

ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

Report on measures to ease the transition to upper-secondary level
Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA
Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET

The photos in this report provide insight into the Swiss VET/PET system. Among other things, the photos show the three learning locations (host company, VET school and industry training centre) as well as specific measures intended to help young people enter working life. Examples include advisory services, bridge-year courses and VET Case Management.

Frontpage: VET/PET offices provide young people with information and guidance enabling them to choose a suitable occupation. Corresponding offices can be found in all Swiss cantons.

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FOREWORD

A SHARED COMMITMENT

Each year, two-thirds of all young people coming out of lower-secondary school enrol in a VET programme. In doing so, they lay the foundation for their future careers. The VET sector provides companies with qualified workers who have the skills that are needed on the labour market. The transition from lower-secondary to VET and the transition from VET to working life is a major social and economic policy concern.

The present report offers an overview of the activities taken to favour the occupational integration of young people and young adults. Working with the cantons and professional organisations, the Confederation strives to ensure an adequate supply of apprenticeship places and high-quality VET. Thanks to joint efforts, a wide range of instruments are now at our disposal.

Priorities for this report include measures to help young people with learning difficulties: first of all, VET Case Management has been introduced in all Swiss cantons and initial progress has been made. At the federal level, interinstitutional cooperation is currently being optimised. Secondly, developing talent has become even more urgent in light of demographic changes. Career options need to be attractive if companies are to be able to recruit the next generation of qualified workers and managers. Finally, this report shows how our country integrates young people from a migration background into the VET sector. As the latest OECD reports show, integration takes place through regular structures.

In the chapters that follow, information on the current state of initiatives and measures is provided: e.g. introduction of two-year VET programmes, promotion of skills competitions, and federal funding contributions for projects. All of our efforts are aimed at ensuring that as many young people obtain upper-secondary level qualifications as possible and that companies will be able to recruit the next generation of workers.

I would like to thank everyone involved in helping young people to integrate into VET. It is an important long-term investment that pays both social and economic dividends.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'U. Renold'.

Prof. Dr. Ursula Renold
Director of Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET

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1 OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

Numerous protagonists work at various levels to ensure that young people become integrated in VET programmes and the labour market¹. The present report describes the measures taken at the national level from the perspective of the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET). The report also discusses cooperation with other protagonists.

The Confederation, cantons and professional organisations all work together to establish the general conditions of VET and PET. The Confederation and the cantons are responsible for strategic management and development of the VET/PET system as a whole, which means implementing legal provisions and supervising VET and PET activities. Professional organisations establish training content and the skills needed to obtain a qualification. Here, professional organisations work with social partners, other organisations and VET/PET providers to develop the VET/PET system further.

A successful start in working life is essential for personal development. Two transitions are critical in determining the future prospects of young people and young adults: the transition from lower-secondary to upper-secondary level (transition I) and the transition from school to working life (transition II).

Education policy objective of achieving a 95% graduation rate at upper-secondary level

Increasing the graduation rate at upper-secondary level is among the various education policy objectives² established by the Confederation and the cantons in 2011. By 2020, 95% of all 25-year-olds should have an upper-secondary level qualification. Today the graduation rate at upper-secondary level stands at 90%. In order to reach the current objective, the Confederation, the Cantons and professional organisations intend to adopt a joint statement to increase the commitment³ levels set in 2006, when an agreement was reached on concerted action to facilitate the transition from

lower- to upper-secondary level. In 2012, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) intends to encourage them to renew their commitment.

Broad-based, proven set of measures

The vast majority of young people manage to find an apprenticeship. However, the interest of young people in a given occupation and available apprenticeships are not the only factors influencing the apprenticeship market. Other factors such as structural change, demographic change and economic conditions also influence the apprenticeship market.

In recent years, the Confederation, cantons and professional organisations have taken a series of measures to help young people enrol in VET programmes and find suitable apprenticeships, thereby lending support to development of the next generation of qualified workers.

- Transitional solutions, coaching and tutoring programmes, two-year VET programmes and VET Case Management are intended for pupils who, upon completion of lower-secondary level, will not be able to enter the labour market without assistance.
- Support is provided to host companies to ensure that they will be able to offer apprenticeships and train apprentices under the best possible conditions. The use of apprenticeship incentives and the option of joining a host company network have stabilised the apprenticeship market and led to a steady increase in the number of apprenticeship positions in recent years.

In 2011, the apprenticeship barometer showed that supply on the apprenticeship market (93,500 apprenticeship positions) outstripped demand for the first time. Even the number of young people on the waiting list (i.e. those who were unable to find a suitable apprenticeship) fell from 17% in 2007 to 11% in 2011.

¹ In this report, the term “integration” mainly refers to the integration of young people in VET programmes and on the labour market. Other forms of integration do not fall within OPET’s purview (see chapter 5 “Cooperation with other offices”).

² Chancen optimal nutzen – Joint Statement by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK), the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) and the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) on common education policy objectives for the Swiss education system, May 2011. The statement is available in German and French.

³ Leitlinien zur Optimierung der Nahtstelle obligatorische Schule – Sekundarstufe II, EDK, June 2006. The guidelines are available in German and French.

