



# **Keynote on Higher VET: What is happening in Brussels with EQF level 5?**

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# Why Higher VET?



- More **demand in economic sectors** for skills beyond upper secondary education/initial VET (healthcare, IT, business, technical/engineering)
- Growing labour market demand for a **flexible and fast response** from education and training on skills provision
- Need to foster **VET excellence and innovation**
- Growing number of **young people** who wish to continue studies (e.g. after IVET or upper secondary education) not necessarily within academic bachelor or master HE studies
- Need to ensure **“one step-up” and LLL for adults**, employed or not



- **2015 Riga conclusions:** "Promote work-based learning in all its forms..."
- **New Skills Agenda for Europe, 2016:**
  - Make VET a first choice and raise VET attractiveness
  - Underlines important role of Higher VET
- **Investing in Youth Package, 2016:**
  - Quality Framework for Apprenticeships (QFA)
  - proposal for tracking of outcomes of graduates including for VET
  - measures on modernising school & higher education

# What is Higher VET? An attempt to define...



## Characteristics

- VET/PET at higher qualification levels (EQF level 5 and up; ISCED-1997 4-6 / ISCED-2011 4-8)
- Pre-dominance of professionally oriented aspects in terms of profile and content of a programme and qualifications
- Strong integration with the world of work
- Diversity across the EU, rarely common understanding and definition

## Purpose

1. prepare for direct entry to the labour market in a certain field or area, provide access to a certain profession
2. currency for entry or progression to education and training programmes at higher levels



**Narrow definition:** higher professional and vocational education and training outside the EHEA

- Post-secondary level VET, offered outside higher education
- Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and other LLL programmes offered in the formal education system
- Higher-level CVET provided outside the formal education system

**Broad definition:** Professional programmes/qualifications at level 5 and above, including those, covered by the EHEA

- Short-cycle higher education
- Professional Bachelor & Professional Master degrees
- Dual studies (apprenticeship or 'alternance' types) at Bachelor, Master or Doctoral level.

## Defining Higher VET and overview of the situation in EU-28

|  |                           | EQF level 5   | EQF level 6  | EQF level 7            | EQF level 8 |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|------------------------|-------------|
| HE ('overlapping zone')  |                           | AT, BE-nl, DK, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, UK | AT, BG, DE, DK, EE, FR, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SI | AT, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL | IT          |
| Higher professional and vocational education and training offered outside EHEA ('narrow' definition of higher VET) | Post-secondary            | AT, BG, CY, EE, EL, ES, HU, IE, IT, RO, SK, SE, UK                    | DE, IT, SE   | CZ, IT                 | IT          |
|  | CVET                      | BE-nl, CZ, DK, FI, FR, HR, IE, LU, NL                                 | AT, BE-nl, CZ, DE, DK, FI, NL                      | BE-nl, CZ, DK          |             |
|  | Outside the formal system | EE  | EE   | EE                     | EE          |



### By education sub-systems/sectors:

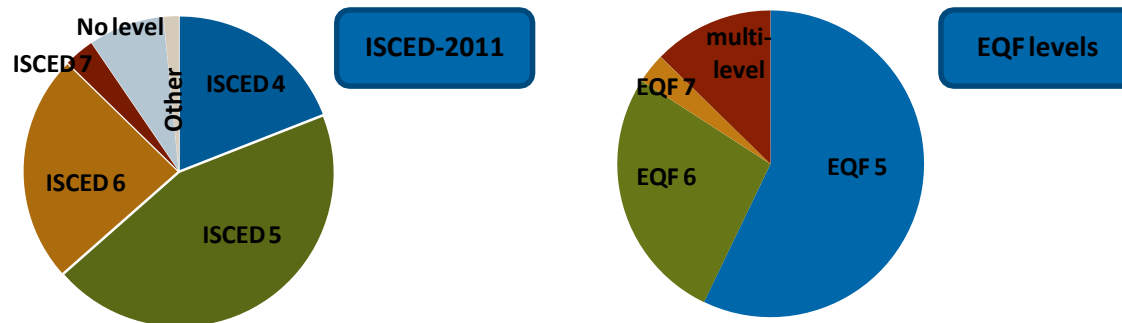
- **Post-secondary:** CY, EL, RO (post-high schools); SK-certified specialist
- **HVET, covered by EHEA:** PT (only- I 5); SI (Short cycle – I5; other – level 6); PL (State HV Schools. I 6, 7; (Foreign Language) Teacher Training colleges – I 5, 6); LV (I 5-7)
- **CVET:** HR, LU- Master Craftsperson; FR-Masters qualifications – Chambers of trade; BE-fl – Professional qualifications (I 5-7) can be obtained based on recognition; DK – further adult education, I 5;

### By countries

- **Out of 63 studied programmes – 36 refer to level 5**
- **In most countries with HVET at level 5, level 6-8 are predominantly "reserved" for HE**
- **In 1/3 of countries, levels from 5 up are in principle open for all types of qualifications (AT, BE-fr, CZ, DE, EE, FI, IE, IT, NL, PL, UK)**

