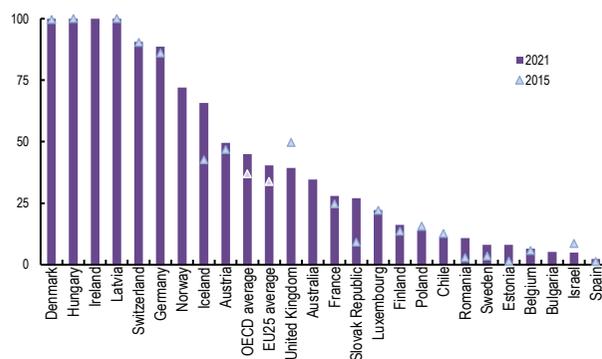


VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TAILORED TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND RESPONDING TO LABOR MARKET REQUIREMENTS

authors: Laura Vikšere, Viktors Kravčenko, Dace Kalsone

Vocational education and training (VET) provides good outcomes for employment and professional, and personal skills. Work-based learning (WBL) is an effective way to learn both vocational and transversal competences. Latvia is one of the four countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – together with Denmark, Ireland and Hungary – where **all upper-secondary vocational education students are enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes** (see Chart below).

Share of upper secondary vocational students enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes (2015 & 2021), %



A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Starting from 2022, evaluation of learning results of the student gives the opportunity to receive an education document that certifies the achievements on mastering:

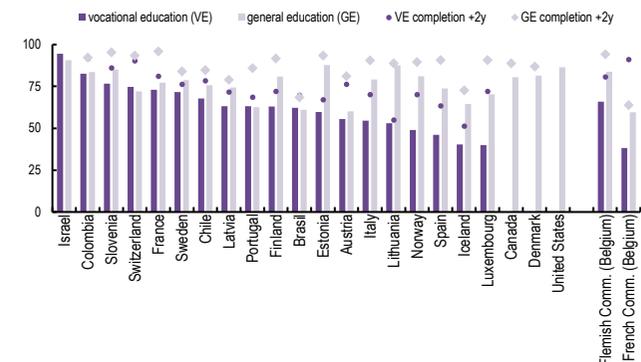
- of a full VET qualification (of the same educational programme or of a lower level),
- or individual parts of the programme or VET qualification,
- or a programme module.

This flexible approach promotes a successful integration of students into the labour market and provides the opportunity to continue learning or obtaining qualifications at later stages as well.

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Mentioned measures will reduce the dropout from VET programmes in the near future – now in Latvia **63% of upper-secondary VET students complete their programmes by the end of theoretical duration**, the OECD average is 62%, while the proportion of those who finish the programmes after a further two years is 72% in Latvia and 73% in OECD countries average (see Chart below).

Upper secondary completion rates, by timeframe and programme orientation on entry (2021), %



ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCE ALLOWS THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO LATER STAGES OF PROGRAMME

Starting from 2023 VET institutions may enrol persons in VET programmes to continue their studies at later stages of a programme. Competence acquired in previous education or professional experience is evaluated and recognized, so that the person individually acquires only the missing competences for obtaining the specific VET qualification in a shorter period of time.

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INVOLVEMENT OF INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

The industry representatives are involved through the active participation of [Sectoral Expert Councils](#), taking part in the development of VET content, the exams, admission planning and quality assurance of VET. In Latvia, a [tripartite social dialogue](#) allows the government, employers and trade unions jointly solve socio-economic and educational issues.

MONITORING OF VET GRADUATES

Upper secondary VET ensures the access of qualified specialists to the labour market and to the next levels of education. The monitoring data of VET graduates provides information to individuals, educational institutions, municipalities and state institutions about the graduates':

- employment,
- entrepreneurship and
- earnings

for data-informed decision making.

[§ Regulatory framework](#)

SHORT-CYCLE HIGHER (COLLEGE) EDUCATION IN LATVIA – WITH THE HIGHEST EARNINGS ADVANTAGE

Short-cycle higher vocational education in Latvia, i.e. college education, provides a very significant – 74% income advantage compared to those employed with below upper-secondary attainment.

Relative earnings of workers (25-34 year-olds) compared to those with below upper-secondary attainment = 100, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2021), %

	Upper-secondary vocational	Upper-secondary general	Short-cycle tertiary
Latvia	116	139	174
Estonia	103	115	–
OECD average	122	122	139
EU 25 average	121	122	–

SUMMARY

- ❖ students learn theoretical knowledge and practical skills at VET institution, while at the employer - in the framework of WBL and practical training - they are equipped to the requirements of the labour market,
- ❖ upper secondary VET ensures the supply of qualified specialists to the labour market and gives the opportunity to them to continue education at a next level,
- ❖ industry representatives are involved in the planning and implementation of VET, ensuring responsiveness to labour market requirements, industry needs and development trends.

Source: OECD Spotlight on VET: Findings from Education at a Glance 2023 and MoES data.