
KEY COMPETENCES
IN VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CYPRUS





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The thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) systems provided in '[VET in Europe](#)' reports. The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.

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Introduction

Promoting key competences is at the core of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 lifelong learning (LLL) strategies. The latter recognises that the acquisition of transversal skills, for example, entrepreneurship, technologies/digital competences and languages, plays an important role in enhancing people's employability and improving the economy's potential for growth. Key competences are also promoted through the strategic vocational education and training (VET) plan 2015-20 by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

VET starts at upper secondary level. Formal upper secondary technical and vocational education programmes last three years and are offered free of charge in both theoretical and practical directions of technical schools.

Key competences (communication, problem-solving, social and learning-to-learn) are included in the national qualifications framework (NQF) level descriptors and are promoted in the same way in both practical and theoretical directions of upper secondary VET. Since 2004/05, key competences and generic skills have been part of VET curricula and are acquired through theory and practice, including work placements. From 2016/17, a new competence-based national curriculum is based on learning outcomes. It places more emphasis on key competences. The curriculum includes career management skills next to entrepreneurship, practical training in industry and language learning. In this context, training for curriculum designers and teachers is being developed. While practical parts of programmes focus on competences in maths, science and technology, apprenticeships emphasise the competences of numeracy, literacy and technology.

Entrepreneurship in education is promoted through entrepreneurship programmes and curricula, organisation of competitions and the project 'Start up ambassadors'. State-of-the-art equipment simulates the workplace in VET labs and workshops. Special software and computers facilitate learning in architecture and design programmes in the fields of electrical and mechanical engineering and in woodcraft and furniture making.

1. Key competence: communication in the mother tongue

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level		Yes
How is it promoted?		
• national/regional policy document(s)	The 2014-20 lifelong learning strategy promotes the acquisition of the Greek language through the development of new curricula.	
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No	
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	In upper secondary VET, Modern Greek is a compulsory general education subject for four 45-minute teaching periods per week in the first two study years, and for five periods per week in the third. This applies to both practical and theoretical directions of upper secondary VET. All subjects (except for foreign languages) are conducted in Greek.	
• training VET teachers trainers	No	
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	The subject of Modern Greek comprises tests and final examinations. Students' attitude, effort, participation, interest, willingness, persistence, oral and written work and homework are also taken into account. End-of-the-year exams are school-based and mandatory for all compulsory subjects. Final exams (at the third and final years of upper secondary VET) are centralised. Assessment provides feedback on students' progress and reinforces learning and motivation. It determines whether students meet a specified level, according to the objectives of the curriculum, identifies problem areas for remedial work and validates the effectiveness of the teaching programme.	
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No	
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		
• through international or national statistical data	No	
• survey(s)	No	
• benchmark(s)	No	
• other instrument(s)	No	
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010		No data

2. Key competence: communication in foreign languages

Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national/regional policy document(s) 	<p>The 2014-20 lifelong learning strategy promotes the acquisition of foreign languages through the development of new curricula. The Ministry of Education and Culture aims, through teaching of foreign languages, also in initial VET, at learners' cultural growth, emotional development and the fostering of social awareness. Therefore, foreign language curricula are based on the principles of 'learning how to learn' and 'learning by doing'.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national/regional law(s), regulation(s) 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national curricula, standards and qualifications 	<p>In upper secondary VET, foreign languages are compulsory. Students must learn at least two European languages other than Greek. English, French and German are the three foreign languages that are offered and teaching is adjusted to the needs of each VET programme. English as a foreign language is a compulsory subject for three 45-minute lessons per week in the first year, and for two teaching periods per week in the second and third year of studies in both the theoretical and practical directions. 'Hotel, catering and services' VET programme places even greater emphasis on foreign languages (see example below).</p> <p>For both practical and theoretical directions of upper secondary VET, in the second and third year of their studies, learners can select English for two additional teaching periods per week. The syllabus is different for theoretical and practical VET directions.</p> <p>In addition to English, in the second and third year of their studies, learners can opt to study French and/or German for two teaching periods per week.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training VET teachers trainers 	No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centralised assessment of the key competence in VET 	<p>Assessment is carried out for the individual subjects of English, French and German. Continuous assessment is used and comprises tests and final exams. End of year exams are school-based and mandatory for all compulsory subjects. The final exams at the third and final year of studies are centralised. Students' attitude, effort, participation, interest, willingness, persistence, oral and written work and homework as well as fluency, creativity and communication skills, project and portfolio work are taken into account.</p> <p>Assessment provides feedback on students' progress and reinforces learning and motivation. It determines whether students meet a specified level, according to the objectives of the curriculum, identifies problem areas for remedial work and validates the effectiveness of the teaching programme.</p> <p>The use of the language portfolio constitutes another assessment method since current trends in education call for its adoption in assessment, in addition to the methods already used. Portfolios include project work, designs, drawings or pictures related to the students' specialisation and which students can describe orally or in writing, notes, instructions, invitations, greeting cards, photos, videos, pieces of writing work and any work students feel should be kept in their portfolio.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods) 	<p>Teachers of foreign languages in VET adopt a combination of principles and techniques from various teaching methods. Variety and flexibility are key principles in promoting effective teaching and learning.</p> <p>Team, experiential and exploratory teaching methods and project work help developing a foreign language competence. Multimedia is used to further support language learning and promote self-learning.</p>	
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> through international or national statistical data 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> survey(s) 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> benchmark(s) 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other instrument(s) 	No	
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010		No data