# Main Features - 1

- **Trend:** - more than 1/3 of higher VET types studied are considered 'recent' (< 10 years)
  - tendency towards EQF level 5 in recently introduced qualifications (19 out of 22)
- **ISCED/EQF levels** of higher VET types analysed



– ISCED-97 levels: almost half ISCED level 5b – ‘more practically oriented and occupationally specific than programmes at 5a’

- **Segment of education and training:** post-secondary non-tertiary VET and higher education each account for approximately 1/3



# Main features of higher VET - 2

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## ▪ Governance:

- **Awarding body:** In 2/3 cases awarded by the provider; some by a ministry; a very small number by social partners or sectoral bodies
- **Funding:** most cases studied rely on some form of public funding
- **Quality assurance:** for programmes/qualifications studied *outside* higher education, nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  have some accreditation procedure
- Cases ***without any accreditation*** in place can be found at post-secondary non-tertiary level and in IVET.

# Main features of higher VET - 3

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- **Key focus/purpose:**

- Preparation for **employment** (50 out of 63) followed by **up-skilling** (29) and **re-skilling**.
- Cases of **CVET and post-secondary non-tertiary education and training** significantly more often **focus on re-skilling and up-skilling** (as compared to IVET, HE cases).

- **Permeability:**

- Only 4 out of 10 CVET and post-secondary non-tertiary cases studied provide access and progression to further learning (significantly lower than for HE and IVET cases).

- **Content and type of learning outcomes:**

- The majority of cases focus on **vocational LO** (i.e. more than 50% of LO); 1/3 display an equal balance between academic (general) and vocational LO.
- No or little *research* included (54 out of 63) in most cases.

- **Mode of delivery, acquisition and pathways: flexibility as a key aspect**

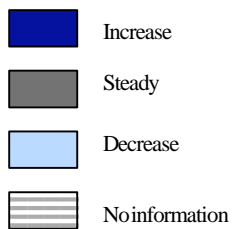
- More than half of the cases are offered both in full-time and part-time format. Flexible formats available across all segments of E & T, most prevalent in HE.
- The extent of work-based learning is considered 'medium' or 'large'

## Main features of higher VET - 4

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- **Teachers and trainers:** specific level of qualification (20 out of 63) or qualification and related work experience (27 out of 63); large variations across institutions and subjects taught.
- **Partnership and cooperation with businesses:** in 80% of cases, the extent of cooperation was stated as being of either 'medium' or 'large' extent.
- **Cooperation with other training institutions:** less prevalent; ¼ without cooperation with other training institutions
- **Sectoral prevalence:** various fields and sectors; 3 top sectors of the cases studied: *business, engineering and health*.

## Participation in higher VET



# Trends

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- **Evolution of the relationship between Higher VET and HE**
  - development or reforms of short cycle qualifications or professional bachelor degrees
  - Examples: AT is considering introducing short cycle degrees; CZ was considering replacing the higher VET qualification "Qualified Specialist" (DiS) with professional bachelor degrees
- **NQFs development and how to position higher VET**
  - No non-university qualifications levels 6 and above (BG, DK, EE, EL, ES, HR, HU, RO)
  - Set of parallel levels for HE and higher VET (AT, BE fr, BE nl, PL)
  - All levels open to all types of qualifications:
    - Higher VET qualifications are included at levels 6 and sometimes even above (DE, FR, IE, LV, MT, NL)
    - No higher VET qualifications above level 5 in practice so far (IT, LT, LU, PT, SI)

# Some conclusions of EC Higher VET study



- **No consensus on definition of Higher VET**, thus recommendation to use the term *"professional education at higher levels."*
- **Support cooperation among countries on how to integrate higher qualifications that are outside the formal system into NQFs** and how to position them in the education and training systems.
- **Improve evidence** on the different groups of qualifications and programmes under higher VET and notably those sub-groups that are outside higher education area, as well as on **employment outcomes**.
- **Main trends** shaping higher VET:
  - the **evolving relationship with the rest of the education system**,
  - growing demand for **good employment outcomes** and **strengthening WBL**
- **But also challenges**: notably the **ambiguous relationship** with higher education regarding competition for students, **absence of clear positioning** and **limited recognition of higher VET in higher education**.



# Looking ahead:

- **Modernisation of Higher Education**, May 2017 (tbc): Includes proposal for a Council Recommendation on tracking outcomes of graduates, including VET
- Launch of Erasmus+ call for proposals Key action 3 on "**Joint VET qualifications, including at higher level**", October 2017
- Other important **initiatives** (e.g. Chain5), **as well as projects** under Erasmus+ (e.g. Tandem, BEEHIVES) or other funding (e.g BIBB)
- **2<sup>nd</sup> European Vocational Skills Week**, Brussels, 20-24 November 2017
- Cedefop Research on the Changing nature and role of VET in Europe: **VET in higher education** (2016-2018)



**Thank you**

**Feedback very welcome -**

**Questions or Comments?**

***See also:***

***European Skills Agenda for Europe***  
***Study on Higher VET in the EU***

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