
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE
ITALY

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



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 - Post-Secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Istruzione Tecnica Superiore)..
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Italy comprises the following main features:

- education and employment ministries lay down the rules and general principles but the regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of VET programmes and apprenticeship-type schemes;
- there are three types of apprenticeship with one type (Type 2) not corresponding to any education level but leading only to occupational qualifications recognised by the labour market (1) ;
- continuing VET is mainly directed towards employed people;
- the recent adoption of the national qualifications framework (January 2018) is a catalyst for re-designing qualifications.

Distinctive features (2)

The Italian context is characterised by the presence of multiple institutional players at national and regional levels, in addition to the relevant role of the social partners.

Title V (article 117) of the Constitution provides for ownership either by the State, the regions or mechanisms for cooperation between the different institutions, in relation to the type of training supply:

- the State establishes general rules and determines the fundamental principles of education;
- the regions have legislative power over VET;
- education falls under the scope of concomitant legislation, except for the autonomy of education institutions.

In light of the interweaving of the different intervention areas, ministries of education and labour and the regions define formal agreements within the State-regions conference. The aim is to define matters of common interest, although at different levels of responsibility.

The implementation of Title V has not yet been completed; this increases the interweaving and the complexity of the different levels of system governance. The areas of activity which primarily apply to the jurisdiction of the education ministry and those which primarily apply to the labour ministry and the regions and autonomous provinces, are to be kept distinct. However, many activities and interventions require consultation between the different institutional players.

Reference should be made to the role of the social partners, who contribute to defining and creating active employment policies, especially in relation to VET (in particular lifelong training).

[1] Apprenticeship is available at all levels and programmes and is always defined as an open-ended employment contract. Type 1 apprenticeship is offered for all programmes at upper secondary level and the higher technical education and training (IFTTS) programme. Type 3 apprenticeship (higher training/education apprenticeship) is offered in higher technical education (ITS) programmes and all tertiary education level programmes leading to university degrees, HTI diplomas, and doctoral degrees

corresponding to the tertiary level. Type 2 apprenticeship does not correspond to any education level, diploma or qualification, but leads to occupational qualifications recognised by the relevant national sectoral collective agreements applied in the hiring company. Type 1 and Type 3 apprenticeships are associated with a formal education and training programme, while Type 2 is not.

- [2] Information on distinctive features is provided by ReferNet Italy as there is no *Spotlight* edition for 2017 of which distinctive features was an analysed theme.

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Challenges that the VET system faces (3) :

- integrating the training and employment of young people within a dual system by reinforcing apprenticeships;
- reinforcing apprenticeship for higher training/education;
- simplifying current legislation and boost the appeal of apprenticeship for enterprises;
- developing innovative pedagogical methodologies;
- reducing early leaving from education and training;
- training teachers and trainers;
- promoting the assessment of education and training outcomes (processes and results) through implementation of a national plan for quality assurance in education and training and in line with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training recommendation (4) ;
- training staff involved in all stages and procedures of the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- increasing public awareness of the potential benefits of validation of non-formal and informal learning especially to those target groups who could benefit most;
- improving cost-effectiveness of validation of non-formal and informal learning procedures;
- improving monitoring of VET outcomes and adjust VET provision to each learner's training needs;
- developing evaluative analytical tools on the impact of training policies.

Regarding specifically to continuing vocational training the following challenges and issues should be addressed:

- developing further the already existing skills forecasting tools and methods and better match training provision to skills needs;
- supporting workers' participation in training, eliminate obstacles that prevent them from training, and motivate the most vulnerable workers, in particular the low-skilled and over 50s to participate in training activities;
- improving the capacity of training providers to offer programmes that enhance technological and in particular digital skills;
- strengthening the involvement of the social partners in corporate decisions relating to training;
- consolidating the certification of skills acquired through continuing vocational training;
- improving coordination and networking between the various stakeholders involved in lifelong learning at national and regional level.

[3] Adapted from *Vocational education and training in Europe – Italy*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018 [unpublished].

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

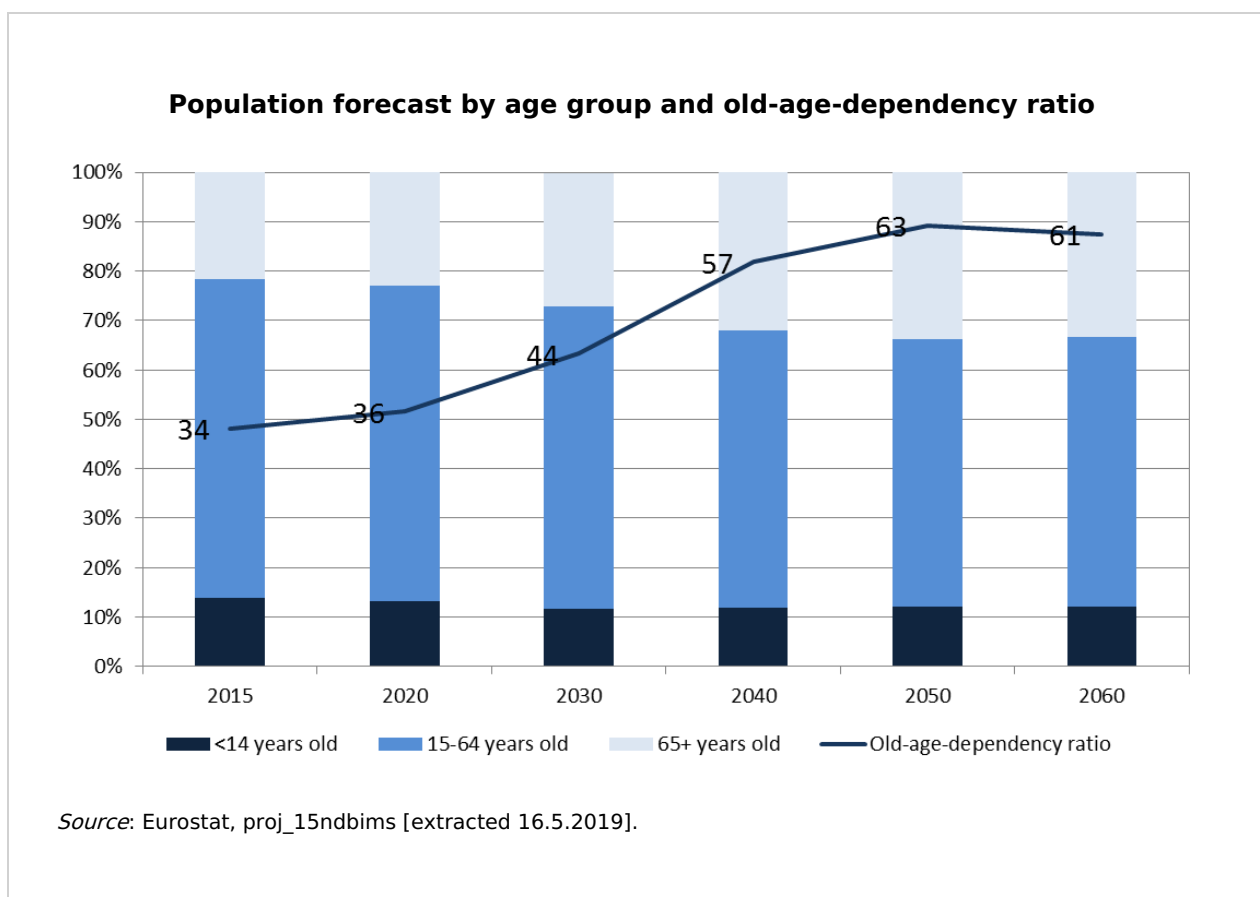
3.1 Demographics

Population in 2018: 60 483 973 (5) .

It increased since 2013 by 1.3% due to immigration (6) .

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

An old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase from 34 in 2015 to 61 in 2060.



Demographic trends have an impact on school population, which was decreased between September 2014 and June 2015, especially at lower secondary level (by 0.7%). In the same period, upper secondary school level population has increased by 0.8%, including both Italian (+0.6%) and foreign learners (+2.8%).

Since 2007, immigration has been a prevailing demographic growth factor. In 2016, it has halved, while emigration has nearly tripled.

The share of foreign learners has increased by 20.9% between 2009/10 and 2014/15 (from 673

592 to 814 187), compared to a 2.7% decrease of Italian learners (from 8 283 493 to 8 058 397). The share of foreign female learners was 48%.

In 2014/15, 55.3% of learners with foreign nationality were born in Italy (84.8% in pre-primary education). In 2015, 7.3% of foreign learners declared to have repeated one or more school years (4), especially those not born in Italy (31%). Foreign learners often have lower marks in secondary education programmes.

Not applicable (7)

3.2 Economics

Most companies in Italy are micro and small-sized (8) .

Total: 4 390 911 enterprises, 16 684 518 employees.

Micro enterprises (0-9 employees): 95.2%

Small enterprises (10-49 employees): 4.2%

Medium enterprises (50-249 employees): 0.5%

Large enterprises (250 and more employees): 0.1%

Main economic sectors in Italy are:

- machinery and equipment;
- metalworking;
- electronics and components;
- chemicals;
- textiles;
- furniture;
- food and beverage;
- construction;
- wholesale and retail trade;
- accommodation and food service activities;
- transport and logistics;
- information and communications;
- financial and insurance activities.

Export is very relevant for Italy and comprises several sectors, mainly machinery and equipment, textiles, furniture, transport equipment and vehicles, metalworking, food and beverage, electronics and components and others.