Example of acquisition of foreign languages in the 'hotel, catering and services' VET programme

The hotel catering and services field (offered only in the practical track of upper secondary VET at EQF level 4, ISCED level 354) allocates more time to foreign language learning than other programmes and it is fully vocation-oriented. Students have three 45-minute lessons per week in the first year, two in the second and three in the third year of studies. In the second and third year, students can opt for two additional periods per week. The third year of studies (as in all specialisations of the practical track) combines a school-based environment with a real workplace as final-year students are placed in industry for one day per week, where they follow a practical training programme. French and German are compulsory in the first year of studies for two periods per week. In the second and third year, students may select two or four periods of French and/or German per week (optional). Students do not acquire international language certificates by completing the foreign languages subjects.

Teachers of foreign languages adopt a combination of principles and techniques in a carefully balanced manner and involving continuous adjustment, variety and flexibility:

- (a) teaching is learner-centred: students are involved in the learning process and are offered opportunities for self-discovery through elicitation and discovery techniques, as well as problem solving activities.
- (b) autonomous learning is encouraged: students take responsibility for their own learning; autonomous learning is promoted through the use of grammar books, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other sources.
- (c) student-teacher cooperation and understanding: Project work encourages and develops student initiative and promotes cooperation among teachers and students within mixed ability classes.
- (d) stress on communication skills: communication is promoted through the use of communicative activities, such as information gap activities, simulations, role-plays, problem solving activities etc.
- (e) exploitation of students' interests and life experiences: language learning is related to the students' themselves, their lives, interests, relationships, and their professional choices.
- (f) use of various activities and materials according to students' learning styles and levels: various language activities, teaching aids and materials, as well as classroom management are used, such as whole class interaction, individual, pair and work group.
- (g) focus on authenticity to cater for the students' specialisation: appropriate language is developed through the use of authentic materials and relevant activities.

3. Key competence: competences in maths, science and technology

Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).

Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions.

Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level		Yes
How is it promoted?		
• national/regional policy document(s)	The 2014-20 lifelong learning strategy promotes the acquisition of competences in maths, science and technology (digital competences), through the development of new curricula.	
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No	
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	In upper secondary VET, mathematics is a compulsory general education subject (four 45-minute lessons per week in the theoretical and two periods in the practical VET track). In the second and third year students may opt for two additional periods of mathematics per week, but with a distinct syllabus for the theoretical and the practical directions. Students also develop competences in maths, science and technology, since technical subjects and assignments encourage and require applying mathematical principles. Technical subjects in their field of study/specialisation acquaint students with technology, products and procedures and allow understanding and evaluating the impact of science and technology on the world and the environment in general, and on their specific field of study.	
• training VET teachers trainers	No	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centralised assessment of the key competence in VET 	<p>Continuous school-based assessment is carried out for individual subjects, for example, mathematics or technological subjects. Mathematics is a compulsory subject and comprises tests and final examinations that are centralised and common for the final year of studies. Students' attitude, effort, participation, interest, willingness, persistence, oral and written work and homework are also taken into account.</p> <p>Assessment provides feedback on students' progress and reinforces learning and motivation. It determines whether students meet a specified level, according to the objectives of the curriculum, identifies problem areas for remedial work and validates the effectiveness of the teaching programme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods) 	No
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	No
How is it monitored?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> through international or national statistical data 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> survey(s) 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> benchmark(s) 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other instrument(s) 	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	No data

