VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE
CZECH REPUBLIC
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This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop’s ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET’s main features and role within countries’ overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET’s relevance to and interaction with the labour market.

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CHAPTER 1.

External factors influencing VET

1.1. Political and socio-economic context

The Czech Republic (Česká republika - CZ) came into being in 1993, as a result of the split of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. The Czech Republic is a parliamentary republic and the head of the country is the President. In 2004, the Czech Republic became a member of the EU. Since 2000, the Czech Republic has 14 administrative units called regions (kraje) (NUTS 3) (1).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) is responsible for the national education system. From pre-primary until post-secondary education, the schools are governed by the regions within the national education system (for details on governance see Section 2.2.1).

1.2. Population and demographics

The Czech Republic covers an area of 78 900 km². The population is 10.6 million (2016) and will continue to increase until 2018 due to growing life expectancy (2). Like most countries in Europe, the Czech Republic’s population is ageing. The proportion of the 65+ age group will increase from the current 16% to 24% by 2030. The total number in the economically active segment of the population is in decline.

Table 1. Population and its projection by age groups, 2015-40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Population (000s)</th>
<th>Population structure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-24</td>
<td>2,672.2</td>
<td>2,570.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-64</td>
<td>5,949.2</td>
<td>5,805.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>1,932.4</td>
<td>2,156.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,553.8</td>
<td>10,532.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(1) NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics.
(2) Source: Projekce obyvatelstva České republiky (Projekce 2013), czso.cz
The population ageing will have consequences for education and training systems. The role of adult education and training will increase considerably and schools (especially basic and secondary) will face the problem of having less young students. This process has already started. Secondary VET schools are supported by national and regional authorities and by the European structural funds to develop their capabilities for adult education.

The share of young people will decrease in the long term. The population of group aged 0-24 will decrease from 25.5% of the total population in 2015 to 21.8% in 2040. In the medium term, there is a strong population surge of children born in 2002-08. It will, for a certain period of time, increase demand on the capacity of primary (highest in 2020) and secondary (highest in 2027) education.

Table 2. School-age population and its projection by age groups (000s), 2015-40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2035</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>550 194</td>
<td>493 874</td>
<td>448 006</td>
<td>406 650</td>
<td>396 326</td>
<td>418 037</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>1 073 522</td>
<td>1 128 179</td>
<td>1 049 582</td>
<td>949 168</td>
<td>862 627</td>
<td>811 417</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>458 003</td>
<td>474 060</td>
<td>580 868</td>
<td>557 395</td>
<td>502 896</td>
<td>457 735</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>590 522</td>
<td>474 673</td>
<td>487 458</td>
<td>592 667</td>
<td>569 327</td>
<td>515 864</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-24</td>
<td>2 672 241</td>
<td>2 570 786</td>
<td>2 565 914</td>
<td>2 505 880</td>
<td>2 331 176</td>
<td>2 203 053</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.3. Economic structure

The structure of the economy has changed considerably since 1989. The share of agriculture and heavy industry in the economy has decreased while the share of services has increased. The share of manufacturing in the economy (gross added value and employment) is significantly higher than the average in the EU-28. The business service sector is developing rapidly.

The industrial economy traditions date back to the 19th century. Industry related VET also has a long history and traditions. During the communist regime the development of heavy industry was strongly supported. Following transition to the market economy, extensive foreign investments have been made, particularly in electrical engineering and the automotive industry. Foreign investors enjoyed a combination of high supply of technical qualifications and low labour costs. Increasing labour costs had a negative effect on employment in those industries where the spatial proximity of suppliers is not an important factor (e.g. the textile industry). The economic recession, which began in 2008, hit manufacturing and construction sectors the hardest. However employment in the service sector, however, was growing even during the recession. Throughout the recovery period some manufacturing branches have expanded (e.g. metal products, machinery, automotive,
repair and installation) and in 2012 the share of manufacturing almost reached the level of 2008.

Table 3. Employment structure by sector (15-64 years) in 2008 and 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Employment (000s)</th>
<th>Employment structure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary sector and utilities</td>
<td>14 322.5 13 093.5</td>
<td>322.5 284.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>37 800.7 33 535.5</td>
<td>1 368.5 1 362.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>18 449.9 14 587.6</td>
<td>476.1 390.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution and Transport</td>
<td>42 613.5 41 387.5</td>
<td>938.7 898.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and other services</td>
<td>52 876.9 56 571.4</td>
<td>923.2 1 032.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non marketed services</td>
<td>51 932.8 54 945.4</td>
<td>904.0 964.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>218 924.1 215 588.9</td>
<td>4 933.5 4 934.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat. Employment by sex, age and economic activity (LFS, table lfsa_egan2), http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/lfsa_egan2 Date of extraction 03.08.2016

1.4. Employment and unemployment

The employment rate in the CZ is higher than the EU-28 average (70.2% in the CZ compared to 65.6% in the EU-28 in 2015 for population aged 15-64) (3). It is related to lower unemployment, while the activity rates are at the same level as in EU-28. The employment rate of young people has been declining due to their increasing participation in upper secondary education and tertiary education. The employment rate of people aged 50-64 is increasing as a consequence of the gradual postponement of the retirement age.

Compared to the EU-28, a bit higher constant gender inequality in employment exists because of the lower retirement age for women and the low availability of flexible jobs (part-time work, work at home, etc.).

The economic recession has caused a significant growth of unemployment. It has however been decreasing since 2010, reaching 5.1% in 2015 compared with 9.4% in EU-28 (\(^1\)).

Similarly to the EU-28, young and low-skilled people are at the highest risk of becoming unemployed in the CZ. The economic growth in 2005-08 and the demographic situation caused a decrease in unemployment for these groups but during the economic recession young people with low and medium education levels, especially those aged 15-24, were affected the most. Although there are less early leavers from education in the CZ than in the EU-28 on average, they are the most disadvantaged on the labour market.

Table 5. Unemployment by age and highest level of education attained (%), 2004-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISCED - 2011 level</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Long-term (one year or longer) unemployment constitutes a major problem within the context of the Czech labour market. In 2015, its share was 47% (\(^2\)).

Even at the peak of economic growth and high demand for labour (with less than three unemployed persons per vacancy) there were many unemployed whose qualifications did not match the requirements of the labour market. In times of recession (with more than 18

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\(^1\) Source: Eurostat (LFS, table une_rt_a); Extracted on: 4.8.2016

unemployed per vacancy) employers had difficulties to recruit new employees for certain jobs. There is a long-term shortage of technical graduates on the labour market.

Table 6. **Share of long-term unemployment, 2004-15 (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** Long-term unemployed are deemed persons unemployed for 12 months and more.
Source: Eurostat. Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a percentage of the total unemployment, by sex, age and citizenship (LFS, table lfsa_upgan). http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/lfsa_upganExtracted 04.08.2016

1.5. **VET qualifications on the labour market**

Traditionally, there has been high attainment in upper secondary education (ISCED 353 and 354), in particular in vocational education. Vocational education accounts for three quarters of all upper secondary education graduates. This type of education is either concluded by a maturita examination (ISCED 354 – 44% of all upper secondary graduates) enabling further studies at tertiary education level or graduating without maturita (ISCED 353 – 30%). The latter is intended mainly for direct entry to the labour market (6). For a long time there has been a decline in interest for vocational secondary education and a rise in the interest in general secondary education. Pupils have also increasingly preferred secondary education with the maturita rather than without the maturita examination, but since 2014 this trend has reversed again due to the introduction of the state maturita (see Box 1) which is in general more demanding than previously non-regulated maturita and thus deterred some pupils from such programmes. While the share of young people decreases, the capacity of secondary general schools (gymnázia) remains the same which results in a declining share of students in vocational education.

Table 7. **Graduates at upper secondary level, 2005/06-2014/15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnázia (ISCED – 354)</td>
<td>24 160</td>
<td>24 701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational with maturita (ISCED 354)</td>
<td>54 558</td>
<td>53 619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational without maturita (ISCED 353)</td>
<td>39 744</td>
<td>32 092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118 462</td>
<td>110 412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) The remaining 26 % of upper secondary graduates represent those of general programmes (only ISCED 354 level concluded with maturita).
Graduates of vocational education (especially in ISCED 353 programmes without *maturita*) have less employment opportunities compared with an experienced workforce and are thus sensitive to fluctuations in the economy. Employers often complain about poor and outdated knowledge/skills of ISCED 353 non-*maturita* programme graduates. Such programmes are often seen as a second choice for those not able to study at the ISCED 354 level. The graduates often lack motivation for the vocational field per se. The results of the OECD PIAAC survey confirm that the graduates of non-*maturita* programmes perform worse in numeracy and literacy than the OECD average, while the Czech graduates from upper secondary education with the *maturita* and from tertiary education score equal to or above the average.

More graduates from vocational education programmes are unemployed than graduates from general education (*gymnázia*) programmes, but this is also contributed by the fact that almost all of *gymnázia* graduates continue in tertiary education and do not enter the labour market at this stage. Follow-up courses (ISCED 354) offer the graduates without the *maturita* an opportunity to study two more years and get the *maturita* exam. Then they can access the tertiary education, but the chances of successful completion of tertiary education are higher for graduates from general than from vocational education (*)). Also the unemployment rate of follow-up courses graduates (ISCED 354) is quite high. Tertiary professional education (ISCED 655) has a small number of graduates and their position on the labour market is relatively good compared to other vocational programmes, which may be the case due to their higher age.