The sectors most linked to VET are electronics and components, information and communications, financial and insurance activities, machinery and equipment, transport equipment and vehicles, chemicals,

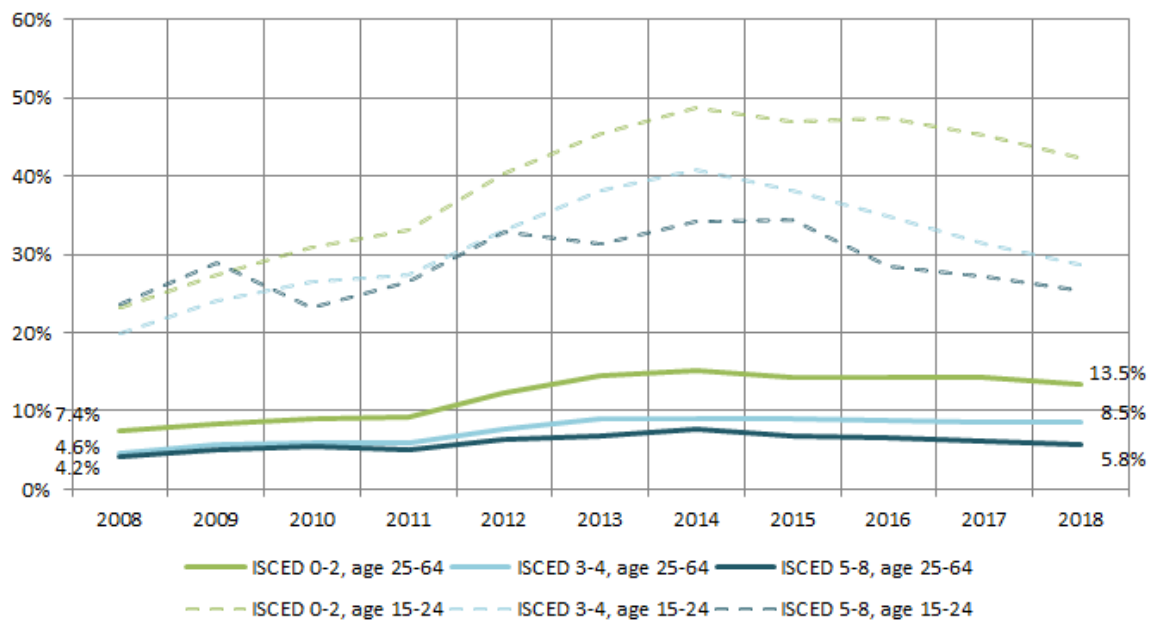
3.3 Labour market

Most of occupations and professions are regulated, with the exception of some sectors of self-employment, especially in the south regions.

In recent years, a series of legislative reforms, inspired by the European principle of flexicurity, have been introduced with the aim of introducing more elements of flexibility into active labour market policies, as well as new social security instruments.

Total unemployment (9) (2018): 9.3% (6% in EU-28): It increased by 3.7 percentage points since 2008 (10) .

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2008-18

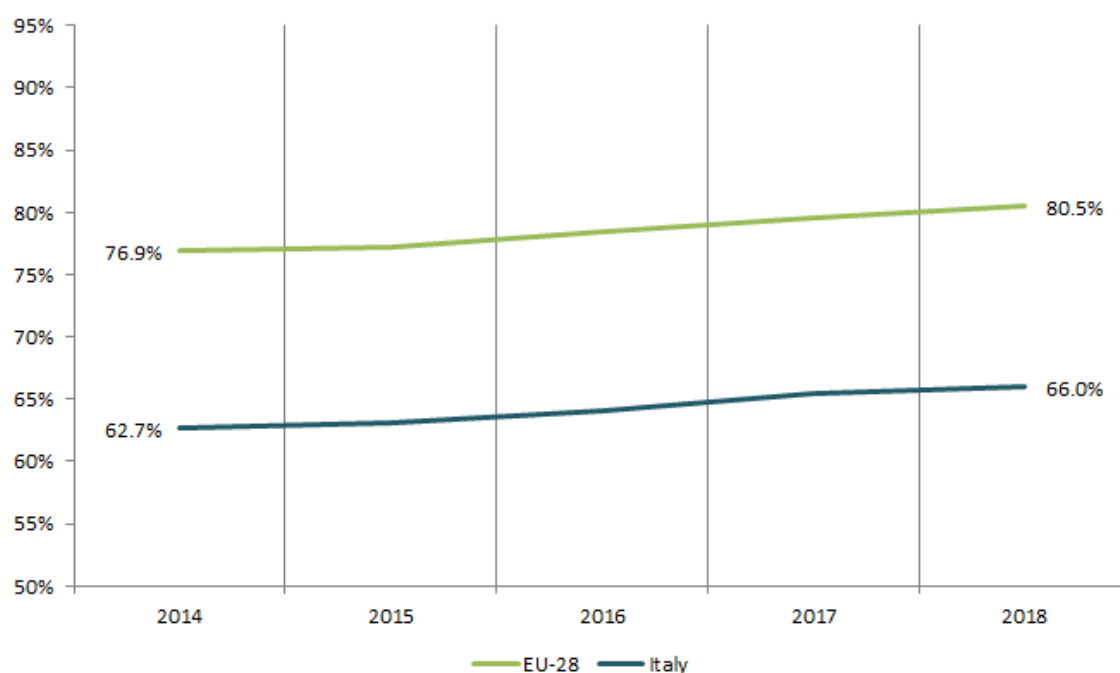


NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.
 Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

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

Employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates increased from 62.7% in 2014 to 66% in 2018 (11) .

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 16.5.2019].

The increase (+3.3pp) in employment of 20-34 year-old VET graduates in 2014-18 was lower compared to the increase in employment of all 20-34 year-old graduates (+3.7 pp) in the same period in Italy (12) .

For more information about the external drivers influencing VET developments in Italy please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project [(12a)]

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- [5] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [Extracted 16.5.2019].
 - [6] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [Extracted 16.5.2019].
 - [7] Italy is home to almost fifty different nationalities with over 10 000 residents. This composes a multi-ethnic framework. Though courses in Italian language are offered to foreign residents there's no record of VET programmes offered in another language.
 - [9] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.
 - [10] Source: Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 20.5.2019].
 - [11] NB: Breaks in time series. Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].
 - [12] NB: Breaks in time series. Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

CHAPTER 4.

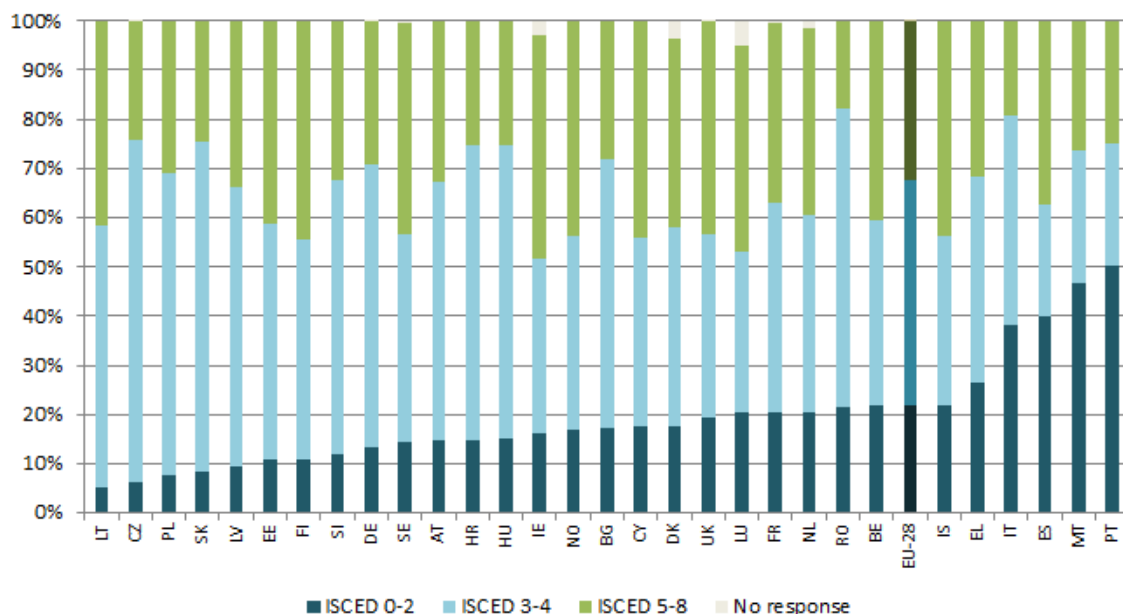
Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Education has high value in Italy. However the share of population aged up to 64 with higher education (19.3%) is below the EU-28 average (32.2%). This is also the case for the share of population aged up to 64 with medium or low qualifications. In Italy, there are some contradictions in the relationship between the education and training system and the production system. An example is the low presence of qualified labour in the production system, due mostly to the still fairly low number of graduates compared to other European countries.

Having a higher educational qualification would not appear to have a significant effect on the probability of finding a good job match. Also, over-education is associated to both lower labour productivity and lower job satisfaction. In this respect the number of 14 year-olds choosing to enrol on vocational education and training pathways (IeFP) as an option that would allow better matching of skills to jobs is significant, as the figure below demonstrates.

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2018



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011. Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia, Iceland, Latvia, and Poland.

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, Ifsa_pgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

Students on Vocational Education and Training Pathways (IeFP) courses by region (years I-III), 2015-16 training year ([13])

Regions	Total students	At training institutes	Supplementary subsidiarity	Complementary subsidiarity
Piedmont	25,964	15,887	10,077	0
Aosta Valley	699	197	437	65
Lombardy	56,153	44,609	0	11,544
Bolzano	5,505	5,505	0	0
Trento	5,199	5,199	0	0
Veneto	21,640	19,216	0	2,424
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	4,602	3,966	422	214
Liguria	5,329	1,728	3,601	0
Emilia-Romagna	27,893	7,280	20,613	0
Tuscany	17,888	2,582	13,950	1,356
Umbria	4,856	565	4,291	0
Marche	10,321	798	9,523	0
Lazio	20,042	11,030	9,012	0
Abruzzo	5,800	346	5,454	0
Molise	1,960	316	1,644	0
Campania	23,685	0	23,685	0
Apulia	23,224	1,780	21,444	0
Basilicata	2,597	0	2,597	0
Calabria	90	90	0	0
Sicily	37,025	12,148	24,161	716
Sardinia	7,856	534	7,322	0
Total	308,328	133,776	158,233	16,319

Source: National institute of public policy analysis and ministry of labour and social policy, based on regional and provincial figures.

Figures for the 2015/16 training year confirmed a progressive stabilisation of the system: the decision to enrol on the 1st year of vocational education and training pathways is becoming increasingly vocational, gradually distancing itself from the widely-held opinion that the vocational education and training pathways educational offer is exclusively the port of call for those who have failed repeatedly at school, but these pathways are chosen because have strong professional characteristics.