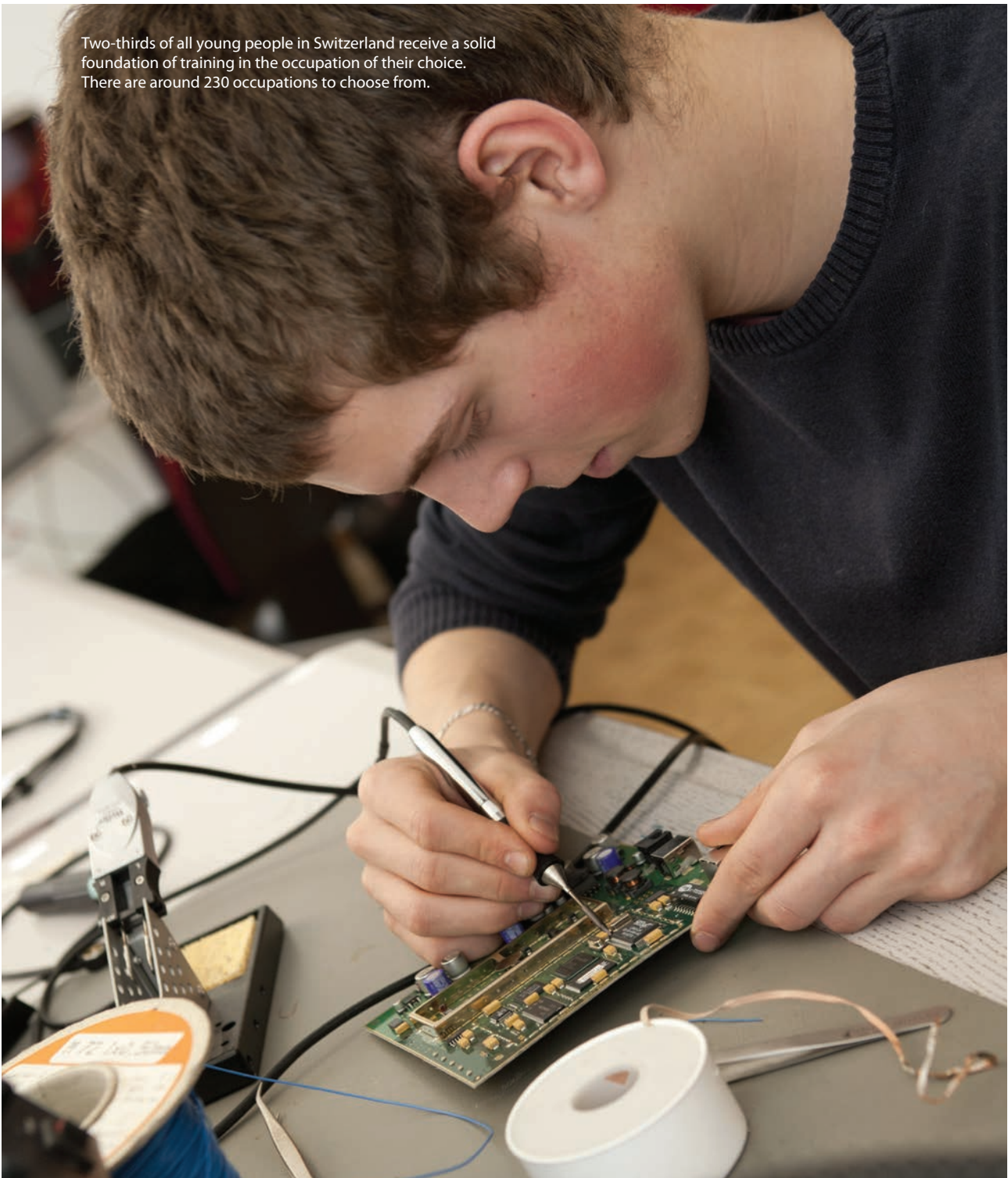
Training workers at all levels

Demographic changes pose a major challenge. In some branches such as healthcare, there are major shortages of qualified workers. In response to this, the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) has launched the Qualified Workers Initiative, which includes targeted labour market and education policy measures as well as the “Master Plan Education in Nursing Professions”. Measures to offer better opportunities for academically skilled young people (e.g. Federal Vocational Baccalaureate or Skills Championships)

also ensure that the VET sector remains appealing to academically skilled young people. These measures also ensure that host companies are able to find suitable apprentices for challenging apprenticeships.

All things considered, a solid battery of instruments is available to help young people gain access to VET programmes. The three main partners regularly review these measures (e.g. in the Annual Apprenticeship Conference) to assess effectiveness and make changes as needed.

Two-thirds of all young people in Switzerland receive a solid foundation of training in the occupation of their choice. There are around 230 occupations to choose from.



2 INTEGRATION MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: TODAY AND TOMORROW

Various factors influence the dynamics of the apprenticeship market. The state acts as an intermediary: it helps young people to choose a suitable occupation, encourages companies to offer apprenticeship positions and works to ensure that host companies are able to train apprentices under optimal conditions.



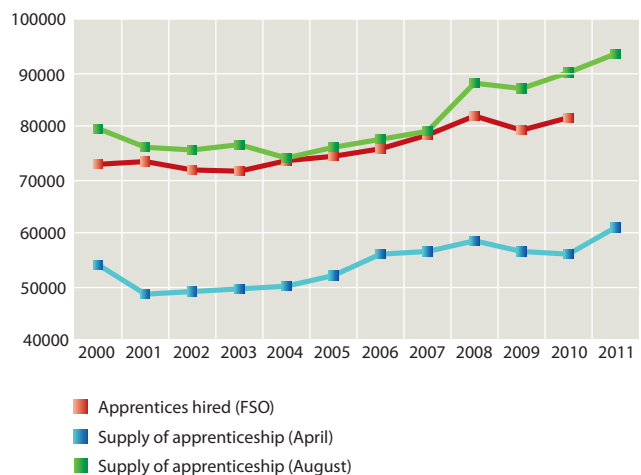
VET schools are responsible for classroom instruction in both vocational and academic (general education) subjects.

2.1 INSTRUMENTS TO MONITOR THE APPRENTICESHIP MARKET

The apprenticeship monitor is intended to enable VET/PET partners to keep abreast of developments taking place on the apprenticeship market and detect potential shortages in apprenticeship places at an early stage. Introduced for the first time in 1997, the apprenticeship barometer is published twice each year so as to provide the latest information on changes taking place on both the supply and demand sides of the apprenticeship market.

The Apprenticeship Barometer is based on a representative survey of companies and young people. The survey is conducted by the LINK Institut für Markt- und Sozialforschung (Lucerne) on behalf of OPET. Monthly analysis of trends is also carried out on the basis of cantonal estimates of the current number of apprenticeship places. In August 2011⁴, host companies offered 87,000 apprenticeship places (2010: 83,000). Of the 6,500 apprenticeship places that remained vacant (2010: 7,000), the host companies stated they expected to be able to fill an additional 2,000. 147,000 young people applied for these apprenticeship places. This number was slightly lower than in the previous year (2010: 149,000). According to their own statements, most of these young people found a solution. 4% (2010: 5%) stated that they were unemployed. This amounts to around 6,000 young people (2010: 8,000). Support services are available for these young people. 72,500 young people began their VET programme in 2011 (2010: 73,500).

Supply and demand on the apprenticeship market⁵



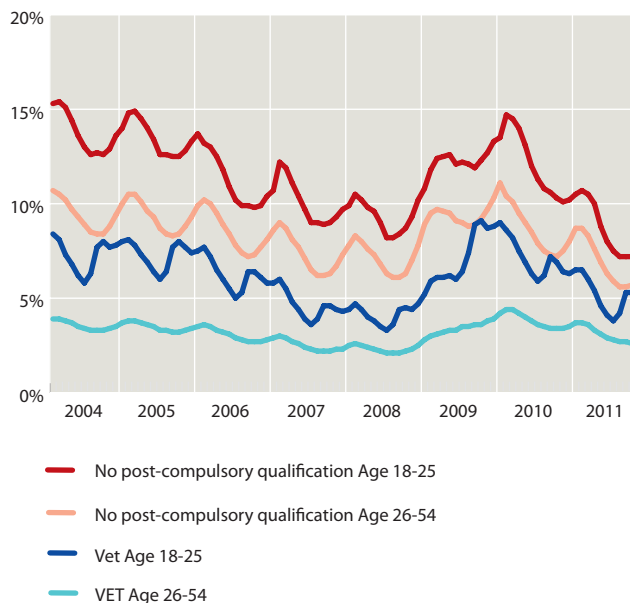
The number of available apprenticeship places has risen steadily over the past decade. This shows that companies are committed to providing apprenticeship training and see this as a long-term investment.

