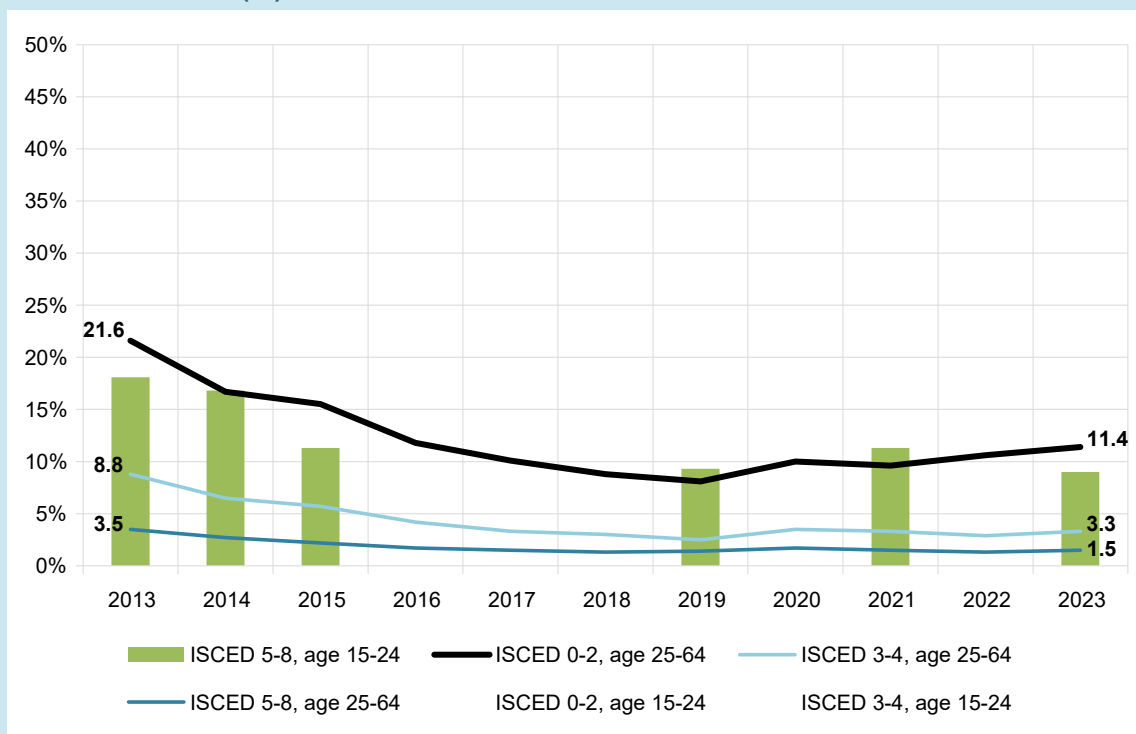
- (b) electrical and electronic equipment;
- (c) pharmaceutical products;
- (d) communication engineering equipment (sound recording and playback devices).

The volume of exports increased in 2023 (KSH, 2024, p.18), especially in the automotive and battery manufacturing sectors.

1.2.2. Employment and unemployment

Figure 3 shows the unemployment rate in Hungary from 2013 to 2023, segmented by educational attainment and age group. The trend indicates that individuals with lower education levels (ISCED 0-2) have the highest unemployment rates, particularly those aged 15-24. In contrast, those with higher education levels (ISCED 5-8) have the lowest unemployment rates. Overall, in 2023, total unemployment ⁽¹¹⁾ in Hungary was 3.5%, below the EU-27 average of 5.2%. It has increased by 0.8 percentage points since 2019.

Figure 3. Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2013-23 (%)



NB: data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 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

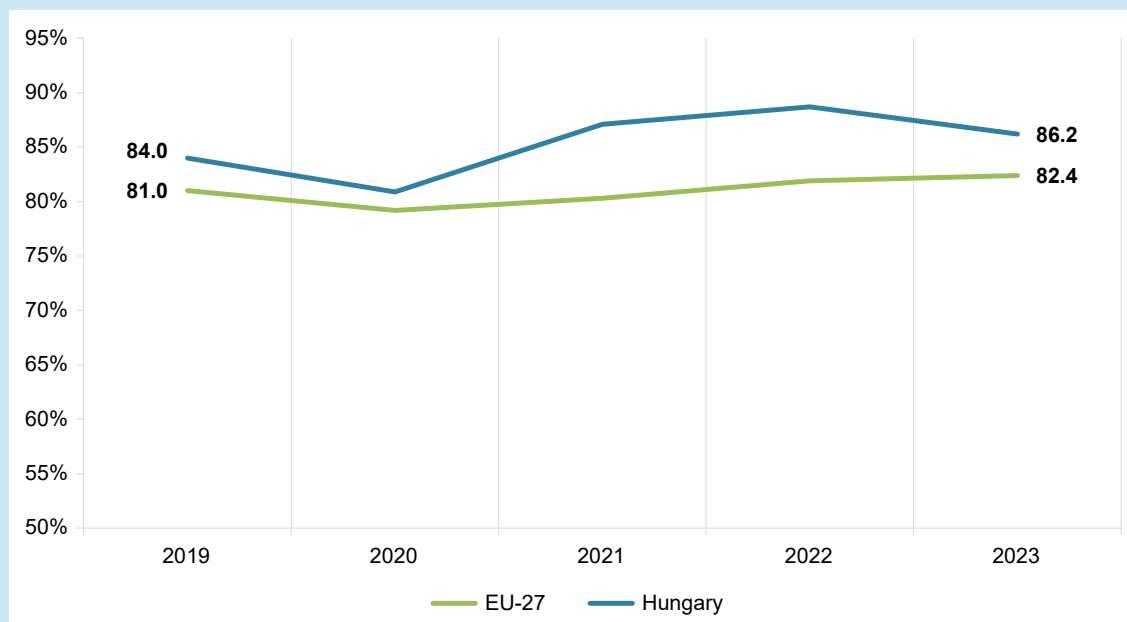
Source: Eurostat, lfsa_urgaed [extracted on 30.4.2024].

The employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) increased from 84.0% in 2019 to 86.2% in 2023. This is more than in the EU on average (Figure 4). Employment

⁽¹¹⁾ The age bracket here is 25-74, as the Eurostat, une_rt_a data does not allow for selection of the 25-64 age range [extracted on 30.4.2024].

growth of all ISCED level graduates aged 20 to 34 in Hungary was 4.4 percentage points during the same period ⁽¹²⁾.

Figure 4. 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_ifse_24 [extracted on 30.4.2024].

1.2.3. Professional regulations

In Hungary, professions are considered regulated if their practice requires obtaining a specific qualification, diploma, passing a State exam, or membership in a professional organisation. The country has the highest number of regulated professions in the EU, according to the [regulated professions database](#).

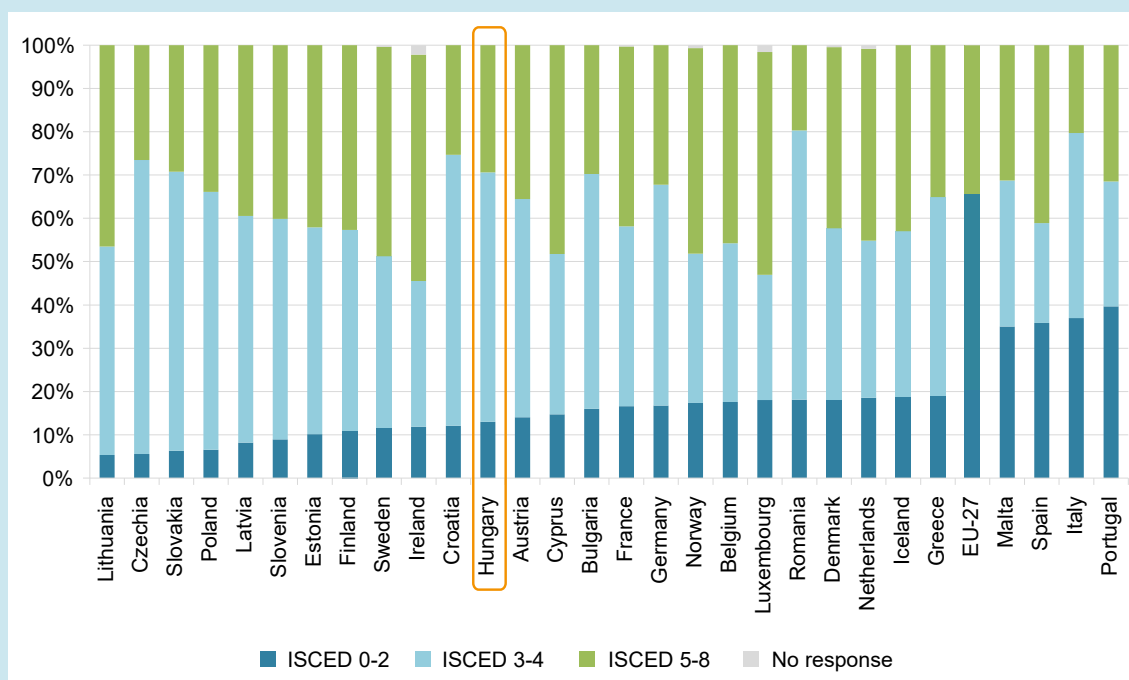
The qualification requirements for the performance of certain activities and for certain jobs are specified in the relevant sectoral regulations, such as Decree 34/2021 (VII.26.) of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology on the qualifications required for the performance of certain industrial and commercial activities and amending certain ministerial decrees on technical regulations.

1.3. Education attainment

In Hungary, the share of people with no or low-level qualifications (13.0%) was below the EU-27 average (20.5%) in 2023. Most people in the age group 25-64 had a medium level qualification (57.6%), making it the sixth highest in the EU-27, where the average was 45.2%. People with high-level qualifications represent 29.4% of those aged 25 to 64, which is lower than the EU average of 34.2% (Figure 5).

⁽¹²⁾ Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [accessed on 28.6.2024].

Figure 5. Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2023



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

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, Ilsa_pgaed [extracted on 30.4.2024].

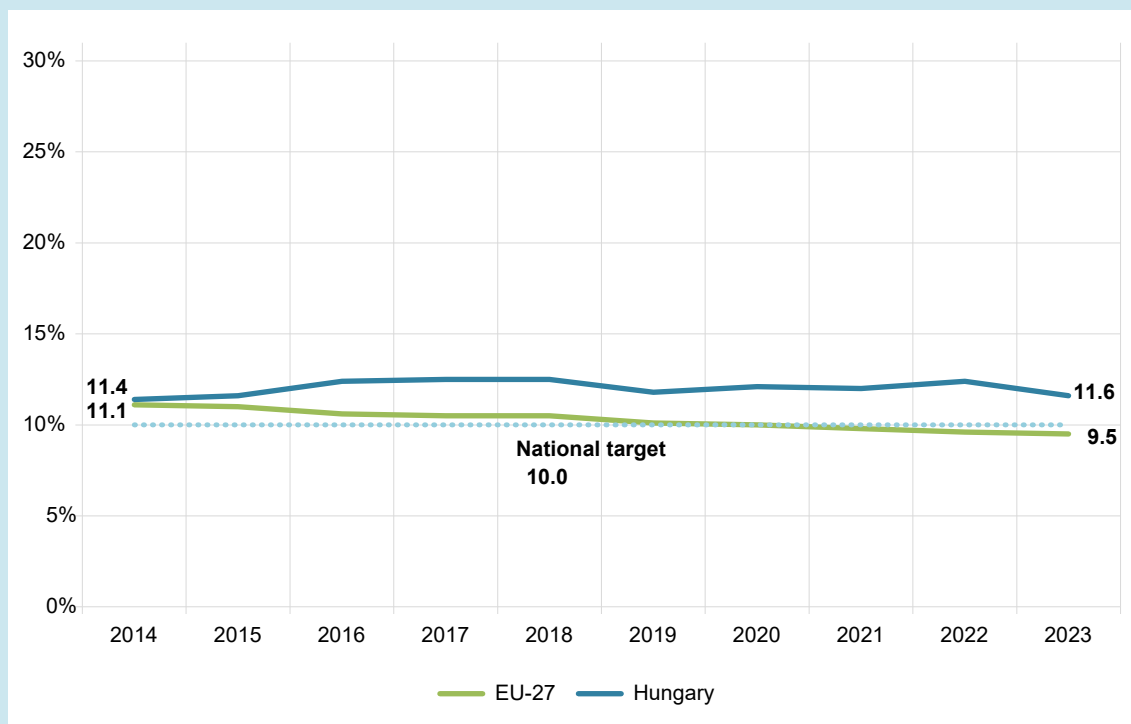
Traditionally, there are more male learners in VET (55.3% in 2022/23) ⁽¹³⁾. They prefer technical fields, such as IT, engineering, construction, and architecture, while female learners typically prefer healthcare, tourism and hospitality, and business and management ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Despite a slight decrease in 2023, the overall share of early leaving from education and training (ELET) increased from 11.4% in 2014 to 11.6% in 2023. It falls short of the national target for 2023 of not more than 10% and the EU-27 average of 9.5% (Figure 6).

⁽¹³⁾ The proportion of male learners is calculated based on the data provided by the source: KSH (2023). *Oktatási adatok 2022/2023 (előzetes adatok)* [Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2023). Education data 2022/2023 (preliminary data)].

⁽¹⁴⁾ NSZFH: *Szakképzési Statisztika - Tanulói létszámadatok országosan* [National Office for VET and Adult Learning: Vocational education statistics - Nationwide student enrolment figures].

Figure 6. Early leaving from education and training (ELET) in 2014-23 (%)



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat & European Commission, edat_lfse_14, https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [extracted on 24.4.2024].

While ELET data are collected through a survey of the 18-24 age group, the National Office for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning also collects dropout data from initial VET programmes. These data track learners removed from the register in October of 2 consecutive school years, excluding graduates. According to these data, the dropout rate from VET decreased from 8.68% in 2022/23 to 7.67% in 2023/24 ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Reducing dropouts from VET is a national challenge. Early leaving from education and training is largely attributed to learners' disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and insufficient basic skills. These issues often stem from challenges in primary school education provision, coupled with the difficulties VET schools face in mitigating these initial disadvantages.

Policy reforms have been developed to address this issue. For example, the Early school leaving (ESL) programme module was created within KRÉTA, the electronic school management system mandatory for Hungarian public schools since 2017. The ESL module functions as an early warning system, continuously monitoring students' performance based on learner achievements and both justified and unjustified absences. If a student's performance starts to decline and unjustified absences increase, the ESL module automatically notifies the parents and informs the headmaster. The ESL programme module provides detailed academic achievement reports for each student, broken down by subjects and months.

Flexible learning pathway programmes have been introduced in school-based VET to reduce early school leaving, keep at-risk youth in education, and help them gain at least a partial vocational qualification through alternative methods (Section 2.2.1.2).

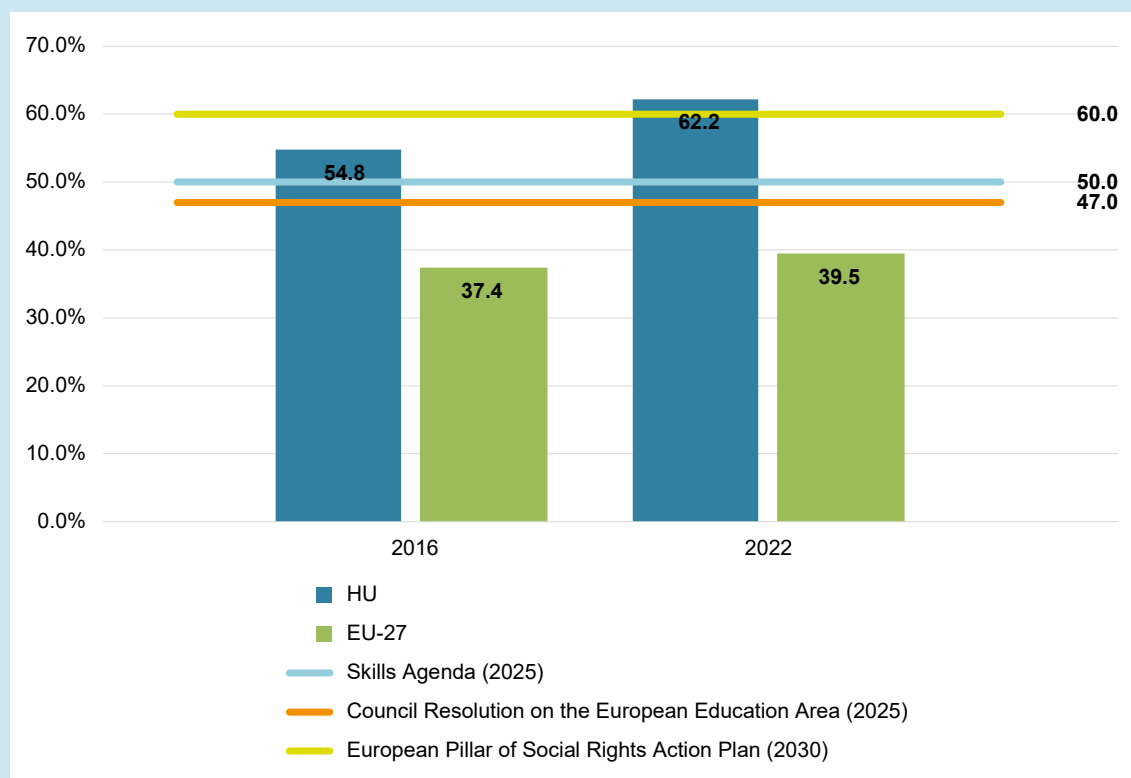
⁽¹⁵⁾ More detailed information on vocational statistics for the 2023/24 school year is available on the [National Office for Vocational Education and Training's website](#). The drop-out report for the 2023/23 school year is available [here](#), and for the 2023/24 school year, [here](#).

