Initiatives and measures for the promotion of Vocational Training

Unified Vocational Training System

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEFP) has established the promotion of Vocational Training (VT) as one of its main lines of action. The publication of the First Strategic Plan for Vocational Training in the Education System was a first step in this direction, and the creation of the General Secretariat for Vocational Training within the Ministry's new organisation structure confirms the importance of vocational training.

With this new General Secretariat, the MEFP undertakes responsibilities regarding VT in the education system and employment, and promotes a unified VT system. The Ministry of Employment will confer on it the powers to draw up the standards and reports on the National Vocational Qualifications System, to draw up and update the Certificates of Professionalism and the assessment tests and, finally, to incorporate the network of National Reference Centres into the network of Vocational Training Centres.

First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training

In November 2019, the Council of Ministers approved the First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training, which supports the consideration of Vocational Training (VT) as one of the basic educational and economic strategic lines in the Spanish and European framework, due to the role it must play as an engine for economic growth and employment.

The plan designed for vocational training in the education system is based on the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Objectives, which the Ministry of Education has undertaken to develop a modern country project, which requires for a new global social contract involving all actors: public administrations, companies, trade unions, civil society and universities.

Some of the objectives that make it necessary to carry out the unavoidable transformations planned in the field of vocational training are:

- guaranteeing inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning for everyone
- achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls
- promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and proper jobs for everybody
- promoting a socially fair and environmental transition, inclusive and sustainable
industrialization, while encouraging innovation

More information on First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training [2] and Presentation of the First Strategic Plan for VT [3].

Draft Organic Law on Education

The Spanish Council of Ministers has submitted for its parliamentary processing and subsequent approval the Draft Organic Law amending the Education Act in force since 2006 and amended in 2013.

This legislative initiative aims at tackling the following challenges in the Spanish education system:

- improving the level of competence of the entire student body, compensating for any initial disadvantages
- regaining the equality lost during the crisis years
- updating the teaching profession to lead curricular and didactic innovation
- modernising Vocational Training and improving its enrolment and qualification rates
- Increasing STEM vocations, especially among female students.
- guaranteeing an investment space in education and scholarships regardless of political alternatives and economic circumstances.

To meet these challenges, the bill addresses four main objectives:

1. updating the education system
2. regaining equality and inclusiveness in the system
3. Improving performance and educational achievement
4. stabilising the education system as a basic cornerstone of knowledge policies.

The Ministry of Education suggests the following changes in Vocational Training according to the challenges undertaken and the objectives of the Education Reform:

- setting up a basic vocational training programme leading to the ESO degree
- making it easier to reconcile training and work activities
- renewing contents and degrees in a more agile way, adapting them to employment and productive changes
- making access to vocational training more flexible by eliminating certain age requirements and allowing access from specialised education
- establishing "second chance" programmes with a professional focus for those who drop out of compulsory secondary education without a diploma
- enhancing career guidance by introducing a gender perspective
- promoting the accreditation of work experience while offering access exams in a more flexible and frequent manner
- encouraging further training to complete vocational training qualifications at intermediate and advanced levels
- promoting the creation of a network of centres for the transfer of innovation and successful experiences in VT.

More information on An Education for the 21st Century [4].

Permanent Collaboration Framework for Vocational Training

The Minister of Education and Professional Training (MEFP) met with representatives of the Spanish
Confederation of Business Organizations (CEOE) and the Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises (CEPYME).

They discussed the urgent need to transform Vocational Training (VT) and adapt it to the productive system of the 21st century and therefore, among other measures, they considered the establishment of a permanent collaboration framework between the MEFP and business organisations.

Coordination between business organisations and the MEFP is essential to meet the needs of the different training maps for each sector. The joint effort of all the actors involved will help to transform vocational training in a modern and competitive training option. This aspect becomes particularly relevant with the new competences of vocational training for employment.

