



Work-based learning in the Montenegrin VET system

The vocational, education and training (VET) system offers three different types of programme: lower VET (two years), secondary VET (three and four years) and post-secondary VET (two years, following secondary VET). Most of the three-year programmes (18 out of 29 in 2019/20) are also offered in a dual form with compulsory work-based learning.

The Law on Vocational Education defines practical training (as part of a VET programme) as a combination of training at a VET school and in the workplace. Each curriculum allows for practical training in schools and in businesses. Where employers have adequate resources, the practical training may be implemented entirely in the company.

The curriculum specifies the amount of time to be allocated to vocational practice.

This is a minimum of 45% in the three-year programmes and a minimum of 12% in the four-year programmes. The vocational practice can usually take place in VET school workshops or in companies. The exceptions are the three-year dual education programmes, which include compulsory work-based learning in companies.

The role of the social partners

Social partners are represented on the National Council for Education and the Qualifications Council, which have adopted most of the important documents in the area of education and qualifications.

Social partners are part of the governing board of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (VET Centre). The VET Centre is now a governmental research institution and is responsible for the development and improvement of the vocational and adult education system.

In addition, social partner representatives are members of sectoral commissions. Based on labour market analysis, sectoral commissions propose the development and revision of new and existing qualifications.

The main challenges

While the Law on Vocational Education allows for the provision of internships in companies, many VET schools still have difficulty finding enough suitable partners in the world of work. As a consequence, most of the vocational practice still takes place in VET school workshops.

There are also significant regional disparities, with VET schools in the north of Montenegro often struggling to secure sufficient work-based learning opportunities for their students because of a lack of interest from employers. In contrast, some of the VET schools in the centre and the coastal areas of the country have been able to conclude cooperation arrangements with over 50 companies, mainly from the tourism sector.

KEY FIGURES

- **Around 70 different VET programmes are provided in 41 VET schools.**
- **In the academic year 2019/20, 3 599 students were enrolled in three-year programmes (23% of them in dual education) and 15 247 students in four-year programmes. There are currently no students enrolled in two-year programmes. Every year, 50 students enrol in Year 1 of the Police Academy in post-secondary programmes.**
- **45% of the VET students enrolled in three- and four-year programmes are women.**

Source: Ministry of Education

MONTENEGRO

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of internships has been identified as another major challenge. The tourism sector has been selected as a pilot for implementing new measures to improve the quality of internships and the collaboration between VET schools and businesses.

How does cooperation between learning venues work?

The contractual agreement for work-based learning depends on how much of the vocational practice takes place in the company. A contract between a student and an individual company is needed when the student spends his or her vocational practice entirely in the company. Within the dual system, the learner and the company sign a 'contract on practical education'. Where part of the vocational practice is completed in a company and the other part in VET school workshops, a 'contract on practical teaching' between the VET school and the individual employer is signed. In such cases the VET school is also responsible for assessing the learner's competences, even when the vocational practice takes place in a company.

Objectives for 2024

In its National VET Strategy 2020–2024, the Government of Montenegro has set several goals relating to work-based learning. Overall, it aims to provide a stimulating environment for companies and VET schools. A stronger role for intermediary institutions, for instance employers' associations and chambers, has been identified as a key priority.

The plan is for such intermediary institutions to promote work-based learning more actively through the engagement of employers and quality

assurance. Another key priority is to strengthen the training of in-company instructors.

The latest developments

In the academic year 2017/18, three-year dual education programmes were introduced systematically for Montenegrin students, following an initiative of the Ministry of Education implementing the amendment of the Law on Vocational Education.

Students spend one day per week at the workplace in their first year, two in the second and three in the third. The Ministry of Education subsidises the pay of students in dual education to the extent of at least 10% of the minimum net wage in the first year and at least 15% in the second, while employers have to cover the pay in the third (at least 20% of the minimum net wage).

Dual education programmes are popular among employers and students alike. Total enrolment started with 277 students in 2017/18. In 2019/20, 848 students were trained by 280 employers in 18 different occupations, such as chef, waiter, mechanic, electrician, salesperson, hairdresser, and sanitary equipment, heating and air-conditioning fitter.

A recent evaluation of dual education in Montenegro by the European Training Foundation and the International Labour Organisation indicated promising results. Almost 60% of dual VET students found a job after graduation.

For information on our activities, jobs and tendering opportunities, please visit our website:

www.etf.europa.eu

2020 update

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VIRTUAL FIRMS

With the support of KulturKontakt Austria, virtual companies have been established in eight secondary schools that provide courses in the fields of economics, law and business administration.

The virtual firms:

- enable fast acquisition of the practical knowledge and skills necessary to run a business in a simulated market economy environment;
- provide an opportunity to communicate and collaborate with students from other local and foreign companies;
- participate in fairs, where the students have an opportunity to showcase their work, their school and their country.