### Table 8. Unemployment of graduates, %, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational without <em>maturita</em> (ISCED 353 - vocational)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational with <em>maturita</em> (ISCED 354 - vocational)</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gymnázia</em> (ISCED 344 - general)</td>
<td>3.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up courses (ISCED 354 - vocational)</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary professional (ISCED 655)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational without <em>maturita</em> (ISCED 353 - vocational)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB:* The unemployment of graduates is calculated as the number of graduates registered at the Labour Offices from the total number of graduates in the previous year. Therefore it does not correspond to the standard unemployment rate definition. *The unemployment rate among secondary general programmes *gymnázia*) graduates is traditionally the lowest, because the majority of them continue in tertiary education (especially at higher education institutions)


(*) Source: Kleňhová, M.; Vojtěch, J. (2011) Úspěšnost absolventů středních škol ve vysokoškolském studiu, předčasné odchody ze vzdělávání. [Success of upper secondary school graduates in higher education, early drop-outs from the education.]: Praha: NÚV.
Access to most vocational occupations is not legally defined with several exceptions, as for example mandatory certificates for electricians and welders. However employers usually ask for relevant formal VET qualification. Informal non-mandatory requirements for individual occupations are defined in the National Occupation Framework (www.nsp.cz).

Entry to some occupations is more specifically regulated for the self-employed; in some occupations (defined in the Trade Licensing Act) formal qualification is required to become an entrepreneur. Self-employed (usually craftsmen occupations) require a formal qualification although it can be partly substituted by proof of work experience. In 2012, the Trades Licensing Act was amended stipulating that a set of vocational qualifications leading to a complete vocational qualification is sufficient for obtaining a trades licence for selected crafts without a final examination or a vocational certificate (see Section 2.2.4.2).
CHAPTER 2. Provision of VET

2.1. Diagramme of the national education and training system

Figure 1. VET in the Czech national education and training system

NB: ISCED-P 2011.
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Czech Republic
2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

2.2.1. Governance

The main body holding executive powers in the field of education (IVET and CVET) at the national level is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT). The key responsibilities of the MŠMT include the development of the national education strategy and priorities; development of curricular policy and care for the quality of education for and in accordance with the objectives and content of education; coordination of public administration and funding in the area of education.

The MŠMT holds the main responsibility for administration and establishing the rules for higher education (HE) institutions, which, however, have broad academic autonomy.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí - MPSV) is responsible for retraining under the auspices of the public employment service. The Ministry of Health is responsible for training of health staff, the Ministry of Interior Affairs is responsible for the accreditation of public administration staff training courses, etc.).

At the regional level, self-governing bodies – the regional assembly and regional council (zastupitelstvo kraje, rada kraje) – are directly responsible for establishing public VET schools (9) at upper secondary and tertiary professional levels (see Section 2.2.4.2 and 2.2.4.4). The regional assembly has decision-making and consulting powers on the number, structure, provision, quality and funding of schools. The regional council (9-11 members) is elected by the assembly and holds executive powers. It forms expert advisory commissions in various fields, including education.

A regional body of state administration is a regional authority (krajský úřad). It is responsible for the development of a regional long-term plan for the development of education and a report on education in the region. It also allocates resources from the state budget to schools which cover pedagogical staff wages and direct educational costs.

The Regional Councils for Human Resource Development perform a consultative function for regional councils (9).

All schools (including VET) have a relatively high level of autonomy. School directors hold significant powers. They are responsible for the preparation and implementation of school curricula based on approved national curricula, for the quality of pedagogical work

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(9) The majority of VET schools are public schools established by regions. The rest includes private schools, church schools and schools run directly by ministries (state schools).

(9) These Councils are advisory bodies to regional councils. They were established in 2003 in accordance with the National Strategy of Human Resource Development. They are voluntary bodies which operate differently in each region. In some regions, they focus only on education issues, while in others they have a broader approach and they advise on job creation and innovation.
and human resources policy, and for educational management and efficient use of financial resources. School councils are established at schools as a consultative body. The councils include representatives of the school founding body, pedagogical staff, parents and sometimes pupils.

Social partners can influence vocational education at national and regional levels particularly through co-operation on the preparation of curricula. Their representatives participate in the final exam committees of upper secondary vocational programmes (ISCED 353), cooperate on the newly introduced uniform assignments for final examinations (ISCED 353), and profile (vocational) parts of maturita exams (ISCED 354, see Box 1). Enhancing the role of employers and increasing their participation in VET is one of the current national priorities.

2.2.2. Legislative framework
Vocational education and training up to the level of tertiary professional schools is governed by the Act on pre-school, basic, secondary, tertiary professional and other education – School Act (Zákon o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání – Školský zákon).

Higher education institutions (vysoké školy – VŠ) are governed by the Higher Education Act (Zákon o vysokých školách).

The Act on Pedagogical staff (Zákon o pedagogických pracovnících) stipulates a definition of the position of pedagogical staff, lays down requirements for the performance of the occupation, as well as for the continuing training and career system.

Training provided within the public employment services is regulated by the Employment Act (Zákon o zaměstnanosti).

2.2.3. Funding
There are three different systems of regular public funding of VET. The first system is regulated by the Schools Act and finances the upper secondary and tertiary professional schools. The second system finances higher education institutions and is governed by the Higher Education Act. The third system covers the Public Employment Service training and is governed by the Employment Act.

2.2.3.1. Upper secondary and tertiary professional education
The responsibility for funding vocational schools (ISCED level 353 and 354), general secondary schools (ISCED level 344), and tertiary professional schools (vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ, ISCED 655) is shared between the MŠMT and those responsible for establishing schools, i.e. regional authorities or in some cases private entities, churches and ministries.
Regions administer approximately 81% of upper secondary schools and approximately 64% of tertiary professional schools.

### Table 9. Government expenditure per student, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary education</th>
<th>Lower and upper secondary education</th>
<th>Tertiary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of GDP per capita</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The MŠMT provides most of the education budget, covering direct costs, except investments. School founders cover operational and investment costs. Funding from the public budget (for direct and operational costs) is per-capita and depends on school type and educational field. The per-capita funding has been criticized by experts. Schools are motivated to admit many students to reach higher funding levels, which often means lowering selection criteria and decreasing school quality. In 2016, a reform of regional school funding has been adopted by the Government. It introduces new criteria to determine the level of funding, such as the number of lessons taught, the number of children with special needs in the class etc. It also transfers the main responsibility for school funding to the MŠMT. If adopted by Parliament, the new system will be launched in 2019.

Schools may also receive resources from the MŠMT budget for development programmes. The content and the aim of these programmes are announced by the MŠMT for each fiscal year; the resources allocated to these programmes represent only about 0.5% out of the total budget. In addition, some individual subsidies (e.g. capital investments) may be determined during the process of the budget’s approval by the Parliament.

### Figure 2. Financial flows in upper secondary and tertiary professional education

*Source: ReferNet*
The MŠMT budget also provides financial resources to private schools and schools set up by registered churches or religious societies, which are included in the register of schools. The subsidy is set as a percentage of the per-capita funding of a comparable programme in public education.

Another source of funding of private secondary VET schools and public VOŠ is that of fees. The maximum limit of fees for public VOŠ is set by legislation and differs depending on the field of study. Generally, fees are low, ranging from the equivalent of EUR 97 to 195 per year. The level of tuition fees for private schools is not regulated.

2.2.3.2. Higher education institutions (VŠ)
Each public VŠ is entitled to a contribution from the state budget. The level of the contribution depends on the number of students, type of accredited study and lifelong learning programmes and on the basis of several qualitative indicators (i.e. research results, professional structure of academic staff, foreign students, financial resources owned, unemployment rate of graduates, the extent of student mobility).

Public VŠ programmes are generally free for students. Fees\(^\text{10}\) are collected for extending the standard length of studies by more than one year (min. ca. equivalent of EUR 150 per semester) and approaching the second bachelor or master programme (min. ca. equivalent of EUR 100 per year). Fees may be collected also for admission proceedings (max. ca. equivalent of EUR 20) or for studying in a foreign language (no limit set). The rector may exempt socially disadvantaged students from paying the fees.

Figure 3. Financial flows in public higher education institutions (VŠ)

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\(^{10}\) The MŠMT sets the limits for each year.
Private VŠ must assure financial resources for the implementation of the activities by their own means, for example by collecting fees.

2.2.3.3. **Retraining in the framework of active labour market policies**

Retraining in the framework of the active labour market policies (ALMP) (see Section 2.2.5.3) is funded from the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí - MPSV). The financial resources are transferred to the Labour Office (ÚP) which then distributes them further to its regional branches. The ÚP branches cover the course fees for the participants but may also contribute to other retraining-related costs.

2.2.4. **Education within the school system (IVET)**

Compulsory education lasts nine years. Usually pupils complete it in general schools (either in a basic school for 6-15 year olds or in more prestigious gymnázia programmes from the age of 12-14). At the age of 15, the pupils finishing the basic school choose between general education (four year gymnázia programme) and IVET. IVET is not a 'dead end' path. After upper secondary education (either general or IVET) most graduates can choose an appropriate path to proceed to higher levels.

At upper and post-secondary levels IVET is provided by secondary vocational schools (střední odborná učiliště – SOU) and secondary technical schools (střední odborné školy – SOŠ); at tertiary level by tertiary professional schools (VOŠ – vyšší odborné školy) and higher education institutions (VŠ – vysoké školy). Higher educational institutions (VŠ) constitute a self-governed system regulated by the Higher Education Act. Secondary vocational and technical schools are often integrated within one legal entity (a school) called for example 'Integrated SOU and SOŠ of (subject)', thus providing more diverse study opportunities under 'one roof'. Rarely, tertiary professional schools (VOŠ) are integrated with secondary schools, e.g. 'VOŠ and SOŠ of (subject)'. A less common study path is provided by conservatoires which provide education in the field of arts (music, dance or drama) at lower and/or upper secondary level.

IVET in public (majority) schools is provided for free, whereas private and church schools may collect tuition fees.

Secondary schools may provide education for pupils with special educational needs depending on the type of disability. Secondary vocational schools (SOU) may open IVET programmes (ISCED 253) aimed at learners over 15 years old with learning difficulties.