⁴ The results of the Apprenticeship Barometer for 2012 (April survey) were not available at the time this report was drafted.

⁵ Apprenticeship Barometer for August 2011. Detailed report of findings – Survey among young people and companies conducted by LINK Institute on behalf of OPET, October 2011.

The Jobstarter Barometer was published for the first time in 2010. This instrument presents the labour market situation for VET graduates (i.e. those looking for their first job). Commissioned by OPET and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, the University of Zurich's Swiss Job Market Monitor also examines the status and composition of first-time jobseekers and provides an analysis of vacancy postings. The Jobstarter Barometer is published on an annual basis. The first two editions clearly show that VET qualifications offer strong protection against unemployment (see chart below: "Unemployment rate by age and qualification status"). At the same time, the proportion of vacancies for first-time jobseekers has fallen over the past ten years (whereas this proportion had remained steady in previous years). This development can be explained by the greater demands that companies place on VET and CET. Compared to the previous year, the labour market in 2011 was somewhat more open to first-time jobseekers thanks to the more favourable economic situation. As a result, the unemployment rate for workers of typical first-time jobseeker age (young people aged 18-21) fell from 8.7% in 2010 to 6.8% in 2011.

Unemployment rate by age and qualification status⁶



⁶ Jobstarter Barometer for 2011 – Report commissioned by OPET, Swiss Job Market Monitor, November 2011.

Young people and adults without post-compulsory qualifications are more frequently unemployed than those who have completed VET. The long-term average (since 2004) unemployment rate of young people without post-compulsory qualifications is 1.9 times higher and 2.7 times higher for adults.

The Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations work together to achieve the objective of reaching a 95% graduation rate at upper-secondary level. VET Case Management is intended to prevent young people from dropping out of the education system.



2.2 VET TRAINING OPTIONS

Two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate

The new Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act provided for introduction of two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate. This marked a change of system as far as the integration of young people in VET is concerned. Unlike the previous informal two-year apprenticeships, two-year VET programmes lead to issuance of a federally recognised qualification associated with its own occupational profile. Such programmes are therefore part of the Swiss education system. Graduates of these two-year VET programmes also have the option of enrolling in three-year and four-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Diploma.

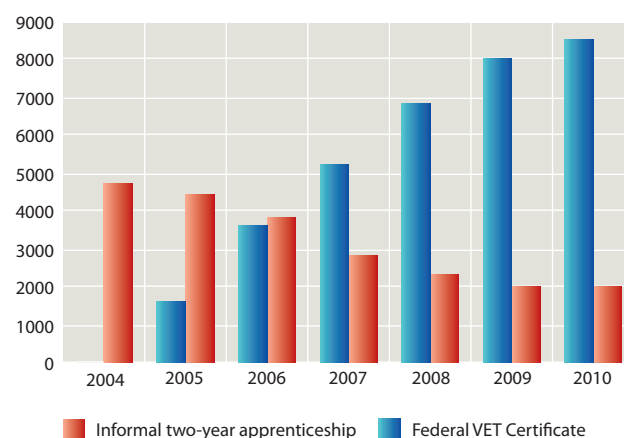
At the end of 2011, 35 ordinances on two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate came into effect. In 2012 and 2013, eleven more ordinances will follow. Specifically, two-year VET programmes in health and social care assistance will be introduced in the summer of 2012. The training provides entry-level qualifications to the healthcare field and will help to reduce labour shortages in this branch.

The number of apprenticeships associated with two-year VET programmes has steadily increased in recent years. In 2011, over 3,600 Federal VET Certificates were issued. Two studies from 2010 show that host companies offering apprenticeships within the framework of two-year VET programmes derive a net benefit from the productive output of learners.⁷ Concerns that more young people coming out of lower-secondary school would end up without education prospects (due to the higher requirements of two-year VET programmes) proved to be unfounded. Equally unfounded were concerns that introduction of these two-year VET programmes would draw students away from three-year and four-year VET programmes.

Individual skills certificates

Individual skills certificates are intended for young people who have been unable to complete a VET programme leading to a federally recognised qualification. Although the learners enrolled in the two-year programme, they were

Two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of a Federal VET Certificate vs non-formal two-year apprenticeships⁸



Introduction of two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate has been highly successful. Upon completion of a two-year VET programme, most learners obtain advanced placement and complete three-year or four-year VET programme.

nevertheless unable to pass the final apprenticeship examination for the Federal VET Certificate. Individual skills certificates shall provide written acknowledgement of the vocational and social skills that the young person has acquired. These certificates are issued by the cantons and professional organisations.

Under the auspices of the Swiss Conference of VET/PET Offices (SBBK) and the Swiss association of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SGV), efforts are currently underway to introduce these individual skills certificates. The challenge will also be to certify skills that the learner has acquired outside of legally regulated training. In 2012, an initial phase will be launched to examine basic questions and to design procedures for issuance of individual skills certificates. Corresponding instruments will then be developed and tested in a pilot phase. By 2014, a general guideline should be ready. The Confederation provides funding for this project.

⁷ Evaluation der zweijährigen beruflichen Grundbildung mit EBA – Schlussbericht, INFRAS/Idheap, Dezember 2010. Kosten und Nutzen von zweijährigen beruflichen Grundbildungen aus der Sicht der Betriebe – Schlussbericht, Eidgenössisches Hochschulinstitut für Berufsbildung, Juni 2010. Only available in German.

⁸ VET statistics for 2010, FSO, 2011.

2.3 PROMOTION OF SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONS

VET and PET should be perceived by young people, adults, employers and HR officers as an appealing pathway to education and training, with a clear understanding of all of the associated benefits. Various partners work at all levels to make this happen.

The Swiss Service Centre for VET/PET, Occupational, Educational and Career Guidance (SDBB) provides information through various media channels, teaching and working materials on all occupations and professions as well as on academic, vocational, professional and continuing education and training options. The SDBB also maintains a website www.berufsberatung.ch that provides an overview of the full range of options. In addition, the SDBB provides VET/PET offices, host companies and learners with important documents and working materials relating to VET.

Marketing of occupations is handled mainly by trade associations. They produce brochures, fliers, videos, websites and other communication media for the purpose of raising the profile of their occupations and drawing young people. In addition, job fairs are organised each year in Switzerland for young people, teachers and parents.

Another website, www.vetplus.ch is a joint initiative of the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations.

It is the first online platform to provide a uniform presentation of the heterogeneous VET/PET system.

The purpose of this platform is to raise awareness

- a. Among young people, their parents and other reference persons, of the possibilities that VET offers (smoother transition to employment, career prospects)
- b. Among companies of the importance of VET (creating apprenticeship places, issuance of VET and PET qualifications)

In addition to the www.berufsbildungplus.ch website, the www.missionfuture.ch website for young people and the magazine "Fokus Beruf" for parents have been launched. Starting in the summer of 2012, this magazine will be published in German, French and Italian as well as in Albanian, Serbo-Croatian and English. Between 2012 and 2014, the campaign will focus on the theme of developing talent. These measures can be intensified as needed.