In 2018, a survey was introduced to identify vulnerable learners at risk of leaving school early by assessing their key competences necessary for learning and daily life. The survey is now conducted at the start and end of 9th grade in school-based VET programmes. Students identified as at-risk are engaged in a catch-up programme, receiving individual or group skills development. Results from 2023 show a 7.1% improvement in the average mathematics scores, and the proportion of students not meeting the minimum level dropped from 13.9% to 4.99% ⁽¹⁶⁾.

For more information on early leaving from education and training in Hungary please see [Cedefop's country fiche](#) that has been developed as background material to the Cedefop study: Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage, [Volume I](#) and [Volume II](#).

Adult participation in lifelong learning is being promoted in Hungary, with a special focus on early leavers and people without a VET qualification. The share of adults (25-64) with a learning experience in the past 12 months increased from 54.8% in 2016 to 62.2% in 2022, consistently above the EU-27 average. In 2022, it was the second-highest rate in the EU. The 2022 figure exceeds the targets of 47% and 50% set for 2025 in the Council Resolution on the European Education Area and the Skills Agenda, and the 60% target set for 2030 by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

Figure 7. Adults (25-64) with a recent learning experience over the 12 months prior to the survey (%)

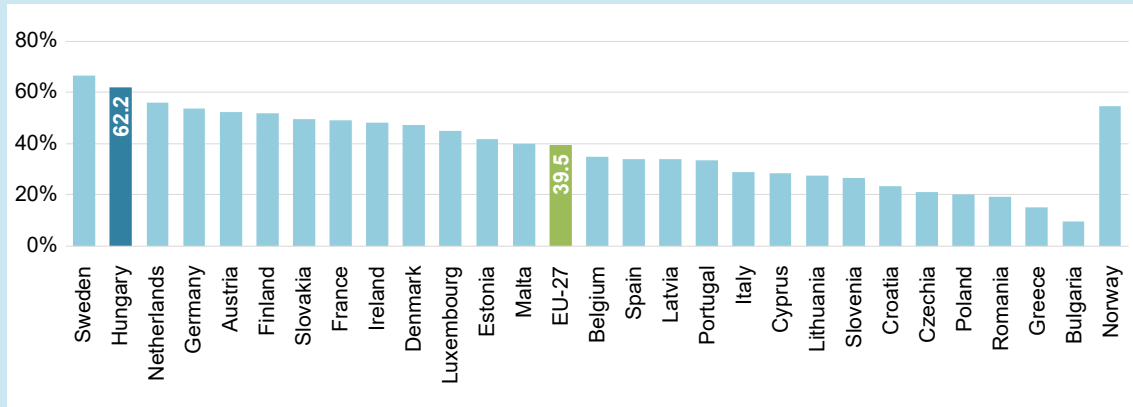


NB: Percentage of the population aged 25-64 who participated in formal or non-formal education and training over the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source: Eurostat, AES, data supplied at Cedefop request and excluding participation in guided on the job training; Cedefop uses this source as a proxy up until 2024 LFS data are not available.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The VET competence assessment surveys are available on the website of the [National Office for VET and Adult Learning](#).

Figure 8. **Adults (25-64) with a learning experience in the last 12 months in the EU, 2022 (%)**



NB: Percentage of the population aged 25-64 who participated in formal or non-formal education and training over the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source: Eurostat, AES, data supplied at Cedefop request and excluding participation in guided on the job training; Cedefop uses this source as a proxy up until 2024 LFS data are not available).

1.4. Employment policies influencing VET

Employment policies in Hungary are governed by the labour code ⁽¹⁷⁾ and the Act on the promotion of employment and provision for the unemployed ⁽¹⁸⁾. These laws shape VET by outlining employer responsibilities, employee rights, and government roles in workforce development.

The Labour Code establishes basic principles for employment relationships. While it does not mandate vocational training, it supports VET indirectly by requiring employers to inform employees about training opportunities.

The Act on the on the promotion of employment and provision for the unemployed directly supports VET through the National Employment Fund (*Nemzeti Foglalkoztatási Alap*), which finances employment initiatives (see also Section 2.4.1).

Hungary's labour market faces challenges like digitalisation and the shift to greener practices, needing new policies for flexibility and skills alignment. These needs are highlighted by COVID-19 recovery efforts in Hungary's National recovery and resilience plan (RRP) ⁽¹⁹⁾. The RRP includes VET measures, promoting employment and skills development, especially for vulnerable groups like women and young people.

Hungary's employment strategies include the [Employment strategy for 2014-20](#), the [Competitiveness strategy 2024-30](#) and the [Social inclusion strategy 2030](#). Implementing measures, like the [Youth guarantee plus programme \(Ifjúsági garancia plusz program\)](#), increase youth employment through guidance, training, and job opportunities. Adult learning programmes, often supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), ensure continuous skill development. Public employment services (PES), known as *Nemzeti Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat* in Hungary, implement national and EU employment policies. They connect job seekers with employers, provide career counselling, manage unemployment benefits and run active labour market programmes.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Act I of 2012 on the labour code.

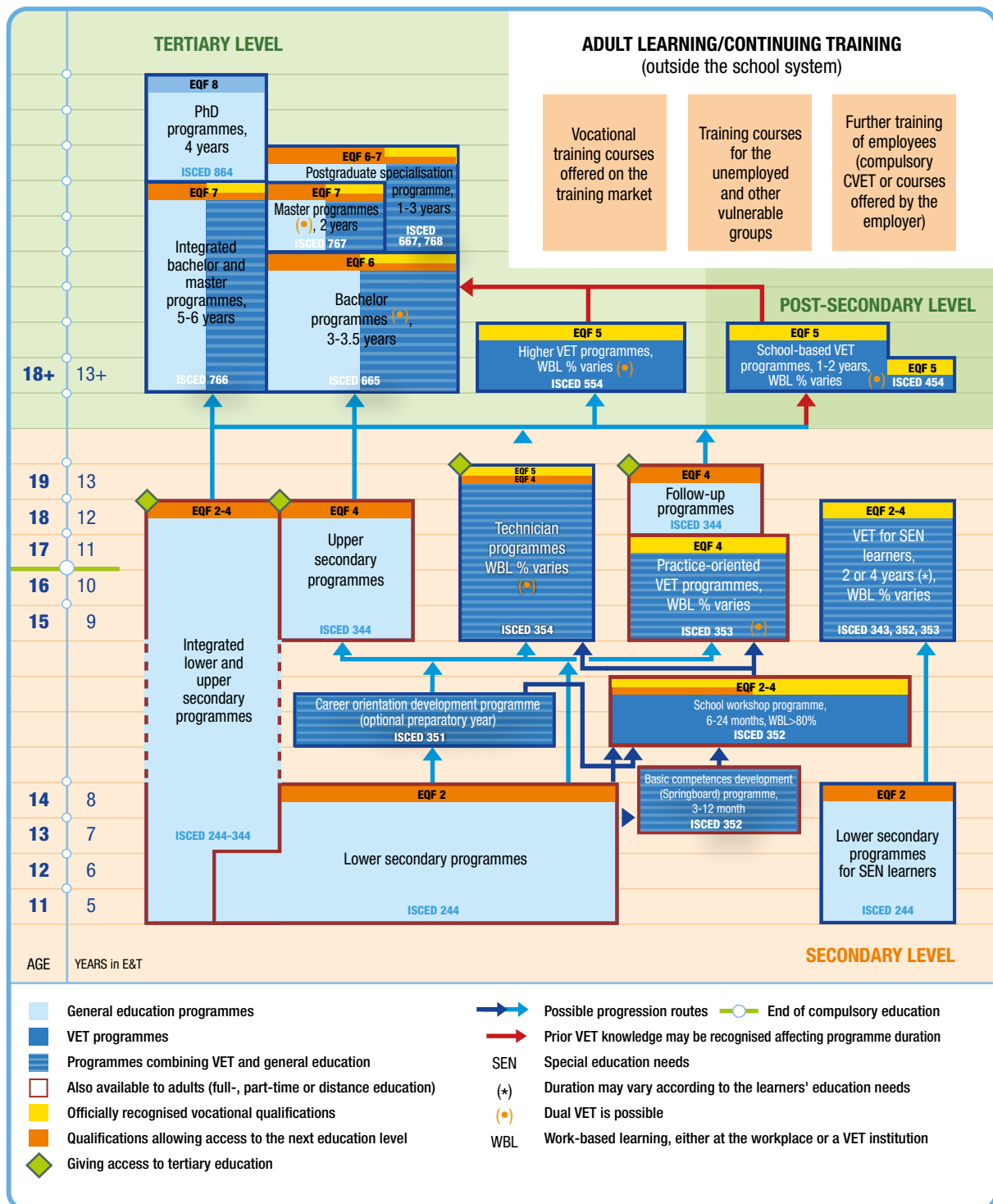
⁽¹⁸⁾ Act IV of 1991 on the promotion of employment and provision for the unemployed.

⁽¹⁹⁾ [More information on Hungary's RRP.](#)

CHAPTER 2. VET provision



Figure 9. Vocational Education and Training System Chart: Hungary



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & IKK Innovative Training Support Centre Private Limited Company (IKK Plc.) and Ministry for Culture and Innovation. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Hungary: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/hungary-u3>.

2.1. Education and training system overview

Participation in education (kindergarten and school) in Hungary is compulsory from age 3 until the end of the school year in which the student turns 16. Compulsory school education starts at the age of 6 (or 7) ⁽²⁰⁾.

Hungarian terminology distinguishes between education and training: education refers to school-based programmes, while training programmes are offered outside the formal school system (Section 2.2).

Free and universal access to education and training is ensured until the attainment of all the following:

- (a) upper secondary school leaving certificate (*matura* certificate) obtained either in general or vocational upper secondary education
- (b) first two vocational qualifications offered by the formal school system ⁽²¹⁾
- (c) first (short-cycle) vocational qualification in the framework of adult training ⁽²²⁾

Extra advantages are provided for special education needs (SEN) learners and students from disadvantaged backgrounds to support their participation ⁽²³⁾.

The Hungarian education system comprises the following levels:

- (a) pre-primary education (ISCED level 0);
- (b) integrated primary (ISCED level 1) and lower secondary (ISCED level 2) general education, hereafter basic education;
- (c) integrated lower secondary (ISCED level 2) and upper secondary (ISCED level 3) general education;
- (d) upper secondary general education (ISCED level 3);
- (e) upper secondary vocational education (ISCED level 3);
- (f) post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED levels 4-5);
- (g) tertiary education (ISCED levels 6-8).

The first institution for children is the crèche (*bölcsőde*), which is part of the basic child welfare care system, not public education. It offers day care, specialist care, and education for children aged 20 weeks to 3 years.

Pre-primary education (ISCED 0) is compulsory and provides institutional education in kindergarten (*óvoda*) from age 3 to 6 (or 7) ⁽²⁴⁾.

Basic education (ISCED 2) is provided in 8-year basic schools (*általános iskola*), offering integrated primary (ISCED 1) and lower secondary (ISCED 2) general education within a unified structure for ages 6 (or 7) to 14 (or 15). To move on to upper secondary education, learners must complete the programme and obtain the basic school certificate. Students can continue in an upper secondary institution, where they can opt for either a general, or a vocational pathway.

⁽²⁰⁾ Children become subject to compulsory education in the year they turn 6 years old by August 31. If they do not reach the required age by this date, they can start school the following year.

⁽²¹⁾ [Act CXC of 2011 on national public education](#) and [Act LXXX of 2019 on VET](#). These acts regulate the specific conditions for the free attainment (e.g. maximum duration spent in education).

⁽²²⁾ These qualifications are offered by adult training providers under the [Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult training](#), including formal VET institutions. Attaining one such qualification is free of charge if students enrol at State-maintained VET schools or schools that have a cooperation agreement with the State.

⁽²³⁾ Refer to the relevant provisions in [Act CXC of 2011 on national public education](#) and [Act LXXX of 2019 on VET](#) for details on the regulations ensuring these advantages for learners.

⁽²⁴⁾ Attendance is compulsory from the September following a child's third birthday until reaching the compulsory school entry age. However, exemptions can be applied for and granted up until the child reaches the age of 5.

The admission process to upper secondary schools in Hungary includes a centralised written test in Hungarian literature and grammar and mathematics, a possible oral examination organised by the upper secondary school, and a consideration of previous learner performance. All students (whether applying to general or vocational upper secondary schools) take the same written exam based on the basic school curriculum in the 8th grade (or earlier for the 6- and 8-year upper secondary general education programmes). Some schools admit students without entrance exams to attract learners ⁽²⁵⁾.

Upper secondary general education (ISCED 3) is provided by upper secondary grammar schools (*gimnázium*), and typically lasts 4 years (or 1+4, where students complete an additional language preparatory year before starting the 4-year curriculum). These programmes cover grades 9 to 12 for ages 14 (or 15) to 18 (or 19). Alternatively, there are 6- and 8-year integrated lower (ISCED 2) and upper secondary (ISCED 3) general education programmes (*6 osztályos és 8 osztályos gimnázium*), but in this case, students leave basic schools earlier.

At the end of upper secondary general education students take the *matura*/upper secondary school leaving examination (*érettségi vizsga*). This examination also serves as an admission test for higher education institutions.

Upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 3) is accessible at age 14 (or 15) after the completion of basic education and offers two main pathways.

- (a) 5-year ISCED 354 technician programmes prepare students for both the *matura*/upper secondary school leaving examination and an EQF level 5 vocational qualification (such as chemical technician) over grades 9-13, enabling them to either pursue higher education or enter the labour market. This programme combines two former programmes from before the 2019 VET reform: a 4-year upper secondary VET programme and an optional post-secondary programme for vocational qualifications. Previously, students often completed the 4-year VET programme with only an upper secondary school leaving certificate and no vocational qualification. The reform merged these programmes into a single 5-year course, now offered by *technikum schools* ⁽²⁶⁾.
- (b) 3-year ISCED 353 practice-oriented VET programmes at *szakképző iskola* schools lead to an EQF level 4 vocational qualification (such as carpenter or cook). Graduates can pursue further education through a 2-year ISCED 344 general education follow-up programme within the upper secondary VET framework to obtain the *matura* certificate.

The vocational qualifications provided by the school-based VET system are listed in the national register of vocational qualifications (nationally known as the Register of vocational occupations, *Szakmajegyzék*). These qualifications can only be offered by the school-based VET system (see Section 2.2.1).

Both the 5-year and the 3-year VET programmes consist of two phases: sectoral basic education (*ágazati alapoktatás*) and vocational specialised education (*szakirányú oktatás*). The first phase focuses on building foundational professional skills and key competences essential for various sectors of the economy and forms the basis for lifelong learning. Conducted within school facilities, this phase ends with a sectoral basic exam, granting access to vocational specialised education. During their specialised education, students prepare for the specific

⁽²⁵⁾ More information on the secondary admission procedure is available on the website of the Education Office.

⁽²⁶⁾ Programmes in three fields - art, pedagogy, and public cultural education – remained under the former institution system and are still offered by vocational grammar schools (*szakgimnázium*). These programmes have also been extended to 5 years (grades 9 to 13), but they are not called technician programmes and fall outside the national VET framework. They are governed by the provisions outlined in the Act CXC of 2011 on national public education.

vocational qualification they have chosen within the sector (Section 2.2.1.1) ⁽²⁷⁾.

Work-based learning is an important part of school-based VET programmes. Whenever possible, it is provided through dual VET, allowing students to gain practical experience in real work environments. Students participate in dual VET with vocational employment contracts during vocational specialised education (Section 2.2.1.3). Those who cannot find a company placement, complete their practical training within school facilities.