For more information about VET in higher education in Italy please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project [(12b)]

4.3 VET learners by level

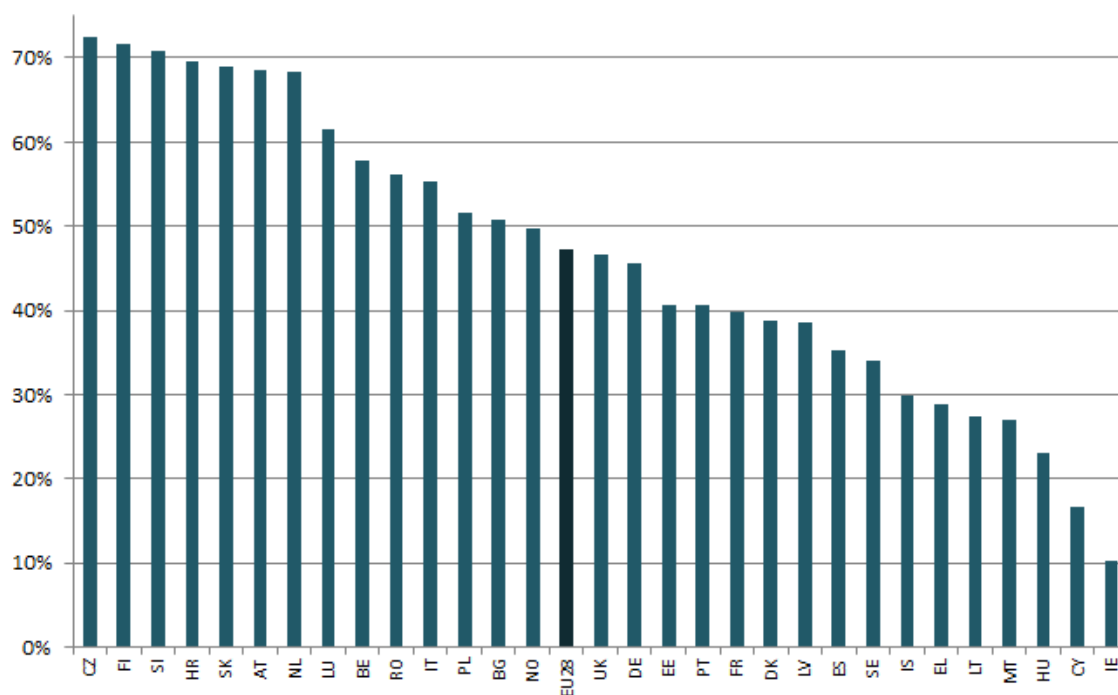
Share of learners in VET by level in 2017

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
Not applicable	55.3%	Not applicable

NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 16.5.2019].

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2017



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 16.5.2019].

4.4 Female share

In VET there are 50.3% males compared to 49.7% females.

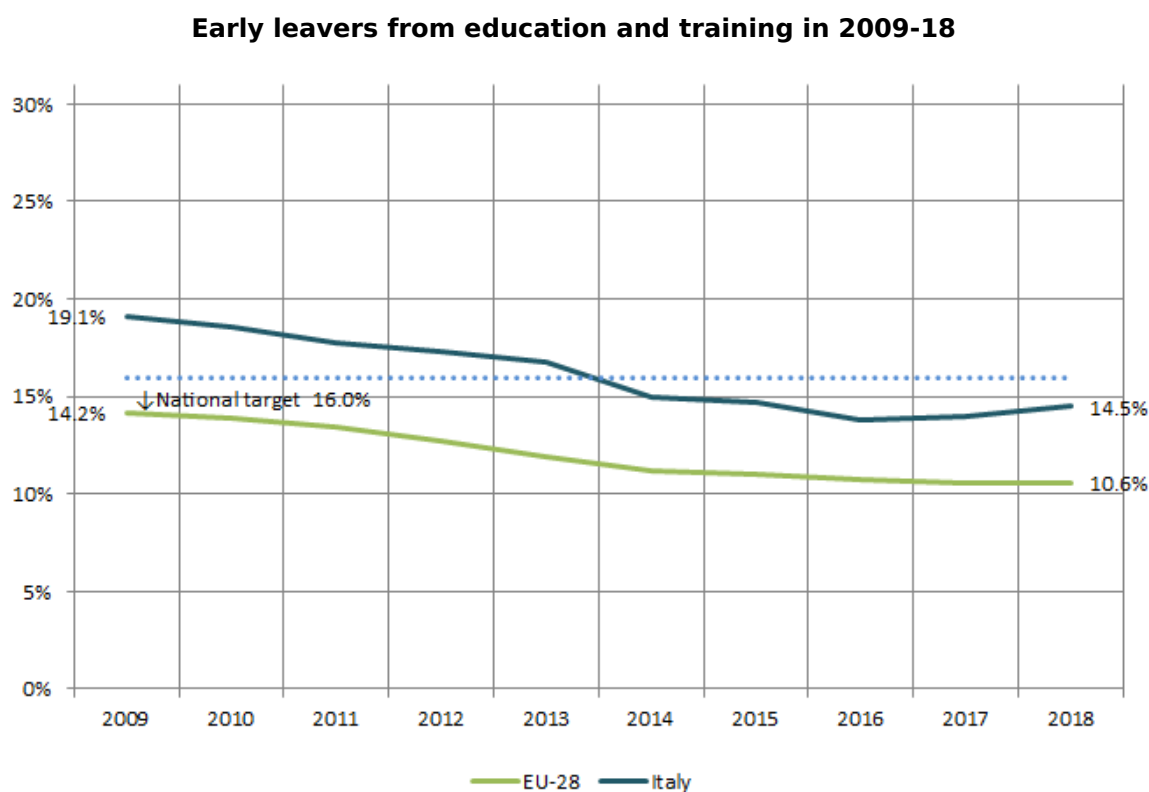
The educational attainment is as follows: 36%, less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2); 35.7%, upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4); 17.1%, tertiary education (levels 5-8) (14). The study fields (ISCED 2013) that they enrol the most are: computer use (37.4%), hygiene and occupational health services (29.1%), professional computer (27.3%), foreign languages (23.8%), business and administration (23%), hotel, restaurants and catering (19.8%), marketing (16.4%), mechanics and metal trades (16%), secretarial and office work (15.1%), health (15%), accounting and taxation (14.3%), electronics and automation (12.1%) (15).

In vocational education and training pathways (leFP) there are more males than females. (61.5%, compared with 38.5%). In the fourth year of the pathways, there is still a prevalence of male pupils (57.5%) even if the detachment from the female component (42.5%) is less.

The preferred study fields are in the areas of catering, electronics, wellness, aesthetics (for females) (16).

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased from 19.1% in 2009 to 14.5% in 2018. It is below the national target for 2020 of not more than 16% but above the EU-28 average of 10.6%.



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

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 16.5.2019] and European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [accessed 14.11.2018].

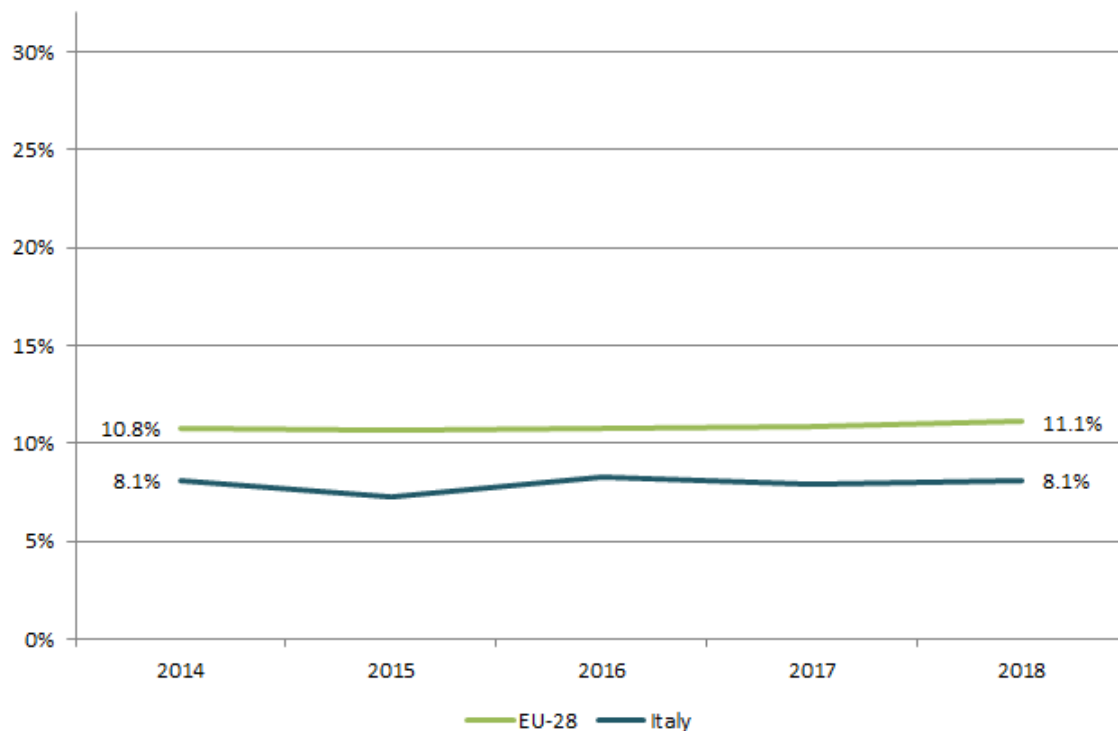
Dropout rate from VET

Information not available

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning offers training opportunities for adults, mainly low qualified people, imprisoned people and refugees.

Participation in lifelong learning in 2014-18



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training
 Source: Eurostat, trng_ifse_01 [extracted 16.5.2019].

Participation in lifelong learning is the same since 2014 (though a decreasing trend was obvious until 2017 when it reached 7.0%). In 2018, it reached 8.1%, three percentage points below the EU-28 average (11.1%).

4.7 VET learners by age

VET learners by age (17) :

- 14-17: 18.8%
- 18-34: 45.8%
- 35+: 35.4%

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- [13] National institute of public policy analysis and ministry of labour and social policy, based on regional and provincial figures.
- [14] Source: ISFOL-INAPP (2012). *OFP Survey*. <http://tiny.cc/gx737y> . Latest data available; the next survey results will be available in 2020.
- [15] Source: ISFOL-INAPP (2012). *OFP Survey*. <http://tiny.cc/gx737y>. Latest data available; the next survey results will be available in 2020.
- [16] Data from the 2015/16 academic year.

- [17] Most recent aggregate data available: ISFOL *OFP Survey*, reference year 2012; the next estimate will be available for the reference year 2018.

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0);
- integrated primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 1 and 2) (hereafter first cycle of education);
- upper secondary education (ISCED level 344, EQF 4 for general education)(ISCED levels 353-354, EQF 3-4 for vocational upper secondary options)(also called second cycle of education);
- post-secondary education (IFTS- only vocational – ISCED level 453, EQF 4);
- higher education (ISCED level 453, EQF 5 for higher technical programmes), ISCED level 667, EQF 6, ISCED levels 667-767 EQF 7, ISCED level 768-864, EQF 8).

Pre-school education is not compulsory and is provided by educational services for children aged less than three years operated by the regions, whereas for ages 3-6 is available at pre-primary schools which operate under the responsibility of the education ministry.

Compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and lasts for 10 years up to 16 years of age. It covers the whole first cycle of education (primary and lower secondary and two years of the second cycle- upper secondary education).

The last two years of compulsory education can be attended either in an upper secondary school or within the regional VET system.

The upper secondary school education offers both general and vocational (technical and vocational) programmes. Duration of studies is five years. At the end of the upper secondary education, students who successfully pass the final exam, receive a certificate that gives them access to higher education.

The following institutes offer education at higher level:

- universities (polytechnics included);
- high level arts, music and dance education institutes (Afam);
- higher schools for language mediators (SSML);
- higher technical institutes (ITS).