Even abroad, targeted information and communication measures have helped to raise awareness of the strengths and quality of Swiss VET and PET. This conclusion was drawn by an OPET study.⁹ Measures along this line are therefore to be intensified.

2.4 ANNUAL APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE

The Annual Apprenticeship Conference is led by the head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA). This event offers representatives of the Confederation, the cantons, professional organisations and the Swiss Parliament the opportunity to discuss the current state of the apprenticeship market and to review existing instruments and

decide on any necessary adjustments. In addition, current VET challenges and specific measures are also discussed. Priorities in previous years, for instance, have been encouragement of occupational mobility (2011), improvement of PET (2010) and anticipated shortages in qualified workers in healthcare (2009).

⁹ Berufsbildung – Ein Schweizer Standort- und Wettbewerbsfaktor, Survey of multinational companies and experts in Switzerland, Germany and Britain, OPET, August 2011.

2.5 SHORTAGES OF QUALIFIED WORKERS

The free movement of persons has enabled the Swiss economy in recent years to partially address shortages in qualified workers. Nevertheless, the shortages remain, in some branches more than in others. The highest demand can be seen in technical and mathematical fields as well as in healthcare and medicine.

In Switzerland as in other European countries, demographic developments will lead to a decline in the proportion of the working population within the total population. The FDEA has therefore launched the Qualified Workers Initiative to better tap free potential within the local working population. The initiative should enable companies to find a larger number of suitably qualified workers on the Swiss market. As part of the initiative, a general report¹⁰ was drafted listing seven areas of focus. This report will be discussed with participating partners and federal departments and then implemented at corresponding levels of responsibility. Planned labour market and education policy measures are intended to increase already high levels of employment and ensure the continued and subsequent education and training of Swiss workers. Free potential can be tapped among: young people who are not yet employed or are currently unemployed; adults who are not employed and who lack VET qualifications; parents who are currently raising children; people who are returning to the labour market after extended periods of economic inactivity; and older workers. For young people, emphasis will be placed on improvement of VET Case Management and the creation of additional less

demanding apprenticeships; for adults, efforts will be made to make it easier to reconcile life at home and at work; for the other categories, priority will be given to continued and subsequent education and training of workers.

The Continuing Education and Training Act, which is currently in the drafting stage, can make an important contribution in terms of encouraging people to take responsibility for lifelong learning. It should also foster equal access to CET and improve the level of coherence of federal legislation. The CET Act focuses on non-formal learning, i.e. learning which takes place at courses and seminars but which is not recognised by the state.

Targeted measures will be taken for branches faced with major shortages in qualified workers. As a case in point, the Confederation, the cantons and the national umbrella organisation for the health sector, OdASanté, adopted the Master Plan Education in Nursing Professions in 2010. The aim is to provide access to training in nursing professions as well as development prospects to interested young people, people from different professions (lateral entrants) and people who wish to return to the labour market after extended periods of economic inactivity (re-entrants). Corresponding measures should be implemented by 2015 and relate to three main areas: ensuring an adequate number of apprenticeships and traineeships; implementing education and training system; providing incentives and support to foreign workers.

¹⁰ Fachkräfte für die Schweiz – Eine Initiative des Eidgenössischen Volkswirtschaftsdepartements, EVD, August 2011. Information is available in German and French.

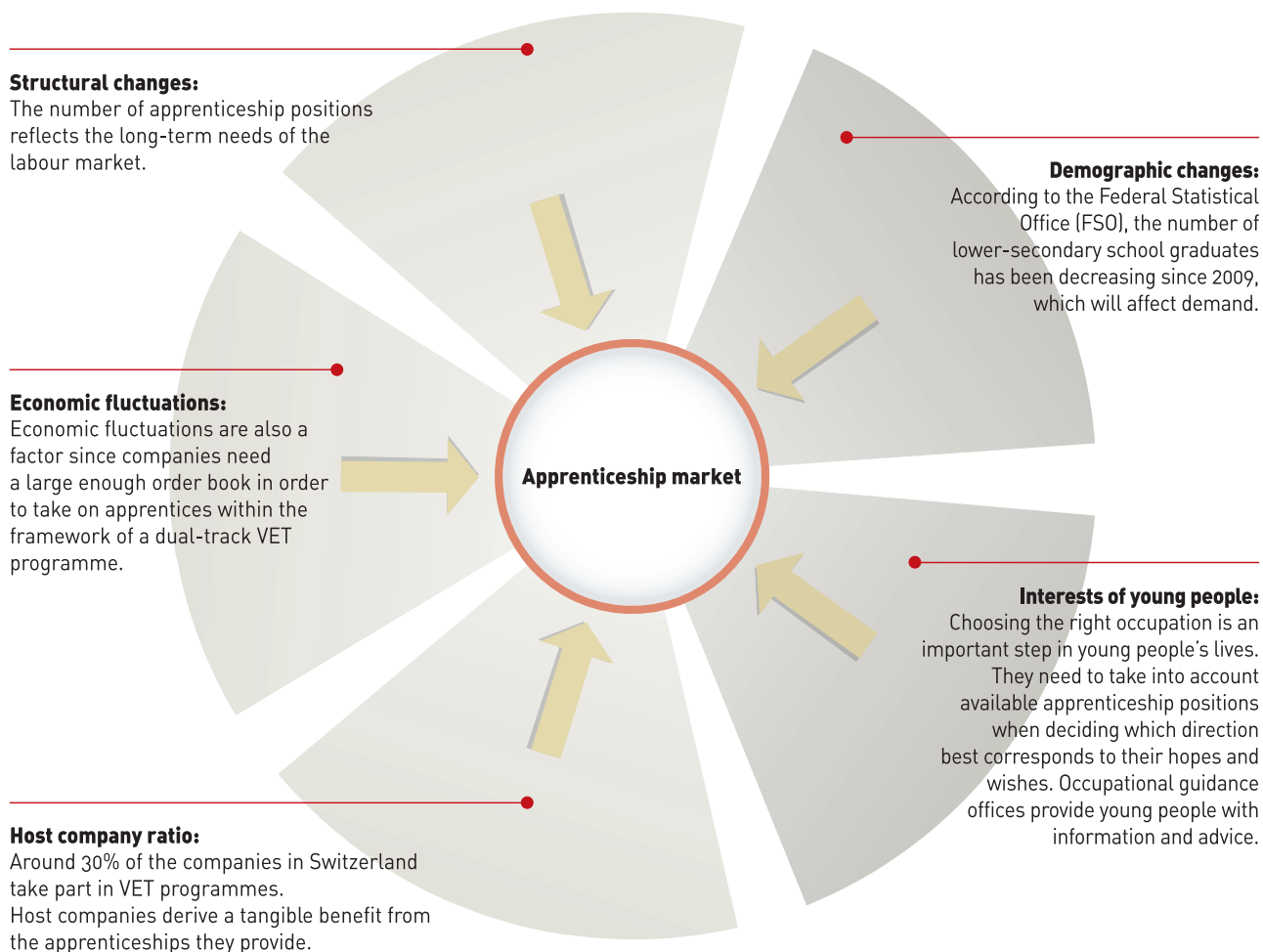
¹¹ "Masterplan Bildung Pflegeberufe" – Report commissioned by the Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA, OPET, March 2010.