In addition to the two main VET programme types, flexible programmes at ISCED levels 2-3 within upper secondary VET offer alternative learning pathways for students who find traditional methods challenging (Section 2.2.1.2). These include the Career orientation development programme (*orientációs évfolyam*, ISCED 351), where learners explore different professions during an optional preparatory year. The Springboard (*dobbantó*) programme (ISCED 352) allows entry to upper secondary VET for those over 15 without a lower secondary certificate, facilitating progression to the School workshop programme (*műhelyiskola*, ISCED 352) to obtain a partial qualification at EQF levels 2-4 (see Section 3.2.3 for a description of partial qualifications).

Vocational programmes tailored for learners with special education needs (SEN) are available at ISCED level 3 and typically last 2-4 years (Section 2.2.1.2).

The share of VET learners at the upper secondary level increased from 23% in 2017 to 52.9% in 2022, representing an almost 30 percentage point increase during this period. The 2022 value is 3.9 percentage points above the EU-27 average of 49.0% (Table 1, Figure 10).

Table 1. Share of learners in VET by level

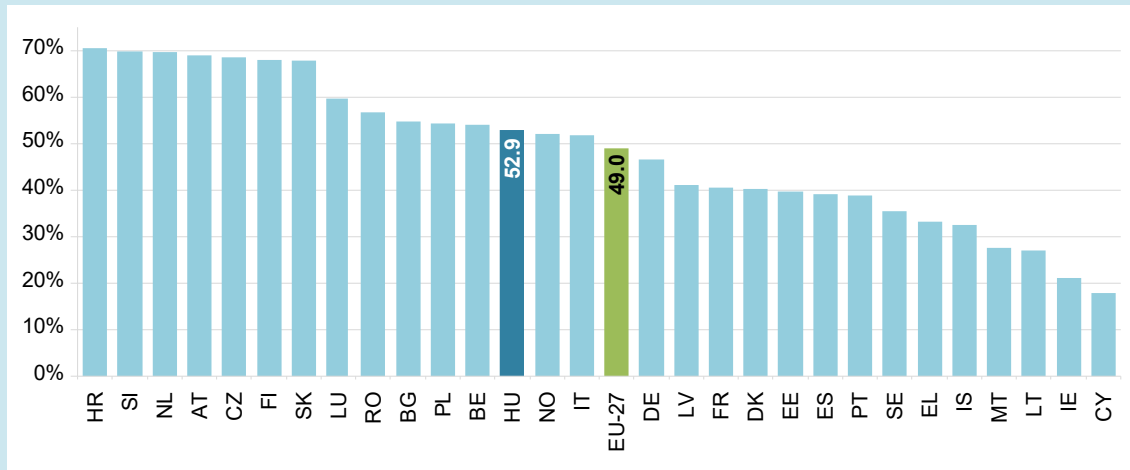
	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary
2017	0.2%	23%	100.0%
2022	:	52.9%	100.0%
Change 2017-22	:	29.9 pp	0 pp

NB: There is no VET programme in lower secondary education in Hungary, and the 0.2% share of learners in VET in lower secondary education in 2017 is a statistical value.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted on 17.5.2024] Special value: : - not available.

⁽²⁷⁾ 5-year VET programmes in three fields (art, pedagogy, and public cultural education) that remained under the governance of the Act on National Public Education do not follow this two-phase structure.

Figure 10. Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper-secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2022 (%)

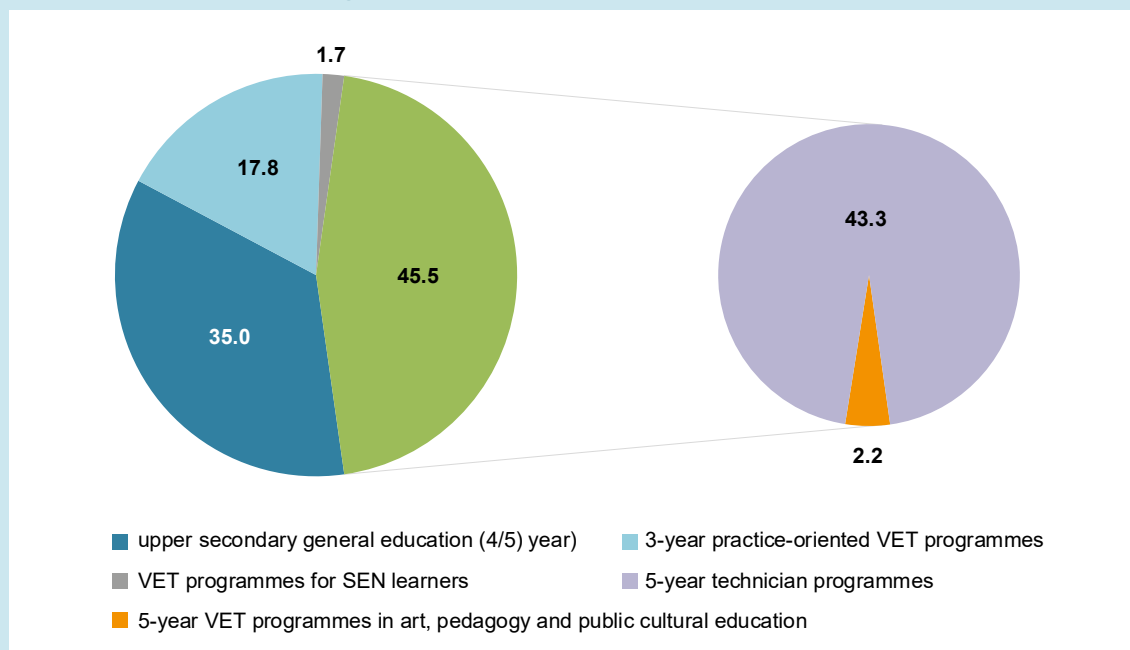


NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uae_ens04 [extracted on 17.5.2024].

In the 2023/24 school year, a total of 78 277 learners were admitted to grade 9 in upper secondary education, including both general and vocational tracks. Of these 35% were admitted to upper secondary general schools, 45.5% to 5-year VET programmes, 17.8% to 3-year practice-oriented VET programmes and 1.7% to schools for SEN learners (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Share of students admitted to grade 9 of various upper secondary education programmes in 2023/24 (%)



Source: Figure prepared by Cedefop based on data published in: *Oktatási Hivatal: Középfokú felvételi eljárás a 2023/2024. tanévben* (Education Authority: Secondary school admission procedure for the academic year 2023/2024 [published PowerPoint presentation accessed on: 22/06/2024].

Holders of the *matura* certificate can enrol in the following post-secondary non-tertiary programmes:

ISCED 454 technician programmes are offered by technikum schools and focus only on the vocational content of the 5-year upper-secondary VET programmes, omitting the general education content. They usually last 2 years but can be shorter in adult education (Table 2). They provide an EQF level 5 vocational qualification, which can earn extra points for university admission if they apply for a bachelor programme in the same field (Section 2.2.1.1.)

ISCED 554 higher VET programmes (*felsőoktatási szakképzés*) are offered by higher education institutions. Graduates receive a certificate at EQF level 5 (such as business informatics specialist) and can transfer credits to a bachelor programme in the same field. To obtain such qualifications, a minimum of 120 credits must be acquired. The number of credits that may count towards a bachelor degree in the same field ranges from 30 to 90. The training lasts at least 4 semesters.

The Hungarian VET framework allows adults to join school-based VET programmes. Adults up to 25 can participate in regular full-time vocational education (upper and post-secondary) with student status. For those over the compulsory schooling age of 16, flexible learning options with shorter durations are available under adult status. Students between 16 and 25 can choose their legal status. Student status entitles students to scholarships (see Section 4.1.1), while adult status provides more flexibility, helping students balance education with work.

Professional tertiary programmes at EQF levels 6-7 lead to a diploma and a professional qualification, including bachelor, master and postgraduate specialisation programmes. They are designed to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, preparing students for specialised professions (such as engineers, health care professionals, IT professionals) and immediate entry into the workforce.

VET also extends beyond the formal school system to adult training programmes provided by various training providers (which may include formal VET schools, see Section 2.2.2). Adult training aims to complement the school-based system with short-cycle programmes responsive to labour market needs. These programmes can lead to State-recognised vocational qualifications. However, these are not included in the national register of vocational qualifications but are catalogued separately. Participation in training programmes is mostly voluntary, but some, like teacher continuing professional development, are mandatory (Section 2.5.2).

Table 2 summarises the participation options of adults in vocational education and training:

Table 2. Summary of participation options for adults in vocational education and training in Hungary

VET type	Learning form	Age requirement	EQF levels	Governing regulation
Upper secondary VET	Regular full-time (student status)	up to the age of 25 (young adults)	EQF levels 4-5 vocational qualifications EQF levels 2-4 partial vocational qualifications	2019 Act on VET 2011 Act on national public education
	Flexible learning forms (adult status)	Beyond the compulsory schooling age (16)		
Post-secondary school-based VET	Regular full-time (student status)	up to the age of 25 (young adults)	EQF 5	2019 Act on VET 2011 Act on national public education
	Flexible learning forms (adult status)	Beyond the compulsory schooling age (16)		
Post-secondary higher VET	Full-time/ part- time / distance learning	No specific age requirements	EQF 5	2011 Act on national higher education

VET type	Learning form	Age requirement	EQF levels	Governing regulation
Adult training	Flexible according to the training contract	No specific age requirements	Adult training programmes based on programme requirements are referenced to the EQF, while others are not	2013 Act on adult training

2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

Hungary's VET policy is guided by the [VET 4.0 Strategy](#) ⁽²⁸⁾. Originally endorsed by the government in 2019 and revised in 2023, it aims to modernise VET for the young and adults. The 2019 Act on VET, rooted in this strategy, has significantly reformed Hungary's vocational education and training system. Key changes include the legal and administrative separation of VET from general education, with the aim of establishing an independent pillar that collaborates more closely with the economy (Section 2.3.1). This includes a distinct legal status for VET teachers, leading to specific regulations governing aspects such as salaries and continuous professional development (CPD) (Section 2.5). The reforms have replaced the previous apprenticeship system with a dual training system enabling students to acquire the entirety of the vocational specialised content within companies. Vocational employment contracts, replacing apprenticeship contracts, now include remuneration for learners (Section 2.2.1.3). A scholarship scheme for VET learners has also been introduced (Section 4.1.1).

The strategy and corresponding national legislation ⁽²⁹⁾ distinguish between vocational education and vocational training.

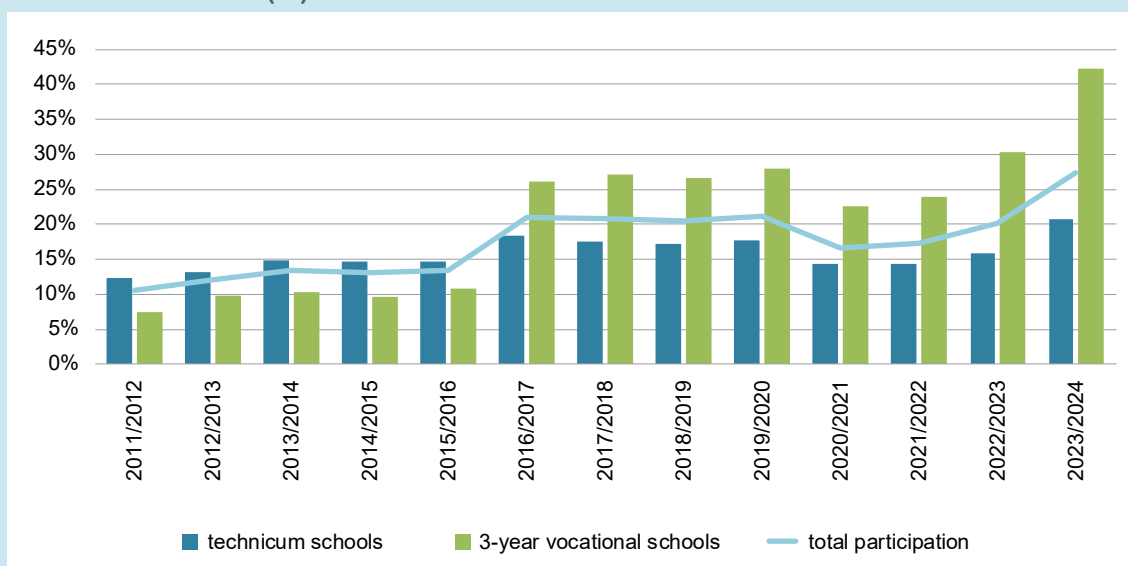
Vocational education (*szakmai oktatás*) in the national context refers to school-based VET, provided through formal IVET or school-based vocational adult education. The vocational qualifications offered by the school-based VET system are listed in the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*). These qualifications can only be offered by the school-based VET system (Section 2.2.1). Vocational training (*szakmai képzés*) is offered by adult training providers and is designed to adapt to the rapidly changing job market. These specialised training programmes are flexible, industry-driven, and continuously updated to meet labour market needs. Adult training programmes leading to State-recognised vocational qualifications are listed in a separate catalogue from the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*). The catalogue of adult training programmes can be expanded with new qualifications if any actor identifies a market need for a new training programme and follows the authorisation process (Section 2.2.2).

Since 2015, when the opportunity to obtain a second vocational qualification free of charge was introduced, and since 2020, when qualifications listed in the national register of vocational qualifications became accessible exclusively through school-based VET, there has been a significant increase in the number and share of adults participating in these programmes. Figure 12 shows that overall, the total share of adults in school-based VET has roughly tripled since 2011, driven primarily by the substantial increase in participation in 3-year practice-oriented VET programmes. As a result, adult participation in formal vocational education is a considerable part of the school-based VET system (Figure 13).

⁽²⁸⁾ Government Decision 1168/2019 on the strategy VET 4.0.

⁽²⁹⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET, Act LXXVII of 2013 on the adult training, Government Decree 11/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on adult training.

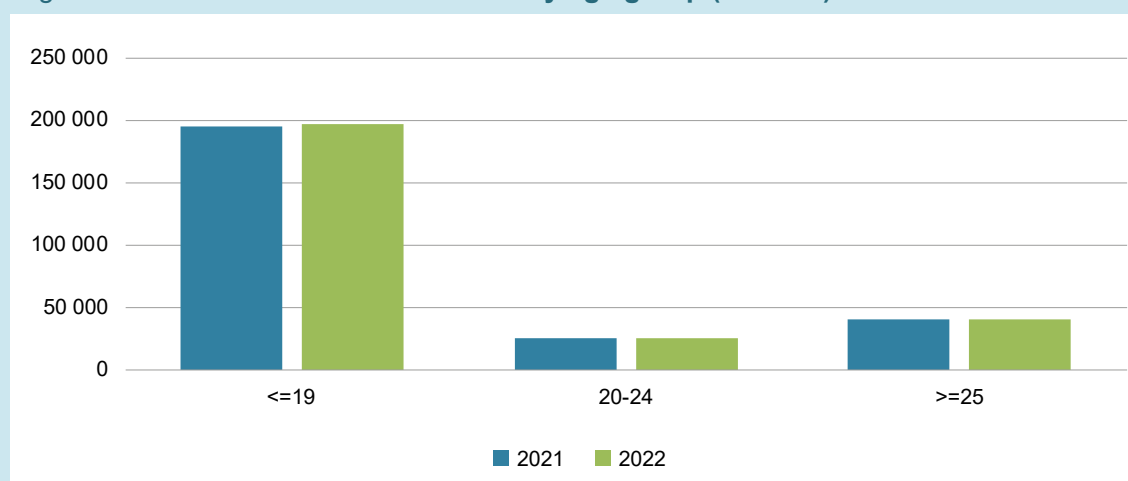
Figure 12. Share of learners in school-based vocational adult education (*), 2011-24 (%)



NB: (*) Titles of VET schools in use as of 2020/21.

Source: KSH, STADAT database, https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/hu/okt0015.html; https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/hu/okt0013.html.

Figure 13. School-based VET learners by age group (2021-22)



Source: OSAP, National Office for Vocational Education and Training.

2.2.1. School-based VET programmes

As of July 2024, the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*) includes 180 vocational qualifications, known nationally as basic qualifications (*alapszakma*). These qualifications can only be offered through school-based VET programmes. They are aligned with the Hungarian qualifications framework (HuQF) and the European qualifications framework (EQF), with the corresponding levels described in the programme and outcome requirements (*Képzési és Kimeneti Követelmények, KKK*) ⁽³⁰⁾.

⁽³⁰⁾ However, the partial qualifications specified in the Programme and outcome requirements of basic vocational qualifications are attainable both in formal VET institutions and through adult training providers (outside the formal school system).

School-based VET offers the following options for learners:

- (a) core VET programmes;
- (b) special support mechanism programmes.

2.2.1.1. Core VET programmes

The 2019 VET Act in Hungary outlines the types of institution that can operate under this framework and the programmes they can offer. The act establishes two types of VET institution: technicums (*technikum*) and vocational schools (*szakképző iskola*). These schools provide the following core VET programmes to students.

