

UNITED KINGDOM: ENGLAND AND WALES

Summary

**Country Report on the Vocational Education and
Training system, REFERNET Cedefop**

and

**Summary report on Vocational Education and
Training (VET) for learners with Special
Educational Needs (SEN)**



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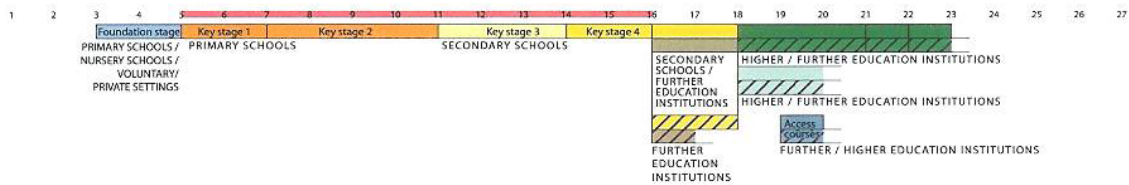


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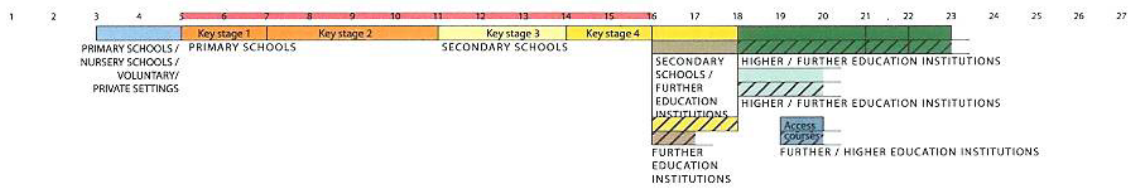
1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

1.1 Diagram of the education and training system

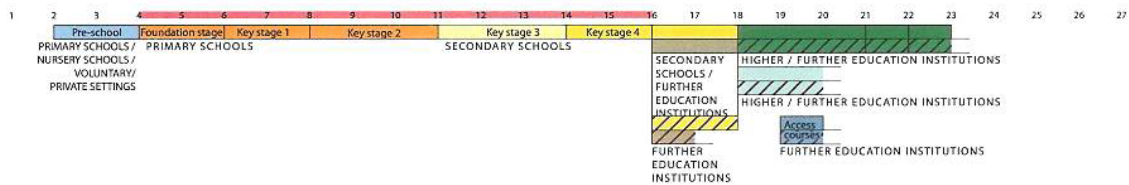
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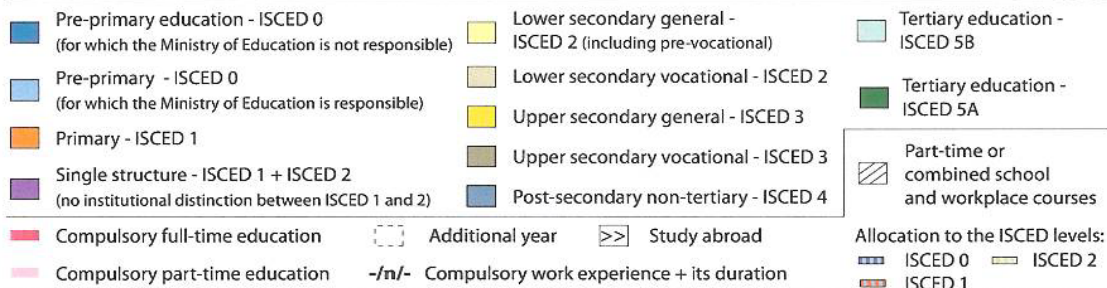
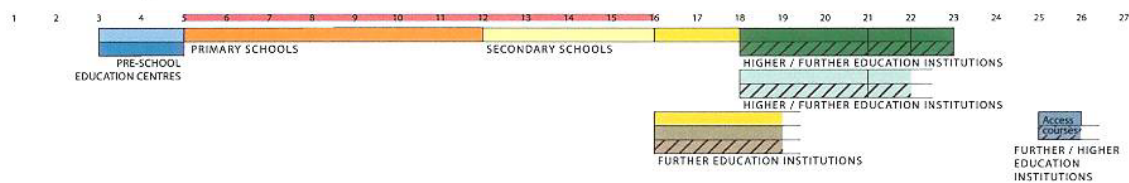
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1.2 Definitions

Pre-vocational education – focuses on basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy and is below level 2. Vocational training may still contain general skills but would also include more vocation-specific training.