Access to university, high level arts, music and dance education institutes and higher schools for language mediators programmes is solely for students with an upper secondary school leaving certificate. The education ministry and individual institutions establish the specific conditions for admission.

Courses at higher technical institutes (ITS) are accessible to students with an upper secondary leaving certificate and to students who have attended a four-year regional vocational course followed by an additional one-year course in the higher technical education and training system (IFTS). Higher technical institutes offer short-cycle bachelor programmes, according to the Bologna structure (18) .

At upper secondary level the following VET programmes are offered:

- five-year programmes (EQF level 4) at technical schools leading to technical education diplomas; at vocational schools leading to professional education diplomas. Programmes combine general education and VET, and can also be delivered in the form of alternance training. Graduates have access to higher education;
- three-year programmes leading to a vocational qualification (EQF level 3);
- four-year programmes leading to a technician professional diploma (EQF level 4).

At post-secondary level, VET is offered as higher technical education for graduates of five year upper secondary programmes or four-year vocational education and training pathway programmes who passed entrance exams:

- higher technical education and training courses (IFTS): one year post-secondary non-academic programmes leading to a high technical specialisation certificate (EQF level 4);
- higher technical institute programmes (ITS): two- to three-year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma (EQF level 5).

VET for adults is offered by a range of different public and private providers. It includes programmes leading to upper secondary VET qualifications to ensure progression opportunities for the low-skilled. These programmes are provided by provincial adult education centres (CPIA) under the remit of the education ministry.

Continuing VET targets mainly employed people. Most resources for continuing training have been planned and managed by the regions and autonomous provinces (which have mainly used European social fund regional operational programmes as a source) and the social partners (through interprofessional funds).

Continuing VET programmes pursue three goals:

- the maintenance/upgrading of competencies and skills;
- corporate competitiveness and innovation;
- compulsory training.

Compulsory training comprises obligatory courses related to work specific requirements, for which the employer has to make sure that a worker received a proper training tailored to the needs and conditions of the workplace. It is a mandatory training at the work place (mandatory for the employer by law, for all employees in certain occupations, e.g. health and safety). There are also some obligatory training courses by law for some dangerous or potentially dangerous tasks (driving a fork lift), training for preventive services (e.g. occupational physicians may be required by law to do some training regularly, as well as for the workers in the food sector in respect to the compliance with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food protocol, training for safety representatives who deal with occupational safety and health questions at the enterprise level and training for first aid measures (by law, a certain number of people have to be able to offer first aid), training for workers to protect themselves and others (e.g. fire exercises). Beneficiaries can obtain a formal qualification.

[18] Information retrieved from Eurydice: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/italy_en

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

In 2012, agreement between the government, the regions and local bodies concerning the definition of the national system on lifelong guidance provided a national reference framework to facilitate and consolidate a common language and culture between guidance workers. In the framework of this agreement, an inter-institutional and national working group for lifelong guidance was established in 2012, with the purpose of defining minimum standards for guidance services and workers' professional skills, with reference to the guidance services and functions that exist within different regional VET and working systems.

In September 2015, at the State-regions-autonomous provinces conference, an agreement was signed for a trial project about the dual system. This trial, which began in the 2015/16 training year, was an opportunity to further develop the Italian dual education system, able to create integration between education/training and the fundamental task of actively combating the notable youth unemployment crisis.

The trial includes two courses of action:

- first course of action: development and reinforcement of the VET providers' placement system:
- support for the organisation of guidance services and placements (vocational guidance, balance and certification of expertise, matching companies and students, organising school-work);
- alternation of courses and placements and managing protocols with companies;
- training of vocational training centre workers on the legislative and operational features of the new apprenticeship;
- design of educational and vocational courses in which alternating school-work pathways or apprenticeship training are reinforced.
- second course of action: supporting VET pathways beneath the dual system. This action is aimed at allowing young people to obtain a vocational qualification and/or diploma by following educational pathways that provide for an alternance between school and work experience (400 hours). More specifically, these pathways can be completed by means of:
 - apprenticeships to obtain a qualification, a vocational diploma or a higher technical specialisation certificate (i.e. a certificate for completion of higher technical education and training pathway; and
 - alternance between school-based and work-based learning; simulated business training.

Apprenticeship is one of the main educational instruments used to integrate young people in the labour market. In particular, apprenticeship is a permanent labour contract aimed at training young people and giving them employment and is one of the cornerstones of the Italian dual system. The training provided during apprenticeship is managed by the regions and autonomous provinces. Within the Jobs Act framework, Legislative Decree 81/2015 fundamentally revised related regulations. These innovations were mainly designed to enhance the appeal of apprenticeship contracts for companies and institutions because application performances are not yet satisfactory, in line with the general difficulties of the national economic and production system.

Apprenticeship in Italy designates a work contract with a specific training purpose; it includes both on-the-job and classroom training. The apprenticeship contract, which is distinct from other

work-based learning, must be drafted in written form, defining the roles and responsibilities of all parties, as well as the terms and conditions of the apprenticeship, the probationary period, the occupation tasks, wage increases, both the entry and final grade levels and the qualification to be obtained. The training programme is an integral part of the contract. Both the contract and the training programme must be signed by the employer and the apprentice.

Since apprentices are considered employees, they are entitled to insurance benefits for job injuries and accidents, occupational diseases, health reasons, ageing and disability, maternity, household allowance and, since 1 January 2013, labour social security insurance.

The Jobs Act established that only enterprises with up to 50 employees can hire an apprentice if, in the previous 36 months, they retained 20% of their previous apprentices. Workers registered on so-called 'mobility lists' and unemployed people receiving unemployment allowance can take part in this scheme to qualify or requalify (usually they are offered a place on a 'professional' apprenticeship scheme, which is analysed below under the heading professional training apprenticeships).

The apprenticeship system includes three types of contracts:

- apprenticeships leading to a professional operator certificate and a professional technician diploma, an upper-secondary school diploma, a higher technical specialisation certification (IFTTS) – level I apprenticeship.

These schemes are regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces through specific State-regions conference agreements. Content, which is divided into theoretical and practical learning, the specific qualifications offered, and the number of training hours are established by the regions and autonomous provinces according to minimum standards agreed at national level. The duration of the contract is determined according to the certificate or diploma to attain: it cannot exceed the training period nor be less than the national minimum standard. Apprenticeships leading to a professional operator certificate and a professional technician diploma allow young people to fulfil their right/duty to education and training. There are no specific entry requirements, but learners need to bridge the year between the end of lower-secondary school and the start of apprenticeship on an upper-secondary school or vocation education and training pathway programme, unless they are already 15 years old. These apprenticeship schemes last three or four years and offer the possibility to acquire qualifications at operator or technician level (in 22 and 21 occupation fields, respectively: professional operator certificate (European qualifications framework level 3) or professional technician diploma (European qualifications framework level 4). These qualifications are part of the national qualifications register. After obtaining the operator certificate, apprentices may proceed to the fourth year to obtain a technician diploma, in the same occupation. Access to university is possible after successful completion of secondary education and an additional one-year course at an education institute. Apprenticeships for a higher technical specialisation certificate (European qualifications framework level 4) lasts a year and target young people who have fulfilled their right/duty to education and training.

- professional training apprenticeships: this targets 18 to 29-year-olds who want to acquire a qualification provided for in collective bargaining agreements and required on the labour market. Training comprises two parts: a) acquisition of key skills (120 hours over a three-year period) regulated by the regions and autonomous provinces and provided by training centres and award a regional qualification; b) acquisition of vocational skills for specific occupation areas provided directly by companies. The occupation areas and training content are defined by collective bargaining agreements. These programmes have a maximum duration of three years (exceptionally five years for the crafts sector).
- higher education and research apprenticeships This scheme leads to an array of qualification levels encompassing European qualifications framework levels 4-8. It targets 18 to 29-year-olds and fulfils various purposes. Learners can acquire qualifications that are normally offered through school-based programmes, in higher education or at universities, including a doctoral degree. Apprentices can also engage in research activities in private

companies or pursue traineeship required to access the liberal professions (lawyer, architect, business consultant); the latter has not yet been regulated by collective bargaining. In agreement with the social partners and public education and training centres, the regions and autonomous provinces decide the duration of contracts and the organisation of programmes and ensure they are compatible with fully school-based curricula. They also define higher education credits learners obtain at schools, universities or training centres and the skills to be acquired through on the job training at a company. In the absence of a regional regulation, ad hoc arrangements between training institutes and companies are possible. Training cost allocation is defined by local authorities, based on national, regional and European social fund regulations.

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

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The education ministry defines the VET framework in national school pathways (technical and professional institutes) for higher technical education and training courses in agreement with the employment ministry). It has sole responsibility for higher technical institute programmes with regard to the definition of guidance documents and the monitoring and assessment of the training chain (19) . The education ministry also deals with redefining the higher technical institutes' national repertory of occupational profiles, with the introduction of new technical profiles and the updating of those already included in the inventory. The repertory is a list of occupational profiles which are taken into consideration for the design of training courses. Monitoring of higher technical institute courses is carried out by the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (INDIRE) (20) .

The labour ministry defines the VET framework for interventions provided for within the scope of vocational education and training pathways, for higher technical education and training (in agreement with the education ministry), for training interventions for apprenticeships and for continuing training provided within the scope of the public system.

At national level, the national institute for public policy analysis monitors vocational education and training pathways, higher technical education and training courses, apprenticeship training pathways and continuing training interventions

The regions and autonomous provinces are responsible for the planning, programming, organisation and implementation of interventions provided for within the scope of vocational education and training pathways, higher technical education, higher technical education and training, post-vocational education and training pathways, and post-university education for most types of apprenticeship-based training and for publicly-funded continuing training interventions (in agreement with the social partners).

In particular, the programming of higher technical education, and higher technical education and training, interventions is provided for in specific planning documents known as three-year plans.

Through these documents, the regions and autonomous provinces define their strategy on the post-secondary education and training offer, bringing together and integrating the various supply chains of higher technical education, higher technical education and training hubs (21) .

Social partners play an advisory role in the formulation of training policies and contribute to their interpretation into the pathways that then constitute the training offer. They also play a key part in promoting in-company, sectoral and territorial training programmes funded by the regions or realised thanks to joint interprofessional funds for continuing training and help to elaborate and organise active policies in the labour market. Beyond their advisory role at national and local levels, social partners play a crucial part in professional apprenticeship regulation.

[19] Training chain (*filiera formativa*): set of pathways to achieve technical education and vocational education diplomas, at the end of the five-year school courses, of technical institutes and professional institutes.