Technician programmes (*technikumi oktatás*)

These are ISCED 354, 5-year, theory-focused VET programmes leading to the *matura* certificate and an EQF level 5 vocational qualification

Technician programmes span 5 years, from grades 9 to 13, and are offered by technicums. Some vocational qualifications extend to 6 years, and technician programmes can also include an additional preparatory year for foreign language study. In the 2023/24 school year, 488 schools offered technician programmes ⁽³¹⁾.

Enrolment is possible after completing 8 years of basic education (ending at lower secondary level) at age 14 (or 15 for students born after 31 August). Technicums, particularly those in high demand, commonly use entrance exams for admissions (see Section 2.1 on the admission process). Graduates of the school workshop programme (Section 2.2.1.2) can enter these programmes as well. Enrolment is also available for young people over 16 and adults (see Section 2.1).

In technician programmes, the curriculum combines general and vocational education, with general education comprising 60% of the programme. This general education covers a broad range of subjects to prepare learners for the *matura* exam and entry into tertiary education. Over grades 9 to 13, the curriculum gradually shifts focus from general education to vocational and dual training, culminating in the technician and *matura* exams (Table 3).

Table 3. **Recommended distribution of hours between general education and vocational subjects in technician programmes**

Technician programmes: recommended distribution of hours		grades				
		9	10	11	12	13
Total number of hours for general education subjects per week		27	25	20	20	4
Total number of hours for vocational subjects per week	Vocational basic education	7	9	0	0	0
	Vocational specialised education	0	0	14	14	24
Flexible scheduling by schools for general education and/or vocational subjects (for hours they can decide)						6
Total available hours/week		34	34	34	34	34

Source: Sample weekly timetable for the preparation of the education programme of VET institutions, for the allocation of subjects, and for the creation of timetables at local level (Heti óraterv minta a szakképző intézmény oktatási programjának elkészítéséhez, a tantárgyfelosztáshoz, valamint az órendek helyi szintű létrehozásához) published at the IKK website.

⁽³¹⁾ SZIR-STAT as of 1.10.2023.

Following the 2019 VET reform, starting from the 2020/21 school year, learners take the *matura* exam upon completing the 5-year programme ⁽³²⁾. This differs from the *matura* exam conducted in upper secondary grammar schools in that, alongside the four mandatory general education exam subjects (Hungarian language and literature, mathematics, history and a foreign language), the fifth optional exam subject in VET is replaced by the mandatory vocational exam. General education exams can be taken 1 or 2 years before completing studies, while the vocational examination, serving as the fifth *matura* exam subject, is conducted at the end of grade 13. Despite these differences, the *matura* obtained in technician programmes is equivalent in academic worth and progression opportunities to the *matura* obtained in general upper secondary education.

The vocational curriculum in these programmes is structured into two phases: sectoral basic education and vocational specialised education. When enrolling in technicums, students first choose the sector, rather than a specific qualification. Sectoral basic education covers content specific to the chosen economic sector and takes place during grades 9 and 10. This allows learners to explore different jobs within the sector before deciding on a specialisation. At the end of grade 10, learners take a sectoral basic exam. Passing this exam allows them to move on to vocational specialised education in grades 11 to 13, where they focus on the specific skills and knowledge needed for their chosen qualification. For example, learners who start in grade 9 in the tourism and hospitality sector will study the common sectoral content as part of their sectoral basic education. After passing the sectoral basic exam, they can specialise in EQF 5 vocational qualifications such as cook-technician, baker-technician, tourism-technician or waiter-technician).

Specialised vocational education is preferably provided by companies through dual training. Registered dual training providers can employ students under vocational employment contracts (*szakképzési munkaszerződés*) during grades 11 to 13. If dual training is not possible, practical training is provided in school facilities (see Section 2.2.1.3 for more on dual VET).

The final vocational examination assesses learners' competences through various interactive and project-based exam activities, defined in the programme, and outcome requirements (*képzési és kimeneti követelmények*) of vocational qualifications. These exam activities are standardised and conducted by accredited examination centres that operate independently from the education and training activities. Examples of the EQF 5 technician qualifications include logistics technician, building construction technician, or wine and champagne production technician.

Upon completion of the programme, graduates obtaining the *matura* / upper secondary school leaving certificate (*érettségi bizonyítvány*) and an EQF level 5 vocational qualification can pursue the following options:

- (a) enrol in additional VET programmes, either school-based vocational education or vocational training offered outside the formal school system (Section 2.1);
- (b) Advance to bachelor degree programmes in higher education (ISCED 665/EQF6), where they can have their admission points calculated based on the results of their vocational exam if it is at least a grade 4, and may also receive extra points if they apply for the same field as their vocational qualification; for example, a tourism technician qualification will give its holder these advantages if they apply for any field in tourism and catering;
- (c) enter the labour market.

⁽³²⁾ In the previous system, before the 2019 VET reform, the predecessors of technicums were called vocational grammar schools. These schools prepared students for the *matura* examination over 4 years and offered an optional additional year for the vocational examination necessary to obtain the vocational qualification. In the reformed (and also renamed) technician programmes, the duration has been increased to 5 years, ensuring that learners obtain both the *matura* certificate and the vocational qualification at the end of the 5th year, thereby eliminating the possibility of students leaving after 4 years with only the *matura* exam but without the VET qualification.

Certified technician programme ⁽³³⁾

The certified technician programme, a specialised track within the technician programme, offers high-performing students an advanced path. It includes extra content designed to prepare students for tertiary education. Initially launched in pilot schools during the 2021/22 school year, the programme has expanded to 97 technicums across 36 VET centres in the 2023/24 school year (see Section 2.3.2 on the role of VET centres). 24 universities participate in implementing the programme, focusing on sectors such as engineering, information technology, and economics.

The duration of training mirrors that of traditional technician programmes (5 or 6 years). Local curricula are jointly developed by technicums, higher education institutions, and companies offering dual VET under cooperation agreements (see Section 2.2.1.3 on dual VET). These local curricula are delivered in the final 3 years of the 5-year technician programme during the specialised vocational education phase.

Benefits for students include:

- (a) advantages in university admissions;
- (b) potential credit recognition ⁽³⁴⁾;
- (c) students can continue their higher education dual training with the same company where they completed their upper secondary dual training, due to the cooperation with dual training providers in the programme;
- (d) use of the title 'certified technician' (which does not represent a higher level of qualification but may be more valued by the labour market).

Students can join through various entry points:

- (a) during the upper secondary admission process; in this case, students have a guaranteed spot in the programme from grade 9 (with the first 2 years studying the same sectoral basics as non-certified classes);
- (b) after completing sectoral basic education, depending on available spaces and learner performance;
- (c) from the 2023/24 school year, the certified technician programme is also available as a 2-year post-secondary course after the *matura* (Section 2.1).

Although graduates of regular technician programmes have access to higher education, the certified technician programme further facilitates this progression, emphasises a connection between academic learning and real-world industry needs, and contributes to the permeability of the VET system (Cedefop (2024)).

5-year VET programmes under the Act on national public education

While most 5-year, ISCED 354 theory-focused VET programmes are offered by technicums under the VET Act, programmes in three fields - art, pedagogy, and public cultural education - are provided by vocational grammar schools (*szakgimnázium*). These programmes operate outside the national VET framework and are regulated by the Act on national public education (see Section 2.3.2 for an explanation of why these programmes fall outside the VET framework).

Practice-oriented VET programmes (*szakképző iskolai oktatás*)

These are ISCED 353, 3-year, practice-oriented VET programmes, leading to an EQF 4 vocational qualification. They are offered by vocational schools (*szakképző iskola*) for students in grades 9 to

⁽³³⁾ More details on the programme are available at the [IKK website](#).

⁽³⁴⁾ Up to 30 credits can be recognised at the university (thus shortening the duration of higher education studies). The conditions for recognition and the duration of higher education studies are set out in the cooperation agreement between the technicum and the higher education institution.

11. In the 2023/24 school year, 370 schools provided these programmes ⁽³⁵⁾. These programmes combine general and vocational education, with general subjects making up approximately one third of the curriculum (Table 4). However, they do not prepare for the *matura* exam.

Table 4. Recommended distribution of hours between general education and vocational subjects in short VET programmes

3-year practice-oriented VET programmes: recommended distribution of hours		grades		
		9	10	11
Total number of hours for general education subjects per week		17	7	7
Total number of hours for vocational subjects per week	Vocational basic education	16	0	0
	Vocational specialised education	0	25	25
Flexible scheduling by schools (for hours they can decide)		1	2	2
Total available hours/week		34	34	34

Source: Sample weekly timetable for the preparation of the educational programme of VET institutions, for the allocation of subjects, and for the creation of timetables at local level (Heti óratervezés mintá a szakképző intézmény oktatási programjának elkészítéséhez, a tantárgyfelosztáshoz, valamint az órarendek helyi szintű létrehozásához) published at the IKK website.

Enrolment is possible after completing 8 years of basic education (ending at lower secondary level) at age 14 (or 15 for students born after 31 August). Vocational schools usually accept students without requiring admission tests to attract learners (Section 2.1 on the admission process). Graduates of the school workshop programme (Section 2.2.1.2) can enter these programmes as well. Enrolment is also available for young people over 16 and adults (see Section 2.1).

Short VET programmes were reformed in 2019 effective from the 2020/21 school year to modernise their curricula and improve alignment with labour market needs. As in technician programmes, the vocational curriculum in short VET programmes is structured into two phases: sectoral basic education and vocational specialised education. Sectoral basic education takes place during grade 9 and covers sector-specific content within the same economic sector. After completing basic sectoral education, students can move between technician and short VET tracks without needing to take any vocational aptitude test.

Vocational specialised education in grades 10-11 focuses on developing the specific skills and knowledge required for the chosen qualification. This phase is preferably provided by companies through dual training. Companies authorised for dual training can hire students through vocational employment contracts (*szakképzési munkaszerződés*) during these grades. If dual training is not possible, practical training is provided in school facilities (see Section 2.2.1.3 for more on dual VET)

The final vocational examination assesses learners' competences through various interactive and project-based exam activities defined in the programme and outcome requirements (*képzési és kimeneti követelmények*). These exam activities are standardised and conducted by accredited examination centres that operate independently from the education and training activities.

Upon completion of the programme, graduates obtain an EQF level 4 vocational qualification (such as carpenter, cook, or CNC programmer) and can pursue the following options:

- (a) further their education by enrolling in a 2-year follow-up general education programme at a technicum to obtain the *matura* certificate through part-time (evening or distance) learning options allowing access to higher-level studies at post-secondary/higher VET and/or higher education (see also Section 2.1);

⁽³⁵⁾ SZIR-STAT as of 1.10.2023.

- (b) enrol in an additional school-based practice-oriented VET programme for another vocational qualification at EQF level 4 or enrol in adult training programmes (see Section 2.2.2 for more on adult training programmes);
- (c) enter the labour market performing the positions available within the obtained qualification.

2.2.1.2. *Special support mechanism programmes*

- (a) Flexible learning pathways: for learners at risk of dropping out (or who have already dropped out of the traditional education system), the VET Act of 2019 introduced three flexible learning pathways within upper secondary VET.
 - (i) Career orientation development programme (*orientációs fejlesztés, ISCED 351*): this is an optional preparatory year in upper secondary VET focusing on career orientation development. In the 2023/24 school year, 27 schools provided these programmes ⁽³⁶⁾. It targets primary school graduates who are either uncertain about which VET programme to pursue or those who lack basic and key competences after completing basic education. The aim of the orientation programme is not to replicate the primary school curriculum but to provide personalised development based on an assessment of the student's competences, deepen self-awareness, and offer career orientation and guidance. The programme gives students exposure to various VET professions throughout the year through project-based learning, including job shadowing and company visits. Competence development is achieved within the framework of these complex projects rather than through standalone subjects. This approach allows students to explore different career pathways before committing to a specific qualification. Progression to vocational programmes (such as 3-year practice-oriented VET programmes, 5-year technician programmes, or school workshop programmes) is possible without additional admission tests at the end of the year if students continue their studies within the same school.
 - (ii) A basic competences development programme called the springboard programme (*dobbantó program, ISCED 352*), offers opportunities for individuals aged 15 ⁽³⁷⁾ and older. On 1 October 2023, 61 schools provided these programmes ⁽³⁸⁾. Upon completion, the programme allows entry into the school workshop programme (see description below) within upper secondary VET without requiring a lower secondary education certificate. The springboard programme is of flexible duration, tailored to the individual needs of learners. This programme is designed specifically for individuals, who may struggle with behavioural and learning disorders, have dropped out of basic education or are at risk of doing so. Its aim is to reintegrate them into the education and training system. Like the career orientation preparatory programme, the springboard programme builds on complex projects and competence development, incorporating informal and non-formal learning and alternative education environment. The programme empowers participants to find the most suitable path to return either to the school system or to the world of work and to progress toward a successful individual career.
 - (iii) The school workshop programme (*műhelyiskola, ISCED 352*) prepares students for obtaining an EQF level 2-4 partial vocational qualification (see Section 3.2.3 for partial vocational qualifications). As of 1 October 2023, 75 schools provided these programmes, which are conducted in school workshops or companies ⁽³⁹⁾ with small groups of no more than five students. The programme lasts between 6 and 24 months, depending on each

⁽³⁶⁾ SZIR-STAT as of 1.10.2023.

⁽³⁷⁾ Who has turned 15 by the last day of the previous school year.

⁽³⁸⁾ SZIR-STAT as of 1.10.2023.

⁽³⁹⁾ However, this is not considered dual VET, as students in school workshop programmes do not take the sectoral basic exam, which is a prerequisite for starting specialised vocational education and entering dual training.

student's progress. The curriculum is tailored to focus solely on the skills and knowledge relevant to the specific partial qualifications pursued by students guided by VET teachers. There are no general subjects: instead, the programme develops the competences needed for the partial vocational qualification based on individual needs (e.g. counting skills). Students benefit from mentorship provided by teachers, who dedicate up to 1 day a week for support and guidance. This programme is open to individuals who have not completed their basic (integrated primary and lower secondary) education, but have completed the Springboard programme, as well as those who have finished their basic education and are over age 16. The programme features alternative teaching methods, avoiding traditional classroom instruction. Vocational theory is introduced through practical tasks in school workshops.

- (b) Vocational programmes for learners with special education needs: these programmes are regulated by the Act on national public education instead of the VET Act. They are provided by 2- to 4-year vocational schools for SEN learners (*szakiskola*, ISCED 353) and are designed for students who cannot progress alongside their peers due to unique educational requirements. The focus is on special education development, therefore these programmes were not removed from the jurisdiction of general education regulations during the VET reform (Section 2.2). The schools offer qualifications or partial qualifications (see Section 3.2.3 for more on partial qualifications) with special framework curricula tailored to the needs of students with specific disabilities (e.g. hearing, vision, movement, or mild intellectual disabilities). These programmes combine general and vocational content to provide comprehensive education and training. Additionally, ISCED 343 4-year skills development programmes (offered by *készségfejlesztő iskola*) prepare students with moderate intellectual disabilities for starting life and acquiring simple work processes that enable employment. These programmes also combine general and vocational content.

2.2.1.3. Dual VET

VET policy in Hungary aims to equip students with modern and competitive knowledge. Dual training, which combines school-based education with practical experience at companies, is a key component of this strategy. Introduced by the VET Act of 2019, effective from 1 January 2020, dual training ensures that teaching at schools and companies complement each other.

Phases of vocational education

Vocational education in Hungary consists of two phases: sectoral basic education and vocational specialised education:

- (a) in 5-year upper-secondary technician programmes, sectoral basic education occurs in the first 2 years;
- (b) in 3-year short VET programmes, it is in the first year;
- (c) in 2-year post-secondary technician programmes, which require a secondary school leaving certificate (*matura*) as a prerequisite, it occurs in the first semester.

During the sectoral basic education phase, students cannot participate in dual VET, this phase must be completed within school settings (see also Section 2.2.1.1) to prepare students for specialisation. However, students can enter a VET pre-contract with a dual training provider, committing to continue their education with a vocational employment contract during their vocational specialised education.