4. Key competence: digital competence

Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of information society technology for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national/regional policy document(s) 	The 2014-20 lifelong learning strategy promotes the acquisition of digital competences, through the development of new curricula.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national/regional law(s), regulation(s) 	No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications 	<p>An introductory ICT course (two 45-minute lessons per week) is compulsory in the first year of upper secondary VET. In the second and third years, ICT courses are optional for all specialisations. Theoretical VET track also offers the specialisation of computer engineering.</p> <p>The CISCO Certified Network Associate (CCNA) optional subject was introduced in VET in 2003/04. It offers network technician and CCNA qualifications.</p> <p>Technical schools use ICT in technology and workshop practice. For example, computers and specialised design software are an integral part of the teaching process in electrical and automobile engineering, architecture and design programmes (interior design, furniture design and production, and fashion design). Computers support teaching of specialisation subjects. For example electronically controlled tool machines (CNC machines, CAD/CAM Systems) are used in the fields of mechanical engineering, woodcraft and furniture making.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training VET teachers trainers 	<p>The Ministry of Education and Culture implements programmes of continuing professional development of teachers in ICT. It also provides pedagogical and technical support for the effective use of ICT, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seminars and workshops on the use and integration of ICT in teaching and learning; • support of coaches for teachers at schools; • online learning environments; • web portals and educational software repository, collaboration with media (e.g. TV) to produce educational material; • study materials based on ICT; • case studies on the integration of ICT in learning, etc. • online enrolment in the various programmes organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute; • provision of modern ICT equipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centralised assessment of the key competence in VET 	<p>Assessment is carried out for individual subjects, for example for ICT, CISCO-CCNA Networks or the various technological subjects. Assessment is continuous and consists of tests and final examinations. The final examinations in the CISCO-CCNA Networks subject are carried out online by the CISCO Networking Academy. Students' attitude, effort, participation, interest, willingness, persistence, oral and written work and homework are also taken into account.</p> <p>Assessment provides feedback on students' progress and reinforces learning and motivation. It determines whether students meet a specified level, according to the objectives of the curriculum, identifies problem areas for remedial work and validates the effectiveness of the teaching programme.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods) 	<p>No</p>

The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		
• through international or national statistical data	No	
• survey(s)	No	
• benchmark(s)	No	
• other instrument(s)	No	
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010		No data

Example of a VET programme at upper secondary level that ensures acquisition of the digital competence

VET offers a subject of CISCO-CCNA Networks (CISCO Certified Network Associate), a part of a broader programme offering qualification of network technician through an online examination and allows to:

- (a) develop knowledge of routing, switching, network applications, protocols, and services;
- (b) study in the classroom and access expert content online anytime;
- (c) practice on real equipment using a simulation tool;
- (d) receive feedback through built-in quizzes and tests;
- (e) prepare for the job using collaborative projects and presentations;
- (f) connect to the global Cisco Networking Academy community.

The CCNA Routing and Switching curriculum builds the skills for employment in the field of networking computers and devices. Career pathways include network technician, support engineer, network administrator, network designer, network engineer etc.

5. Key competence: learning to learn

‘Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at

home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level		Yes
How is it promoted?		
• national/regional policy document(s)	No	
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No	
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	Upper secondary VET prepares students for further learning and to analyse and solve problems in everyday life. The application of theoretical knowledge and the enhancement of existing knowledge through technological subjects contribute to acquiring the learning to learn competences. VET curricula help students acquire competences to learn and equip them with the capacity to adjust in dynamic and unpredictable situations, to search for, select, assess, interpret and make optimal use of information.	
• training VET teachers trainers	No	
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	No	
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	No	
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		
• through international or national statistical data	No	
• survey(s)	No	
• benchmark(s)	No	
• other instrument(s)	No	
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010		No data

6. Key competence: interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence

Personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level		Yes
How is it promoted?		
• national/regional policy document(s)	No	
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No	
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	The subject of 'history and civic education' is compulsory (one 45-minute lesson per week). 'Education for peace', 'intercultural education', 'democratisation' and 'participation in public affairs' concepts are interdisciplinary and embedded in the curricula, programmes and activities of all secondary education schools, including VET. VET curricula help students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assume various roles in life, such as that of the responsible, active, democratic and productive citizen, that of the parent, that of the leader, that of the advisor etc.; • act freely and independently, exercise their critical thinking and be willing to accept constructive criticism from others; • learn to respect and implement universal values and principles; • develop their decision – making skills and competences, as well as the necessary attitudes for active and educated participation, cooperation and leadership at the place of work and in society in general; • learn to accept and cooperate with other ethnic groups, in the context of a multicultural society; • participate effectively in various working groups and to exchange knowledge and experiences in a constructive way. 	
• training VET teachers trainers	No	
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	No	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods) 	<p>Technical school students participate in the “Youth parliament programme”, which targets students in their second year of studies in upper secondary education. During the first phase of the programme, the work of students participating in the programme is assessed and a number of them are selected, according to criteria set by the Foundation of the Greek Parliament. Twenty students are then chosen to represent the Republic of Cyprus at the session which takes place in Athens every January. There, students are given the opportunity to address issues such as terrorism, racism, national problems, the European Union, and to get in touch with Greek students from all over the world.</p> <p>UNESCO Associated Schools, including Technical Schools, aim at promoting the ideals of UNESCO, such as friendship, peace and cooperation among students. Their basic activity is the organisation of an annual Symposium.</p> <p>UNESCO Associated Schools in the Republic of Cyprus cooperate with UNESCO Associated Schools in other countries.</p>
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored	No
How is it monitored?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through international or national statistical data 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey(s) 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benchmark(s) 	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other instrument(s) 	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	No data