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(11) The so called ‘school system’ is a system of schools (under responsibility of the MŠMT) which provides typically formal education to the children and youth, eventually leading to a qualification level (IVET). But they also provide CVET courses and other training for adults.
There is no apprenticeship system (or ‘dual system’) in the country. IVET is mostly school-based. However, mandatory practical work-based training and work placement are integrated into IVET curricula.

2.2.4.1. IVET programmes at ISCED level 253

IVET programmes at ISCED level 253 (also known as ‘practical’) are a marginal part of the IVET system. They are designed primarily for students with mental disabilities of various severities, or for other disadvantaged students who attended nine years of compulsory school and have had learning difficulties. The programmes last one to two years and are designed to prepare students to perform simple tasks of manual occupations in services or manufacturing and/or to strengthen their manual skills and working habits. The programmes are provided by practical schools (praktické školy) which apply a special pedagogy. At the end of the programme students take final examinations and obtain a certificate of a final examination or, in some programmes, only a certificate of the completion of a programme.

Table 10. Students in lower secondary education by programme orientation, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>ISCED 244 general</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ISCED 253 vocational</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>19 935 654</td>
<td>19 334 597</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>601 057</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>367 021</td>
<td>365 077</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>1 944</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat (educ_uoe_ens01); Extracted on: 03.08.2016. Calculations done by NÚV.

Table 11. Students in lower secondary education by programme orientation, 2008/09-2015/16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 244 general</td>
<td>400 429</td>
<td>375 618</td>
<td>365 528</td>
<td>361 469</td>
<td>360 649</td>
<td>362 341</td>
<td>365 211</td>
<td>369 626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 253 Pre-vocational and vocational</td>
<td>1 795</td>
<td>1 917</td>
<td>2 107</td>
<td>2 053</td>
<td>1 965</td>
<td>1 965</td>
<td>2 040</td>
<td>2 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>402 224</td>
<td>377 535</td>
<td>367 635</td>
<td>363 522</td>
<td>362 614</td>
<td>364 306</td>
<td>367 251</td>
<td>371 827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational %</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.4.2. IVET at the upper secondary level

There are 942 upper secondary VET schools in the CR, 24 % of them are private (12). The upper secondary vocational education is provided by secondary vocational schools (SOU) and secondary technical schools (SOŠ). Upper secondary education is generally open to all

applicants who, in addition to their completed compulsory education (13), meet the admission criteria usually set by the school director. The basic school performance is a principal criterion and in most cases an entry examination must be passed.

Applicants can choose from 285 VET programmes preparing students for one or more professions. Schools can further develop the programme specialisation according to local labour market needs or other criteria (see Section 3.2.2). The programmes are specialised but include general subjects in all grades (in upper grades the share of specialised subjects increases). Most IVET programmes at upper secondary level last three (ISCED 353) or four (ISCED 354) years.

Three-year vocational programmes (ISCED 353) enable graduates to perform manual work in crafts, services and similar occupations. They are usually provided by secondary vocational schools (střední odborné učiliště – SOU) and include a final examination and a vocational certificate. Graduates enter the labour market or may enrol in a two-year follow-up programme (ISCED 54) to pass the maturita examination and continue to higher education (see Section 2.2.4.3). Three-year vocational programmes include general subjects, vocational subjects and practical training. The minimum allocation of general and vocational subjects and practical training is defined by the National Curricula (see Section 3.2.2) and varies depending on the programme and the grade. Usually, general subjects are allocated 30-35% of the instruction time; vocational subjects 20-30% of the time and practical training 35-45%. Practical training takes place at specially designed school training facilities or workshops or laboratories; only exceptionally it takes place in a real work environment. According to the law, the final examination and the issuing of the vocational certificate must be supervised/checked/reviewed by an expert (member of the examination board) from an enterprise.

Four-year technical programmes (ISCED 354) entitle their graduates to apply for higher education or to perform mid-level technical, business and other similar jobs. They are usually provided by secondary technical schools (střední odborná škola – SOŠ) and are concluded by the maturita examination. A successful graduate gets a maturita certificate which is a prerequisite for admission into higher education studies and acknowledges the technical qualification for the labour market. Studies include general subjects and vocational subjects, depending on the programme. Vocational subjects include practical exercises, laboratory work, etc. Work experience in companies and other institutions is on average six to eight weeks. The share of general and vocational subjects varies depending on the fields of study and grades. It is approximately 45:55 in favour of vocational subjects.

(13) Compulsory education is defined as nine years of school attendance, regardless of grade.
Secondary vocational schools (střední odborná učiliště – SOU) may also provide four-year vocational programmes completed by the maturita examination, but this is not a common practice. They provide a qualification for performing demanding manual work and technical occupations and open up the path to higher education.

As a response to a high demand for gymnázium programmes, four-year lyceum programmes (ISCED 344) have been developed at the secondary technical schools in addition to vocational programmes. Approximately 70% of the curricula constitute general subjects. Vocational/professional subjects focus on technology, business, natural sciences, healthcare, teacher training, etc. The graduates are prepared for studies at higher education institutions in similar disciplines.

Conservatoires are a specific type of secondary school. Students with music, dance and drama talents take an aptitude test as part of the admission proceedings. Applicants who complete the 9th (final) year of basic school are admitted to six-year music and drama programmes. The eight-year dance programme is designed for those who complete the 6th year of basic school; thus, in the early years of the conservatoire students also undergo compulsory schooling. Six- and eight-year programmes are usually completed by an absolutorium. The graduates achieve tertiary qualification (ISCED 655) and get an absolutorium certificate and a diploma. They are awarded the title ‘specialist with a diploma’ (diplomovaný specialista, abbreviated as ‘DiS.’ – written behind the name). Students at conservatoires may also take a non-compulsory maturita (secondary education ISCED 354) examination during their studies.

**Participation in upper secondary education**

The total number of pupils in upper secondary education has dropped by 25% between 2005 and 2015 because of demographic decline. Currently, 72% of pupils at upper secondary level attend vocational programmes which include both ISCED 353 and ISCED 354 programmes. Participation in the vocational training is relatively high compared to most European countries due to the traditionally high share of industries in the economy and the flexible possibilities of vocational training which allow entering the labour market with a vocational qualification at a relatively early age and/or proceeding to higher levels of education.

Nevertheless, the international trend when children and their parents tend to prefer general as opposed to vocational education is also apparent. The share of vocational students in upper secondary education has been decreasing steadily since the mid-90s.

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14 Gymnázium provides general secondary programmes completed by maturita examination (ISCED 344) and prepares students primarily for higher education. The studies may last four (upper secondary education), six or eight years (lower and upper secondary education).
Between 2005/06 and 2015/16 it has decreased by 4.4%. Yet, the labour market demand for quality workers with vocational qualification is still high. Government addresses the decreasing participation by promoting vocational training and employers are becoming more active in this respect as well.

Table 12. **Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>ISCED 344 general</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ISCED 353, 354 vocational</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>21 266 026</td>
<td>11 190 837</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>10 075 189</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>414 371</td>
<td>110 160</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>304 211</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat (educ_uoe_enrs04); Extracted on: 03.08.2016. Calculations done by NÚV.

Table 13. **Students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2005/06-2015/16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ISCED 344 general</th>
<th>ISCED 353, 354 vocational</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Vocational %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>115 675</td>
<td>371 180</td>
<td>486 855</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>121 430</td>
<td>366 962</td>
<td>488 392</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>124 839</td>
<td>356 357</td>
<td>481 196</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>127 545</td>
<td>347 597</td>
<td>475 142</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>126 492</td>
<td>341 692</td>
<td>468 184</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>115 180</td>
<td>306 620</td>
<td>421 800</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>104 899</td>
<td>275 026</td>
<td>379 925</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>102 927</td>
<td>267 408</td>
<td>370 335</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>102 574</td>
<td>261 400</td>
<td>363 974</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** Data for 2010/11 and 2012/13 not included.


**Box 1. Reform of maturita and final examination**

After long discussions, the process of implementation of the so-called ‘state maturita’ (ISCED 354) was launched in 2010/11 when it became compulsory for all secondary schools. It comprises common and profiling/vocational parts. The MŠMT is responsible for the preparation of a standardised exam. The profiling/vocational part is designed by schools. The ‘state maturita’ reform ended the former practice of schools preparing their own maturita exams, thus making exams more objective, comparable across schools/programmes and increasing their role as a reference tool.

For vocational certificate (ISCED 353) courses standardised final examination assignments have been under development since 2009. A uniform content for each study programme (e.g. bricklayer, toolmaker, baker, hairdresser, etc.) is developed jointly by vocational school teachers and experts with practical experience. Since 2014/15, the use of uniform assignments is
compulsory for all secondary schools. The regular update of topics for assignments as well as technical support is the responsibility of National Institute for Education (NÚV).

Source: ReferNet

2.2.4.3. **Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non-tertiary) level**

**Follow-up courses (ISCED 354)**

Pupils who have acquired a vocational certificate (výuční list) (ISCED 353) may enrol in ISCED 354 follow-up courses that are organised by secondary schools having *maturita* courses in the respective field. It is also possible to enrol after gaining some work experience. The two year course is completed with a *maturita* examination. The number of graduates interested in follow-up courses is increasing as their completion gives access to higher education after completion. In 2015/16, about 26% of graduates of three-year vocational courses entered a follow-up course (15). Nevertheless, their success rate is lower than in other *maturita programmes*.

This segment of the education system provides a second chance and significantly enhances further passage through the system. Instead of a four-year course with the *maturita* a number of pupils opt for a three-year programme leading to a vocational certificate that is followed by a two-year follow-up course concluded by the *maturita* examination.