Many more nursing internships will be needed to address growing shortages in nursing staff on the Swiss labour market. The occupational profile also needs to be made more appealing and match the needs of the labour market. This is the aim of the "Master Plan Education in Nursing Professions".

2.6 PROMOTION OF SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONS

The State plays a mediating role: it ensures the best possible general conditions for host companies, encourages the provision of apprenticeship positions and helps young people to choose an occupation.



MEASURES TO HELP HOST COMPANIES

VET promotion agents

VET promotion agents deal directly with companies to encourage them to create apprenticeship places for learners.

Host company networks

The creation of host company networks enables small-sized or specialised companies, that would otherwise be unable to train learners, to offer mini-apprenticeships in combination with one or more other companies. This allows the participating companies in the host company network to share resources. OPET provides start-up funding for the creation of host company networks. The Web site www.lbv.berufsbildung.ch also provides information and advice on how to establish and expand a host company network.

MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Occupational information and advice

Cantonal guidance offices work closely with schools to provide young people with assistance in choosing an occupation and finding a corresponding apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship postings

Apprenticeship postings show a list of vacant apprenticeship places advertised by host companies. These apprenticeship places can be searched by occupation and canton.

Bridge-year courses

Bridge-year courses are intended to help young people gain access to VET who face social barriers and/or had poor academic performance in lower-secondary school. Bridge-year courses also serve as a stop-gap measure for young people who are unable to find a suitable apprenticeship immediately after completing lower-secondary school.

Coaching /mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are intended to provide individual support to pupils in lower-secondary school. Examples include measures to develop relevant occupational, social skills and application skills. The programmes and projects are sponsored by both the cantons and private organisations.

VET Case Management

VET Case Management is a structured process: a single agency is responsible for ensuring a coordinated and systematic approach. The focus is on the principle of empowerment and on maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of measures taken (see chapter 3.2).

Apprenticeship placement services

Measures to help learners find a suitable apprenticeship begin from the fourth quarter of the last year of lower-secondary school. Apprenticeship placement services are an additional means of easing the transition from lower-secondary to upper-secondary level.

Individual tutoring

Individual tutoring is intended to provide slower learners in two-year VET programmes with complete support. Host companies, VET schools, third-party training centres and social workers all work together to ensure the learner's progress. Individual tutoring is provided for in Art. 18 para. 2 of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act. While mainly intended for learners in two-year VET programmes, learners in three-year and four-year VET programmes may also benefit.

During an apprenticeship at a host company the learners are taught the practical skills needed for their chosen occupation. They contribute to the host company's productivity.



3 PRIORITY THEMES FOR 2012

3.1 INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

The overall objective of social insurance institutions is to quickly reintegrate individuals in the labour market for the long-term. Within this context, interinstitutional cooperation at municipal, cantonal and national levels is intended to improve coordination of activities of the various partners and clarify their respective roles and responsibilities.

Interinstitutional cooperation has steadily expanded in recent years. The launch of VET Case Management was for the purpose of optimising activities through coordination and achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness of measures taken. After VET Case Management was expanded to include young adults who lack upper-secondary qualifications (VET Case Management plus), cooperation with institutions outside the VET sector intensified and it became increasingly apparent that interinstitutional cooperation and support from the various protagonists would be a major challenge.

Restructuring of interinstitutional cooperation at national level

After the National Poverty Conference in 2010, the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) decided to restructure interinstitutional cooperation at national level. A national steering committee (IIZ STG)¹² was established with representatives of the Confederation, the cantons and towns to coordinate occupational integration activities. This steering committee is responsible for establishing the general conditions and policy direction. The steering committee is chaired by the following three agencies at two-year intervals: the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) and the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET). The Development and Coordination Council for Interinstitutional Cooperation (IIZ EKG)¹³ is responsible for subsequent development and coordinated implementation of interinstitutional cooperation. The Interinstitutional Cooperation Office (Fachstelle IIZ)¹⁴ serves as the Confederation's contact point for matters relating to interinstitutional cooperation and support required to ensure that the activities at the various interfaces within the system are carried out in a professional manner. The Interinstitutional Cooperation Office also provides support to national interinstitutional cooperation committees.

KEY FACTS

- Interinstitutional cooperation is intended to achieve effective and efficient use of various safety net and integration systems through concerted action.
- VET programmes protect from the risk of pending unemployment and dependency on social insurance benefits.
- From the standpoint of VET practitioners, clarification of interfaces with unemployment insurance offices, invalidity insurance offices, welfare offices and lower-secondary school is crucial.

This restructuring of interinstitutional cooperation at national level, which will be completed by the end of 2012, is mainly intended to instil a general culture of interinstitutional cooperation in the various institutions, review existing interfaces between individual partners and find pragmatic solutions where needed. Special importance was given to interfaces between regional employment offices and social insurance offices as well as interfaces between VET Case Management and other institutions involved in interinstitutional cooperation.

Clarifying interfaces with unemployment insurance offices

In February 2011, OPET was asked to draft a strategy paper outlining ways in which cooperation between the VET sector and interinstitutional partners can be improved. Clarification of interfaces avoids duplication of efforts and enables an adequate training strategy to be developed that helps young people to overcome difficulties at an early stage. Priority will therefore be given to coordinating VET Case Management with unemployment insurance. Specifically, emphasis will be placed on cooperation between case managers and employment advisors as well as on clarification of their respective roles. In addition, specific criteria will be established to determine when young people will be assigned to a case manager. Other areas of focus include interfaces between VET Case Management and invalidity insurance, welfare and lower-secondary school.

In 2012, the Federal Council intends to support implementation of the poverty strategy by deciding what action is to be taken in relation to interinstitutional cooperation at the national level. This will include both short- and medium-term measures in the areas of training and integration.

¹² Members: Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Economic Affairs (VDK), Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Social Affairs (SODK), Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK), Swiss Towns Union, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO), Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET), Federal Office for Migration (FOM), the Development and Coordination Council for Interinstitutional Cooperation (IIZ EKG), Interinstitutional Cooperation Committee (IIZ Fachstelle).

¹³ Members: Swiss Association of Labour Offices (VSAA), Swiss Conference of Invalidity Insurance Offices (IVSK), Swiss Welfare Conference (SKOS), Urban Social Policy Coalition, Swiss Accident Insurance Fund (SUVA), Swiss Conference of Integration Delegates (KID), Swiss Conference of Directors of Occupational, Educational and Career Guidance Offices (KBSB).