[20] National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research:
<http://www.indire.it/en/>

[21] As defined in Inter-Ministerial Decree dated 7 February 2013, professional technical hubs are intended to be the functional interconnection between the subjects in the training

chain and companies in the production chain and are therefore, identified as 'training venues for learning in situ', established thanks to network agreements for sharing public and private workshops that are already operating; this interconnection also establishes venues dedicated to learning in applicative contexts, in order to make full use of existing professional resources, even based on 'workshop at school' and 'enterprise school' modes.

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

In Italy there's a distinction between funds that are committed and dispensed. With respect to the sources of funding, both in terms of committed and dispensed funds regional/provincial sources prevail. In short there are three sources of funding:

- regional/provincial;
- ministry of education;
- ministry of labour.

Funding of Vocational and Training Pathways (IeFP)

Vocational education and training pathways are an alternative channel to school for fulfilling the obligation to participate in education (with the legal requirement for all young people to attend school from age 6 to 16) and the right-duty (which must be guaranteed for at least 12 years or until attainment of an upper-secondary school qualification or a vocational qualification before the age of 18) to it.

Funding of higher technical education and training (IFTTS) and higher technical education (ITS) courses

In terms of funding for the higher technical education supply options, the methods used for higher technical education and training and higher technical education courses are the same. Monitoring shows a marked uniformity between the regions that use the European social fund to implement courses. Within this framework, the only exception is Lombardy that, as well as the European social fund, has allocated to the supply chain a share of funding from the labour ministry for the experimentation of the dual system.

Funding of apprenticeships

Training activities for apprenticeship are funded by the labour ministry. For 2017, the labour ministry has earmarked EUR 15 million for this activity (i.e. for funding training courses); the amount due to the regions is calculated on the basis of the number of apprentices with an apprenticeship contract and the number of apprentices on training pathways.

The regions and autonomous provinces co-finance training activities dedicated to apprenticeships through their own resources or the resources of the European social fund.

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In VET there are:

- VET teachers;
- VET trainers;
- company tutors.

The professional profile of teachers is much more clearly defined and regulated than trainers as far as training, recruitment, duties and skills are concerned. Additionally, when it comes to the actual teaching part of their activities, teachers are mainly defined as 'content experts', whereas trainers are 'process experts' who can play a variety of roles depending on the situation (e.g. tutors, trainers, group leaders, coaches, etc.). In fact, trainers are mainly required to support the learning process by guiding and motivating trainees, to strengthen the link between training and work and to update trainees' working skills.

Teachers are regulated on a national level and are employed by the education ministry. They work in State vocational schools and in centres for adult education. Some also work at higher technical institutes. The minimum requirement for accessing the teaching profession is now a five year bachelor degree in specific teaching subjects (maths, chemistry, foreign languages etc.); followed by a one year traineeship (Active Teaching Traineeship (TFA)) courses at schools. Active teaching traineeship courses last 1 500 hours, are equivalent to a European qualifications framework level 7 qualification and the access to them is restricted. The number of students is determined on the basis of the vacancies in each teaching subject and on an admission test. Those who wish to teach disabled people must attend a specific course of study in formal education. After completion of the active teaching traineeship pathway teachers must pass a State exam in order to be admitted to State schools.

Trainers mainly work in vocational training centres that are managed directly by the regional and provincial authorities, as well as in private vocational training centres accredited by the regions. Some trainers also work in companies, consultancy agencies, non-profit organisations and public employment services. There is no nationally recognised register of trainers or formal recruitment procedures, except for public training centres for which a public examination is required. As regards access requirements to the training profession, the national collective work contract only sets

minimum requirements: a degree or an upper secondary school diploma plus professional experience in the relevant sector. Additionally, it establishes that – regardless of the role played in the different training contexts (tutor, counsellor, trainer coordinator, etc.) – trainers should regularly participate in professional refresher programmes, either within or outside the institutions at which they work.

The company tutor is the key figure for the apprentice in workplace training. According to consolidated act on apprenticeships (Legislative Decree 167/211) the company tutor must have 'suitable training and skills', according to national legislation or, in the absence of this, a national collective labour contract. The minimum skills that the company tutor must possess are:

- be familiar with the regulatory context concerned with alternance systems;
- understand their own functions within their role and the contractual elements of the sector and/or company in terms of training;

- manage the reception of the apprenticeships, fostering their placement within the business environment;
- manage relationships with people outside of the company that are involved in the apprentice's training, in order to foster positive integration between extra-company training and work experiences within the company;
- plan and support learning pathways and work socialising, fostering the acquisition of the skills required by the job and facilitating the apprentice's learning process throughout the entire training pathway;
- evaluate learning and acquired skills, as well as the progress and results achieved by the young apprentice during his/her placement and professional development, for the purpose of the relevant certificate being issued by the company.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

For what concerns VET teachers' pre-service training, universities provide teachers' initial training on behalf of the education ministry in collaboration with the schools. The minimum requirement for accessing the teaching profession is a five-year Bachelor degree in specific teaching subjects (maths, chemistry, foreign languages).

In 2018, a new recruitment system has been developed. The latest key features introduced include the requirement to have not only a degree, but also knowledge of psychological and pedagogical disciplines and didactic methodologies and technologies, confirmed by passing specific university exams.

Another fundamental new feature is the post-degree initial training and internship pathway (FIT). This is a paid, three-year training pathway that aspiring educators must attend before being awarded a teaching post. Post-degree initial training and internship pathways are only accessed after passing a public examination. The post-degree initial training and internship pathway envisages gradual integration of aspiring teachers into the classroom environment:

- the first year provides more theoretical training;
- the second year more integrated training opportunities, with a work placement in a school and the start of specific training activities (short substitutions covering absences and lasting no more than 15 days);
- in the third year, aspiring teachers are awarded a vacant teaching position, with all the associated responsibilities.

More generally, pre-service training of VET teachers is aimed at improving their teaching, psychological, pedagogical, organisational and social skills. Special attention is also given to improving their language and digital skills, in compliance with EU recommendations. Educators who wish to teach disabled people must also attend a specific course of study in formal education.

For many years, permanent training for VET teachers was considered an individual right under the national collective labour agreement, but it is now compulsory and regulated by the so-called 'Good School' reform (Law 107/2015).

This law 'establishes that teachers' in-service training is compulsory and continuing, provides incentives to support continuous teacher training and systematic need analysis mechanisms.

Teachers' in-service training must be in line with the school plan and with the education ministry's priorities. Training must also involve all open-ended contract teachers'.

The regions (with employers' rights organisations and trade unions) define and plan the specific training measures aimed to develop the minimum skills required to carrying out the functions of a tutor.

The training measures for the company tutors, now spread over almost all of Italy, have many distinctive features, both due to methodological requirements and the operational means used. Every regional entity sets different pathways due to methodological requirements, structure, content, duration and tools used, as well as due to language and terminology.

More information is available in the Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspective on teachers and trainers (22) .

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

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

For fifteen years, surveys have been carried out in Italy that study the phenomenon of job needs (quantitative) and skill needs (qualitative) from both quantitative (e.g. which and how many professional profiles companies predict they will need to recruit over the next few months) and qualitative (e.g. which skills, know-how and competences should be the focus of future refresher pathways for company employees) perspectives.

These two surveys mentioned above have been carried out by Unioncamere (23) (quantitative survey) and the national institute for public policy analysis, former Isfol (qualitative survey) on a national level, as well as occasionally on a regional level.

The results of these surveys can now be interpreted by integrating them with communication protocols (24) – basically, the Classification of Occupations (CP 2011) and the Classification of Economic Activities (ATECO 2008). In terms of quantity since 1997 the Excelsior survey carried out by Unioncamere has reconstructed an anticipation framework of labour demand and skill needs expressed by companies. For anticipated recruitment, analytical information is collected on the characteristics of the personnel the company intends to hire (i.e. skilled labour, educational qualifications and training levels required, difficulty in finding these profiles, need for further training, previous experience, IT and language skills, etc.).

From a qualitative point of view, in 2006 the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers (ISFOL – now INAPP (National Institute for Public Policy Analysis)) began to carry out research activities designed to analyse existing professions and trades, with a view to providing a detailed description of changes in job content in the short- (next 12 months) and medium-term (next five years). Investigation methods were used that made it possible to interview entrepreneurs, corporate human resources managers or industry experts who could outline trends in key sectors of the economy.

In these terms the audit survey on professional needs, targeting a sample of about 35 000 companies with employees, aimed to collect qualitative information on the needs of companies in terms of the scarcity/lack of specific skills and know-how relating to the skilled workers they employed. Entrepreneurs could therefore reflect and explain in great detail not the training that had been carried out over recent years, but rather, what had to be done in the near future to satisfy specific needs.

In Italy, 33% of companies with at least one employee, just over half a million businesses, have declared they employ at least one person for whom they have registered a need to be satisfied within the next few months via specific refresher activities. The in-company professions for which the most pressing needs have been registered – with gaps that must be closed within the next few months via specific training activities – are those attributable to the large groups of skilled jobs in commercial and service activities (23.9%), artisans, specialist workers and farmers (22.9%) and technical professions (20%), followed immediately by office-based managerial positions (18.3%). The last audit survey on professional needs (the third of its kind) concluded in December 2017. Data of the third edition confirm, on the whole, the information collected during the previous editions. Skills needs are growing in some sectors of the economy: food and

beverage, textiles, chemicals, electronics, commerce and tourism, education and health.

Information from the quantitative and qualitative surveys that explore the professional and training needs of the labour market is a huge asset as it provides useful indications to all stakeholders (including VET providers) of the complex education system that have the task of planning and implementing professional training and upskilling and re-skilling training programmes (refresher pathways) that are as coherent as possible with the needs of the world of production. In this respect, there have been some interesting attempts to bring together the world of labour and training supply; for example, on technical committees periodically tasked with reviewing and updating standards for professional profiles closely linked to the most vocational training supply chains (for example, profiles relating to vocational education and training pathways and higher technical education courses as well as through specific research and analysis activities that are trying to draw up other methodologies, designed to connect (even on a territorial level, the so-called 'curvature' process) the professional needs expressed by companies with the training aims and practices designed by those responsible for the various education options.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (25) and European Skills Index (26) .

10.2 Designing qualifications

Following approval of the 8 January 2018 decree, Italy adopted a national qualifications framework, a tool to define and classify the qualifications issued within the national system of certification of competences, which will make it possible to create the national repertory of education and training qualifications and professional qualifications hereinafter the national repertory).

Thanks to the national qualifications framework, the institutional and technical process for cross-referencing qualifications issued within the national system to one of the eight levels of the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning is defined. In fact, the scope, descriptors and levels of the national qualifications framework are developed in coherence and continuity with European qualifications framework levels. The national qualifications framework and the atlas for jobs and qualifications (hereinafter the job atlas) (27) are the two components of the technical infrastructure of the national repertory.