**Shortened programmes at secondary technical and secondary vocational schools**

Since 2005, the so-called ‘shortened programmes’ at secondary technical and secondary vocational schools are available. The full-time programme takes one to two years. A part-time equivalent may be 12 months longer than the full-time programme. Shortened programmes are designed for those who have already completed secondary education and intend to acquire a qualification in a different field, or have secondary general education and intend to get a vocational qualification. Candidates with *maturita* (ISCED 354) may get a vocational certificate (ISCED 353) or another *maturita* in a different field; candidates who have a vocational certificate (ISCED 353) can only get another vocational certificate in a different field. Shortened courses are suitable especially for adults. Although the number of applicants has been low, it increases.

(15) Source: NÚV (2016). Vývoj vzdělanostní a oborové struktury žáků a studentů ve středním a vyšším odborném vzdělávání v ČR a v krajích ČR a postavení mladých lidí na trhu práce ve srovnání se stavem v Evropské unii 2015/16 [Development of education and field structure of pupils and students in upper secondary and tertiary professional education in the CR and situation of young people at the labour market in comparison with the EU 2015/16].

Lifelong-learning courses in HE institutions (VŠ)

HE institutions may provide courses for graduates of secondary education which do not lead to a qualification level or academic degree. These are, for example preparatory courses for HE or retraining or specialization courses designed to widen/complement the knowledge and skills for a specific occupation. Formally, these courses are post-secondary (ISCED 454) education programmes. The participants are not HE students but are regarded as students by the state for the purposes of, for example, social security and pensions. Opening and management of the courses is an autonomous decision of the HE institution and the details (type, content) are not statistically monitored at the national level.

Post-maturita language courses

The post-maturita language courses (ISCED 454) provided by the authorised language schools serve mostly as an alternative for students who intend to continue studying at the tertiary level, but have not passed an entry exam after the maturita (ISCED 354). They provide an opportunity to prolong their initial education student status (for example, for social security benefits) while improving language skills. Graduates who have passed a maturita exam are allowed to enter these courses. The students can undergo the state language exam, which is standardized and nationally recognized, but it does not constitute a qualification level. The courses (as well as the exams) are provided for a fee and language schools must have them accredited by the MŠMT.

Table 14. Participation in postsecondary non-tertiary education by the type of programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up courses</td>
<td>45 059</td>
<td>44 520</td>
<td>43 207</td>
<td>36 482</td>
<td>30 166</td>
<td>26 483</td>
<td>22 758</td>
<td>20 437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortened programmes</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>1 239</td>
<td>1 709</td>
<td>2 260</td>
<td>3 136</td>
<td>4 183</td>
<td>4 352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-maturita language courses</td>
<td>12 910</td>
<td>10 058</td>
<td>9 205</td>
<td>6 793</td>
<td>6 517</td>
<td>5 442</td>
<td>5 284</td>
<td>5 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning courses at the VŠ</td>
<td>44 071</td>
<td>47 347</td>
<td>47 219</td>
<td>49 550</td>
<td>52 295</td>
<td>57 907</td>
<td>68 745</td>
<td>72 009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.4.4. Vocational education and training at tertiary level

Tertiary professional schools (vyšší odborné školy – VOŠ)

The tertiary professional schools represent a relatively recent component in the Czech education system. They have been established since 1995/96 with an aim to provide practically oriented high quality professional education (ISCED 655) and they, thus, constitute a kind of counter balance to the higher education that has been traditionally of a rather academic nature. Most of VOŠ were founded by secondary technical schools (SOŠ)
and together with them they often form one legal entity. Some have recently acquired the status of higher education institutions of a non-university type. Applicants must have completed their upper secondary education with the *maturita* (normally of age 19 or older). The school director may decide whether an entrance examination should be part of admission proceedings, and should decide on its content. The study programmes last three to three and a half years. All (including public) VOŠ may collect tuition fees (see Section 2.2.3).

In general, VOŠ study fields cover most vocational fields at upper secondary level. Healthcare, pedagogy, social work, economics, administration and arts related programmes prevail. The number of students is rather low compared to higher education.

The curricula are designed by individual schools and accredited (see Section 3.2.2). The ratio between general, general vocational and specific vocational subjects is roughly 20:40:40. Practical training and work placement are important components of education in tertiary professional schools. They may last up to one year. Students work on a project/paper to be evaluated jointly by the school and the relevant company or institution. The teaching methods are similar to those applied in higher education.

The studies are completed by the *absolutorium*. It is a vocational examination consisting of the theory of vocational subjects, a foreign language, a graduate thesis and its defence. Upon successful passing of the *absolutorium*, the graduate attains a tertiary professional qualification and the title of a specialist with a diploma (*diplomovaný specialista*, DiS).

Graduates from tertiary professional schools find employment relatively easily in various fields and perform advanced (qualified) tasks. They may further enhance their qualification in higher education with the same conditions as secondary school graduates with a *maturita* certificate. Some forms of prior learning (subjects) may be recognised by the higher education institution.

**Higher education institutions (vysoké školy – VŠ)**

VŠs provide all (three) types of study programmes: *bachelor* (ISCED 645), *master* (ISCED 746 and 747) and *doctoral* (ISCED 844). The students acquire both general (academic) as well as vocational (profession-related) education. Higher education institutions are both private and public.

Bachelor study programmes are designed to prepare students for performing an occupation and for further studies in a master study programme. They last from three to four years (ISCED 645) and are concluded by a state final examination and the defence of a bachelor thesis.

Master study programmes focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in line with modern science, research and development, on mastering its practical application, and on
nurturing creative activities. The programmes follow on from bachelor programmes and their standard duration is one to three years (ISCED 746). If the nature of the study programme so requires, accreditation may be awarded to a standalone master programme, which does not follow from a bachelor programme (the so called ‘long master programmes’, ISCED 747). In such a case it lasts from four to six years. The studies in master programmes are completed by a state final examination and the defence of a master thesis. After obtaining the degree of master, a so-called ‘rigorous’ (rigorózní) examination may be taken, which also involves the defence of a thesis.

A doctoral study programme may follow only after the completion of a master programme. These programmes focus on independent creative activities concerned with research and development, or on independent theoretical or creative work in arts. The standard length is three years (ISCED 844). The studies in doctoral programmes are completed by a state doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation.

A minimum requirement for admission to a VŠ is the completion of secondary education with maturita, or absolutorium in the case of conservatoires. The majority of VŠs are public. The education for the Czech nationals at public VŠs is free of charge, except for some special fees (related to admission proceedings, extending the standard length of studies, etc.). Private VŠs provide education for a fee.

**Participation in tertiary education**

Since 1989, there has been a rise in the number of students. Between 2005/06-2015/16 the largest increase (in percentage as well as absolute terms) was at ISCED 645, 746, 747 (16) level (13%, 35 868). The number of ISCED 554, 655 (17) students decreased by 12% (3 768 students). The number of doctoral students (ISCED 844 (18)) increased by 7% (1 577 students).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU-28</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>ISCED 645, 746, 747 %</th>
<th>ISCED 554, 655 %</th>
<th>ISCED 844</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 530 019</td>
<td>17 418 224</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>1 406 851</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>418 624</td>
<td>392 536</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>25 090</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat. Students enrolled in tertiary education by education level, programme orientation, sex and field of education (educ_uoe_enrt03); http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_enrt03&lang=en Date of extraction 04.08.2016. Calculations done by NÚV.

(16) ISCED 645 - Bachelor study / university education, 1st stage – Bachelor, ISCED 746 - Master study (long 5-years programmes) / university education, 2nd stage – Master, ISCED 747 - Master study (short 2- to 3-years follow-up programmes) / university education, 2nd stage – Master
(17) ISCED 554 - Conservatoire - upper stage of 6-years or 8-years courses (7th and 8th grade) / higher education at conservatoires, ISCED 655 - higher technical schools / education.
(18) ISCED 844 - Doctoral study / university education, 3rd stage – Doctor
Table 166. Students in tertiary education by programme orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ISCED 645, 746, 747</th>
<th>ISCED 554, 655</th>
<th>ISCED 844</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>ISCED 645, 746, 747 %</th>
<th>ISCED 554, 655 %</th>
<th>ISCED 844 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>267 154</td>
<td>32 287</td>
<td>22 310</td>
<td>321 751</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>343 550</td>
<td>31 562</td>
<td>24 501</td>
<td>399 613</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>370 068</td>
<td>33 360</td>
<td>25 911</td>
<td>429 339</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>356 226</td>
<td>32 635</td>
<td>24 795</td>
<td>413 656</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>322 885</td>
<td>30 716</td>
<td>24 211</td>
<td>377 812</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>303 022</td>
<td>28 519</td>
<td>23 887</td>
<td>355 428</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.2.4.5. Quality assurance

Quality assurance mechanisms of secondary schools and tertiary professional schools

Evaluation of schools and assurance of the quality of education are carried out by means of (a) external evaluation, and (b) self-evaluation. In addition to this, each newly established school is evaluated by the MŠMT, based on which the school is included in the official register.

(a) External evaluation

The Czech School Inspectorate (Česká školní inspekce – ČŠI) is the independent national evaluation authority. It identifies and evaluates provision and outcomes of education, their compliance with school-based curricula and links to the national curricula. The evaluation of the education processes conducted by the ČŠI and the feedback provided is of a more practical nature than in the past. In 2015, the ČŠI defined the model of a quality school. It includes criteria and methodology for inspections in all types and levels of schools. For every school year a set of specific indicators for schools is published. At the beginning of 2016, the National Institute for Education (NÚV) was appointed by the MŠMT to the role of National Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET (NRP EQAVET-CZ). Activities of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET) are performed in cooperation with the ČŠI, the former NRP.

(b) School self-evaluation

A voluntary self-evaluation of schools is embedded in the legislation. Its outcomes form a basis for the development of an annual report on the school’s activities, and also serve as background material (among other things) for external evaluation by the ČŠI.
Quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions

The quality assurance of the higher education institutions takes the form of an accreditation process. The institutions must submit their educational programmes for evaluation to the Accreditation Commission set up by the Government and based on successful assessment, the accreditation is awarded/renewed.