Vocational education – in general, the term VET is not widely used in the UK. The term 'vocational qualification' is more common. It is difficult to define VET in the UK context. The Future Skills Scotland defines it as a course of education usually in a school or a learning institution that is oriented towards specific job or element of work.

The Welsh government refers to academic and vocational learning, the latter is defined as learning related to a specific vocation, usually involving the development of specific technical or professional knowledge and skills.

Further education (FE/ post-16 education or post-16 learning) - is the type of learning or training that takes place after the age of 16, but before degree level. It can be full or part time, academic or vocational.

Training – there is no official definition, the notion of learning is more widely used. Future Skills Scotland defines training as the process of coaching in or accustoming an individual to a mode of behaviour or performance; or to make proficient with specialised instruction and practice and the Skills Strategy for Wales, define it as coaching, instruction or practice that makes someone proficient in a particular activity.

Apprenticeship – is a structured programme (a framework, Learning and Skills Council - LSC) of training which gives young people the opportunity to learn on the job and build up knowledge and transferable skills. More specifically, it is defined as work-based learning programmes combining paid employment or work experience with on-the-job and off-the-job learning.

1.3 Objectives and priorities of the national policy development areas of VET

- Meeting the targets of “Leitch Report 'Prosperity for all in the global economy'”(2006): publish legislation on funding entitlement to free training in basic skills and first full level 2 qualifications, a guarantee of free training up to level for those aged 19-25, and a legal right for suitably qualified young people to enter Apprenticeship.
- “Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training, NEET” (2008): reduce the number of NEETs by building partnerships of schools, career services and families and providing attractive alternatives to post-compulsory education and throughout impending legislation to raise the education participation age to 18. Financial support (Education Maintenance Allowance -EMA) to those from poorer backgrounds to stay on in education or training
- Raise attainment and widen participation, especially among disadvantaged and disaffected young learners, the government is reforming 14 to 19 provisions, with increased flexibility in the last two years of compulsory education (work-related learning engagement programmes) and by introducing new Diplomas in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which intend to provide a vocational alternative to general secondary education.
- Reforming the apprenticeship scheme by investing more resources, removing the age limit and opening up progression routes to those coming up through vocational route.
- Qualifications more flexible through the unit- and credit-based frameworks, which allows for better horizontal and vertical flexibility of the system.

1.4 Institutional and legislative framework for IVET

There is no clear cut off between the IVET and CVET. There is no official definition of IVET in the UK and it can take place in various settings, which are administered by different bodies. The government and institutional frameworks differ between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, and all of which have extensive autonomy.



The general pattern is as follows:

- Overall policy for vocational learning and skills is the responsibility of the Learning / Skills or Education Department of each national government, which also deals with school education.
- The funding, provision and management of learning opportunities within the learning and skills sector in each nation is delegated to a funding council, which determines priorities and the allocation of funding, as well as overseeing data collection.
- Regional and local bodies advise on the provision of learning opportunities to meet local needs, within the overall national policy and funding arrangements, but individual colleges have considerable autonomy.
- Inspection of the quality of provision is the responsibility of an independent body in each nation, as is research, evaluation of initiatives and staff development.
- Approval of qualifications for use in publicly funded provision is the responsibility of an 'accrediting body' for each nation, although those for England, Wales and Northern Ireland work closely on accreditation issues.
- Training programmes for the unemployed are the responsibility of the UK Department of Work and Pensions, working with the governments of the devolved administrations.
- Sector Skills Councils, responsible for identifying skills needs in economic sectors and for defining the occupational standards on which occupational qualifications are based, work across the UK, as does their co-ordinating body, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).
- The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) was set up in April 2009 under the two departments (DBIS- and DCSF) that is totally responsible for the delivery of Apprenticeships.
- Awarding bodies develop and award a wide range of qualifications. Awarding bodies are private companies in their own right (with either commercial or charitable status), although they are subject to regulation by accreditation bodies, e.g. Ofqual (England), Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) (Wales), and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) (Northern Ireland).
- The learning and skills sector comprises further education colleges (including both general and specialist colleges and also Sixth Form colleges), post-compulsory education in school sixth forms, government funded work-based learning for young people (including Apprenticeships) and adult and community learning.


Policies:

There is not a single piece of legislation that provides the basis for the legal framework for education and training for all UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) instead there are different independent policies.

1.5 Types of teacher and trainer occupations in VET

Categories of employment for teacher/trainers in each sector are:

- secondary schools: vocational subject teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); classroom assistants;
- Further Education colleges: vocational teachers, with part or full teaching qualification; learning support workers (with varying roles and qualifications); and

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- Other training providers: vocational trainers, with or without part or full teaching qualification, but with an Assessor Award for those working in publicly-funded training enterprises.

1.6 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs

The UK has an ambition of being in the top eight countries in the world for skills, jobs and productivity by 2020. Since 2002, with the introduction of the UK-wide Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), followed by creation of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in 2008, the government has aimed to enhance employer understanding of their future labour market and skills requirements leading to improved employability and skills demand and supply. Relevant labour market data comes from a variety of national sources including the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Employment Survey (AES), and from national, regional or sectoral surveys, and skill audits. The anticipation of skills needs is taken forward initially on a sectoral basis, followed by the regional and local dimension based on the sectoral needs analysis. The Skillsbase database provides a wide range of labour market information.

1.7 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs

Vocational Qualifications (VQ): a flexible, responsive and easily understood VQ system to meet individual and employment needs should be in place by 2010, with a unit-based credit framework by 2007. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (England) was tested and trialled. It aims to make qualifications landscape more understandable to employers and learners while meeting the needs of both and providing clear and accessible routes to employability and learning progression. England includes the conversion of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) into the QCF, which is a credit-based and web-based regulated framework.

At regional level employers, education and training providers and government agencies come together to develop coordinated approaches to skills issues through Regional Skills Partnerships, and at local level Local Aimhigher Partnerships bring together partners to develop and coordinate initiatives to widen participation in higher education, including vocational routes.

1.8 Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment in IVET

- In England, schools have a statutory obligation to provide a planned programme of career education within the national curriculum in years 7 to 11 (age 11 to 16). Schools are also required to work with careers services to ensure that pupils have access to materials providing careers guidance and to a wide range of up-to-date reference materials. There is also a statutory requirement for schools to include work-related learning within the curriculum for all students in years 10 and 11 (ages 14 to 16).
- In Wales, careers education and work-related education are statutory requirements, but are outside the Welsh National Curriculum and are not subject to statutory programmes of study or assessment arrangements.
- In Northern Ireland: Learning for Life and Work is a statutory part of the revised curriculum being phased in from 2007 to mid-2010. The aim is to ensure that all young people develop the personal qualities, skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes which will give them a strong foundation for life and work. The curriculum consists of statutory minimum content which is supplemented by additional non-statutory guidance. The Careers Service operates a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with schools.



- Careers Scotland's service is available to people of all ages through local Careers Centres or the interactive website at www.careers-scotland.org.uk.
- Young people in transition are all expected to receive advice and guidance through facilities made available at the place of learning.
- All secondary schools must provide a careers programme for all their pupils as part of the national curriculum, and further education colleges and universities have advice centres and careers programmes available for their students.