**2019**

**First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training 2019-2022**

The Agreement on the First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training 2019-2022 [1], is approved, in order to update these studies. It was drawn up with the support of the Ministries of Economy and Entrepreneurship; Industry, Trade and Tourism; Ecological Transition and Labour Migration and Social Security.

With the implementation of this strategy, the aim is to improve employability and meet the needs of the labour market, as well as to consolidate the flexibility of these studies, which in turn will allow students to reach a higher qualification. This improvement in qualification is expected to guarantee a quality work experience that will promote a competitive professional curriculum.

The plan incorporates the Sustainable Development Objectives of the European Commission's 2030 Agenda and the New Capabilities Agenda for Europe which includes actions to ensure that EU citizens benefit from adequate training, skills and support.

The plan is based on 9 lines of action or axes (2 of which are transversal) and 16 strategic objectives.

Aaxes of the First Strategic Plan for Vocational Training:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AXES</th>
<th>MAIN ACTIONS</th>
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| Axis 1 Transversal: collaboration and participation of companies and access to participation bodies from all sectors. | • Redesign of the Qualifications Observatory  
• Collaboration with more than 300 companies |
| Axis 2 Transversal: speeding up the response from Vocational Training to the qualification needs in each production sector. | • Updating of qualifications and approval of degrees and specialization courses |
| Axis 3: updating of the Catalogue of Vocational Training Qualifications | • Drafting of 80 new degrees and specialization courses (especially those associated with digitization)  
• Updating of the contents of the 172 existing degrees.  
• Incorporation in all degrees of a new module on "digitalization applied to the production sector". |
| Axis 4: Flexibilisation of the organisation of vocational training qualifications | • Distance learning offer  
• Modular "on demand" degrees offer |
| Axis 5: extension of the VT offer | • Increase of Mentor Classrooms to reach 3000 small and medium municipalities.  
• Creation, together with the autonomous communities, of 200,000 new vocational training vacancies. |
| Axis 6: acknowledgement of basic and professional skills | • Revision of the regulations for the accreditation of professional competences, in order to speed up and intensify the accreditation process.  
• Creation of a procedure to accredit basic skills (linguistic, mathematical and digital) for 20,000 adults per year |
| Axis 7: teacher training in vocational training associated with production sectors | • Joint innovation projects involving vocational training centres from different autonomous communities, companies and other institutions  
• Placements for teaching staff in companies and leading vocational training centres |
| Axis 8: VT Internationalisation | • Alliances between VT centres in our country and other surrounding countries  
• Double vocational training diplomas offered with centres in partner countries |
| Axis 9: modification of regulations on vocational training in the education system | • Act on the general organisation of vocational training courses in the education system  
• Royal Decree on the Dual Vocational Training Scheme of the education system |

Source: Eurydice España-REDIE (CNIIE, MEFP) based on current legislation.

Based on these 9 axes, the following 16 strategic objectives are set:

- **Objective 1.** Promoting the engagement, collaboration and trust of all the sectors involved in order to achieve value-creating vocational training.

- **Objective 2.** Incorporating companies, social partners and other bodies on a permanent basis in the National Qualifications Observatory.

- **Objective 3.** Reducing the design procedures for qualifications

- **Objective 4.** Having availability of the training offers associated with the new qualifications

- **Objective 5.** Facilitating the diversification of training itineraries, taking into account the characteristics of each production environment and the students’ personal interests.

- **Objective 6.** Extending the Catalogue of VT qualifications, incorporating qualifications associated with emerging sectors, especially those related to the digitalisation of the economy.

- **Objective 7.** Developing the Dual VT model
- **Objective 8.** Promoting online or distance VET which allows compatibility between personal and work circumstances with training

- **Objective 9.** Offer modular programmes which allow to accumulate or complete training leading to a vocational training qualification or a professional experience certificate.

- **Objective 10.** Improving the accessibility of procedures for the accreditation of professional competences

- **Objective 11.** Developing a procedure for the accreditation of basic -non-professional- competences for adults.

- **Objective 12.** Promoting specialised training for teachers

- **Objective 13.** Increasing teacher mobility between the different autonomous communities and at a European and transnational level.