7. Key competence: entrepreneurship

The sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level		Yes
How is it promoted?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national/regional policy document(s) 	<p>The 2014-20 lifelong learning strategy promotes the acquisition of entrepreneurship competence, through the development of new curricula.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship is also promoted in the national policy document on enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem and environment (2015) by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism and the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus. It foresees that the educational system must offer young people the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills, since 15-20% of the upper secondary entrepreneurship programme graduates will start up their own enterprise. It also underpins measures at all education levels for the development of entrepreneurial skills and competences with special emphasis on teacher training. The following activities/measures should be promoted for the cultivation of entrepreneurial culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> entrepreneurship programmes; entrepreneurship competitions; 'start-up ambassadors' project. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national/regional law(s), regulation(s) 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications 	Workshops in woodcraft, furniture making, industrial design, services, applied arts, clothing, etc. promote entrepreneurship through learning about legal aspects, costs and pricing, start-up, organisation and administration of an enterprise.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> training VET teachers trainers 	Teachers, school principals and representatives from public authorities that were involved in enhancing the entrepreneurship ecosystem, participate in seminars on entrepreneurship education.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centralised assessment of the key competence in VET 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods) 	<p>The 'Junior achievement young enterprise programme' helps students learn how to take a business idea from concept to reality, form their own real enterprise and discover how a company functions. They elect a board of directors from amongst their peers, raise share capital, and market and finance a product or service of their own choice. At the end of the programme, they present a report and accounts to their shareholders.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education and Culture together with Junior Achievement Worldwide, Junior Achievement Cyprus and the University of Nicosia, implement the programme in upper secondary VET since 2013/14.</p>	
The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		

through international or national statistical data	No
survey(s)	No
benchmark(s)	No
other instrument(s)	No
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010	No data

8. Key competence: cultural expression

Cultural expression is the appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.

The acquisition of the key competence at upper secondary VET is promoted at national/regional level	Yes
How is it promoted?	
• national/regional policy document(s)	No
• national/regional law(s), regulation(s)	No
• national/regional curricula, standards and qualifications	The curricula of upper secondary VET encourage students to converse and communicate with other people on a range of subjects, and to appreciate and enjoy artistic expression, aesthetic perfection, creativity and culture in all aspects of life.
• training VET teachers/trainers	No
• centralised assessment of the key competence in VET	No
• other instruments (e.g. ways of working, teaching/learning methods)	Secondary education schools, including VET, participate in the Pancyprian school competition of contemporary plays and ancient drama. The organisation of the competition falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture, in cooperation with the Theatrical Organisation of Cyprus. The rehearsals which precede the theatrical performance teach students to accept and cooperate with others, and give them the opportunity to get acquainted with the work of important playwrights. In addition, students are given the opportunity to enjoy a common creative outcome, i.e. the final theatrical product, through which their imagination and creativity are exercised in the best possible way and their interest for the art of the theatre is enhanced and cultivated.

The progress of improving key competence levels/learning outcomes among upper secondary VET students is monitored		No
How is it monitored?		
• through international or national statistical data	No	
• survey(s)	No	
• benchmark(s)	No	
• other instrument(s)	No	
Key competence level improved among upper secondary VET students since (+/-) 2010		No data

9. Conclusions

The key competence of communication in the mother tongue is promoted in VET through compulsory subjects. Foreign languages are also a mandatory part of the curricula, including English as a compulsory subject and either French or German as an optional subject. Mathematics is a compulsory subject and students through practical training are given the opportunity to develop competences in mathematics, science and technology. State-of-the-art machines and equipment used in labs and workshops simulate the workplace as best as possible and special software and computers facilitate learning in some subjects.

VET also allows students to acquire competences of learning how to learn. The subject of history and civic education is offered as a compulsory subject and concepts of peace, intercultural education. Participation in public affairs is also promoted. Entrepreneurship is promoted through the national policy document of 2015, cultural expression – through equipping students with the necessary competences in order to appreciate and enjoy artistic expression, aesthetic perfection, creativity and culture in all aspects of life.

In 2016/17, VET introduces new curricula at upper secondary level. It will be based on units of learning outcomes and ECVET credits, emphasising the acquisition of key competences, especially foreign languages, entrepreneurial skills, maths, science and technology, digital skills, and the way knowledge is acquired (learning to learn). The new curricula will also help students become more competitive in the labour market.

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