1.9 Funding for initial vocational education and training

Funding flows from the government departments (BIS and DCSF) to Learning and Skills Councils and then to training providers in England. The LSC funds post-16 education in secondary schools, via the LAs, and funds directly all other state-funded programmes. New funding models and methods are being introduced: 2009-2010 is the first year of aligning funding to qualifications nominated for public funding by the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)/Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) and the funding is being switched from NQF qualifications to QCF qualifications. As the new qualification system is unit-based, a unit-based funding approach is being trialled during this period to test whether unit funding can incentivise the completion of full qualifications.

1.10 References

Cuddy, N, Ward, C and Cedefop Refernet United Kingdom (2009): VET in Europe. Country Report Thessaloniki: Cedefop.



2 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.1 Population

The definition approximates very closely to the population of the project.

However, the definition only applies to children and young people who are in the school system. For young people in the college system, the definition is "Learning Difficulty and/or Disability" and young people thus identified are eligible for additional support, either within a mainstream or special setting.

2.2 Organisation and Provision of VET programmes

2.2.1 IVET system options for SEN learners: lower and upper secondary levels, apprenticeship training and other youth programmes.

In England, young people remain in compulsory upper secondary education until the age of 16, where there are some vocational curriculum offers alongside the traditional academic curriculum. At 16, 40% of young people follow higher-level academic and vocational curriculum, 40% follow lower level vocational and academic curriculum and 20% follow apprenticeships or other work-based learning. Young people with SEN follow all of these pathways. In addition there are discrete curriculum programmes for young people with severe learning disabilities. Some of these have vocational elements.

2.2.2 Different types of educational/VET settings

In England, and Wales, all of the above are in place. Separate special educational settings for young people over the age of 16 are either in the sixth forms of special schools or from age 18 in specialist colleges. Both the public and private sectors provide special schools. Specialist colleges are, on the whole, provided by the private sector.

Some education and training takes place in the voluntary sector and in social care day services.

2.2.3 The curricula of VET programmes, the assessment procedures, types of qualifications and assessment criteria (e.g. flexibility on curricula composition and individual adaptations, diplomas etc.)

Most young people with SEN follow regular VET programmes. VET programmes are at different levels and people join the level indicated by their prior attainment. Tutors are expected to differentiate the curriculum to take account of the individual learning needs of all students in the group. Additional adaptations can be made for young people with specific needs. For example a reader for an examination, somebody to write examination answers, extra time for examinations. For young people with severe learning disabilities, there are some specific programmes. Some programmes are assessed throughout with no examination component while others have a mixture of ongoing assessment, assignments and examination.

Qualifications are at different levels - foundation, level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4. Within each level there are a number of qualifications, set by sector skills bodies and accrediting bodies. Curricula composition varies depending on the awarding body, the sector skills council, etc.



2.3 VET programmes and employment

2.3.1 Strategies and practices used to match the local labour market needs with the skills acquired by learners in the course of the VET programmes

Local supported employment services, the Department of Work and Pensions, colleges schools and local authorities gather labour market information and attempt to use this information to inform the VET available. However, this topic is continually debated and is often said not be carried out successfully enough.

2.4 Data (relating to learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old and enrolled in VET programmes in the academic year 2010/2011 and relating to their transition to employment)

2.4.1 Data on the number of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 years old who are enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level.

In January 2011 there were 321,355 young people in England and 32,425 in Wales identified as having a Special Educational Need (SEN) aged 14 and over who were attending any form of Secondary Education.

SEN status only stays up until school leaving and there is no separate estimate of how many people with SEN are in different forms of Further, Higher Education and Training Programmes. However, if we count young people with a disability or learning difficulty in further education or work-based training there are 456,400 in England and 13,035 in Wales.

2.4.2 Data on how many of these learners are enrolled in mainstream VET programmes, how many are enrolled in special units within mainstream VET settings and how many are enrolled in special VET programmes.