- **Objective 14.** Fostering technological and methodological innovation

- **Objective 15.** Improving vocational guidance in the education system

- **Objective 16.** Devising a Quality System for VT in the education system.

For more information read [I First Strategic Plan of the Educational System for Vocational Training 2019-2021](#)

**Authorized military educational training centres to provide Vocational Training education**

The Ministries of Defence and Education and Professional Training have signed agreements with the corresponding education authorities of the autonomous communities of Aragón, Castilla y León, Galicia and Madrid, to provide the necessary resources to the military schools authorized to offer vocational training courses located in those communities.

In addition, these agreements foresee the incorporation of teaching staff with the necessary qualifications and requirements to deliver the teaching corresponding to the professional training degrees which have been authorised.

The Ministry of Defence will transfer the amount corresponding to the cost of the teaching staff who provide services in military training centres to the educational administration of the corresponding autonomous community and the latter will provide the aforementioned staff.

The agreement will remain in force until 31 August 2022 and may be extended for up to four additional years or until it is terminated.

**New Higher Vocational Training degree**

From 2011 onwards there is a general reorganisation of vocational training in the education system. As a result, the new qualifications established have progressively replaced the previous ones.

On 22 April 2019, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training approved the Advanced Technician in Chemistry and Environmental Health degree which replaces the previous Advanced Technician in Environmental Chemistry and Advanced Technician in Environmental Health
degrees.

The general competence in this degree consists in supervising and controlling the effects on health of environmental and food risk factors, participating in the implementation and development of environmental management systems. Likewise, it will be possible to intervene in education programs for public and community health under the supervision, where appropriate, of the responsible manager, in accordance with established protocols and respecting the reference standards in quality and safety settings.

For more information read [Advanced Technician in Chemistry and Environmental Health](#).

### Funding for Workshop Schools and Craft Houses and for Employment Workshops

In May, the Spanish Council of Ministers approved an agreement authorising the Public Employment Service (SEPE) to call for grants for 2019 to finance these programmes.

The amount is 12,668,200 euros, to be executed in 2019 (10,358,200 euros) and 2020 (2,310,000 euros), and which will be financed from SEPE's 2019 expenditure budget.

The works or services of public utility or social interest that are developed in [workshop schools](#), trade training centres or employment workshops enable working students to perform effectively at work and, at the same time, receive vocational training for employment which will contribute to their professional qualification and favour their insertion in the labour market.

70% of the students who were enrolled in these programs in 2016 and 2017 (last closed calls) entered the labour market after their participation.

These programs can be promoted by:

- different bodies, autonomous bodies and other public bodies in the General State Administration and the Autonomous Communities
- local entities, their autonomous bodies and entities with competences in the field of employment promotion, dependent on or attached to them, and whose ownership corresponds entirely to said local entities.
- consortia
- associations, foundations and other non-profit organisations.

It can also be developed abroad, within the scope of international collaboration and on the terms agreed by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

For more information read [Programmes of Worksho Schools and Craft Houses](#).

### Draft Law on Education

The Draft Law, which is in the parliamentary approval phase, aims at boosting Vocational Training (VT) through the following measures:

- the Basic Vocational Training cycles will enable students to obtain the Compulsory Secondary Education Diploma.
- intermediate training cycles will include general and vocational training.
National strategy to prevent and fight poverty and social exclusion (2019-2023)

The goal is to tackle the existing situations of poverty and social exclusion in Spain.

The lines of action related to Equitable and Inclusive Education (Objective 2.1) are, among others:

- promoting itineraries to improve skills that reflect formal and non-formal learning and allow people to re-enter the education and training process in order to improve their qualifications
- enhancing the Vocational Training programmes (dual vocational training and certificates of professional experience) by improving the coordination between the education system, the labour market and the business environment
- setting-up initiatives and gateways to promote the continuation of studies for groups at higher risk of early school drop-out
- revising the mechanisms for updating training offers in order to ensure the necessary match between supply and demand for qualifications

For more information read Reforms in Primary and Secondary Education [11].