2.2.4.6. Permeability

Early leaving from education and training is very low (around 5.5%) due to a wide choice of programmes combined with their high permeability (19). Vertical permeability is fostered by the availability of programmes where a VET graduate can obtain the maturita certificate allowing to study in tertiary programmes (upon passing an eventual entry examination set by the institution).

Horizontal permeability is possible upon the decision of the school directors. Since 2009, graduates of secondary vocational programmes can get another secondary vocational qualification through the so-called ‘shortened study programmes’ provided by the secondary schools (see Section 2.2.4.3). Graduates of tertiary professional schools, who after completing their studies continue in bachelor programmes, may have some of their completed subjects and exams recognised. However, in practice not all institutions are willing to do so.

Since 2012/13, four-year programmes, which enable the acquisition of both the vocational certificate and the maturita are being piloted. Student may take vocational examination after three years of studies and the maturita examination after the fourth (and final) year of studies. This helps strengthen the position of graduates in the labour market and prevents young people leaving educational without any qualification, because in case a student does not pass the maturita examination, he/she already has a vocational certificate recognised in the labour market.

(19) Permeability of an education system, as defined by Cedefop, means that the learners are ‚able to move easily between different types of education, (such as academic and vocational) and between different levels (such as upper secondary, or apprenticeship, up to higher education), as they decide’. Source: Cedefop (2012). Permeable education and training systems: reducing barriers and increasing opportunity. Briefing Note. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/20510.aspx
2.2.5. Continuing vocational education and training

2.2.5.1. Adults in the schools system
Adults can take part in any form or level of VET provided within the school system\(^{20}\). As concerns training programmes, levels of qualification, curricula, quality assurance and assessment, no distinction has been made between young IVET students and adults. However, the participation of adults in these formal forms of study is rather low. Balancing the work/family life and studies can be difficult and there is also a certain reluctance on the part of most adults to return to the school environment as the specifics of adult learning are not thoroughly acknowledged by the schools: traditional teaching methods (lectures, the ‘frontal’ approach to communicating knowledge) still predominate in schools, and individual work and life experience are not always taken into account. The entrance examination, in which the knowledge gained in prior initial education is mechanically tested, frequently poses an obstacle to adults’ access to education, particularly at the higher levels.

Schools may also offer part-time and distance courses suitable especially for adults (these courses usually last one extra year in comparison to full-time programmes). Lessons take place mostly in the afternoon. Self-studying within part-time studies and various methods of distance studies (e.g. e-learning) are being used.

Part-time education at secondary and tertiary professional levels is not particularly widespread.

Distance learning is more common in higher education. It is supported mainly through initiatives of universities and the National Centre of Distance Education (Národní centrum distančního vzdělávání – NCDiV). The majority of the VŠs offer so-called combined studies, where the distance learning is combined with a portion of on-site learning or individual consultations. The range of study fields is nearly as diverse as in full-time programmes, although the number of courses and participants is much lower.

2.2.5.2. Statutory training
Statutory training is based on legal requirements related to certain professions (esp. in public administration, healthcare, railway transport, electrical engineering, etc.) The training is normally provided by sectoral/industry institutes. Training differs in terms of management and operations: directly managed by the relevant ministries or provided by commercial training firms.

\(^{20}\) The so called ‘school system’ is a system of schools (under responsibility of the MŠMT) with the main task of providing formal education to the children and youth leading to a qualification level (IVET).
HE institutions provide accredited teacher training courses (so-called ‘complementary pedagogy studies’) to make it possible for professionals to obtain a teaching qualification. These courses normally last one to two years and graduates get a nationally recognised qualification that entitles them to teach in their field at a particular level of education or to provide other educational services (educational guidance, etc.).

2.2.5.3. Retraining in the framework of active labour market policies ALMP

Retraining in the framework of active labour market policies (ALMP) is organized by the Labour Office (Úřad práce - ÚP) through its regional and local units (branches). The courses must be accredited by the MŠMT and are provided by various training providers (private or public providers including schools).

Since 2009, accredited retraining courses must be linked to the national register of qualifications (Národní soustava kvalifikací – NSK) (see Section 3.2.1) and the content of the course and the certificate issued has to be in compliance with the relevant vocational qualification (if defined for the field). There are two main types of retraining:

(a) The retraining of the unemployed and people at risk of unemployment

Besides the unemployed registered at the Labour Office, who comprise the primary target group, also people at risk of becoming redundant, people who wish to change their job and other applicants (e.g. women on maternity leave, women in household or other inactive persons) can take part in retraining. The duration of courses normally ranges from several weeks to several months. The training can be arranged in either of the following ways:

- The regional branches of the ÚP develop targeted projects for specific groups of people who are present in their registry in larger numbers (e.g. the disabled, people over 50, women after maternity and parental leave, the long-term unemployed, people with combined disadvantages, the juveniles, etc.). The ÚP branches then contract the training providers and recommend the training to their clients.

- Since 2012, the client of a ÚP branch can find an accredited course according to his/her preferences and apply for funding. If ÚP branch considers the course to be suitable, with respect to the jobseeker's health condition and his/her prospective employability, funding is provided.

(b) The retraining of employees

Retraining may also take place at the initiative of an employer with the aim of ensuring that the employees continue their employment. In that case a ÚP branch may cover the costs of retraining and other related costs for the employer or for the organisation that provides the retraining courses for the employees. The retraining of employees takes place during working hours and employees are entitled to a wage reimbursement
amounting to their average earnings. Courses tailored to the specific employer(s)’ needs and not leading directly to a government-regulated qualification can also be provided in this framework.

2.2.6. Teachers and Trainers

In addition to the achieved formal qualification in the respective field, upper secondary VET teachers (i.e. teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational theoretical subjects, teachers of vocational training and teachers of practicum) need to acquire tertiary pedagogical qualification.

Practical training instructors are exclusively employees of the company; the Act on Pedagogical Staff does not recognise them as pedagogues. Therefore, they do not need to have pedagogical training despite the fact they interact with learners.

Some teachers complete the required qualification in pedagogy within the framework of further education. The teachers’ obligation to participate in continuing education is stipulated in the Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on pedagogical staff and in the amendment to some other acts (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2004).

Qualification and competence requirements for all teaching professionals, their working hours, continuing professional development (CPD) and career scheme are regulated by this Act.

Continuing education of VET teachers does not form a system, its contents or time scope are not centrally prescribed; CPD is managed individually by every school – the headmaster of the school is responsible for continuing professional development of pedagogical staff. A uniform standard of professional competences for teachers at all levels of education (from pre-school education to tertiary education – short cycle) of all types of schools and subjects is being prepared. The standard will be a part of a long-awaited career scheme. Mentoring is not part of the support currently being provided to teachers within the school structure.

In the 2014 approved Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020 includes teachers and trainers among the three key priorities. It is promoting the quality of teaching and teachers particularly in the sense of completing and launching the career scheme for teachers, improving their work conditions and modernising the pre-service training of teachers.

The attractiveness of teaching jobs up to the tertiary level is generally very low as the teaching profession is considered undervalued. This is caused mainly by low average salaries compared to other high-skilled professionals and limited opportunities for career development.
Adopting the framework for career development for teachers has been debated for many years. A new approach being developed proposes three progression levels and focuses on the quality of teaching. It introduces the currently missing path allowing for the development of professional competences.


2.3. **Other forms of training**

2.3.1. **Governance**

The MŠMT has overall responsibility for continuing education. The ministry is responsible for all types of training provided within the schools system (21). The training on a commercial basis that does not provide government-recognised qualification is not governed by any regulatory body.

At the regional level, Regional Councils for Human Resources Development have consultative, initiatory and coordinative functions in the area of strategic management of human resources.

2.3.2. **Legislation**

There are various regulations (acts or decrees) that touch upon aspects of non-regulated (on the part of government) VET. The most important is the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results (zákon č. 179/2006 Sb., o ověřování a uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání) effective since 2007. The law creates a legislative framework for the recognition and validation of qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning and interlinks the areas of CVET and IVET in terms of legislation (see Chapter 3). The basic general framework for obligatory training in companies is set by the Labour Code (Zákoník práce).

2.3.3. **Funding**

In general, there is no unified coherent system for CVET funding. The training that does not lead to the government-regulated qualification is financed by either participating individuals

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(21) The so called 'schools system' is a system of schools (under responsibility of the MŠMT) whose main task is to provide typically formal education to children and youth eventually leading to a qualification level (initial education and training). However, they also provide continuing education and training courses for adults and other forms of training.
or employers who provide the training for their employees. Besides that, there are several forms of incentives and grants that (mainly) employers can apply for. These schemes are often project-based initiatives co-funded from EU structural funds. Due to their temporary nature, conditions change according to the state administration policy priorities. For details on the incentives and grants please see Chapter 4.

2.3.4. Training programmes

2.3.4.1. Non-formal training provided within the schools system

Within the regular school system (\textsuperscript{22}), non-formal courses are provided. They do not lead to higher level of education. The graduates get a certificate of the course´s completion.

Training provided by schools in addition to their primary activities related to formal VET

These courses are defined by the School Act. They are not subject to strict rules and schools may provide them on a voluntary basis. They may be offered for a fee and are normally run by school teachers. Courses are usually open for all applicants who meet the entry requirements set by the school and include:

(a) Specialist courses, courses in various subjects, and post-maturita specialisation courses offered by secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. They are focused on acquiring the additional knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of a profession.

(b) Lifelong learning courses at HE institutions with an objective to complement or update a qualification. Most of the participants are specialists with a form of qualification in the given field. Institutions issue certificates of course completion. The duration and subjects are diverse. Part-time or e-learning courses predominate. Within this scheme, most universities also offer the University of Third Age. The courses are tailored to leisure and personal interests of seniors and financially supported by the state.