We can break down the figures for SEN (Statemented and non-Statemented SEN) secondary education, Further Education, and work-based vocational education (Disabled/Learning Difficulty) into mainstream and segregated options as follows. In Wales around 31% of young people in mainstream secondary school are taught in special units. We are unable to break down College education into segregated arrangements as statistics are not generally available. :

In England

	Young people	
Mainstream secondary school	288,920	
Special school	32,425	
College of further education	354,400	
Work-based training	<u>102,000</u>	
Total	777,745	15.3% of national enrolled pop'n

In Wales

Mainstream secondary school	44,121	
Special school	4,181	
College of further education	11,760	
Work-based training	1,275	
Total	61,337	15.9% of national enrolled pop'n



4 121009furthered1011en(11).xls and 121009workbased1011.xls

2.4.3 Data on the number and percentage of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the number and percentage of the general youth population of the same age enrolled in VET programmes, at national and/or local level

All young people identified with SEN are required to attend school and so they will have broadly the same percentage of engagement in VET 14-19 as the general population. The percentage of young people with SEN aged over 19 enrolled in colleges and work-based training is difficult to calculate as estimates of numbers in the general population with SEN of this age are not available without separate estimation.

2.4.4 Brief definition and explanation of “drop out”. Data concerning the drop out rate of learners with SEN aged between 14 and 25 who are enrolled in VET programmes, in comparison with the drop out rate of the general youth population, at national and/or local level.

We do not have access to data on students with SEN who did not complete their course – our definition of drop out. However, we know that in England in 2011, compared to their peers, pupils with special educational needs were more likely to be permanently excluded⁴. Pupils at School Action Plus were most likely to receive a permanent exclusion and were nearly 20 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than those with no special educational needs. Overall, in England, young people with some form of SEN were permanently excluded at rates of between 0.1% to 0.55%⁴, depending on SEN status, compared to non-SEN young people at below 0.05%. In Wales permanent exclusions for people with SEN was 0.2%, compared to non-SEN young people at below 0.01%⁵.

4 Department for Education (2011) Special Educational Needs Act: An Analysis 2011.

5 Statistics for Wales (2012) Exclusions from Schools in Wales 2010/11.

2.4.5 Data on the transition rate of learners with SEN from VET to employment in comparison with the transition rate of the general youth population from VET to employment at national and/or local level

There is no definitive data on how many young people transition to employment from school, or employment. The overall employment rate for adults with Intellectual Disabilities is 6.4%. We believe the rate for Wales will be similar. This means that rates of transition to employment post-19 are still too low. A recent representative sample survey of further education college leavers with SEN in 2005^[6] found that:

- 52% had “Cognition and Learning Disabilities”
- 30% had attended a Special School
- 50% were in employment 1 year after leaving college (compared with non-disabled rates of 75% at the time)
- 27% were “Not in Education, Employment or Training” (NEET)
- 78% of the NEETs had a Statement of Special Educational Need when at school, an indication that they had some form of SEN

Young people with “cognition and learning difficulties” were the group most likely to be NEET. The equivalent employment rate for non-SEN post 19 leavers from VET was:

- Further education college- XX%



- Vocational training programmes- XX%
- Apprenticeships- XX%
- Paid Employment
- Volunteering

[6] Aston, J., Dewson, S., Loukas, G. and Dyson, A., (2005) *Post-16 Transitions: a Longitudinal Study of Young People with Special Educational Needs (Wave Three)- Research Report RR655*. London: Institute for Employment Studies.

2.5 Legislation and policy

2.5.1 Brief description of existing legislation

Education Act 1996 and SEN Code of practice 2001 – specifically Section 9

Learning and Skill Act 2000

Education and Skills Act 2008

All schools are required to provide careers education and advice and guidance to all young people. For those who need support to move into adulthood with employment, there is a specific service called Connexions. The national Connexions service was devolved to local authorities in 2008. This service has a duty to support young people to stay in education, employment or training beyond the age of 16. Young people with severe learning disabilities and those with severe mental illness are the least likely to move into employment despite this support (less than 10% and 20% employment rates respectively). The national strategies Valuing People Now and No Health without Mental Health have increased awareness and agency responsibilities for supporting people into employment. The Government has a specific Work Programme to provide additional support but often people with the most significant disabilities need inter-agency support led by supported employment agencies who have the specific expertise and who can provide, for example, job coaching and training is systematic instruction.