¹⁴ Members: SECO, OPET, FSIO, SKOS, SODK, Swiss Towns Union.

Interfaces between institutions involved in VET Case Management¹⁵

	Case manager	Primary and lower-secondary schools	Social workers at schools	OEC guidance offices	Bridge-year courses	Regional employment centres	VET schools	Social service offices at schools	Apprenticeship inspectors	Social services at communal level	Voluntary youth workers	Invalidity insurance offices	Counselling centres	Crisis intervention centres	Youth advocacy groups	Police
Case manager																
Primary + lower-secondary schools	●															
Social workers at schools	●	○														
OEC guidance offices																
Bridge-year courses	●	○		○												
Regional employment centres	●			○	○											
VET schools	●			○	○	○										
Social service offices at schools	●		○	○	○		○									
Apprenticeship inspectors	●			○		○	○	○								
Social services at communal level	●	○	○		○	○		○								
Voluntary youth workers	●	○	○		○			○	○							
Invalidity insurance offices	●															
Counselling centres	●	○	○	○	○	○		○	○	○	○	○				
Crisis intervention centres	●		○					○		○	○		○			
Youth advocacy groups	●	○	○				○	○		○	○		○	○		
Police	●	○	○				○	○		○	○		○	○	○	

Various protagonists are involved in helping young people become more integrated in VET and the labour market. From a VET standpoint, the following considerations are important: lower-secondary school and VET schools (prevention, early recognition, individual support programmes), bridge-year courses (suitable profiles), regional employment centres (support for pre-job training), invalidity insurance (clarification and recognition of invalidity), teaching/labour inspectors (mainly contact with host companies), community welfare offices (keeping records of drop-out cases, family allowances and approval of assumption of costs).

¹⁵ Nationales Projekt Case Management Berufsbildung – Assessment Report on Implementation, Charles Landert, June 2011.

3.2 VET CASE MANAGEMENT

VET Case Management contributes to ensure that young people and young adults have the opportunity to complete a VET programme. VET Case Management is based on the principle of empowerment and involves a coordinated approach to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of measures taken.

At the Conference on Apprenticeship Places in 2006, the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations decided to introduce VET Case Management to help disadvantaged youths overcome the multiple problems they face in gaining access to VET programmes. VET Case Management is a structured process to coordinate the activities of all persons and institutions involved (guidance counsellors, teaching supervisors, regional employment centres, migration offices, welfare offices and cantonal invalidity offices). With VET Case Management, only one agency or person is responsible for providing various interinstitutional services geared to the young person's individual needs. This ensures greater efficiency and effectiveness of measures taken.

The cantons are responsible for operational implementation of VET Case Management. The Confederation provides a funding contribution to the Cantons. Between 2008 and 2011, the Confederation's contribution stood at CHF 20 million. OPET and the Swiss Conference of VET/PET Offices (SBBK) also contribute by sponsoring support projects devoted to specific themes, e.g. identification of target groups or establishing the competence requirements of case managers.

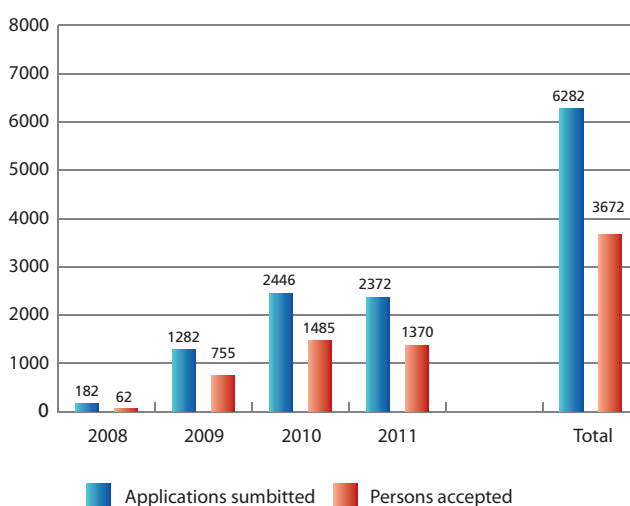
Implementation well underway

By the end of 2011, VET Case Management had been fully introduced in 22 cantons. The remaining cantons were either still in the pilot phase or about to implement the programme within the canton. A report¹⁶ commissioned by OPET to assess implementation of VET Case Management in the cantons drew the following conclusions:

- Many cantons have used the launch of VET Case Management as an opportunity to critically examine and optimise the structure and efficiency of existing support systems.

- According to assessors, the objective of ensuring that 95% of all 25-year-olds obtain upper-secondary level qualifications by 2020 is reachable.
- Early recognition of pupils at risk should lead to improvements. In particular, greater efforts are being made to keep partners informed and to work more closely with lower-secondary schools.
- In their daily activities, case managers act as intermediaries and fill gaps in the existing system designed to encourage occupational integration. If this practical experience can be brought to steering bodies, then the efficiency and effectiveness of VET Case Management can be increased even further.

Number of individuals in VET Case Management programme is a reflection of progressive anchoring of the programme throughout Switzerland.¹⁷



Since VET Case Management was implemented in the cantons in 2008, the number of participants has increased steadily, with the exception of 2011. So far, 3,600 young people have benefited.

¹⁶ Nationales Projekt Case Management Berufsbildung – Assessment Report on Implementation, Charles Landert, June 2011.

¹⁷ CM Online database, OPET, 2011.

Consolidation phase

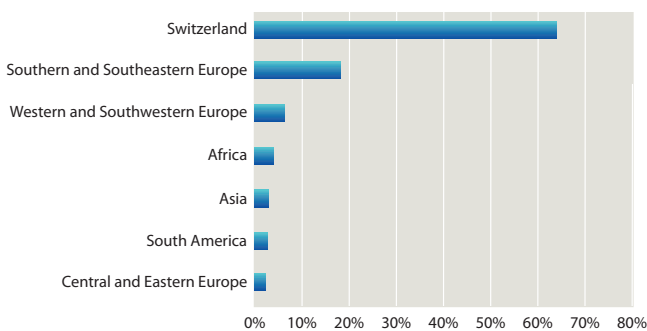
All parties view the long-term anchoring of VET Case Management to be essential. In order for the cantons to have enough time to include VET Case Management in cantonal structures, a consolidation phase from 2012-2015 is planned. OPET contributes CHF 15.5 million in funding to this process. Initially, the financial contribution of the cantons should equal that of the Confederation and then gradually increase as the Confederation decreases its funding contribution.

In 2011, the Qualified Workers Initiative launched by the Federal Department of Economic Affairs (FDEA) also helped to consolidate the position of VET Case Management as the main programme. It also prompted policymakers to examine ways to optimise the programme's legal basis. In addition, regional employment centres will now only accept people under the age of 24 in coordination with VET case managers. Continued development of interinstitutional cooperation shall include special emphasis on interactions between VET case managers and unemployment insurance offices, welfare offices and lower-secondary schools (see chapter 3.1).