Dual training in vocational specialised education

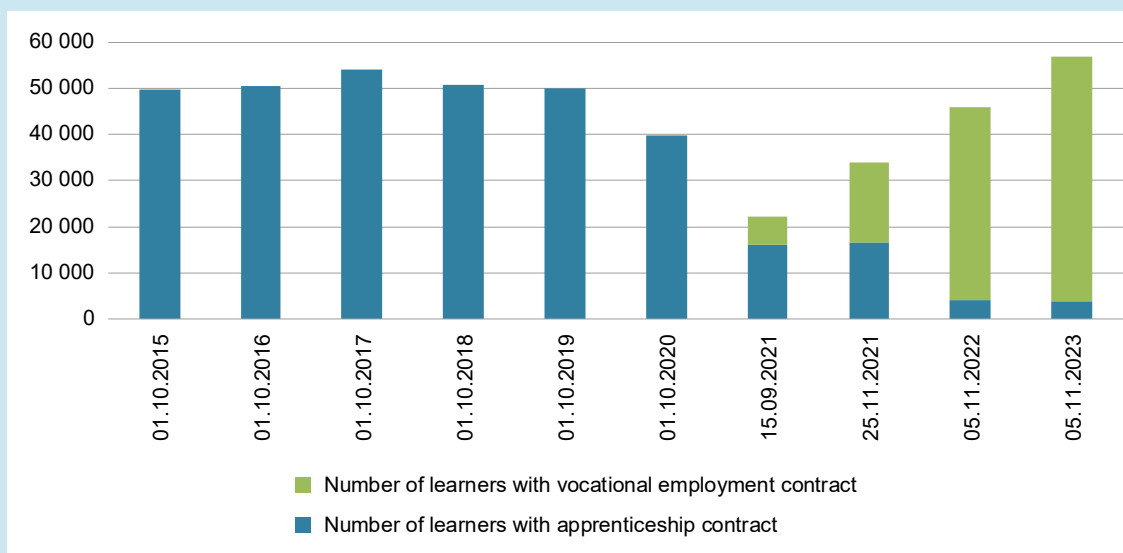
Dual training can be conducted:

- in grades 11-13 of technicum;
- in grades 10-11 of short VET programmes;
- from the second semester of 2-year post-secondary technician programmes after passing the sectoral basic exam ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Vocational specialised education can also take place at the school, but only if participation at a dual training location was not possible.

Dual training was gradually implemented, starting in September 2021, for new VET entrants. Those who were already enrolled before the reform (Section 2.2) completed their studies under the apprenticeship model. See Figure 14 for the total number of learners contracted with companies between 2015-23.

Figure 14. Number of learners in dual VET and former apprenticeship programme



NB: The number of learners engaged in dual training fluctuates continuously throughout the year.

Source: National Office for VET and Adult Learning, SZIR-STAT.

Differences from former apprenticeships

Before dual VET, Hungary operated an apprenticeship scheme. Dual VET in the Hungarian context differs as it involves vocational employment contracts, which provide wages for students and count as work experience for seniority calculations. These contracts can be converted into permanent employment by mutual agreement after the final vocational examination ⁽⁴¹⁾.

Benefits for the students include:

- learn the technology specific to their profession, become familiar with the technologies used in companies;
- gain work experience in a corporate setting, learn corporate culture, and improve job placement opportunities;
- receive remuneration (Section 4.1.1).

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Those who have previously obtained a partial qualification and wish to further their education to acquire a full vocational qualification within the same specialisation do not need to undergo a sectoral basic examination. Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

Benefits for the company include:

- (a) in the longer term, ensure the replacement of the work force;
- (b) in the short term, immediate workforce availability as students engage in production;
- (c) receives financial compensation (Section 4.2.1).

Coordination by economic chambers

Dual VET (like former apprenticeships) is coordinated by various chambers:

- (a) Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara*);
- (b) Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (*Nemzeti Agrárgazdasági Kamara*);
- (c) Chamber of Hungarian Healthcare Professionals (*Magyar Egészségügyi Szakdolgozói Kamara*).

These chambers authorise and register dual training placements, monitor compliance with training standards, including considerations such as group size limits, and assist VET students in obtaining practical training placements within companies.

Cooperation between schools and dual partners

Schools and dual partners create a joint professional programme and prepare students for the vocational exam. Before 2020, vocational theory and practice were separated in VET. The VET 4.0 strategy and the 2019 VET Act adopted a learning outcomes approach, removing the rigid separation of theory and practice.

There are two forms of cooperation for vocational specialised education:

- (a) the dual partner conducts the entire curriculum of vocational specialised education;
- (b) the dual partner delivers specific vocational units, but not the entire curriculum.

In both forms, the school maintains overall responsibility for ensuring the coherence and quality of the programme.

Vocational employment contracts can be:

- (a) for the entire period of vocational specialised education;
- (b) for shorter periods (2-12 weeks each time, up to twice a year, with a maximum of 12 weeks per year) ⁽⁴²⁾.

The Labour Code provisions apply to vocational employment contracts, with special provisions in the VET Act to protect students and adapt to the specifics of education.

Entities eligible for registration as dual training placements:

- (a) enterprises (including SMEs and large enterprises);
- (b) training centres;
- (c) budgetary organisations;
- (d) self-employed professionals;
- (e) small-scale farmers (eligible from 2023).

Training centres types defined by the 2019 VET Act

- (a) Knowledge centre: established by economic entities, a higher education institution, and a VET centre, with the latter two owning more than 51%. It implements dual training under both the Acts on VET and national higher education.

⁽⁴²⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

- (b) Company training centre: usually a large company with its own practical workshop conducting vocational specialised education independently or in collaboration with others.
- (c) Sectoral training centre (STC): facilitates cooperation among SMEs, large companies, and VET centres to meet dual placement standards. STCs are non-profit and handle training organisation, coordination, and administration, enjoying tax allowances.

By 1 July 2024, 65 STCs were registered. They reinvest results in training development and can extend operations to adult training, corporate training services, and production operations.

STC operational modes

- (a) STC as a training organiser handles operational tasks, coordination, and administration, while training occurs within member organisation infrastructure;
- (b) STC as a training provider directly provides practical training using its infrastructure and that of affiliated organisations.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the [European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop](#)

2.2.2. Adult training

Vocational qualifications awarded outside the school system are regulated by the adult training Act ⁽⁴³⁾ and the VET Act ⁽⁴⁴⁾. These laws ensure that adult training services are provided by institutions that have acquired the necessary permits. Vocational institutions such as technicums and vocational schools can also act as adult training providers in compliance with these regulations.

Adult training prepares individuals for specific jobs and work activities. It includes courses that build on school-based vocational qualifications, providing further specialisation. It also offers courses for qualifications not available through the school-based vocational system. These types of training programme typically have short training periods. The system is designed to be flexible, allowing it to adapt promptly to the labour market needs.

Qualifications achieved through adult training programmes are not listed in the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*). However, they are referenced to the HuQF and EQF levels based on their approved programme requirements (*Programkövetelmények, PK*), which are expressed in learning outcomes. These programme requirements define the curriculum and exam criteria for adult training qualifications. Upon completing an adult training programme, students receive a certificate confirming their success. To obtain a State-recognised qualification, students must also pass a final vocational exam at an accredited examination centre. From 1 July 2023, the legal framework allows students to request the Europass Supplement, which accompanies the qualification certificate.

Any actor can propose a new PK or suggest changes to an existing one. The catalogue of PKs is maintained by the minister responsible for VET and adult training and is [published on the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre website](#). The minister reviews the registered PKs annually. If a PK overlaps by 30% or more with the competences of a basic vocational qualification listed in the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*), it cannot be registered. This rule applies unless the PK aims to acquire a higher level of vocational competences or specific professional knowledge related to the qualification. As of 30 June 2024, a total of 601 programme requirements have been included in the catalogue. Each adult training provider develops their training programmes based on these PKs.

⁽⁴³⁾ Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult training, Government Decree 11/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on adult training.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

Other training options under the scope of the Adult Training Act include those that do not lead to a State-recognised exam or qualification, such as language courses, or teacher CPD courses. Participants receive a certificate as proof of successfully completing these courses.

Training providers must have a quality assurance system in place, including documentation on teachers' qualifications, competences, and continuing professional development (CPD). Although in-service training for instructors in adult training is not mandatory, providers typically offer further training for their full-time instructors on an occasional basis.

These programmes are usually fee-based. Funding for adult training programmes comes from multiple sources, including participant contributions, employer contributions, State budget allocations, and international assistance, primarily from the European Social Fund (ESF) (see also Section 4.1.2).

2.3. VET governance

2.3.1. Central governance

Since the enactment of the [2019 Act on VET](#), VET is legally and administratively separated from general education ⁽⁴⁵⁾, creating an independent facility for VET that collaborates more closely with the economy. While general education falls under the supervision of the minister responsible for education ⁽⁴⁶⁾, VET is overseen by the minister responsible for VET, currently part of the Ministry of Culture and Innovation (*Kulturális és Innovációs Minisztérium, KIM*). This separation started in 2015, when the maintenance of VET schools was transferred to the Ministry of National Economy, then to the newly established Ministry of Innovation and Technology in 2018. Since 2022 this responsibility has been under the successor Ministry of Culture and Innovation, which currently oversees VET, as well as adult training and higher education ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

The minister responsible for general education oversees the general education content taught in VET schools and develops the framework curricula for them. Within VET governance, other ministries oversee qualifications within their respective sectors. For example, qualification requirements for agricultural training are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture (*Agrárminisztérium, AM*), military training is overseen by the Ministry of Defence (*Honvédelmi Minisztérium, HM*), and qualification requirements for the healthcare sector and police training are established in agreement with the minister responsible for healthcare and law enforcement.

2.3.2. Governance of VET institutions

There are two types of VET institutions (*szakképző intézmény*) according to the VET Act: technicums, which offer 5-year ISCED 354 programmes leading to the *matura* at EQF level 4 and a vocational qualification at EQF level 5, and vocational schools, which offer 3-year ISCED 353 practice-oriented VET programmes leading to an EQF level 4 vocational qualification. There are also multi-purpose institutions offering more than one type of programme. Since 2013, school governance has been centralised, resulting in the integration of most public VET schools into a network of VET centres. A VET institution operating as part of a VET centre is an organisational unit of the VET centre with legal personality.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ In the national context, VET has been separated from public education. Public education now encompasses educational levels ranging from pre-primary to post-secondary levels, except VET, and is governed by the Act CXC of 2011 on the national public education.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Since 2022 in the institutional structure it is placed under the Ministry of Interior (*Belügyminisztérium, BM*).

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Government Decree 182/2022 (V.24.) on the duties and powers of the members of the Government.

Currently, 41 VET centres (*szakképzési centrum*)⁽⁴⁸⁾ operate under the maintenance of the ministry responsible for VET. These centres are funded by the State through the ministry's dedicated budget, managing financial disbursements to schools. They coordinate education and training activities of the member schools and facilitate the alignment of training with labour market needs by maintaining contact with dual partners and establishing connections with local companies. This engagement aims to enhance dual training opportunities and adjust the training offer of schools under the VET centres to meet local workforce demands. State-run agricultural vocational schools are operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and belong to the network of Agricultural VET centres (*agrárszakképzési centrum*). In the 2023/24 school year, 53 agricultural vocational schools are part of five Agricultural VET centres.

VET schools operated by the Ministries of Interior and Defence, along with some universities, offer sector-specific programmes. VET schools can also be established by minority self-governments, churches as legal persons or religious associations, business organisations, foundations, and associations⁽⁴⁹⁾. They can receive funding from the central budget under an agreement with the minister responsible for VET (see Figure 17 for number of VET schools maintained by different entities in Hungary as of 1.7.2024).

EQF level 5 vocational qualifications in the fields of arts, pedagogy and public cultural education (Section 2.2.1.1), as well as vocational programmes tailored for various categories of special needs (Section 2.2.1.2) to achieve partial or full vocational qualifications at EQF levels 2-4, are regulated by the Act on national public education, rather than by the VET Act, following the 2019 VET reform. This choice reflects the new regulatory framework's emphasis on practical relevance and flexibility tailored to labour market demands; such elements are not fully applicable to these specialised programmes. For arts, pedagogy and public cultural education, key components of the new VET framework, such as dual VET, are not applicable. For SEN learners, the focus is on curative educational development. Consequently, these programmes remain under the 'traditional' general education regulations and are not offered by VET institutions defined in the VET Act.

EQF level 5 programmes in the three fields quoted are offered by vocational grammar schools (*szakgimnázium*), while EQF level 2-4 programmes for SEN learners are offered by vocational schools for SEN learners (*szakiskola*) as defined by the National public education act. Teachers in these programmes are not covered by the VET Act as VET teachers but are subject to the rules applicable to teachers in general education schools. This means different employment conditions, wage system, CPD, and career advancement systems. Similarly, students in these programmes are not eligible for the financial incentives available in VET programmes governed by the VET Act. Despite such distinctions, these programmes lead to the same level of vocational qualifications as those offered in VET institutions.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ The number of schools in each VET centre varies between 5 and 19. Each VET centre must have an average of at least 2 000 students. Currently, 358 VET schools are part of these 41 centres.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET.

Figure 15. Number of VET schools by maintainers

	Maintainer					
	Ministry of Culture and Innovation	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Defence	Higher Education institutions	Non-State entities
VET schools organised into VET centres	41 VET centres	5 agricultural VET centres	Schools are not organised into VET centres	Schools are not organised into VET centres	Schools are not organised into VET centres	Schools are not organised into VET centres
Number of schools	358	53	2	2	20	92
Total number of VET schools	527					

Source: SZIR-STAT as of 1.7.2024. Non-State entities include religious legal entities, religious associations, foundations, private companies, non-State higher education institutions.

2.3.3. Public VET authorities

The National Office for VET and Adult Learning (*Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Hivatal, NSZFH*) and the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre (*IKK Innovatív Képzéstámogató Központ, IKK*) are key State bodies under the ministry responsible for VET. They support VET policy implementation.

NSZFH responsibilities include:

- (a) central management: oversees VET centres and institutions under the maintenance of the minister responsible for VET (Figure 17) ensuring legal compliance and effective operations;
- (b) system operations: runs key systems, like SZIR (VET information system), FAR (Adult training data reporting system) and KRÉTA (Electronic school management system) and handles scholarship payments;
- (c) examination development: creates content for vocational exams;
- (d) project coordination: manages VET and adult learning projects, including EUROGUIDANCE and EPAL and handles Europass certificate supplements.

IKK responsibilities:

- (a) VET content development: creates textbooks, digital teaching tools, and other resources;
- (b) information centre: operates the VET Enquiry and Information Centre;
- (c) R&D: conducts research and develops teacher assessment methods;
- (d) teacher training: provides continuing professional development for VET teachers and manages related systems;
- (e) examinations: organises vocational exams if no accredited centre is available;
- (f) QMS: conducts external evaluation of VET institutions;
- (g) VET teacher support: offers support through workshops and a network of innovative VET teachers in each sector;
- (h) project implementation: manages projects funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Digital renewal operational programme plus (DIMOP Plus), and Economic development and innovation operational programme (EDIOP) including developing 672 digital learning materials.

The Education Authority (*Oktatási Hivatal*), a body under the ministry responsible for education, handles several functions that include both general education and VET. These include

managing national learner assessment systems, administering upper secondary admissions, overseeing the *matura*, and providing pedagogical counselling services.

The Pest County Government Office registers exams and oversees adult training providers and programmes outside the school-based system (Section 2.2.2). The employment departments of county/capital government offices provide training support for vulnerable groups.

2.3.4. Social partner involvement in VET

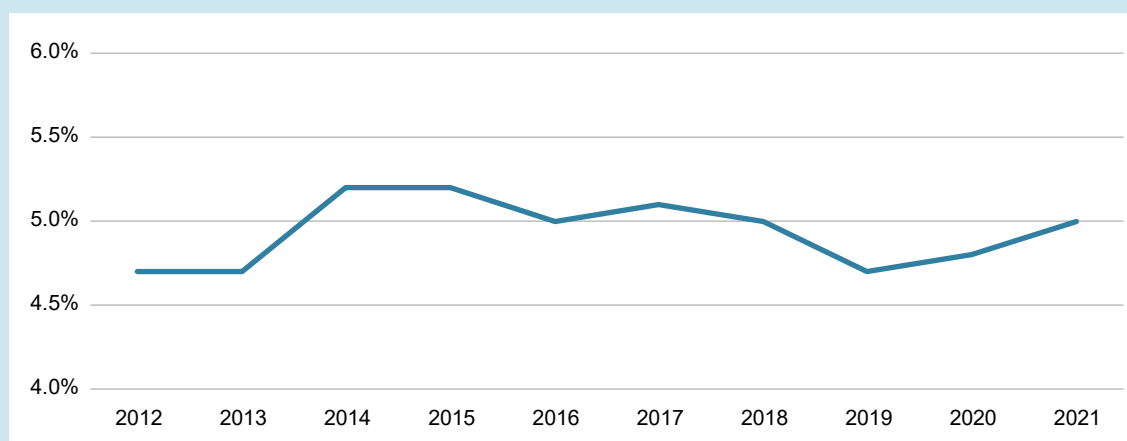
Social partner involvement and cooperation in VET is facilitated mainly by the chambers of commerce, the VET Innovation Council and the sector skills councils.