The competences that compose the national repertory are defined and updated by the education ministry, the labour ministry, other ministries and regions and autonomous provinces that now have the possibility to use the descriptors of the job atlas (processes, activities and expected outcomes) as guideline criteria. These have been developed on a national level in collaboration with the regional authorities and are periodically updated, pursuant to the decree dated 30 June 2015.

As far as the technical investigation part is concerned, this is done via a process conducted by the National institute for public policy analysis further to a request by and in collaboration with stakeholders who are sector experts and subsequently validated by the national technical group established pursuant to the 30 June 2015 decree.

The technical-institutional decision to create a national benchmark – i.e. of a reference tool, organised along the lines of job descriptors, has made it possible to construct a shared system of technical elements around which to establish the processes for assessing the relevance of the needs of the labour market to the competences already described in the national repertory and development of the same, if necessary. The qualifications in the national repertory correspond to a series of elements that constitute the minimum national standard. They are: reference to the public awarding body; description of competences in terms of skills, know-how, autonomy and responsibility; referencing to the economic activity statistical codes (ATECO) and the nomenclature and classification of occupations (CP-ISTAT), in compliance with national statistical system laws; referencing to the national qualifications framework/European qualifications

framework.

These elements are compulsory for all qualifications for the purpose of validation and certification within the national system of certification of competences, as well as for the purposes of portability in a European context. Precisely in relation to this last point, the descriptors of the job atlas are referenced to National qualifications framework levels and are the only benchmarks for the process of comparison between the qualifications issued by the different public awarding bodies.

The national system of certification of competences is designed to be integrated with and complementary to the public lifelong learning offer, in order to favour development of the cultural and professional skills acquired by individuals in formal and non-formal learning contexts and the portability of qualifications in both national and European contexts, even in terms of geographical and professional mobility. The entire technical institutional system that has been developed since 2013 is the single benchmark for organisation of assessment tests, basically designed to ascertain the possession of competences, in line with Article 3, para. 1 of Legislative Decree 13 dated 16 January 2013.

Both components of the national repertory (namely the national qualifications framework and the job atlas) are anchored to the definition of competence intended as the proven ability to use – in a work, study or professional and personal development situations – a complex set of skills and know-how acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

The job atlas contains descriptions of one or more expected outcomes for each of the 840 areas of activity which make up the classification of economic and professional sectors. These express the outcome of an activity or a set of activities of a specific area of activity and include indications on the expected product/service, on the service to be provided, on any input elements and on the context and complexities expressed in terms of autonomy and responsibility.

In the same way, the national qualifications framework provides the reference parameter to define and/or evaluate the elements useful for expressing the minimum expected outcomes, in relation to a specific qualification, in terms of what individuals should know and be capable of doing in relation to each of the eight levels that characterise the increasing complexity of learning for each of the descriptors of the competence (know-how, skills, autonomy and responsibility).

As explained above the Italian context is characterised by the presence of multiple institutional players at national and regional levels.

National vocational school programmes that combine general education and VET (28) fall under the competence of education ministry that lays down general rules and common principle. In the context of school autonomy, schools have the possibility to include specific subjects.

Education and vocational training qualifications, which fall within the competence of the regions, are included in the national register of qualifications. These qualifications are the outcome of a technical and institutional process, which took place at the permanent conference for relations between the State, the regions and the autonomous provinces (a privileged forum for political negotiations between the central government and the regions), with the signing of a State-regions agreement. Any modification to the register requires a debate in the above-mentioned forum.

Below specific information for VET programmes is presented:

Initial VET programmes (IeFP).

The Title V of the current Constitution provides that vocational and training pathways (IeFP) fall under the exclusive competence of the Regions. This means that the State sets 'common standards' (Essential levels of performance, LEP, defined by Legislative Decree 226/05) and

regions define, by their own legislation, the system of vocational and training pathways taking into account the characteristics and needs of the territory. Regions design the training provision. In 2011 regulations issued by the State-regions conference have introduced several important systemic elements: a set of training standards for basic skills to be developed in the three - and four-year programmes; a set of minimum standards (valid at national level) for technical and vocational skills in relation to the occupational profiles included in the National qualifications register (29) intermediate and final certifications that are valid at national level.

The national qualifications register created in 2011 contains the national occupational profiles and the corresponding qualifications and programmes or learning pathways, as well as minimum education and training standards (valid at national level). Qualifications leading to a certain national occupational profile need to be described in terms of learning outcomes and to be allocated the corresponding EQF level.

The update of the occupational profiles is made through an institutional process involving also social parties and approved in State-regions conference.

The above-mentioned Legislative Decree 226/05 defines also the essential levels of competence assessment and certification. Regions ensure the fulfilment of essential levels related to the assessment and certification of competencies: every year an examination commission made up of teachers and experts (as established in Article 19 of the decree) evaluate the level of achievement of learning outcomes; at the end of the pathways, students must pass an exam.

Technical and vocational school programmes ([(30)])

The education ministry defines by legislative decree, for each kind of pathway, the areas of the curriculum (i.e. Agricultural, Industry, etc.), the timetable of subjects and the educational cultural and professional profile (31)) of pupils. The educational cultural and professional profile is a document describing the skills, abilities and knowledge that the student must possess at the end of pathways. The purpose is gives references and guideline useful for the defining the curriculum of the pathways.

Technical schools offer pathways in 11 areas allocated in two sectors: economic sector and technological sector (32) .

Vocational schools offer pathways in six areas allocated in two sectors: service sector and industry and craft sector. Each school can decline these courses according to the local context consistent with the priorities indicated by the regions (33) .

At the end of both pathways, pupils must pass the State exam that consists of two written test and an oral test. The first written test is common to all pathways of the upper secondary education, while the second is specific for each pathway. The education ministry defines by decree the evaluation grids for the assignment of the exam marks.

Higher technical education and training programmes (IFTS) ([(34)])

The institution of the higher technical education and training pathways is planned by the regions, within their exclusive competences in the planning of the training offer. At national level a joint Decree (2013) adopted by the education minister and the labour minister (in accordance with the State-regions conference) defines the 20 specialisation areas for the training offer and the minimum standard of skills. Additional skills may be further defined at regional level, based on the analysis of local professional needs and through consultation with institutions and social partners. At the end of pathways, pupils must pass an exam for the assessment of competence acquired. The examination commission is composed taking into account the indications of the region and made up by representatives of the school, university, vocational training and the world of work.

Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) ([(35)])

Qualifications on offer by higher technical institutes are the result of a strong synergy between

different actors: enterprises, universities/centres of scientific and technological research, schools, and local authorities. The qualifications are designed in six technological areas envisaged by Article 7 of the Prime Minister's Decree of 25 January 2008 (sustainable mobility, new technologies for life, new technologies for 'Made in Italy' products, innovative technologies for cultural heritage and tourism, information and communication technologies, energy efficiency) that are considered priorities for the support of the economic development and competitiveness of the Italian production system. For each area, national reference figures are identified to diversify the training offer so that it is consistent with the needs of the territory in which the higher technical institute operates: to date, there are 29 national reference figures. Each higher technical institute also defines, for each national reference figure, a specific technical professional profile based on the needs of the territory in which it operates. The 29 figures are characterised by a common cultural and professional profile and technical-professional skills. In particular, the course provides the following competences: basic (language, communication and social, scientific and technological, legal and economic, organisational and managerial) and technical-professional competences.

At the end of the courses, learners must pass a final exam for the assessment of the competences acquired through the learning process. The examination board is made up of representatives of the training provider (e.g. school, university, vocational training) and experts coming from the labour market.

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- [23] <http://www.unioncamere.gov.it/>
 - [24] Information and data collected through the surveys is organised on the basis of the 2011 Classification of Occupations and the Classification of Economic Activities (Ateco).
 - [25] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast>
 - [26] <https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index>
 - [27] The atlas for jobs and qualifications is a classification and information tool created on the basis of the descriptors of the Classification of economic and professional sectors, also pursuant to Art. 8 of Legislative Decree 13/2013 and Art. 3, para. 5 of the Inter-Ministerial Decree of 30 June 2015 and an integral part of the information systems pursuant to Arts. 13 and 15 of Legislative Decree 150/2015.
 - [28] Istituti professionali.
 - [29] Repertorio nazionale delle qualifiche.
 - [30] Istituti tecnici e istituti professionali.
 - [31] Profilo Educativo culturale e professionale P.E.Cu.P.
 - [32] Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica, 15 marzo 2010, n. 88 and Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 31 luglio 2017, n. 134.
 - [33] Decreto Legislativo, 13 aprile 2017, n. 61:
<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2017/05/16/17G00069/sg>
 - [34] Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore.
 - [35] Istituti di Istruzione Tecnica superiore. More information available at:
<http://www.sistemaits.it/istituti-tecnici-superiori-its.php>

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

Within the education and training system, the various segments and pathways are accountable to different competent bodies on matters relating to quality assurance.

In terms of issuing general laws on education and defining essential levels of provision on educational matters, upper secondary education and higher technical education are regulated on a national level by the education ministry.

Within the national education and training system a national evaluation system was established by Presidential Decree 80/2013 with the aim of evaluating its efficiency and efficacy, contextualising evaluation on an international level.

At least every three years, the education ministry issues strategic priorities on the evaluation of the education system that, with reference to the vocational education and training system, are defined by guidelines adopted in agreement with the State-regions conference and the labour ministry.

The national institute for the evaluation of the education and training system (INVALSI) (36) operates within the national evaluation system.

Its primary tasks are:

- to guarantee the functional coordination of the national evaluation system;
- to propose evaluation protocols and plan visits to schools by external evaluation units;
- to define efficiency and efficacy indicators to identify the school and training institutes that require support and need to be externally evaluated as a priority;
- to make tools for realising actions linked to evaluation available to individual schools and training facilities;
- to define indicators for the evaluation of school directors;
- to handle the selection, training and inclusion on special lists of external evaluation unit experts;
- to draft a periodical report on the education and training system;
- to take part in international surveys and other initiatives relating to evaluation.

A key role for improving the quality of the system is played by the national institute for documentation, innovation and educational research (37) , which provides support to school institutes in defining and implementing plans to improve the quality of the training offer and the learning outcomes of students, which schools and training institutes independently adopt.

To this end, it deals with supporting innovation processes centred on the use and diffusion of new technologies, activating research projects designed to improve didactics, as well as interventions linked to consultancy and the training of teaching, administrative and managerial personnel.