KEY FACTS

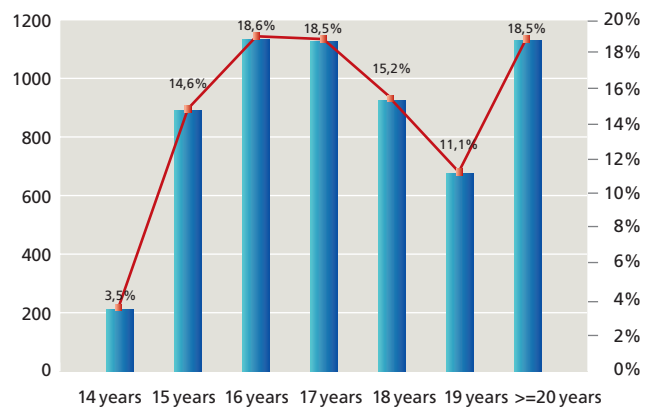
- VET Case Management is intended to empower youths who find it difficult to integrate into VET programmes. Here, the principle is "education takes precedence over work".
- VET Case Management does not involve the introduction of new guidance and support measures. Instead, the aim is to coordinate the activities of existing programmes, people and institutions. Greater efficiency is achieved through coordination of activities among the various partners. The aim is to ensure that the person obtains a post-compulsory qualification.
- VET Case Management has been introduced in all participating cantons; the consolidation phase is currently underway (2012-2015). The Confederation provides the cantons with CHF 15.5 million in funding.

Nationality of young people¹⁸



VET Case Management is intended for young people who have difficulty entering upper-secondary level upon completion of compulsory education. Around two-thirds of these young people are Swiss nationals.

Providing timely support¹⁹



VET Case Management begins as early as the 7th year of schooling. It is mainly 16- and 17-year olds that receive assistance.

¹⁸ CM Online database, OPET, 2011.

¹⁹ CM Online database, OPET, 2011.

“WE HAVE ESTABLISHED AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM”

Interview with Christian Kälin, Head of Office 1155 within the Canton of Aargau’s Department of Education, Culture and Sport, which implemented VET Case Management.



Mr Kälin, you introduced VET Case Management about three years ago. How smooth has the start been?

Christian Kälin: The start was made easier by support given to us by cantonal project groups and start-up funding from OPET. In my previous job, I managed labour market courses and programmes for regional employment centres. I was therefore familiar with the various challenges. 2009 was also a good year to start: despite the financial and economic crisis, the apprenticeship situation remained solid and the demographic situation was such that there were fewer young people coming out of lower-secondary school. As a result, there has been a slight oversupply of apprenticeship places for the past three years. We have established an interdisciplinary team of highly qualified case managers in Aargau.

How many and what type of young people do you receive?

Around 300 each year. So far, we have worked with over 1,000 young people. This is slightly higher than what was estimated prior to commencement of the project. These young people fall into one of three categories: around 150 would not have been able to enrol in a VET programme on their own for cognitive or psychosocial reasons and were therefore assigned to us at the end of lower-secondary school. 500 were sent to us by a labour inspector because they dropped out of an apprenticeship and have multiple problems. Over 350 are young adults (aged 18 to 25) who tried on several occasions to enrol in a VET programme but were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons: unclear circumstances; difficulty choosing an occupation or making it through the apprenticeship recruitment process; lack of stamina, mental instability, chronic illness, addiction, etc.

How does cooperation with the various parties involved work?

To tell you the truth: no one saw us coming. Each office has its own processes, specific funding, other software applications. Some felt that we were “encroaching on their turf” and others were afraid of possible competition. Cooperation management is therefore the most important part of our work. When choosing an occupation, it is important to never lose sight of the actual needs of the labour market. The interests and abilities of young people must therefore be brought in line with these needs. There are usually enough apprenticeships to go around. In many cases, learners have better career prospects if they choose less popular occupations than if they pursue the same occupations as everyone else. In Switzerland, dual-track VET programmes offer so many opportunities precisely because emphasis is placed not only on classroom instruction but also on work-based training.

Are there any ways to achieve even better results?

Generally, we should intervene at an earlier stage: not when the young people have finished lower-secondary school nor after they drop out of an apprenticeship but rather at the first signs of crisis. Regional employment centres also need to determine early on whether an individual should first look for a temporary job and whether the individual will truly be able to complete training. I am very much in favour of targeted short-term coaching, and especially for young people. VET Case Management handles the long-term support services. This ensures that the limited state funding is used more effectively. We should also require young people and their parents to show greater commitment when they apply for state benefits. I also wonder what will happen to the 5% of young people who fall through the cracks in the official target of ensuring that 95% of 25-year-olds obtain upper-secondary qualifications [see chapter 2.2]. Another priority is integration of young people who immigrate to Switzerland at the age of 14-24.

“Cooperation management is the most important part of our work”

3.3 SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM A MIGRATION BACKGROUND

The Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (VPETA) seeks to encourage occupational and personal growth, integration in society and equal education and training opportunities. These objectives apply to everyone. For this reason, activities are carried out within regular structures. By virtue of Art. 54/55 VPETA, OPET subsidises VET projects aimed at helping young people from a migration background.

According to the Swiss Education Report 2010²⁰, the education policy objective of ensuring that 95% of all 25-year-olds obtain upper-secondary level qualifications has already been achieved for all young people who have gone through the entire Swiss education system. At present, the overall percentage stands at 90%. Since young people from a migration background only spend a portion of their school years in the Swiss education system, special efforts need to be made to help these young people so that the 95% target can be reached by 2020.

Initiatives taken within the VET sector to help young people become integrated in VET programmes do not take nationality or origin into account. VPETA provides for various options:

- Art. 3 VPETA fosters and develops a VET/PET system that enables individuals to develop on an occupational, professional and personal level, to become integrated into society, and particularly into the labour market, that provides them with the skills they need, the necessary professional flexibility and the ability to compete on the labour market.
- As part of the planned partial revision of the Foreign Nationals Act, the following provision will be added to Art. 3 let. c VPETA: [This Act shall foster and develop:] a balan-

Proportion of lower-secondary pupils who immediately enrol in upper-secondary level, 2009²¹

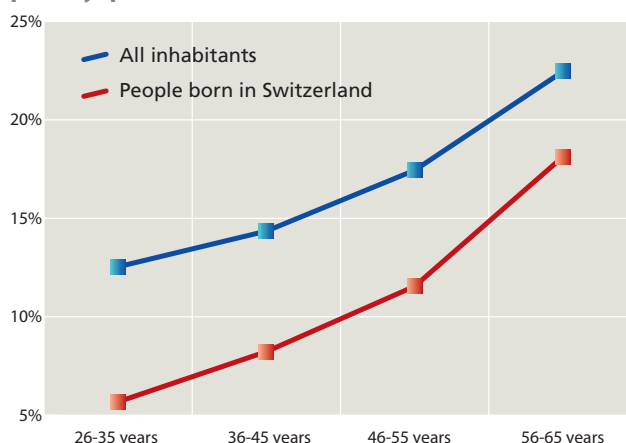
	VET	General education	Bridge-year
Swiss	50.3%	27.9%	12.1%
Foreigners	36.7%	21.3%	26.6%

Bridge-year courses after completion of lower-secondary level are important in helping young people to become integrated. The proportion of young people of foreign origin who attend bridge-year courses prior to enrolment in upper-secondary is higher than the proportion of Swiss nationals who do so.

cing of education and training opportunities in social and regional terms, true gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities as well as equal opportunities and the integration of foreign nationals.