- (a) Economic chambers: contribute to VET through policy advice, supervision of dual training providers, participation in vocational exam activities and career guidance services. The County labour-market reconciliation roundtables (*Megyei Munkaerő-piaci Egyeztető Kerekasztal*) are established by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the county level. They facilitate dialogue between higher education, VET and adult training sectors, aligning with the local economic goals.
- (b) VET Innovation Council (*Szakképzési Innovációs Tanács, SZIT*)⁽⁵⁰⁾: coordinates VET policy, makes strategic recommendations, and assists the Ministry of Culture and Innovation in guiding VET system development.
- (c) Sector skills councils (SSCs)⁽⁵¹⁾ established in 2018, SSCs represent various sectors, advising on VET content updates based on labour market needs and technological trends.

2.4. Financing VET

General government total expenditure on education in Hungary has shown a relative balance as a share of GDP between 2012-2013 (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Total general government expenditure on education in Hungary as percentage of GDP



Source: Eurostat, General government expenditure by function (COFOG) for Education.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ The VET Innovation Council established in 2018, includes representatives from government, education, school maintainers, students, chambers, industry and various organisations. It provides policy proposals to drive demand-driven transformation in VET. The 2019 VET Act formalised its role and responsibilities.

⁽⁵¹⁾ *Ágazati készségtanács*. The SSCs took over the responsibilities of the national qualification board. Each council comprises 7 to 19 business representatives from the relevant sector. Currently, there are 19 SCCs.

Central government plays the main role in funding public education, including secondary vocational education (ISCED 3).

2.4.1. Financing school-based VET

Learners can enrol in school-based VET free of charge to pursue their first two vocational qualifications listed in the national register of vocational qualifications (*Szakmajegyzék*) (Section 2.1).

Until 1 January 2013, local municipalities maintained public schools, including upper secondary VET schools. Since 2013, public VET providers have been financed by the central government, to ensure equal funding for all providers (Eurodice, 2024). In 2015, most public vocational upper secondary schools were transferred under the maintenance of the minister responsible for VET, instead of the minister responsible for education, and were organised into VET centres (Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). These VET centres are independent budgetary bodies funded annually from the central budget, with additional funding for their adult training activities provided on a per capita basis. Public VET schools that are not organised into VET centres are also financed from the central budget.

VET financing comes primarily from the Budget Act allocation for basic tasks (maintenance, salaries) allocated from the budget of the maintaining ministry. VET centres and schools also receive funds from the National Employment Fund generated from part of the social contribution tax revenue and the central budget. The training sub-fund of the National Employment Fund covers scholarships, one-off career starter allowances (Section 4.1) and supports VET tasks undertaken by the chambers, along with other subsidies related to VET operations.

Non-governmental entities such as minority self-governments, churches, religious associations, business organisations, foundations, and associations can also maintain VET schools and receive State funding if they establish an agreement with the minister responsible for VET.

Until 31 December 2021 businesses contributed to VET financing through a VET contribution tax, which supported dual and practical training. From 1 January 2022, this contribution was discontinued. However, companies offering dual training still receive tax relief as an incentive to participate in dual VET. Previously, these companies did not have to pay the VET contribution tax, now they can reclaim training costs from other tax payables through a refund mechanism.

2.4.2. Financing adult training

The acquisition of the first vocational qualification through adult training programmes is free in Hungary if provided by a State-maintained VET school or a training provider with a cooperation agreement with the State (Section 2.1). For other labour market training programmes, participants can use State subsidies and training loans. Financing options for fee-based training include:

- (a) Training loan: available for participants in fee-based training. The loan is interest-free for courses lasting at least 3 months and only applies for programmes where the Student Credit Centre (*Diákhitel Központ*) has concluded a cooperation agreement with the training institution;
- (b) grants and subsidies: provided from the central budget and international programmes (mainly the European Social Fund, which often jointly funds employment-related programmes. They support mandatory CVET in the public sector, as well as the unemployed, at-risk groups, and SMEs;
- (c) participant contributions: fees paid by the learners;
- (d) employer contributions: financial support from employers.

2.5. VET teachers and trainers

The 2019 VET Act redefined the status of teachers in VET schools, distinguishing them from *pedagógusok* (teachers) working in general education institutions. Since then, they are uniformly referred to as *oktatók* (VET teachers), which includes:

- (a) general subject teachers;
- (b) vocational subject teachers;
- (c) vocational teachers of practical skills.

In dual training, the instructor at the company is called an in-company trainer.

As of 1 July 2020, VET teachers were removed from the Act on public servants and are now governed by the Labour Code. This change aimed to offer more flexibility in legal relationships and working conditions, making it easier to involve industry professionals (such as engineers, economists, and other professionals) in VET.

Previously, VET teachers were paid according to the public servant wage chart, which was less competitive compared to the business sector. Since the changes, salaries have increased significantly. In 2020, HUF 35 billion (about EUR 97 million) was allocated for wage increases, resulting in an average 30% rise. Additional increases of 10% in January 2023 and 5% in May 2023 were implemented, linked to a new performance-based evaluation system introduced in the 2022/23 school year. The performance evaluation system, first conducted in 2020, assesses VET teachers and trainers in 10 areas, with three focusing on position-related aspects and seven on professional competences and performance. Evaluations are conducted by VET institution directors at least every 3 years, using a six-point scale. Institutions had to develop their evaluation systems by 31 August 2022, guided by a [methodological assessment](#) revised in 2022 to include criteria for deputy heads and heads of institutions, and recommendations to improve assessment procedures. Teachers are evaluated by their VET institution directors at least every 3 years, and institutions had to develop evaluation systems by 31 August 2022 (Section 3.4.1).

2.5.1. Initial training

The VET Act and the associated government decree outline the requirements for the employment, qualifications and continuing professional development of teachers and trainers in VET schools. This regulation also specifies the qualification requirements of in-company trainers.

Table 5 details the various types of VET teachers and trainers, their roles and their qualification requirements.

Table 5. Qualifications required for teachers and trainers employed in VET schools

Title/ tasks and responsibilities	Required qualification	
	Technicum	Vocational school
General subject teacher/ Teaching general education subjects	Relevant teacher qualification (university level or master degree, ISCED 766 or 767)	Relevant teacher qualification (bachelor degree, ISCED 665)
Vocational teacher/ Teaching vocational subjects	Relevant VET teacher qualification (master degree, ISCED 766 or 767) or degree in higher education, as well as vocational qualification relevant to the subject (ISCED 665 and 453, 454)	Relevant degree in higher education, as well as vocational qualification (ISCED 665 and 453, 454) or degree in higher education, as well as vocational qualification relevant to the subject (ISCED 665 and 453, 454)
Vocational teacher of practical skills/ Teaching vocational practical subjects in the school	secondary school-leaving certificate (ISCED 344) and vocational qualification relevant to the subject	
In-company trainer/ Instructing vocational content at an enterprise	Relevant vocational qualification, at least 5 years of professional experience and chambers' practice trainer exam certificate (issued by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, MKIK). Practice trainer exam exemptions are: master craftsman certificate (issued by MKIK) and relevant higher education degree (in this case, professional experience of 2 years is enough), or higher education degree and a relevant upper-secondary qualification, or, in respect of the health sector, a medical instructor qualification, or those 60 years of age or older.	

Source: Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

Teacher training for both general and vocational secondary schools combines theoretical and practical experience, with a strong emphasis on teaching practice. Admission includes academic evaluations and aptitude tests. Training is offered in:

- (a) integrated programmes based on secondary school leaving certificates, covering one or two teaching majors;
- (b) divided programmes requiring a bachelor or a college degree, followed by a teaching master degree;
- (c) teaching master programmes taken alongside or after a non-teaching master programme or an integrated programme.

In-company trainers for VET must have relevant vocational qualifications, at least 5 years of experience, and since 2018, a practice trainer exam certificate from MKIK (see Table 5 for practice trainer exam exemptions).

Higher VET programmes, integrated into higher education since 2013, follow the Act on Higher Education for qualification and CPD requirements.

Adult training follows the Adult Training Act and the VET Act. Training providers must be authorised and have a quality assurance system documenting teachers' qualifications and CPD.

2.5.2. Continuing professional development

The VET Act of 2019 regulates the continuing training of teachers and trainers in VET schools but does not include provisions on CPD for in-company trainers (Table 6).

Table 6. **Continuing professional development of teachers and trainers employed in VET institutions**

Title/ tasks and responsibilities	In-service training
General subject teacher/ Teaching general education subjects	Compulsory in-service training of 60 hours every 4 years. VET teachers and trainers must participate in in-service training that contributes to the development of their knowledge and skills related to their vocational qualifications. Teachers and trainers of specialised vocational education subjects should primarily undergo the training in a corporate setting or in a training centre.
Vocational teacher/ Teaching vocational subjects	The planning, coordination, organisation and continuous monitoring of the in-service training of VET teachers and trainers at the national level are carried out by the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre, which set up a national system for the in-service training of VET teachers and trainers (OTR). The list of training courses available is expanded and updated several times a year.
Vocational teacher of practical skills/ Teaching vocational practical subjects in the school	No compulsory in-service training

Source: Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET, <https://ikk.hu/otr>.

Requirements in school-based VET are:

- (a) VET teachers/trainers must complete 60 hours of CPD every 4 years;
- (b) heads of VET schools must take leadership courses;
- (c) VET teachers and trainers are evaluated at least every 3 years by their institution's head.

Requirements in adult training are:

- (a) no mandatory in-service training for adult training instructors;
- (b) providers must have a quality assurance system, which typically includes occasional further training for instructors.

More information is available in the Cedefop-ReferNet thematic perspective: [Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET - Hungary](#).

CHAPTER 3.

Shaping VET qualifications



3.1. Anticipating skills needs

Several initiatives anticipate skill needs in Hungary to align VET with labour market demands. These include regular labour market surveys and tracking graduates from VET, adult learning and higher education programmes.

3.1.1. Labour market surveys

The Institute for Economic and Enterprise Research (MKIK *Gazdaság- és Vállalkozáskutató Intézet*), supported by the Ministry of Economy (*Nemzetgazdasági Minisztérium*), conducts annual short-term labour force forecasts. These surveys use a stratified sample of companies to ensure representation across sectors and sizes, offering insights into layoffs and demand in various sectors and occupations. For example, in April-May 2023, county government offices and regional chambers of commerce interviewed 5 685 managers from companies with at least two employees to gather data for the 2024 forecast.

Based on these surveys, the Hungarian labour force forecast (*Magyar Munkaerőpiaci Prognózis*, MMPP) was developed and is maintained by the Institute for Economic and Enterprise Research. This online-accessible database provides employees, job seekers, employers, and educational organisations with data on expected labour demand.

In 2020, the ministry responsible for VET developed a labour market forecasting system to align adult training courses better with the dynamic demands of the labour market. Known as the Workforce forecasting system (*Munkaerő-piaci Előrejelző Rendszer*, MER), this IT system gathers and analyses data from various sources to forecast job demands requiring vocational qualifications. Operated by the National Office of VET and Adult Learning ⁽⁵²⁾, MER assesses both the demand and supply sides of the national labour market. It analyses workforce needs of State administrations and companies requiring vocational qualifications, and examines data on individuals in the labour market, transitioning from education to employment, and those seeking or exiting employment.

3.1.2. Sectoral monitoring of VET

Sectoral monitoring of VET started in 2022, to refine sector-specific VET proposals. The sector skills councils (SSCs) developed data-driven enquiries focusing on career orientation and enrolment; sectoral basic education and examination; vocational education; vocational examination and labour market analysis with a focus on skilled workers.

The labour market analyses included a survey conducted by the MKIK GVI on the role of enterprises in VET and the competences essential for various job roles. The findings from this research, covering the sectors represented by the 19 SSCs, are documented in Research on the labour market situation of skilled workers. SSCs also prepare short- and mid-term forecasts for VET development and propose updates of qualifications and curricula. These proposals are then submitted to the responsible ministry overseeing VET.

3.1.3. Career tracking

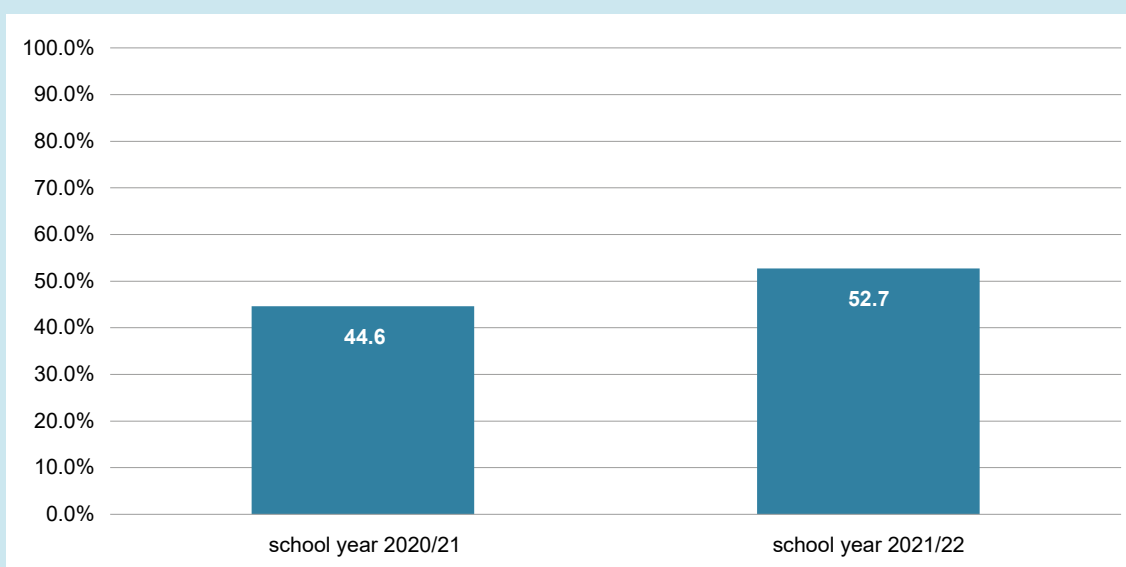
3.1.3.1. Career tracking of VET graduates

Since 2009, MKIK GVI has surveyed VET graduates to assess their labour market situation. These surveys examined short-term labour market adjustments and longer-term labour market trends, to a lesser extent, as different students were interviewed each year. This method was replaced in 2018 by a career tracking survey starting with students in their expected graduation year and following up 7-8 and 19-20 months after graduation.

⁽⁵²⁾ Government Decree 11/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on adult training. This provision entered into force on 9 Dec 2021.

The **VET career tracking system** (*Szakképzési Pályakövetési Rendszer*), operated by the National Office for VET and Adult Learning, links anonymously data from the VET information system (*Szakképzés Információs Rendszere, SZIR*) and the KRÉTA electronic school management system with labour market, higher education and social security registers. The questionnaire module of the career tracking survey engaged over 11 000 learners from 442 VET institutions in 2022. The survey revealed that 52.7% of 2021/22 graduates were employed in a sector corresponding to their qualification as opposed to 44.6% in 2020/21 (Figure 17). The labour market and educational paths of all VET and adult education graduates will be monitored anonymously for a period of 9 years.

Figure 17. **Percentage of learners employed in a sector corresponding to their qualification (%)**



Source: The figure is based on the original published in *Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Hivatal* (2023). 2023 tracking report and recreated in English by Cedefop.

3.1.3.2. Career tracking in adult training

Since 1 September 2020, adult training providers must record their activities in the Adult training reporting system (*Felnőttképzési Adatszolgáltatási Rendszer, FAR*), a module within the KRÉTA electronic school management system. FAR is used to issue training completion certificates, record training loans, and serves as a database for career tracking participant satisfaction.

3.1.3.3. Career tracking in higher education

Between 2008 and 2010, a 'hybrid' graduate career tracking system (*Diplomás pályakövető rendszer, DPR*) was developed for higher education, with European Social Fund (ESF) support. This system uses national and institutional data, surveying graduates 3 and 5 years after graduation. Results are **published annually**, offering insights into graduates' long-term career outcomes. This complements VET tracking for a comprehensive view of career pathways.

3.2. Designing qualifications

School-based VET in Hungary combines vocational and general education. General education follows a curriculum set by the minister responsible for general education (under the Ministry of

Interior). Vocational content is regulated by the minister responsible for VET (under the Ministry of Culture and Innovation) in cooperation with relevant sector ministers.

3.2.1. General education in school-based VET

The National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti alaptanterv*, NAT) ⁽⁵³⁾ guides the general education framework curricula (*közismereti kerettanterv*) in VET schools, detailing subjects, teaching hours and requirements ⁽⁵⁴⁾. VET providers have flexibility in implementation within the specified timeframe ⁽⁵⁵⁾. In 5-year technician programmes, general education subjects comprise about 60% of the curriculum, while in 3-year VET programmes, they make up about one third (see also Section 2.2.1.1).