Training provided by the specialised institutions within the school system

Besides the regular schools, the School Act defines several other types of institutions that provide special services and/or specific training. Courses are open for all applicants (mostly young but also adults) who meet the entry requirements (if set) and are usually provided for a fee. Almost all of the courses are part-time and include:

\textsuperscript{22} See previous footnote.
2.3.4.2. Training in enterprises

**Obligatory training**
According to the Labour Code, the employer is obliged to:

(a) ensure appropriate practical experience for employed graduates,
(b) provide introductory training for all employees who enter into employment without a qualification,
(c) provide initial training for an employee who has transferred to a new workplace or is supposed to perform a different type of work (if needed),
(d) train employees to ensure their health and safety at the workplace.

The law does not specify the form or duration of this training. Its content, frequency and other characteristics depend mainly on the employer who also covers the costs. The State Labour Inspection Office may check on the quality and appropriateness of this training. In recent years, e-learning has become increasingly popular.

**Training based on the employer’s human resource policy**
This training is not regulated by the state. Most of it is provided by external training organisations and consultancies. To a lesser degree training courses are offered by companies’ own training facilities. A very small part is provided by secondary or tertiary schools. The certificates acquired via company training are only valid within the particular company.

Staff training is financed mainly by employers. There is no systemic state support for investment in human resources in companies. Nevertheless employers can receive some public incentives through several programmes operated by the state and co-funded mostly from EU Funds and the state budget.

Under certain conditions, employers can also apply for funding to retrain their employees within the framework of ALMP, a service implemented by the Labour Office.

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(a) Basic art schools (základní umělecké školy) which provide part-time courses in arts (music, dance, fine arts, literature/drama).
(b) Language schools which have the authorisation to administer state language examinations (jazykové školy s právem státní jazykové zkoušky).
(c) Leisure centres (střediska volného času) which focus primarily on leisure activities, but also deliver language, computer skills, fine arts, music, photography and other courses, including continuing education courses for teachers and the general public.
These courses may either lead to the government regulated qualification or be tailored to the employer’s needs (see also Section 2.2.5.3).

The level of company investments to employee training decreased between 2005 and 2010 and dropped below the EU-28 average (see table 17)

Table 17. Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), 2005 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: The indicator represents the Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost. Calculations are related to all enterprises participating in the survey (staff 10+) regardless of having carried out CVT courses or not.

2.3.4.3. Non-regulated ('free-market') training

Courses and programmes offered by public or non-profit organisations

Many public or non-profit organisations (regional and local cultural and training centres, libraries, museums, foundations, churches, political parties, social partners etc.) provide courses and programmes. They are accessible for those interested in the relevant subject area and may be provided for a fee. There have been several initiatives supporting companies in the education of their employees through EU structural funds.

Demand driven courses offered by commercial training providers or independent consultants and lecturers.

Usually courses have no entry requirements except for the payment of the course fee. After completing the course, graduates receive a certificate, which is issued based on attendance or upon passing an examination or test.

2.3.5. Quality assurance mechanisms

Evaluation of the quality of non-accredited courses is the responsibility of the providers and users – there are no quality standards and the quality is not assessed by any particular body or institution. The market is believed to be the decisive force, but as there is only a limited regional market, the quality differs widely and it is not always appropriate. Some associations of training providers issue certificates for their lecturers that should guarantee a teaching quality.

The quality of state accredited courses is guaranteed by the relevant responsible state bodies (in most cases the respective ministry). The quality is assessed as a part of the accreditation procedure. If shortcomings are discovered, accreditation is not granted, but repeated applications are possible. There is no uniform regulation of the accreditation
process. The responsible bodies (ministries) apply different approaches. The quality of the actual provision is not evaluated on a continuous basis. The accreditation is awarded for a limited period of time (usually for several years) and then the programme must be re-accredited.

2.3.6. Participation in CVET

The participation of adults in non-formal education has been, over the long term, below the EU-27 average (see Table 18), however in 2011 there was a remarkable increase and the figure exceeded the EU-27 average (6.4%) by reaching 9.6%. This is due to extensive ESF (European Social Fund) funded projects that were launched as anti-crisis measures and that provided funding for company training. Since 2012, the participation has again been dropping slowly.

Table 18. Participation of adult population in non-formal education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-27</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-15</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Proportion of persons taking part in non-formal education during 4 weeks prior to the date of survey, within 25-64 age group, LFS data

CHAPTER 3.
Shaping VET qualifications

3.1. Anticipation of skill needs

The CZ lacks a coherent system for forecasting skill needs. However, over the course of the years, various initiatives have been developed, especially at the research level, that aim at creating solid methods and individual tools for early identification of skill needs. They still take the form of single projects which are not inter-related, and their results do not serve as a regular source of information. Projects are contracted mostly by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí – MPSV) and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy – MŠMT) or social partners.

The National Training Fund – National Observatory of Employment and Training (Národní vzdělávací fond – Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání, NVF-NOZV), CERGE-EI and the Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs (Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí – VÚPSV) belong to the most experienced institutions in this respect. Their long-term cooperation in carrying out forecasts and developing methodologies constitute a good foundation for the necessary forecasting system.

In addition to this, there are projects of various other institutions which are not directly concerned with forecasting skill needs but which carry out certain partial activities within this area. The National Institute for Education (Národní ústav pro vzdělávání – NÚV) has developed an Information System on the Situation of Graduates in the Labour Market (ISA) available at the website www.infoabsolvent.cz. The Education Policy Centre (Středisko vzdělávací politiky – SVP) of the Faculty of Education at Charles University carried out an analysis of the development of qualification requirements in the Czech labour market to be used as a part of the ISA.

The national project PŘEKVAP - Forecasting Skills Needs (Předvídání kvalifikačních potřeb) – financed from the ESF and state budget was implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Further Education Fund and other stakeholders in 2015. The main objective of the project was to map the situation regarding anticipation of labour market skills needs at the national level and also to create a draft model of a new professional office, which would focus its activities on the problems of forecasting the needs of the labour market and ensuring cooperation between all actors involved. The system follow-up is expected to be initiated within the year 2017 via a new project.
There are also partial activities at the regional level focusing on examining employers’ needs and short-term outlooks of regional labour market developments. These analyses and predictions of future development are only occasionally concerned with longer periods of development in relation to regional strategies. Recently, these activities have also become rather rare.

There are no incentives (financial or other) for secondary schools and other actors based on the employability of graduates or employer’s needs. Nevertheless, in the last few years employers have become more engaged in public discussions at regional and national levels. It shows the need to better match the educational supply with the demands of the economy.

For HE institutions, the employability of graduates is one of the criteria for funding, but its importance is rather low.

One of the ways of obtaining employers’ opinions is their representation in the so-called sector councils (see Section 3.2.3).

Representatives of employers involved in sector councils have regularly offered their views as part of ad hoc surveys and surveys dealing with skills needs and the expected occupational requirements since 2009. These surveys are suitable for identifying the needs in the immediate future (at most one to two years).

3.2. Development of qualifications and curricula

In the past decade, important steps have been taken in the area of defining and updating qualifications, and in their systematic linking to the labour market and VET curricula were undertaken. Key parts of the system have been developed mostly through individual projects. The work on the full integration of the system is not finished yet.

3.2.1. National register of qualifications

The Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results (24) (2007) introduces the national register of qualifications (Národní soustava kvalifikací – NSK) which contains descriptions of qualifications in the form of standards for the so called (a) vocational and (b) complete vocational qualifications (see Section 3.3) which have been gradually developed. As of June 2016, there were 991 standards of qualifications publicly accessible in the register. All approved standards and related information are published in the NSK information system (www.narodnikvalifikace.cz) in the Czech and English languages.

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(24) Act no.179/2006 on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results and on changes to other laws.
Labour market requirements described in the qualification standards are taken into account during the creation and revision of the initial (vocational) education curricula.

3.2.2. Curricula development

Within the formal school system, curricula up to the upper secondary level are developed at two levels. The National Curricula (RVP – Rámcové vzdělávací programy) under the responsibility of the MŠMT contain the minimum requirements for education stipulated by the State and are created for each of 285 individual fields of education. They are focused mainly on learning outcomes and key competences. Based on the National Curricula, upper secondary schools design their own school curricula (Školní vzdělávací programy - School educational programmes). The objective is to allow for a more flexible shaping of graduate profiles in line with regional needs, the development of the relevant field and the interests and capacities of students. At the same time, the system demands a strong methodical guidance for teachers who develop the curricula.

At the tertiary level, the content of study programmes is developed by the institutions (VOŠ and VŠ) themselves. The MŠMT approves the programmes based on a recommendation issued by the Accreditation commission for tertiary professional education or the Accreditation commission for higher education. The commissions are set up by the Government.

Continuing (vocational) education programmes provided outside of the formal school system usually respond directly to the demand of the market. When developing the programmes, existing national registers may be consulted, e.g. the National Register of Occupations (www.nsp.cz) or the National Register of Qualifications (narodnikvalifikace.cz). Since 2009, the providers of the retraining programmes (accredited within the ALMP) must link the content of these courses to the National Register of Qualifications. Thus, the successful participants can get a nationally recognised certificate (see Section 3.3).

3.2.3. Actors involved in the process

There are 25 so called field groups consisting of experts from the area of education, labour market and occupations. The field groups have been working for more than twenty years with the support of the MŠMT to foster the creation of the National Curricula with objectives and contents in line with the labour market needs. Their expertise covers the full spectrum of potential applicability of VET graduates. The field groups support continuous development of
VET curricula and implementation of the European tools – ECVET (\(^{25}\)), EQAVET and assignment of qualifications’ levels to EQF (\(^{26}\)) levels.

Another type of entity, the sector councils (sektorové rady - SR), has been operating over the recent ten years nationwide, primarily in the process of defining occupations and qualifications. They bring together representatives of key stakeholders, especially employers, in particular fields. Gradually established since 2006, the number of sector councils is increasing. Currently there are 29 sector councils consisting of the 350 representatives of employers, educators and ministries working on skill needs analysis of the labour market in sectors and on the development of qualification and assessment standards of vocational qualifications in relation to occupations defined in the national register of occupations (www.nsp.cz).