Article 6 of Presidential Decree 80/2016 provides for the school and training institute evaluation procedure to be organised in four phases:

- self-evaluation: self-analysis and verification of the service provided based on the data made available by the education ministry's own information system, surveys on learning and data on added value provided by national institute for the evaluation of the education and training system, as well as other significant elements integrated by the school itself is the first step of self -evaluation. The second step is the preparation of a self-evaluation report in electronic format, based on a reference framework provided by the national

institute for the evaluation of the education and training system, and the formulation of an improvement plan;

- external evaluation: the first step is the identification of the situations to be evaluated, based on the efficiency and efficacy indicators defined by national institute for the evaluation of education and training system. The second step consists of unit visits. The third step is the redefinition of improvement plans based on the outcomes of the analysis carried out by the units;
- improvement actions: this phase consists of the definition and implementation of improvement interventions, including those with the support of the national institute for documentation, innovation and educational research or through collaboration with universities, research bodies, professional and cultural associations;
- social reporting: publication and dissemination of the results achieved, through indicators and comparable data, both in terms of transparency and in terms of sharing and promoting improvement of the service with the community.

The national evaluation system comprises the evaluation of school directors and the evaluation of learning, carried out by the national institute for the evaluation of education and training system through periodical and systematic checks on the skills and know-how of students and the overall quality of the training offer at education and vocational education and training institutes, even in the context of lifelong learning.

[36] National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System / Istituto nazionale per la valutazione del sistema di istruzione e formazione (INVALSI):
<http://www.invalsi.it/invalsi/index.php>

[37] National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research / Istituto nazionale di documentazione, innovazione e ricerca educativa (INDIRE):
<http://www.indire.it/>

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Italy's legislative framework for the recognition of prior learning was put into place with the Legislative Decree 13/2013 which established the national system of certification of competences and the inter-ministerial decree of June 2015 which defined the operational framework for the recognition of regional qualification at the national level.

The Italian regions are the main hub for services for labour and vocational training on the territory and therefore, within the system supporting active labour or vocational training policies, are tackling the issue of the certification and validation of competences, contextualising and differentiating tools and approaches.

However, different phases of advancement of regional policies and practices on this theme can still be seen, highlighting that now more than ever it is necessary to maintain national legislation and a framework of rules to protect the reliability of procedures and therefore equal opportunities for final beneficiaries. More specifically, the legislative framework, fully outlined in 2015, is a step on a path towards the coordination of regional rules and services for validating and certifying competences.

In some cases, these have already been implemented and have been accessible for years to more or less broad categories of beneficiaries: in this regard, we should mention the systems already activated in the regions of Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont, Tuscany, Lombardy, Umbria, Aosta Valley and Veneto. Meanwhile, some regions have implemented the indications of the 2015 decree and in 2016 adopted provisions to regulate validation and certification services. These include Abruzzo Basilicata, the autonomous Province of Bolzano, Campania, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Liguria, Apulia, Sardinia and the autonomous province of Trento. The remaining regions – Abruzzo, Calabria, Marche, Molise and Sicily – are still in the standardisation phase.

The 30 June 2015 decree also included measures relating to the functions required for providing validation and certification services.

More precisely:

- accompanying and supporting identification of the competences and making them transparent;
- planning and implementation of assessment activities;
- implementation of assessment activities on aspects relating to curricula and professional contents.

The decree describes the tasks and activities that personnel responsible for providing services for the identification, validation and certification of competences should exercise in the various phases of the process, in other words, access to the service/welcoming, recognition/identification, assessment and certification; the European qualifications framework level for each function is also indicated.

We should point out that, in their position as awarding bodies, the regions offer a direct guarantee on the criteria and methods adopted for recruitment of personnel entrusted with providing such functions and verification of their professional requisites, in compliance with the principles of collegiality, neutrality, impartiality and independence. In those regions where the regional rules and services system is already accessible, provider competence training has already been planned and implemented, whereas where work is still ongoing to make services operational, the debate on professional resources is part of a more general framework regarding system standards.

To help develop and raise awareness of the theme, the national institute for public policy analysis has prepared a multimedia training package, which has been designed in an open-source environment (Moodle) and provided on a MOOC (Massive Online Open Courses) platform, to transfer all the information, know-how, methodologies and tools useful for managing the various phases of the process to service providers.

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning please visit Cedefop's European database (38) .

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

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

Individual vouchers and other subsidies

Through the funding provided for by Law 236/1993 and regional operational programmes promoted by the European social fund, the regions and autonomous provinces fund personalised continuing VET training programmes, vouchers for tailored training interventions and other tools, such as 'endowment' (39) , mainly targeted to employed.

Incentives for the unemployed

Tuscany has experimented with re-employment allowances (40) integrating them with training vouchers and recruitment incentives. The initiative targets the unemployed, whether or not in receipt of social security benefits, and the economically inactive people. The training activities that can be funded using the voucher system envisage both pathways for qualifying and certifying skills relating to one or more segments of a certain profile and regulated training (qualifications, certificates, etc.). After training it will be possible to spend re-employment cheques to purchase services for assistance with reintegration. The scheme envisages a service pact after the voucher has been granted.

In the south of Italy, in 2017 the region of Apulia funded individual vouchers for the unemployed and those in a state of non-employment (i.e., earners of incomes below the taxable threshold), to be spent on standard regional training offers (41) . The pathways funded with vouchers (with a maximum duration of 400 hours) focus on basic or transversal skills (English, basic IT skills, communication skills) or regulated training (authorisations, certificates, qualifications) or on technical-professional skills, with reference to the professional skills present in the regional repertory.

Incentives for employees

The region of Tuscany funded in 2017 individual training vouchers targeting managers, directors and young professionals. The use of this tool is ideal for those who can autonomously choose and orient their vocational pathways in virtue of the professional experiences already undertaken or by means of consolidated basic technical training.

Vouchers for managers aim to favour training for skills and know-how useful to the enterprise when making choices linked to technological, organisational and managerial innovation and business models in order to develop the Industry 4.0 paradigm.

Vouchers for young professionals (42)]) (self-employed under 40 years of age) aim to support the training of professionals starting their career and facing economic difficulty in paying for their training or even accessing a training programme in the first place. Access to training programmes stems from obligations imposed by compulsory training, i.e., by training which comprises obligatory courses related to specific work requirements.

The regions of Piedmont and Liguria have funded individual learning activities using standard individual training vouchers for employed workers (with a maximum of EUR 3 000 per capita) (43) .

Study leave

Under provisions of Law 53/2000 (44) , the regions and autonomous provinces grant leave for training for workers, acknowledging their right to lifelong training.

- [39] Endowment consists in a nominal monetary amount that the beneficiary can use on the services included in a tailored intervention programme drawn up in agreement with public or private operators (training providers) accredited with providing such services. The amount of the endowment varies in proportion to the level of employability of the subject and the services included in the individual programme. The beneficiary is never given the sum allocated directly: the financial relationship is only established between the providing public body and the accredited public or private operator that provides the service. For some services, the operator receives the relevant public refund based on the outcome of the specific activity and not on its simple provision.
- [40] <https://www.anpal.gov.it/documents/20126/42272/Allegato-delibera9.pdf/e2d65d5e-431e-48f7-8948-59eb9d16e777>
- [41] This is a specific initiative by Tuscany Region. Maximum amount: EUR 2 500.
http://www.regione.toscana.it/impres/formazione-professionale/voucher-formativi/-/asset_publisher/eonjZadAbVH6/content/industria-4-0-voucher-formativi-per-manager-di-azienda;jsessionid=018A35EF583B429D09B1A029BBB4434B.web-rt-as01-p2
- [42] Amount given varies and depends on different factors (e.g. economic sector).
http://www301.regione.toscana.it/bancadati/atti/Contenuto.xml?id=5123588&nomeFile=Decreto_n.7981_del_29-07-2016-Allegato-A
- [43] The voucher can cover between 50 and 70% of total training cost. It can vary in relation to the class size of the company. The beneficiary must be at least 18 years old.
- [44] Legge 8 marzo 2000, n. 53, art. 5 <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/00053l.htm> and : XV Rapporto sulla Formazione Continua in Italia: <https://www.isfol.it/primo-piano/pubblicato-il-xv-rapporto-sulla-formazione-continua>

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Tax credits, exemptions and reductions in social security contributions

The 2018 Budget Law established that tax credit for 4.0 training is granted to enterprises for 40% of the expenses relating to the corporate cost of salaried personnel for the time they are occupied in training activities. The sum can amount to a maximum of EUR 300 000 per year for each enterprise and is granted for training activities stipulated thanks to corporate or territorial collective contracts (45) . The training activities that can be admitted for requesting tax credits must involve issues connected to the introduction of digital technology innovations: big data and data analysis, cloud and fog computing, cyber security, cyber-physical systems, rapid prototyping, visualisation and augmented reality systems, advanced and collaborative robotics, man-machinery interface, additive manufacturing, the internet of things and machines and the digital integration of corporate processes.

Enterprises that recruit young people on a level 1 apprenticeship contract (i.e. at upper secondary level) are totally exempt from social security payments for the hours the apprentice spends on external training, whilst for the duration of on-the-job training they are granted a substantial reduction in the social security payments owed.

Law 232/2016 introduced financial incentives for companies involved in dual learning. To facilitate the recruitment of young people on a permanent contract in the same company where they were on alternance contracts or types 1 or 3 apprenticeship, certain types of enterprises (with fewer than 10 employees, etc.) are entitled to total social security exemption for the first three years. In the fourth year they will pay 10% of taxable social security contributions.

Companies with more than nine employees pay a contribution, for the entire duration of the apprenticeship, equal to 11.61% of the taxable social security contribution.

Wage subsidy and training remunerations

Employers willing to offer apprenticeships can hire an apprentice at an entry grade level up to two levels lower than the final qualification to be obtained and/or pay a salary equal to a percentage of the salary of a qualified worker, according to the provisions of the collective agreement applied.

Other incentives

Several Italian regions (for example, Piedmont and Liguria) also fund standard enterprise training vouchers (for varying amounts, depending on the size of the enterprise). Enterprise vouchers are a simplified management method designed for small enterprises that, in general, find it difficult to organise structured training courses.