2018

Proposal to amend the Education Act

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is developing a proposal to amend the Education Act with the aim of drawing up a new act of an organic and basic nature:

- it will be a reform of the current Education Act in its consolidated version, that is, including all the changes introduced by the 2011 Sustainable Economy Act and the 2013 Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education
- it will amend some provisions of the Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education concerning the following education acts: the Act on Universities (2001) and the Act Regulating the Right to Education (1985), as well as other non-educational acts, such as the Act on the Financing of the Autonomous Communities (1980).

This proposal concerns seven major educational issues, for which different measures are proposed:

**Equity and educational inclusion.** The following proposals should be noted:

- integrate general and vocational training in basic vocational training, facilitating the award of the Lower Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate, in addition to the vocational certificate, in the case of students who, according to the teaching team, have reached the objectives and acquired the relevant skills
- increased flexibility in the number of years students with special educational needs can study basic vocational training, in those cases in which an extension of time facilitates the completion of these studies
• ensure that any option in compulsory education leads to the award of the same certificate.

**Organisation of education.** Among the measures proposed, the following should be emphasised:

• suppress final evaluations in compulsory secondary education and Bachillerato
• a single compulsory secondary education certificate is established, obtained through the ordinary curriculum and any measure to address the needs of diversity
• regulate flexibly the number of years that are necessary to study Bachillerato ordinarily
• include specialisation courses in vocational training provision and integrate the [vocational modules][12] with [competence units][13] included in the National Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications into the Modular Catalogue of Vocational Training
• establish more flexible procedures to approve and modify vocational training qualifications
• facilitate the access to vocational training in the context of a general plan where other subsystems of vocational training will also be present and coordinated.

**Confessional religious education.** The following measures should be stressed:

• there will be no obligation to take an alternative subject in the case of students who do not study it
• it will no longer be considered as an specific subject in the 1st and 2nd years of Bachillerato
• it will not be taken into account when calculating the average in university admission procedures or for grant or similar purposes.

**Evaluations of students and the education system.** The following measures should be underlined:

• enhance the role of teaching teams in compulsory secondary education and Bachillerato regarding progression and certification
• promote academic and professional guidance in the case of students who leave school without the Lower Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate
• turn final evaluations into sample-based and multiannual evaluations.

**Institutional and social participation of the educational community and autonomy and governance of educational institutions.** Among these measures, the following should be noted:

• rebalance the powers of the School Council and head teachers
• facilitate school autonomy
• redesign the composition of School Councils and the selection of head teachers.

**Educational institutions: admission, specialisation and general programming of education.** The measures in this section particularly affect publicly-funded private schools:

• reinforce the principle of non-discrimination based on gender
• change assessing criteria in order to include certain family and social situations
• avoid any sort of segregation
• restore the role of the School Council and the administration in the selection and dismissal of teachers in publicly-funded private schools.

**The education system and the territorial model.** The following measures should be emphasised:

• review the distribution of powers between the State and the Autonomous Communities when establishing the curriculum of the subjects
• the Autonomous Communities with a co-official language will regulate the use of the co-official
Proposal to create of a new vocational training

The Spanish Prime Minister, together with the Minister of Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security, have participated in an event to promote a new and prestigious vocational training which is recognised in Europe.

The aim of this proposal is to improve vocational training on the basis of two elements:

- strategic vision: a training that conforms to reality in order to strengthen the productive system, committing to qualified talent and quality employability
- social commitment: combining technical and professional skills with personal and social skills that help integrate students into society as active, critical and committed citizens.

Among other objectives, this new model of vocational training is aimed at:

- improving the number of enrolments in vocational training. According to the OECD, in the last decade, the number of students enrolled has increased by 57.4%. However, the percentage of students who choose vocational training is 12% of the total of students, half compared to the rest of OECD countries
- tackling early school leaving: together with the general reform of the education system that the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is developing, vocational training will offer new alternatives and possibilities to return to the education system.