The National Institute of Education (NÚV) is in charge of coordination and of the methodological accuracy of the curricula developed for upper secondary education. The NÚV submits the proposals of the developed qualification standards to authorising bodies for a feedback (there are 16 authorising bodies, usually ministries; see Section 3.3). The final approval of standards is in the responsibility of the MŠMT.

### 3.3. Recognition and validation of learning outcomes

A system of recognition and validation of learning outcomes has been developing during the past years. The legislative framework was created by the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results (Zákon o uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání). Any person who has gained certain skills and knowledge in some vocational field may, after meeting the relevant requirements, acquire a nationally valid certificate of qualification that is generally recognised by employers. Distinction is made between vocational and complete vocational qualifications.

Vocational qualification (profesní kvalifikace) is defined as an ‘ability of a person to duly perform a task or a set of tasks within an occupation’. It corresponds to certain activities (e.g. furniture assembly, installation of lifts, manufacture of upholstered seats, sports massage, flower arrangement, cold dishes catering, production of ice cream, etc.) but does not cover the whole occupation. As of June 2016, 991 qualification standards were approved and included into the national register of qualifications.

Complete vocational qualification (úplná profesní kvalifikace) is defined as a ‘professional competence to duly perform all the tasks within an occupation’ (e.g. pastry

\(^{25}\) European Credit Transfer in Vocational Education and Training.

\(^{26}\) European Qualifications Framework.
chef, hairdresser, plumber, economist, engineering technician, etc.). It can be acquired either by a standard completing of an IVET programme (see Section 2.2.4) or by the recognition of prior learning.

Figure 4. National register of qualifications

To obtain vocational qualification, the applicant needs to demonstrate all competences listed in the qualification standard of the National Register of Qualifications (see Section 3.2.1). Verification is carried out by means of an examination implemented by the so-called authorised persons (mostly adult education providers and VET schools) (27). The exam is provided for a fee that can be deducted from an individual’s taxable income (see Section 4.2). An adult over the age of 18 who has completed at least the obligatory basic education can register for the exam. Upon passing, the individual receives a nationally recognised certificate of a vocational qualification. The above described process was launched in 2009. By June 2016, more than 145 thousand exams have been administered.

Acquiring complete vocational qualifications, which are equivalent to those acquired within the formal schools system, is a more demanding process. If a person wants to obtain a qualification level identical to one awarded within formal IVET, she/he must pass an examination required for the field of study within IVET (certified by the maturita or vocational certificate) at school. It is a rare but possible way of acquiring the complete qualification.

(27) Authorised persons are licenced by the so called awarding bodies, which are organisations of state administration relevant to the given field (ministries or the Czech National Bank). In 2016 there were 1216 authorised persons in the Czech Republic.
Policies to promote the system and enhance awareness and increase the number of applicants are being implemented. A significant step towards connecting the Czech qualifications and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was the approval of the National Referencing Report by the Czech Government in July 2011. As a direct consequence, all qualification standards for vocational qualifications submitted for approval to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports are in both Czech and English.

Figure 5. Processes of recognition and validation of learning outcomes
CHAPTER 4.
Promoting participation in VET

4.1. Guidance and counselling

Most career counselling services are provided in two parallel systems. The first falls within the responsibility of the MŠMT; the other one is administered by the MPSV.

4.1.1. The MŠMT counselling system

The MŠMT regulates career counselling services provided at schools. The services are focused on solutions to problems which children and young people face during their studies and on the process of choosing or changing educational paths. These services are available to all learners in lower secondary programmes (ISCED 244) when they make their first choice.

4.1.1.1. National level

The National Institute for Education (NÚV) is a key actor of such career counselling at the national level. It focuses on research, methodology and dissemination of information related to career counselling, and supports the teaching of subjects dealing with labour market issues. The NÚV provides specific training focused on counselling services and the development and introduction of new methods of diagnostics in the area. It also pursues the development of an integrated information system (ISA) and the related website www.infoabsolvent.cz which gathers information about the employment of school leavers on the labour market and is a useful source of information for career decisions of students, counsellors and adults. The NÚV have also provided e-learning courses for counsellors and teachers to improve their skills related to the career counselling.

Three qualifications (employment career counsellor, career counsellor for educational and professional career and career counsellor for endangered, risk and disadvantaged groups) for the occupation ‘career counsellor’ have been included in the National Register of Qualifications – NSK (see Section 3.2.1).

(28) The system www.infoabsolvent.cz was developed under the national systemic project VIP Kariéra, which was completed in 2009 and was co-financed from the ESF. This system collects information essential for career decision-making (of pupils, students and adults) and the success of graduates on the labour market. The system continues operating and has been evaluated as very beneficial by the OECD.
4.1.1.2. **Regional/local level**

Pedagogical-psychological guidance centres are located in all districts and provide services aiming at solving study-related, psychological and behavioural problems of students. Career services provided by these centres are derived from a pedagogical-psychological diagnosis of the pupil’s capacities, personal qualities, interests and other personal characteristics.

Centres for special pedagogy provide counselling to children and young people with sight, hearing, physical, mental or combined disabilities, and with communication disorders.

Educational care centres provide career services as part of preventive care for children and young people who show or are at risk of developing behavioural and social development disorders. Its role within career counselling lies rather in prevention of drop out caused by socio-pathologic issues.

Information centres for youth are a network of non-profit non-governmental centres that provide young people with information on a wide scope of various topics (education, leisure, health & lifestyle, citizenship, social issues, etc.). They also collect information on educational and job opportunities. They are grouped in the Association of Information and Counselling Centres for young people.

4.1.1.3. **School level**

Educational counsellors are coordinators of counselling services at schools. All basic and secondary schools are obliged by law to establish the position of educational counsellor (often the counsellors are recruited from the teachers of the school and therefore their professional capacity is rather limited due to the teaching duties). They address, in cooperation with other teachers, they address the school director, parents and the above mentioned counselling facilities as well as the MPSV counselling system (see below), and the issues related to education and professional orientation of the students. Each school also employs a school methodologist concerned with the prevention of socio-pathological disorders, and there may also be a school psychologist and a special pedagogue.

**Career management skills in curricula**

Since 2010/11, the curricula for upper secondary schools have included the subject ‘Introduction to the world of work’. Lower secondary education has introduced a subject ‘Career path selection’ where a significant focus is placed on the support of career management skills of the pupils. In addition, pupils may attend various educational fairs, open door days at schools, job brokering events, etc.
4.1.2. The MPSV counselling system

The MPSV system of counselling services to adults consists in the employment-related services provided by the Labour Office (ÚP) regional and local branches. It aims at resolving problems related to the transition from school to employment and supporting job seekers in finding a job through retraining.

The Information and Counselling Centre at each ÚP branch provides career choice assistance for young people and adults. Each centre employs a career counsellor. There is a wide range of information materials and media available for this purpose – mainly used on a self-serve basis (descriptions of occupations and leaflets on educational provision). The main target group are job seekers, people who seek alternative employment, school leavers and other groups at risk of unemployment. There are also visits being organised for the pupils from the senior classes of basic schools.

4.1.3. Other guidance and counselling services

In addition to MŠMT and MPSV counselling systems, there are private counselling service providers, employers’ associations and counselling organisations which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and other bodies.

In addition to the traditional one-to-one guidance sessions, adults may also use public information sources, such as the DAT database of continuing education (www.eu-dat.cz), the Integrated System of Model Working Positions (Integrovaný systém typových pozic) containing comprehensive information on occupations and related requirements (including an optional analysis of the client’s applicability – www.istp.cz), the Registry of schools (http://rejskol.msmt.cz/), Infoabsolvent information system (www.infoabsolvent.cz) and others. Commercial data sources and counselling services are also available.

The National Guidance Forum (Národní poradenské forum – NPF, www.narodniporadenskeforum.cz) is an advisory body of the MŠMT/MPSV for career guidance from a lifelong perspective. It was established in 2010. Given the potential of its members, it is able to ensure inter-sectoral coordination of activities related not only to the acquisition of professional competences of the career guidance providers within initial and continuing vocational education, but most importantly to the coordination of project plans implemented in the field of lifelong guidance at the departmental and interdepartmental level.

The Czech Republic is also involved in the European information and guidance networks, such as Euroguidance (www.euroguidance.cz) which provides the counsellors with a means of sharing information and experience at the national as well as international levels and Eures (www.eures.cz) which provides services to citizens who are interested in seeking employment in EU member states.
4.2. **Financial incentives**

There is no comprehensive system of financial incentives for VET participation. Nevertheless, there are several mechanisms through which limited financial support for VET can be obtained under certain conditions (besides the regular state funding mechanisms for IVET described in Section 2.2.3).

### 4.2.1. National level

Tax incentives were introduced at the end of 2014. Direct and indirect funding of secondary and tertiary vocational education by employers is deemed as a tax-deductible expense:

- a deductible amount of equivalent to approximately EUR 7 per hour of practical training or internship provided to a pupil/student on the tax-payer’s premises;
- costs of the assets at least partially used for the purposes of vocational training.

In addition, the limit of tax deductible amounts for corporate scholarships has been increased. The principle objective of the measure is to compensate part of entrepreneurs’ costs and motivate new companies to commence cooperation with the schools.

As regards CVET, two tax incentives are included in the Czech legislation: (a) costs for employees’ training are deemed as a part of the overall business costs for taxation purposes; (b) individuals can deduct the costs for exams in line with the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results from their tax base.

Enhanced possibility for schools to finance instructors from companies has been fostered by the amendment to the School Act of 2009. The schools may use part of the per capita labour costs to pay the employee of the company leading the practical training. By means of this measure, the schools shall be able to acquire the companies to implement practical training and to function as contractual partners more easily, and they may check on its quality more effectively.