[45] See: <https://www.mise.gov.it/index.php/it/incentivi/impresa/credito-d-imposta-formazione>

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

In the context of Law 150/2015, which concerns reorganisation of the system of employment services and active labour policies, it has been established that Italian employment agencies) should offer the following specific activities relating to guidance and counselling services:

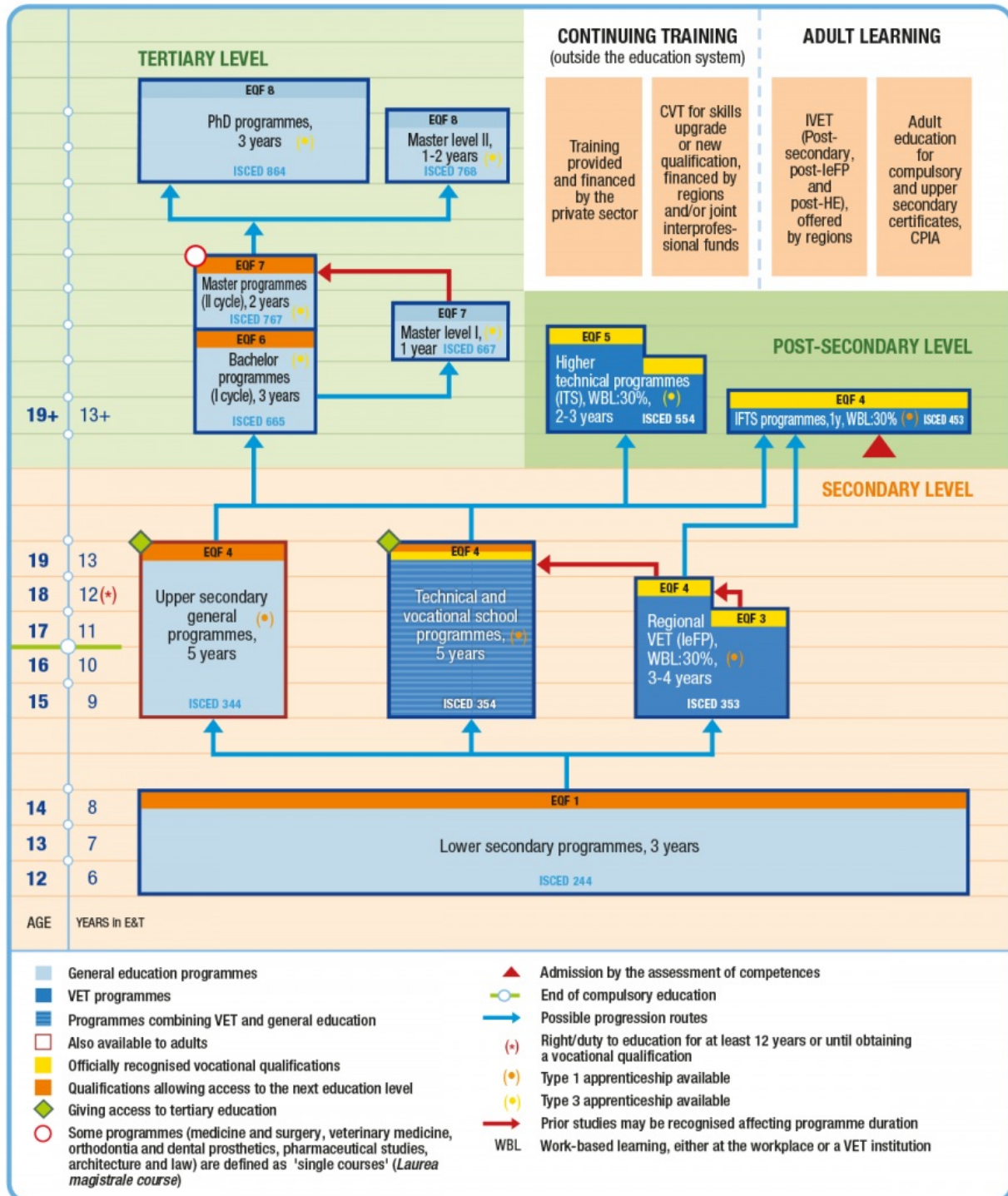
- basic guidance, analysis of competences in relation to the local labour market and profiling;
- help for job-seeking, including through group sessions, within three months of registration;
- specialist and tailored guidance using competence assessment and needs analysis in terms of training, work experience or other active employment policy measures, with reference to adaptation of the profile to the demand for labour expressed on a territorial, national and European level;
- tailored guidance to self-employment and mentoring through the subsequent start-up phases;
- job placement, even through the use of the tailored outplacement indemnity.

Please see:

- guidance and outreach Italy national report (46) ;
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit (47) ;
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices (A1) .

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

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Italy, 2019.

VET Programme Types

EQF 3-4
Regional VET (IeFP), WBL: 30%, 3-4 years ISCED 353

Initial VET programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353 and EQF 4 (Vocational Education and Training pathways-(Istruzione e Formazione Professionale IeFP)

EQF level	3-4	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	11-12
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	17-18
Length of a programme (years)	4 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 Full time education is compulsory until the age of 16, but young people must stay in education or training until age 18 to accomplish 12 years of education and/or vocational training (right/duty).	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 For State owned schools and regional VET programmes	Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning; • work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice); • self-learning; • apprenticeships.
Main providers	Information not available
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	=70%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold a lower secondary school leaving diploma and to have passed the relevant State examination (final State examination of the first cycle of education).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Learners need to pass a final examination. The objective of the exam is the assessment of transversal competencies (communications, languages, maths and technical and professional competences. For these the pupils must take a practical test and draw up a technical sheet. Moreover the learners must take an oral test. The participation of two sector (labour market) experts, as members of the examination committee is a prerequisite.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Upon completion of a three-year programme learners obtain a professional operator certificate (EQF level 3), while upon completion of a four-years programme learners obtain a professional technician diploma (EQF level 4).
Examples of qualifications	Clothing operator, footwear operator, building specialist, graphic specialist, construction operator, construction technician (48) , etc.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who obtain a professional operator certificate can attend one additional year leading to a professional technician diploma. Those who obtain the professional technician diploma (i.e. complete the four-year programme) may enrol onto the fifth year of the technical or vocational schools programmes (EQF 4-ISCED 354) and obtain a general, technical or professional education diploma or enrol in a higher technical education and training programme and obtain the higher technical specialisation certificate.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ They refer to minimum level of basic competencies as well as to general and specific technical - professional competences in terms of learning outcomes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	>1% (49)

[48] As described in national context.

[49] 2016

EQF 4
Technical and vocational school programmes
5 years
ISCED 354

Initial VET programmes leading Technical and Vocational school programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (programmi quinquennali negli istituti tecnici o professionali)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	18-19
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 Full time education is compulsory until the age of 16, but young people must stay in education or training until age 18 to accomplish 12 years of education and/or vocational training (right/duty).	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 For State owned schools	Is it available for adults?	

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning (contact studies, including virtual communication with the teacher/trainer);
- work practice (practical training at school and in-company practice);
- self-learning;
- apprenticeship.

Main providers	Schools
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	=70%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and adults with lower secondary qualifications.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold a lower secondary education certificate (school leaving diploma) and have passed the relevant State examination (final State examination) of the first cycle of education.
Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the upper secondary school education, learners who successfully pass the final State examination of the second cycle of education receive a certificate diploma that gives them access to higher education or higher technical education and training programmes.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Learners who successfully pass the final State examination of the second cycle (upper secondary VET) of education receive, depending on the kind of secondary school (technical or vocational): the upper secondary education diploma – technical schools – or the upper secondary education diploma – vocational schools.
Examples of qualifications	Catering operator, wellness operator, etc. (50)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete VET can enter the labour market or continue their studies in tertiary education (EQF level 6) or higher technical education and training pathways (ITS (EQF level 5 or IFTS-EQF level 4).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	
Key competences	Information not available

**Application of learning
outcomes approach**

The specific regulations for each training provision include learning outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies. As a matter of fact, the student's educational, cultural and professional profile, indicates:

(a) the general learning outcomes which shall be shared by all pathways;

(b) the learning outcomes which shall be peculiar to the specific pathways of technical and vocational schools, while pointing out that, in compliance with the EQF provisions, learning outcomes shall be described in terms of competencies, skills and knowledge in this case as well.

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners**

>1% (51)

[50] As described in national context.

[51] 2016

EQF 4

IFTS programmes,

1 year,

WBL: 30%

ISCED 453

Post-Secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 453 (Istruzione e Formazione Tecnico Superiore)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	453
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	19	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	Information not available	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• school-based learning • work practice • self-learning • apprenticeship		
Main providers	• Schools – these pathways are designed and managed by at least four training partners (a school, a vocational training centre, a university, an enterprise or another public or private centre) which formally cooperate • Enterprises		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	=70%		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• in-company practice		

Main target groups	Programmes are available for young employed and unemployed people and adults with an upper secondary education diploma.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an upper secondary education diploma. Higher technical education and training courses are open also to: holders of a professional technician certificate; young people admitted to the 5th year of general upper secondary education (<i>Liceo</i>); people who do not have an upper secondary education qualification, but had their educational, training and vocational experiences validated.
Assessment of learning outcomes	To complete a VET programme learners need to pass a leaving examination, on the basis of the features characterising regional job markets and referring to nationally defined and established in State-regions agreements occupational profiles.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Higher technical specialisation certificate (<i>Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore</i>)
Examples of qualifications	Higher technical specialisation certificate in Assistant Manager for Travel Agency and Tour Operator (52) .
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete VET can enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 Higher technical specialisation qualifications are based on a system of minimum levels of general (basic and transversal standards) and technical-professional competencies (53) , nationally recognised and structured into course credits (<i>Unità Capitalizzabili - UC</i>). There's no possibility to acquire partial qualifications.
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	 Level description includes learning outcomes descriptors in terms of competence and knowledge; moreover, they are also provided with assessment criteria.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	1% (54)

[52] As described in national context and specified explicitly in the 'Referencing the Italian Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework' report (adopted in

2012). <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

[53] Annex A – Unified Conference Agreement dated 29 April 2004; Unified Conference Agreement dated 16 March 2006; Inter-Ministerial Decree dated 7 July 2011.

[54] 2016

EQF 5
Higher
Technical programmes (ITS),
WBL: 30%,
2-3 years
ISCED 554

Post-Secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Istruzione Tecnica Superiore).

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	13+	Usual completion grade	13+
Usual entry age	19+	Usual completion age	19+
Length of a programme (years)	3 (up to)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	Information not available	Is it available for adults?	✓ Anyone holding an upper secondary education diploma can access higher technical education courses.

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- school-based learning
- work practice
- self-learning
- apprenticeships

Main providers	• schools • enterprises Higher technical institutes are established on the basis of regional territorial plans, and should be considered as specific types of participative foundations. The organisational standard states that founders of these institutes are: an upper secondary school, both technical or vocational, State or fully recognised; a training centre accredited by the region for the purpose of higher training; an enterprise operating in the same production area as the higher technical school; a university department or another organisation operating in the field of scientific and technological research; a local institution (municipality, province, mountain community, etc.).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	=70%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practical training at school • in-company practice
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people employed or unemployed and for adults (both need to hold an upper secondary education diploma).
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Learners must hold an upper secondary education diploma (either general or vocational).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Learners must pass a final examination, conducted by examination committees consisting of representatives of the school, university, vocational training and experts from the world of work.
Diplomas/certificates provided	VET learners receive a higher technical diploma upon successful completion.
Examples of qualifications	Higher technician for the mobility of people and goods (55) .
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Those who complete VET can enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	Information not available

Key competences	Information not available
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	1% (56)

[55] As described in national context and specified explicitly in the *Referencing the Italian qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework* report (adopted in 2012). <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

[56] 2016

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