The role that companies will assume should be stressed: they will work with the education authorities in order to identify the vocational qualifications that the labour market needs in each professional field and to develop appropriate training, with decreasing intervals between the design of a qualification and its implementation.

Another reform is the updating of current vocational qualifications, focused on advanced technologies, intelligent systems, 4.0 economy and 5G communication networks. Qualifications will be revised and specialisation courses will be designed in order to update them.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Labour are jointly developing initiatives to speed up the identification of new vocational qualifications and to simplify the accreditation of professional competences acquired through work experience. They are also developing an integrated vocational training system that facilitates students’ and professionals’ decision-making on training and career at any time.

For more information, see [Future +Progress= +Vocational Training. An education that develops talent](#). 

Proposal to reform the teaching profession

The Minister of Education and Vocational Training has made a proposal to reform the teaching profession that addresses different key aspects:

- initial training: the question arises as to whether entrance examinations or requirements in the case of studies qualifying to teach should be established or not: teaching degrees (pre-primary and primary education) and the compulsory secondary education, Bachillerato, vocational training and language education teacher training Master’s programme
- induction in the classroom: the possibility of establishing an induction phase for new teachers in
order to help them consolidate their skills before they take up independent work
- continuing professional development and evaluation: the establishment of a thorough
evaluation system that enables teachers who wish to receive information on their teaching
tasks to do so, in order to help them improve their teaching practice. An improvement in the
working conditions under which they exercise their activity is also advocated.

A virtual participation space has been set up to gather input from teachers during three months.

For more information, see the Forum Educate for the 21st century. Challenges and proposals on the
teaching profession [15].

**Reform of the system of grants and financial assistance**

The Minister of Education and Vocational Training and the Minister of Science, Innovation and
Universities have signed an agreement to initiate the reform of the system of grants and financial
assistance. The aim is to ensure equal opportunities to access education, regardless of the economic
and personal circumstances of each student.

The first step of the reform has been the reactivation of the Observatory for Grants, Financial
Assistance and Academic Performance, whose function is to inform and advise on grants and
academic performance. So far, the focus had been on university education, but, with time, it will be
extended to pre-university education with the participation of the State School Council.

Representatives of social partners, students, the Autonomous Communities and universities
participate in the Observartory, which will be co-chaired by both Ministers.

For more information, see Observatory for Grants, Financial Assistance and Academic Performance
[16].

**Bill to revert some educational measures**

The Cabinet has agreed to submit the Bill developed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational
Training to the Parliament for approval. The aim is to revert some of the educational measures
implemented in 2012:

- the compulsory increase in the length of teachers’ school day (a minimum of 20 hours in
  secondary education). The education authorities, within their own territory, may establish part
  of the weekly school day of teachers
- the 10-school day waiting period in order to appoint substitute teachers who replace the
designated teachers on leave. The replacement is now immediate from the moment the
designated teacher takes the leave.

The Draft Bill was previously presented to education trade union organisations, the State School
Council and the Sectoral Committee for Education, where it was approved.

**Expenditure on education policy in 2018**

The State Budget for 2018 has been approved in July 2018.

The expenditure on education policy in 2018 amounts to EUR 2 582 million, a 2.3% more as compared
to 2017.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities,
concentrates available financial resources on programmes which are strategic for the education system:

1. **grants and financial support** budget programme (**EUR 1 575 million**). This programme finances, among other actions, general grants and financial support (**EUR 1 450 million**), including grants and financial support for access to vocational training.

2. **secondary education, vocational training and official language schools** budget programme (**EUR 419 million**). The objectives of this programme are to maintain full vocational training schooling in public educational institutions and to improve the quality of public educational institutions providing secondary education.

3. **actions co-financed by the European Social Fund** budget programme (**EUR 323 million**). This programme develops actions to strengthen and improve educational quality, in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities: teacher training, retraining and mobility, promotion of vocational training or encouragement of dual vocational training and the evaluation and accreditation of professional competences, among others.

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