3.2.2. Vocational competences in school-based VET

The national register of vocational qualifications outlines detailed regulations for vocational education, including sector classification, HuQF level, specialisations, duration, and digital competence framework. As part of the 2019 VET reforms (Section 2.2), the National register of vocational qualifications (*Országos Képzési Jegyzék*, OKJ) was renamed the Register of vocational occupations (*Szakmajegyzék*). This change, effective from September 2020, reduced the number of qualifications, now called basic vocational qualifications (*alapszakma*): as of July 2024, there are 180 basic qualifications. The government adopts the register based on proposals from the sector skills councils.

The basic vocational qualifications included in the *Szakmajegyzék* can only be obtained through formal education: in 5-year technicums for EQF level 5 qualifications and in 5-year VET schools for EQF level 4 qualifications ⁽⁵⁶⁾. The programme and outcome requirements (*képzési és kimeneti követelmények*, KKKs) detail the necessary skills, knowledge, behaviour, and responsibilities for each qualification, representing a learning outcomes-based approach. These requirements are developed under the authority of the minister responsible for VET with the agreement of the government members responsible for each relevant sector through the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre, based on the proposals of the sector skills councils (ÁKT) and [published on the IKK website](#).

In VET institutions, the pedagogical and educational activities are conducted based on a professional programme (*szakmai program*) developed according to the programme and outcome requirements. This includes the institution's pedagogical-educational programme, general and sectoral basic education, specialised vocational education, health education programme, and career orientation services. This allows schools to tailor education to local needs. Companies in dual training must also develop a practical training programme with VET schools (see also Section 2.2.1.3).

3.2.3. Designing and updating VET qualifications

Within the formal VET system, there are two types of qualifications:

- (a) vocational qualification: this allows the holder to perform all jobs related to that qualification. The programme and outcome requirements include most typical jobs attainable with the qualification and cover various specific skills. For example, someone with a painter-refinisher (*festő-mázoló*) qualification can paint walls, ceilings, and other surfaces, as well as refinish

⁽⁵³⁾ The National core curriculum was first issued in 2012 and revised in 2020. The updated NCC and related framework curricula are being introduced progressively in secondary schools from the 2020/21 school year starting with the 9th grade. Students who started secondary school before 2020 will finish under the old curriculum.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ The [general knowledge framework curricula for VET programmes](#) are available online.

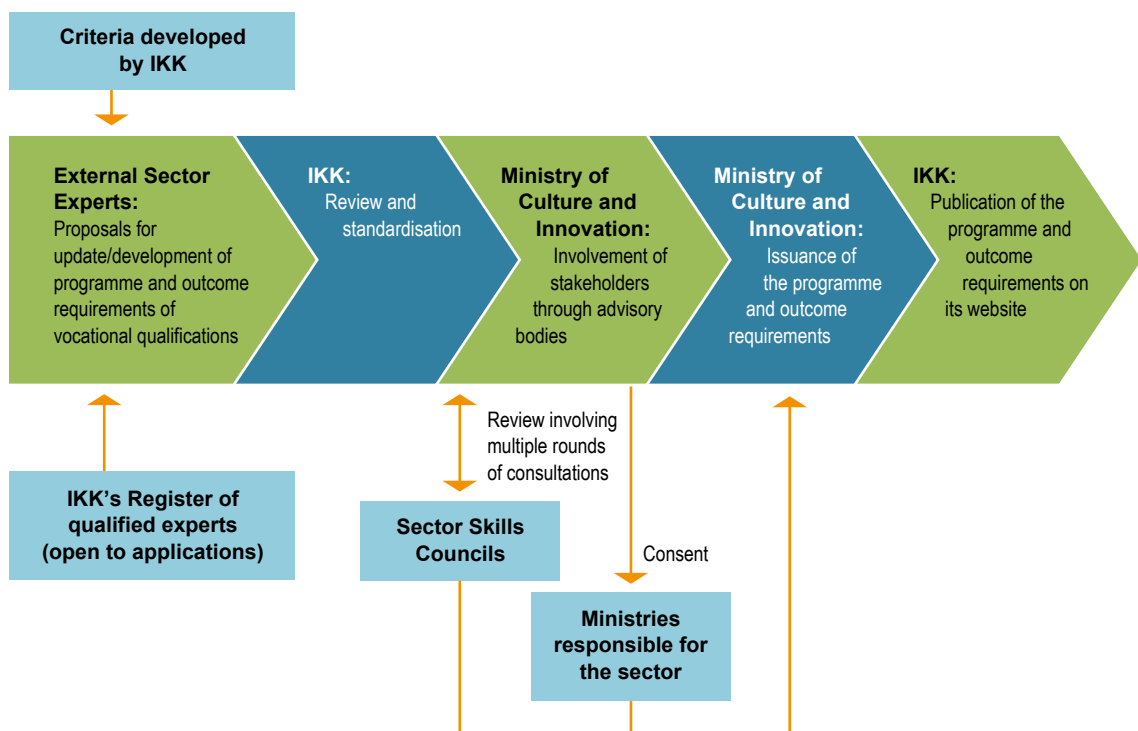
⁽⁵⁵⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ With 64 partial qualifications accessible to learners through the school workshop catch-up programme and adult training courses.

doors and window frames in both homes and businesses. Related qualifications may share common contents.

- (b) partial vocational qualification: This allows the holder to perform at least one specific job. The programme and outcome requirements cover only part of what is included in a full vocational qualification. For example, someone with a painter partial qualification is skilled in painting walls, but their training does not include tasks like refinishing doors and window frames. As of June 2024, there are 64 partial vocational qualifications.

Figure 18. Process for designing and updating qualifications



Source: Prepared by Cedefop based on input received from IKK.

The programme and outcome requirements for vocational qualifications are developed and updated by external sector experts, considering the criteria developed by the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre. These experts are selected from the IKK's Register of qualified experts (*Minősített Szakértői Nyilvántartási Rendszer*), which is open to applications. Qualified experts include, for example, VET teachers. The proposals are reviewed and standardised by IKK staff or designated expert reviewers before being forwarded to the Ministry of Culture and Innovation (*Kulturális és Innovációs Minisztérium*, KIM). KIM then seeks feedback and further recommendations from the sector skills councils (*Ágazati Készségtanács*) of the relevant sectors through the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. SSCs, voluntary bodies representing sector stakeholders, play a crucial role in proposing and reviewing vocational qualifications to ensure that they meet current labour market needs.

Final documents are refined based on multiple rounds of consultations with stakeholders, including sector experts, schools, SSCs, KIM, and potentially other relevant bodies. Final documents are published on the IKK website (Figure 18).

Previously, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry ⁽⁵⁷⁾ was involved in qualification design, but since 2018 sector skills councils have taken over these responsibilities. 19 SSCs were established at the government's initiative ⁽⁵⁸⁾, covering 41 economic sectors, with each council comprising 7-19 members. As of 1 July 2018, the chamber of commerce has been coordinating the operation of SSCs except for sectors under the competence of the minister for agriculture (including forestry, food industry, and fisheries), where the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture is involved ⁽⁵⁹⁾. These councils monitor labour market trends, propose new qualifications, and forecast sector needs (see also Section 3.1.2). Social partners are involved in the process of designing and updating VET qualifications through the sector skills councils.

3.2.4. Standards and curricula in adult training

Adult training is offered by registered or authorised adult training providers including formal VET institutions. Only those qualifications not in the national register (*Szakmajegyzék*) can be taught (see Section 2.2 for more on national VET terminology and classification). There is no limit on these qualifications, allowing new skill needs identified in the labour market to be proposed for registration. The sector skills councils (SSC) assess these proposals to ensure they meet economic needs. Once a programme is registered, other providers can offer training for that qualification.

3.3. Recognition of prior learning

Hungary does not have a nationwide skills assessment and validation system based on uniform principles and procedures, although strategic documents aim to develop one. The Hungarian qualifications framework (HuQF), aligned with the European qualifications framework (EQF), lays the groundwork for assessing prior learning based on learning outcomes. Currently, there are local practices and pilot projects for recognising prior learning.

The Education Authority (*Oktatási Hivatal*) operates the National Coordination Point of the European Qualifications Framework and, along with the National Office for VET and Adult Learning, addresses policy issues regarding the validation of prior learning.

Previous studies, knowledge, and practical experience of students must be considered in fulfilling vocational education requirements. This includes studies from VET, general education, and higher education institutions, as well as relevant work experience. This can shorten the learning period. The head of the training institution decides on exemptions from sessions, subjects, and knowledge assessments based on prior learning.

Legal provisions in school-based VET

The 2019 VET Act includes provisions for recognising prior learning in formal school-based VET and vocational adult education.

- (a) Previous studies and experience: previous studies, knowledge, and practical experience of students must be considered in fulfilling requirements. This includes studies from VET, general education, and higher education institutions, as well as relevant work experience. This can shorten the learning period ⁽⁶⁰⁾. The head of the training institution decides on exemptions from sessions, subjects, and knowledge assessments based on prior learning ⁽⁶¹⁾.
- (b) Sectoral basic education: introduced by the VET Act, this allows flexibility and easier retraining within sectors.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ *Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara (MKIK)*.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ After a pilot phase involving 13 SSCs created in 2017.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ *Nemzeti Agrárgazdasági Kamara (NAK)*.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, 53.§.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET 124.§ (2).

- (c) Exam exemptions: students with recognised prior learning or achievements in competitions may be exempt from certain exams ⁽⁶²⁾.

Provisions in adult training

The Act on adult training includes:

- (a) input competence assessment (*bemeneti kompetenciamérés*): this evaluates if applicants have the necessary competences to start training when there is no documentation;
- (b) prior knowledge assessment (*előzetes tudásmérés*): assesses if undocumented studies or experience meet training module requirements, potentially exempting applicants from parts of the programme ⁽⁶³⁾;
- (c) recognition of prior learning (*előzetesen megszerzett tudás beszámítása*): documented studies can exempt applicants from parts of the training programme.

The Act empowers the government to regulate procedures for these assessments, but detailed rules are still pending.

3.3.1. Key strategic documents on validation

Key strategic documents aim to improve the validation system.

- (a) [Medium-term strategy to counter early school leaving without qualifications](#) ⁽⁶⁴⁾.
- (b) [Government lifelong learning policy framework strategy \(2014-20\)](#) ⁽⁶⁵⁾.
- (c) [Digital education strategy](#) ⁽⁶⁶⁾.
- (d) [Strategy 4.0 for the renewal of vocational and adult education](#) ⁽⁶⁷⁾: this focuses on integrating validation of non-formal and informal learning and creating accredited examination centres for standardising adult education outcomes by 2030. The primary goal is to shorten the overall training period while maintaining the quality of education. The implementation plan sets out the establishment of the National validation system model (*országos validációs rendszermodell*) to validate non-formal and informal knowledge.

3.3.2. Developments, projects and practices

Projects supporting the validation system include:

- (a) GINOP-6.2.4-VEKOP-16 (2017-23): developed and tested competence measurement tools in construction and transportation engineering, involving 700 participants; proposed a national validation system model;
- (b) GINOP-6.1.9 (2019-23): established a competence validation centre in the transport sector; adapted methodologies from the GINOP-6.2.4-VEKOP-16 programme for this purpose;
- (c) micro-credentials (since 2023): drafting legislation to certify specific learning outcomes, enhancing validation.

⁽⁶²⁾ Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET, 256.§ (3), 264.§ (2).

⁽⁶³⁾ If the adult education activity is subject to authorisation.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Government Decision 1603/2014. (XI. 4.) on the adoption of the Hungarian national social inclusion strategy II, of the LLL policy framework strategy, of the Public education development strategy, and of the Mid-term strategy against school leaving without qualification.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Government Decision 1603/2014. (XI. 4.) on the adoption of the Hungarian national social inclusion strategy II, of the LLL policy framework strategy, of the Public education development strategy, and of the Mid-term strategy against school leaving without qualification.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Government Decision 1536/2016. (X. 13.) on the Digital reform of public education, Vocational education, HE and adult training system and on the Hungarian digital education strategy.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Government Decision 1168/2019 on the strategy 'VET 4.0: mid-term policy strategy for the renewal of VET and Adult Education (AE), the answer of the VET system for the challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution'.

These initiatives aim to create a consistent framework for assessing and validating skills, ensuring qualifications meet national standards.

3.4. Quality assurance

3.4.1. Quality management system in school-based VET

A common institutional quality management system (QMS) was developed as part of the VET 4.0 Strategy and the 2019 VET legislation. This system, based on self-evaluation and the EQAVET Framework, is implemented in formal VET settings. It has several key components.

- (a) Quality policy: VET institutions set their mission, vision, strategic goals, and quality objectives, along with defining the organisational framework for QMS.
- (b) Comprehensive self-evaluation: conducted every 2 years, this involves analysing results, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, and implementing action plans. The self-evaluation guide, published by the minister responsible for VET, contains the evaluation criteria, indicator system, regulated processes, measurement tools, work templates, and the proposed procedure and methodology for self-evaluation.
- (c) VET teacher-trainer evaluation: conducted at least every 3 years, this evaluation assesses teacher performance based on a methodological guide.
- (d) external evaluation: conducted every 4 years ⁽⁶⁸⁾ by the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre focusing on compliance with the EQAVET Framework, self-evaluation activities, and performance indicators. It follows the external evaluation guide issued by the minister responsible for VET.

VET institutions had to develop their QMS by 31 August, 2022 with methodological support provided by VET sectoral governance ⁽⁶⁹⁾. Evaluation criteria and tools are based on the EQAVET Framework.

3.4.2. Quality assurance for dual VET providers

Dual VET providers must operate a QMS aligning with the standards defined for VET institutions in the VET Act of 2019 and its implementing regulation ⁽⁷⁰⁾ or comply with quality requirements set by the economic chamber. Similar to the VET institutions, dual VET providers were required to develop their quality management approach by 31 August, 2022 at the latest. Key elements include:

- (a) quality policy;
- (b) self-evaluation;
- (c) intervention and improvement activities.

The set of quality requirements developed by the economic chamber ⁽⁷¹⁾ provides a value-based quality concept, comprising seven closely interlinked elements ⁽⁷²⁾ applicable to all dual VET providers regardless of their size and sector/trade. Quality assurance is reinforced through the

⁽⁶⁸⁾ The evaluation cycle started on 1 September 2022, with the first external evaluations scheduled for 2025.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ *Kulturális és Innovációs Minisztérium* [Ministry of Culture and Innovation] is the VET sectoral governance body. The [methodological guidance materials](#) to support the development and implementation of the VET institutions' quality management system are published on the website of the IKK Innovative Training Support Centre.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET, Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET.

⁽⁷¹⁾ *Kamarai Minőségi Szempontrendszer (KAMSZER)* [Chamber's set of quality requirements].

⁽⁷²⁾ The chamber's quality requirements include: a process-oriented approach, clear training objectives, aligned quality goals, monitoring processes, assessment of customer satisfaction, defined leadership responsibilities, corrective actions and document control measures.

registration process ⁽⁷³⁾ and monitoring by economic chambers to ensure compliance with legal requirements and high-quality training placements.

3.4.3. Quality management in VET under the Public education act

From 1 September 2020, VET system quality management was separated from general education. Two types of upper-secondary VET programmes remain under the Act on national public education (Section 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2):

- (a) 5-year ISCED 354 programmes, offered by vocational grammar schools (*szakgimnázium*) in art, pedagogy, and public cultural education;
- (b) 2- to 4-year ISCED 353 and 343 programmes for SEN learners, offered by special vocational schools (*szakiskola*) and skills development schools (*készségfejlesztő iskola*).

These programmes follow the national quality assurance system for general education, including external monitoring every 5 years. Evaluation focuses on teachers' pedagogical work, school leaders' performance, and school quality. Action plans for improvement are developed based on evaluation results. Since the 2018/19 school year, evaluation standards have been adapted to the EQAVET Framework.

3.4.4. Quality management in adult training

The Adult Training Act ⁽⁷⁴⁾ and corresponding government decree ⁽⁷⁵⁾ establish regulatory mechanisms for quality assurance in adult training. Key elements include:

- (a) licensing: adult training providers must apply for a licence for specific programmes, granted by the public authority responsible for adult training ⁽⁷⁶⁾;
- (b) quality management system: providers must establish a QMS compliant with regulatory requirements;
- (c) external evaluation: conducted at least once every 6 years, evaluating training activities and trainer performance. Feedback and action plans are provided by the public authority. Methodology and tools are developed based on the EQAVET Framework.

These measures ensure continuous improvement of adult training programmes and activities.

⁽⁷³⁾ Companies participating in dual VET for qualifications listed in the new national register (*Szakmajegyzék*) must declare their quality management system in their registration application.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult training.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Government Decree 11/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on adult training.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ In Hungarian: *Pest Vármegyei Kormányhivatal*. Since 1 January 2017, it has replaced the National Office of VET and Adult Learning (NSZFH) in this role.

CHAPTER 4.