Many supported employment services are within the community/voluntary sector or in the private sector.

2.5.2 Main objectives and priorities of the national/regional policy relating to VET for learners with SEN and the transition from VET to employment

The Government's policy aims are to maximise the number of people in employment, including those currently furthest away from the labour market. A number of strategic developments are in place and local areas are being supported to implement these strategies. These are supported through the UK-wide Work Choices, and Access to Work programmes. The WORK programme mainly targets people on non-disability welfare benefits but does cater for people with SEN who are less disabled. England's national strategy to introduce personalization of services has meant that more people are able to use a personal or individual budget to buy their own support for employment, by, for example, employing their own skilled job coach or by commissioning support from a voluntary or private sector provider.

2.5.3 Roles and responsibilities within the institutional framework

Parliament is responsible for monitoring the implementation of legislation and policy. There are many examples of how this has led to the development of new policies. In England, the national learning disability employment strategy Valuing Employment Now resulted



from a scrutiny process that showed that far too few learning disabled people were moving into employment.

In Wales the Government is responsible for running the departments who implement policy and for changing legislation when it considers it necessary. In England, the current SEN and Disability Green Paper arose from the Government's concerns about the SEN legislative framework and the poor life outcomes (including employment) of young disabled people.

In Wales SEN legislation is also under reform and changes in rules around Statementing of SEN will be implemented in the next few years. This may impact on the promotion of employment as an option for people with more severe SEN.

In both England and Wales, supported employment services have a role in supporting disabled people into employment. Schools and colleges are responsible for providing the curriculum and information advice and guidance.

2.5.4 The actors involved in improving standards and evaluating the VET programmes on offer for learners with SEN, relating to the job market

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is responsible for inspecting standards and quality. Schools also receive support for maintaining standards and quality from local authorities. In Wales, Estyn provides the same functions.

2.6. VET teachers, trainers and other professionals

2.6.1 Information on the VET staff (teachers, trainers, career counsellors, transition officers etc.)

All teachers in state schools are required to have Qualified Teacher status. This means that they either have a degree in education or a post-graduate teaching qualification. This training may contain some modules relevant to vocational training and education but that depends on the specialist subject. There is a strategy in place to ensure that eventually tutors working in colleges have a specific teaching qualification. Many tutors working on vocational programmes have previously worked in industry. In-service training is available to all teachers and tutors.

2.6.2 Information on the careers/employment guidance and counselling services offered to learners with SEN who are enrolled in VET programmes

This varies enormously. This can be dependent on the particular skills and knowledge of staff working with them, either in school, college or from the Connexions service. There is evidence that there are often low expectations and knowledge of what is possible for young disabled people to achieve. Once young people are actually enrolled on a vocational programme, they receive more information, advice and guidance as the programme will be geared to a particular industry and there will often be work placements.

2.7 Funding

Depending on the level of "impairment", there is a system of financial support available within the existing social system for learners/families. The educational system assists with additional expenditures for SEN learners through the national budget, in both the private and public sectors, for example for additional staff. The social system of "job support" provides funding for the creation of jobs for persons with disabilities. The "Active Policy towards Employment" strategy is broadly focused on disadvantaged persons as well. Vocational education programmes are funded by the central Government and its agents, in England, the Education Funding Agency and the Skills Funding Agency are the main funding agencies.



In Wales, this function is currently carried out by Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills. Young people aged up to 19 receive the education and training free of charge. After the age of 19 some programmes are free of charge and others incur free, but colleges have the power to allow fee remission.

Young people with severe disabilities are entitled to state welfare benefits, even if they are in full-time education or training.