Employers can apply for public grants to support the training of their employees upon meeting defined conditions. There are several programmes operated by the state and funded from the state budget or from EU funds. The co-funding principle is applied. The programmes are:

- (a) Active employment policy schemes. A company can apply for contribution for (re)training their employees (see Section 2.2.5.3).
- (b) Investment incentives (according to the Act on Investment Incentives). Investors in regions with high unemployment can receive support for training their employees.
- (c) Operational programmes co-funded by EU. Companies can draft projects that include training and receive co-funding if they meet the criteria set by the programmes. For example in the period 2015-2020, a programme POVEZ II (Support to Vocational
Education of Employees), administered by the Labour office regional branches, offers subsidies to companies and entrepreneurs for the training of employees.

4.2.2. **Regional level**

Most regions provide scholarships or other benefits for students of less popular secondary level programmes which are highly demanded by the labour market. The goal is to attract and/or motivate students to complete the programme. Regular school attendance, excellent learning results and good behaviour are usually prerequisites for receiving a scholarship. The scholarship programmes may slightly differ between the regions. A student can mostly obtain a total amount of about EUR 1 000 per three years of study (the monthly amount derives from particular the grade of study). Some fields have recorded an increase in interest; however, in others student interest continues to decline.

4.2.3. **Company level**

Some enterprises provide scholarships and other benefits to the students within the fields of their interest. An agreement that the benefiting student will work for the company after completion their studies may be required. In November 2015, the MŠMT prepared recommendations on contractual relationships between employers and learners, including agreements on the provision of the learner’s allowance.

4.3. **Policy and project-based support**

There is a high level of awareness of IVET benefits and of the risks that arise from decreasing IVET participation. The Government and employers are active in the field, they engage in discussions and pilot projects that should eventually result in more systemic support for IVET.

At political level, there is also a high awareness of the need to promote continuing vocational education of adults which is reflected in most relevant strategic documents. However, in practice the enforcement of effective systemic mechanisms is very slow within the context of high emphasis on austerity measures.

Recent initiatives supporting VET development comprise:

(a) National project POSPULU (fostering cooperation between schools and companies) was implemented by the education ministry in cooperation with the Confederation of Industry in 2012-15. It piloted a closer form of cooperation between schools and employers and subsequently drafted new proposals for legislation and other changes in the system. Project objectives aimed:
- to enhance the entrance of graduates from schools onto the labour market (increase the range of the period of practical training in real work environment);
- to increase the quality of the graduates’ competences in order to meet the employers’ needs (modernise the general education in VET programmes, support the personal assurance of cooperation between school and companies - the position of coordinator, practical training of teachers, quality assurance of practical training in companies, completion of study programmes in cooperation with employers, linkage between IVET and CVET qualifications);
- to match the VET programmes supply with the demand of the labour market (reform of school financing, coordination of VET);
- to enhance the attractiveness of VET for young people (strengthen the carrier guidance and ensure the better permeability of VET system).

(b) In 2013, the Government adopted a paper called New Measures Fostering Vocational Education and Training, which defines the main steps relating to the organisation, administration and legislation planned for the next few years intended to enhance participation in VET and its quality.

(c) In July 2014, the Strategy for Education Policy until 2020 was adopted. The Strategy sets out three priorities for the upcoming period reaching across all components of the system: reducing inequalities in education, supporting high-quality teaching and teachers as a prerequisite for such teaching, governing the system in both a responsible and efficient manner.

(d) In 2014, a one-year development programme fostering continuing education of teachers and pedagogical staff was launched by the MŠMT. The programme aims at enhancing the cooperation between secondary technical/vocational schools and employers, increasing the vocational competences of teachers of technical subjects and teachers of practical training, especially in technical fields (machinery, electrical engineering, chemistry, etc.).

(e) Since 2015, legislation amendments allowed directors of schools to employ part-time the experts from the world of business but also from non-profit organisations and State administration without a pedagogical qualification.

(f) Several media campaigns have been implemented during recent years promoting the choice of VET among school children and their parents or promoting the CVET among the general public (on the initiative of e.g. Ministry of Industry and Trade, MŠMT, etc.). A number of promotion media campaigns (often co-financed from the ESF) have also been carried out in the regions, in many cases in co-operation with social partners,
particularly employers. Regional media campaigns are also carried out by schools in order to attract prospective students.

(g) The MŠMT declared the 2015 Year of Technical Education. The detailed event programme (media campaigns, seminars, open days, conferences, etc.) was prepared in cooperation with the Confederation of Industry and other social partners. An important target group of many activities were parents, as they have influence over their children's education choices, and most still see vocational schools as a lesser option. A new interactive electronic publication called *Almanac of Technical Education* for parents, presenting a range of almost 500 secondary schools providing education in technical fields, including 70 good practice examples of cooperation between schools and companies, has been developed. It is available at www.RokPrumyslu.eu. From 2016 the Confederation of Industry has an option to comment on modifications related to school capacity and programmes.

(h) In March 2016, a six-year project Support to Regional Action Planning (P-KAP) commenced with the aim to ensure methodological support in the utilisation of action planning to all regions of the country as well as to secondary and higher professional schools.

(i) In April 2016, the MŠMT prepared recommendations on contractual relationships between employers and schools with the aim to unify proceedings and practices regarding the practical training provided in the real working environment of companies and to motivate employers towards cooperating with schools.
### List of abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Czech/English Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cedefop</td>
<td>Evropské centrum pro rozvoj odborného vzdělávání</td>
<td>European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERGE-EI</td>
<td>Česká školní inspekce</td>
<td>Czech School Inspectorate</td>
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<td>CVET</td>
<td>Další odborné vzdělávání a příprava</td>
<td>Continuing Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>CVT</td>
<td>Další odborná příprava</td>
<td>Continuing Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
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<td>CVTS</td>
<td>Další odborná příprava</td>
<td>Continuing Vocational Training Survey</td>
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<td>CZ</td>
<td>Česká republika</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>ČŠI</td>
<td>Česká školní inspekce</td>
<td>Czech School Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECVET</td>
<td>Evropský systém kreditů pro odborné vzdělávání a přípravu</td>
<td>European Credit Transfer in Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>EQAVET</td>
<td>Evropský systém kreditů pro odborné vzdělávání a přípravu</td>
<td>European Quality Assurance Reference Framework</td>
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<td>EQF</td>
<td>Evropský rámec kvalifikací</td>
<td>European Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>ESF</td>
<td>Evropský sociální fond</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Evropská unie</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Vysokoškolské vzdělávání</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISA</td>
<td>Informační systém o uplatnění absolventů škol na trhu práce</td>
<td>Information system on the situation of school leavers in the labour market</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISCED</td>
<td>Mezinárodní norma pro klasifikaci vzdělávání</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
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<td>ISTP</td>
<td>Integrovaný systém typových pozic</td>
<td>Integrated System of Model Working Positions</td>
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<td>IVET</td>
<td>Počáteční odborné vzdělávání a příprava</td>
<td>Initial Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>LLL</td>
<td>Celozivotní vzdělávání</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>MPSV</td>
<td>Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>MŠMT</td>
<td>Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports</td>
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<td>NACE</td>
<td>Klasifikace ekonomických činností</td>
<td>Statistical Classification of Economic Activities</td>
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<td>NAEP</td>
<td>Národní agentura pro evropské vzdělávací programy</td>
<td>National Agency for European Educational Programmes</td>
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<td>NCDiV</td>
<td>Národní centrum distančního vzdělávání</td>
<td>National Centre for Distance Education</td>
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<td>NOZV</td>
<td>Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání</td>
<td>National Observatory of Employment and Training</td>
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<td>NSK</td>
<td>Národní soustava kvalifikací</td>
<td>National Register of Qualifications</td>
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<td>NÚV</td>
<td>Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, školské poradenské zařízení a zařízení pro další vzdělávání pedagogických pracovníků</td>
<td>National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers</td>
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<td>NVF</td>
<td>Národní vzdělávací fond</td>
<td>National Training Fund</td>
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<td>Národní vzdělávací fond – Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání</td>
<td>National Training Fund – National Observatory of Employment and Training</td>
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<td>RVP</td>
<td>Rámcové vzdělávací programy</td>
<td>National Curricula</td>
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<td>SOS</td>
<td>Střední odborné školy</td>
<td>Secondary Technical Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOU</td>
<td>Střední odborná učiliště</td>
<td>Secondary Vocational Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UOE</td>
<td>UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat statistics on education</td>
<td>UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat statistics on education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>Úřad práce</td>
<td>Labour Office</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Odborné vzdělávání</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>VOŠ</td>
<td>Vyšší odborné školy</td>
<td>Tertiary Professional Schools</td>
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<td>VŠ</td>
<td>Vysoké školy</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<td>VÚPSV</td>
<td>Výzkumný ústav práce a sociálních věcí</td>
<td>Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs</td>
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Vyhláška č. 208/2007 Sb. o podrobnostech stanovených k provedení zákona o uznávání výsledků dalšího vzdělávání s vyznačením změn [Decree 208/2007 on details to implementation of the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results, with highlighted changes].

Vyhláška č. 33/2005 Sb. o jazykových školách s právem státní jazykové zkoušky a státních jazykových zkouškách [Decree No. 33/2005 Coll. on language schools authorised to administer state language examinations and on state language examinations].

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Zákon č. 347/1997 Sb. o vytvoření vyšších územních samosprávných celků [Act no. 347/1997 on the establishment of higher-level administrative units.(regions)].


Zákon č. 561/2004 Sb. o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (Školský zákon) [Act no. 561/2004 on pre-school, basic, secondary, higher professional and other education (School Act)].

Zákon č. 563/2004 Sb. o pedagogických pracovnících a o změně některých zákonů [Act no. 563/2004 on pedagogical staff and a change to other laws].


Zákon č. 72/2000 Sb. o investičních pobídkách [Act no. 72/2000 on investment incentives].