Promoting VET participation



4.1. Incentives for learners

Supporting skills for jobs is a priority in Hungary. Efforts include increasing the attractiveness of and participation in VET, and promoting dual VET programmes.

4.1.1. Financial and other incentives for young students

Since the 2020/21 school year, VET students can receive:

- (a) general scholarship:
 - (i) grades 9 and 10 in technicums (sectoral basic education): EUR 21/month (HUF 8 000);
 - (ii) grade 9 in vocational schools (sectoral basic education): EUR 42/month (HUF 16 000);
 - (iii) foreign language and career orientation preparatory years: EUR 21/month (HUF 8 000);
 - (iv) school workshop and springboard programme: EUR 42/month (HUF 16 000);
 - (v) vocational specialised education (grades 11-13 in technicums and grades 9-10 in vocational schools) taking place in school settings: EUR 21 to EUR 154 (HUF 8 000 to HUF 59 000) based on academic performance;
 - (vi) eligibility: students studying for their first vocational qualification (in student legal status, not adult status, see also section 2.1);
- (b) monthly wage: for students in dual VET (Section 2.2.1.3) at a company placement EUR 260 to EUR 437/month (HUF 100 000 to HUF 168 000);
- (c) career starter allowance: EUR 347 to EUR 787 (HUF 133 000 to HUF 302 000) upon completion of studies, based on final examination results;
- (d) Apáczai scholarship: for disadvantaged students with good academic performance in grades 9-11, providing double the general scholarship amount. This initiative aims to promote talent development and reduce disadvantages.

The base for these financial incentives is the annual cost price of vocational specialised education, set at EUR 3 123 (HUF 1 200 000) for 2024 by the [Budget Act](#).

Other incentives include competitions, such as WorldSkills and EuroSkills, Apprentice of excellence competition, and the [Stars of trades festival](#), and the accompanying media campaigns to promote VET and highlight achievements.

4.1.2. Financial and other incentives for adult learners

Incentives encourage adult participation in lifelong learning.

- (a) Wages for dual VET: adult learners in vocational employment contracts receive EUR 260 to EUR 437/month (HUF 100 000 to HUF 168 000), exempt from social contribution tax and personal income tax but subject to social security contributions.
- (b) Training loan: up to EUR 1 300 (HUF 500 000) for self-financed training courses lasting at least 3 months, with a 0% interest rate, and at least 20% self-contribution.
- (c) Other incentives:
 - (i) student card: discounts for transportation and cultural events;
 - (ii) free qualifications: first two vocational qualifications in school-based VET and the first vocational training offered by a public VET institution or one that has a cooperation agreement with the State, free of charge;
 - (iii) training support: the unemployed and vulnerable groups ⁽⁷⁷⁾ can receive training support ⁽⁷⁸⁾

⁽⁷⁷⁾ The unemployed, women on childcare support, individuals on rehabilitation support, participants in the public work programme, and those at risk of becoming unemployed.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Reimbursement of tuition fees, related expenses (travel and accommodation costs), costs of family member/child care, and provision of supplementary/compensatory payments.

through the national employment services. Individual psycho-social support, mentoring, work placement or temporary employment and entrepreneurial support is also available and ESF-supported training programmes are also in place ⁽⁷⁹⁾;

- (iv) study contract: workers can receive support from employers for their studies in return for a commitment to stay with the employer for a specified period after training completion. The labour code also provides for training leave or allowances ⁽⁸⁰⁾.

4.2. Incentives for training companies

4.2.1. Tax benefits for training providers under dual VET

Registered dual training providers can enter vocational employment contracts (*szakképzési munkaszerződés*) with students, offering wages as detailed in Section 4.1.1. The monthly wage for students under vocational employment contracts is HUF 100 000 (EUR 260) to HUF 168 000/month (EUR 437) for the 2023/24 school year. This amount is based on the monthly cost price of vocational specialised education as established by the annual budget act, and may change.

Companies are offered several incentives.

- (a) Tax exemption on wages: wages paid to students under vocational employment contracts are exempt from social contribution tax (SZOCHO) and personal income tax (SZJA) ⁽⁸¹⁾.
- (b) Tax allowance: companies can receive a tax refund to cover training costs, primarily labour costs associated with dual training. The amount is calculated based on the cost price of vocational specialised education, set at HUF 1 200 000/year (EUR 3 123) for 2023. The refund is proportional to the training provided and can include actual hours worked, sick leave, and hours of leave.
- (c) Success fee: companies can claim an additional 20% tax deduction as a success fee if a student passes their final vocational exam and has had a vocational employment contract for at least 6 months.
- (d) Additional tax deductions: the VET Act allows companies to account for other training-related expenses, further reducing the tax base ⁽⁸²⁾.

4.2.2. Additional incentives in dual VET

- (a) Financial support for training workshops: the minister responsible for VET can provide financial support from the National Protection Employment Fund to companies for creating or developing training workshops ⁽⁸³⁾.
- (b) Designated liaison: each vocational training centre or school has a designated person responsible for coordinating dual training.
- (c) Vocational training contracts for public employees: recent legislation allows public employees to enter vocational training contracts, enabling public institutions to offer training and reintegrate employees ⁽⁸⁴⁾.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Currently with target groups such as: the unemployed in the 25-64 age group and those in public work programmes (Road to the labour market); young people aged 15-24 not in training nor in employment (Youth Guarantee); or those at risk of becoming redundant (Preventing and tackling redundancy). Under the coordination of the National Office for VET and Adult Learning, two ESF-supported programmes for people with low qualifications are also in place.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Paid or unpaid and support measures, such as payment of tuition fees, training materials, and examination fees, as well as possibly covering travel and accommodation costs.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Section 17/A (4) of the Act LII of 2018 on social contribution tax, and Act CXVII of 1995 on personal income tax.

⁽⁸²⁾ Act LXXXI of 1996 on corporate tax and dividend tax, and Act LXXX of 2019 on VET.

⁽⁸³⁾ Government Decree 12/2020 (II.7.) on the implementation of the Act on VET, 336.§(1).

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Act LXXX of 2019 on VET 90/A.§.

4.2.3. Incentives to provide training for own employees

Companies can train their employees under certain conditions.

- (a) Dual training providers:
 - (i) employers registered by the economic chambers can retain existing employment contracts and additionally enter vocational employment contracts with employees;
 - (ii) alternatively, employers can amend existing employment contracts, though these are not considered vocational employment contracts and do not qualify for tax relief.
- (b) Companies not providing dual training: employers not registered as dual training placements can only amend existing employment contracts, without qualifying for tax relief.
- (c) ESF-supported training:
 - (i) companies can participate in ESF-supported training actions, such as in-company training or external courses. In-company training contributes to the future registration of these businesses as dual training placements.
 - (ii) The [GINOP PLUSZ-3.2.1](#) (Improving adaptability and productivity of workers and enterprises through workforce development) project supports workforce development with a budget of HUF 70 billion (EUR 182 million) from 2021 to 2026. It offers support for technological training and further training for higher added value.
 - (iii) The third phase of the GINOP PLUSZ-3.2.1-21 programme, with a budget of HUF 15 billion (EUR 39 million), opened applications from 5 March 2024, until 30 September 2024. This phase allocates HUF 5 billion for energy-intensive sectors and HUF 10 billion for other enterprises.

4.3. Guidance and counselling

4.3.1. Career guidance framework and responsibilities

Career guidance and counselling are overseen by the minister responsible for VET and adult training. The National Office for VET and Adult Learning (NSZFH) coordinates career guidance and counselling experts across VET institutions, economic chambers, and other stakeholders.

Since the 2020/21 school year, all final-year lower secondary students must complete a [mandatory career guidance assessment](#) available on the Education Authority (*Oktatási Hivatal*) website. This survey helps them choose upper secondary education pathways. VET schools must include career guidance services in their professional programmes (*szakmai program*) (Section 3.2.2).

The career orientation development programme (*orientációs fejlesztés*, Section 2.2.1.2), introduced in pilot schools in 2018 and expanded in 2020, offers an alternative learning pathway for students needing to catch up or unsure about their future. In the 2023/24 school year, 27 VET institutions started this programme.

School-based VET is divided into sectoral basic education and vocational specialised education to help students make informed career choices and thus reduce dropout rates (Section 2.2.1).

Career guidance and counselling services for primary and secondary school learners are also offered by:

- (a) county/capital pedagogical counselling services providing career counselling and recommendations;
- (b) local economic chambers offering career orientation services through sessions, factory visits, and skills contests;
- (c) VET centres disseminating information about vocational programmes to learners, including adults.

4.3.2. Career guidance events and online platforms

Career orientation and guidance events for primary and secondary learners include open days at VET schools and career exhibitions:

- (a) What is the track? (*Mi a pálya?*);
- (b) European vocational skills week;
- (c) Night of trades (*Szakmák éjszakája*);
- (d) Build your future! (*Építsd a jövőd!*);
- (e) Let's learn professions! (*SzakMÁzz!*);
- (f) 'Trade taster' career orientation week (*Szakmakóstoló Hét*);
- (g) Autumn career guidance open day (*Őszi pályaorientációs napok*);
- (h) 'Stars of trades' festival (*Szakma Sztár Fesztivál*).

There are also digital resources and online platforms. The Education Authority's Career guidance measurement and support tool (*Pályaorientációs Mérő és Támogatóeszköz, POM*) helps users explore professions and receive feedback on their skills. The NSZFH Career guidance online platform provides information on events, occupations, career tests, online counselling, and support materials. IKK offers comprehensive VET and career guidance resources, including an Information booklet on basic vocational qualifications, an interactive map, the Digital qualification advisor and SkillsCom, an innovative social media platform. The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's *Szakmavilág app* aids lower secondary students in exploring vocational qualifications and sectors. The Career Guidance Club (*Pályaori Klub*) Facebook group, launched in 2020, provides online events, and counselling.

4.3.2. Higher education and adult career guidance

Career centres within higher education institutions offer guidance and counselling. Information on admission to HE programmes is available on the Education Authority's website. Adults can obtain career information and counselling at employment departments of county or capital government offices, as well as from companies, non-profits, county community centres, and family service offices.

Please see also [Guidance and outreach Hungary national report](#); [Cedefop's labour market information toolkit](#); [Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices](#).

4.4. Challenges and development opportunities

4.4.1. Aligning VET with labour market needs

One of the significant challenges for the Hungarian VET system is matching labour market needs and addressing skills shortages. VET must adapt quickly to the demand for a workforce skilled in advanced technologies and sustainability. Every young person leaving VET should have skills and competences beyond basic levels to support lifelong learning.

Since 2019, Hungary's VET system has been separated from the general education system, highlighting its strategic importance and enabling a more direct alignment with labour market needs.

Hungary is working on improving VET infrastructure to support digital and green technologies⁽⁸⁵⁾. Efforts also focus on strengthening dual training by incentivising placements and supporting SMEs through [sectoral training centres](#).

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Please see information on Hungary's 21st century VET school development programme in: Cedefop (2024). [Vocational education and training policy briefs 2023 – Hungary](#). Cedefop monitoring and analysis of vocational education and training policies.

Regular reviews of vocational qualifications ensure curricula stay relevant. The sector skills councils (SSCs) provide a platform for dialogue between VET providers and industry representatives, ensuring that VET programmes are aligned with current and future labour market needs.

Partnerships between VET and higher education are being developed to increase VET's relevance. Traditionally, the primary pathway to higher education was through general upper secondary education. New initiatives, like the [certified technician programme](#), aim to attract top academic achievers to VET, establishing it as a primary gateway to engineering studies.

4.4.2. Inclusive VET

Hungary's early school leaving rate was 11.6% in 2023, above the EU target of 9% by 2030. As shown by the [PISA 2022 results](#), the impact of learners' socioeconomic background on education outcomes in Hungary is one of the strongest in the EU and the impact of school/programme type on outcomes is also very significant. VET plays a critical role in addressing these disparities by offering accessible education to those at risk of dropping out and supporting disadvantaged groups.

Improving the permeability and flexibility of the VET system can help make it more adaptable and inclusive. This includes enabling smoother transitions between educational pathways and recognising prior learning and skills. The springboard programme within flexible learning pathways, for instance, allows students to enter upper secondary vocational studies without a lower secondary certificate. Recent amendments to the VET Act also lowered the entry age from 16 to 15, helping to prevent early school leaving.

Since 2023, the government has been drafting legislation to adopt micro-credentials. This will help validate specific skills or knowledge areas. Although there is no comprehensive national validation system yet, projects are under way to develop one.

4.4.3. Sustaining a skilled teaching workforce

Sustaining a skilled teaching workforce is crucial for the VET system. To ensure VET teachers stay updated with new teaching methods and technologies, continuing professional development (CPD) is essential. Providing high-quality, in-company training opportunities is a key part of this. However, the aging teacher population and lack of STEM teachers (86) require further actions.

The 2019 VET reforms created a distinct legal status for VET teachers, introducing specific regulations for salaries and CPD to attract professionals from outside the teaching sector, bringing fresh expertise and the latest technologies. Organising CPD opportunities in company environments helps current VET teachers stay connected with industry advancements. Recent wage increases also aim to address the challenge.

Moving from traditional teaching methods such as lecture-based instruction, to new approaches like project-based learning also requires a change in mindset among VET teachers. The IKK Innovative Training Support Centre supports this transition through a network for sharing good practices and offering training sessions to help teachers adopt new methods.

4.4.4. Improving career guidance and VET attractiveness

Attracting young learners to upper secondary VET remains a challenge despite growing enrolment figures. Recent regulations oblige vocational schools to include career guidance in their education programmes. However, career guidance activities are often fragmented and not always effective in preventing misinformed career choices. Students who enter VET as a second choice are at higher risk of dropping out or performing poorly.

Improving career guidance activities is crucial to help students make informed choices and build commitment to their chosen qualifications. To coordinate these activities, a career guidance

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Közgazdaság- és Regionális Tudományi Kutatóközpont: A közoktatás indikátorrendszere 2023.

working group was established within the VET Innovation Council in May 2024. These activities could be further improved by targeting primary school students from early grades.

Acronyms

AES	Adult education survey
CPD	Continuing professional development
CVET	Continuing vocational education and training
EDIOP	Economic development and innovation operational programme
ELET	Early leaving from education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	Early school leaving
FAR	<i>Felnőttképzési Adatszolgáltatási Rendszer</i> [Adult training data reporting system]
GDP	Gross domestic product
HE	Higher education
HUF	Hungarian Forint
ISCED	International standard classification of education
IKK	<i>IKK Innovatív Képzéstámogató Központ</i> [IKK Innovative Training Support Centre]
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
KIM	<i>Kulturális és Innovációs Minisztérium</i> [Ministry of Culture and Innovation]
KKK	<i>Képzési és Kimeneti Követelmények</i> [programme and outcome requirements]
KRÉTA	<i>Elektronikus Köznevelési Regisztrációs és Tanulmányi Alaprendszer</i> [Electronic school management system]
KSH	<i>Központi Statisztikai Hivatal</i> [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
LFS	Labour force survey
MER	<i>Munkaerő-piaci Előrejelző Rendszer</i> [Workforce Forecasting System]
MKIK	<i>Magyar Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara</i> [Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry]
MKIK GVI	<i>MKIK Gazdaság és Vállalkozáskutató Nonprofit Kft.</i> [Institute for Economic and Enterprise Research operated by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry]

NSZFH	<i>Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Hivatal</i> [National Office for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning]
OSAP	<i>Országos Statisztikai Adatfelvételi Program</i> [Hungarian Statistical Data Collection Programme]
PES	Public employment services
PK	<i>Programkövetelmények</i> [programme requirements]
QMS	Quality management system
RRP	Recovery and resilience plan
SEN	Special education needs
SSC	Sector skills councils
STC	Sectoral training centre
SZIR	<i>Szakképzés Információs Rendszere</i> [VET Information System]
VET	Vocational education and training

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Vocational education and training in Hungary

Short description

This short description explores vocational education and training (VET) in Hungary within its socioeconomic context, discussing key characteristics, system developments and challenges.

Hungary's VET system offers upper secondary programmes in school-based forms, incorporating dual training, and includes various post-secondary and tertiary programmes. Labour market training programmes are designed to respond flexibly to the dynamic requirements of the labour market. This comprehensive structure provides a strong foundation of skills and key competences and fosters lifelong learning.

The VET 4.0 Strategy, revised in 2023, guides Hungary's VET policy. The 2019 VET Act reshaped the system by separating VET from general education, introducing dual VET, and aligning VET with labour market demands.

Partnerships between VET and higher education boost quality and excellence. Efforts continue to enhance inclusivity, career guidance, and continuous professional development for VET teachers. Social partners actively contribute to VET policy-making, ensuring the system remains adaptable to economic needs.

**CEDEFOP**European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, 570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE

Postal address: Cedefop service post, 570 01 Themi, GREECE

Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu[visit our portal www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)Publications Office
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