- Promotion of measures intended to help disadvantaged regions and groups (Art. 7 and Art. 55 para. 1 let. e. and f. VPETA).
- Preparation for VET (Art. 12 VPETA): measures to prepare learners for upper-secondary level VET programmes if these learners have not reached the required level of academic achievement upon completion of compulsory education.
- Taking individual needs into account (Art. 18 VPETA): the duration of a VET programme may be shortened or lengthened. Individual tutoring is also provided to learners with learning difficulties in two-year VET programmes.
- Specific optional and remedial courses at VET schools (Art. 22 VPETA).
- Validation of prior learning (Art. 33 VPETA) and recognition of foreign qualifications (Art. 68 VPETA): a recognised Swiss VET qualification can be obtained through the validation of related and unrelated work experience that foreign nationals have obtained in their home countries or in Switzerland as well as foreign qualifications.
- Occupational, educational and career guidance (Art. 49 VPETA): consideration of specific potential and deficits of foreign nationals.

Proportion of working population who lack post-compulsory qualifications, 2007²²



The proportion of residents aged 15-64 who lack VET qualifications fell from 60% in 1990 to 37% in the year 2000. The proportion of adults that lack post-compulsory qualifications has declined over time. This decrease is also reflected in the education structure.

²⁰ Swiss Education Report 2010, Swiss Coordination Office for Research in Education (SKBF), Aarau 2010.

²¹ Education indicator: transition to upper-secondary level, Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2012.

²² Swiss Education Report 2010, Swiss Coordination Office for Research in Education (SKBF), Aarau 2010.

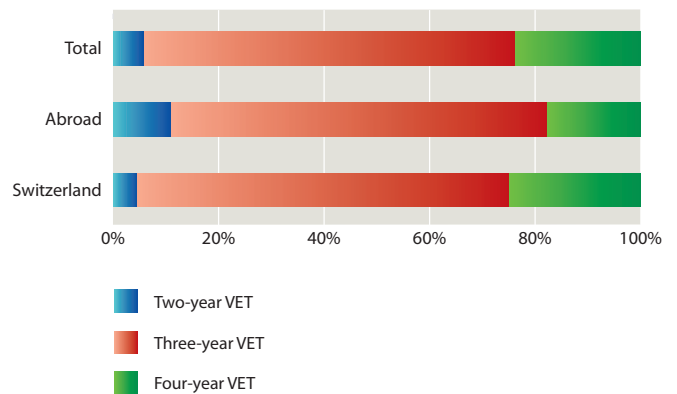
The VET sector covers a broad range of training options. Training content is also adapted according to the different aptitudes of learners.



- Contributions for special activities that serve public interest (Art. 55 BBG): support for specific projects to encourage the integration of young people from a migration background.

Under the terms of Art. 54/55 BBG, OPET has supported various projects intended to assist young people from a migration background. A total of around CHF 1.8 million in funding contributions was allocated for this purpose between 2004 and 2011. Projects intended for a more general target group (e.g. helping young people with specific learning difficulties to gain access to VET) received around CHF 37.7 million.

Duration of training by nationality, 2009²³



With entry into force of the new Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, more practically minded young people now have access to two-year VET programmes leading to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate. So far, it has mainly been young people from a migration background who have pursued this option. Permeability with subsequent education and training options is assured.

KEY FACTS

- Initiatives to encourage the integration of young people in VET programmes regardless of their nationality and origin are now an integral part of VET programmes.
- The Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act considers several options that can be used to help young people.
- OPET supports projects to integrate young people from a migration background in VET programmes under Art. 54/55 VPETA.

²³ Pupils and students 2009/10, Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2011.

“VERY POSITIVE RESULTS”

Interview with Jonathan Chevrolet, scientific advisor for the Canton of Jura’s Upper-secondary and Tertiary Education Office, regarding its individual tutoring project, which is intended for young people of all nationalities and countries of origin.



Mr Chevrolet, What are the aims of individual tutoring and what target groups is it intended for?

With financial support from OPET, the Canton of Jura introduced its individual tutoring project in 2007. For the moment, we have one full-time socio-professional advisor whose role is to provide individual support to young people who encounter specific difficulties in their apprenticeships. This support is intended to help them overcome these difficulties and obtain an upper-secondary level qualification. The target group is mainly comprised of young people between the ages of 15 and 25 enrolled in a dual-track VET programme.

How successful have your efforts been?

Each year, the socio-professional advisor provides individual tutoring to 60-80 young people. Nearly 80% of these young people pass their final apprenticeship examination. Most obtain a Federal VET Diploma and the others obtain a Federal VET Certificate. Those who fail to pass the examination, receive support so that they can repeat their final apprenticeship year or change to another VET programme (e.g. for a Federal VET Certificate instead of a Federal VET Diploma). Moreover, regular surveys conducted by our service show that individual tutoring is greatly appreciated by the young peo-

“Each year, the socio-professional advisor provides individual tutoring to 60-80 young people. Nearly 80% of these young people pass their final apprenticeship examination. Most obtain a Federal VET Diploma and the others obtain a Federal VET Certificate.”

ple themselves, their parents and host companies. The results are therefore very positive.

But you have also experienced difficulties?

There are mainly two types of obstacles. First of all, young people face a wide range of problems, ranging from a lack of self-confidence to mental and emotional problems. The socio-professional advisor therefore works closely with parents, host companies and various specialised institutions. Secondly, the range of possible situations is equally broad. The socio-professional advisor is therefore forced to prioritise and put handling of some situations on hold.

What is the future outlook for this project?

The Confederation has funded this project until 31 January 2012. Today, the individual tutoring structure has become an important resource for young people in difficulty, for parents and host companies. This is why the government of the Canton of Jura has decided to maintain this structure, which is now a effective tool within the cantonal education system.

3.4 DEVELOPING TALENT

The demographic situation will make it more difficult for some companies to fill apprenticeship positions. The Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations give great importance to providing support to the next generation of qualified workers and offering greater opportunities to academically skilled young people enrolled in VET programmes. The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate, the PET sector and Euro/WorldSkills championships combined with school- and work-based initiatives offer such young people the chance to develop their talent and potential.

Based on its demographic scenarios²⁴, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) expects that growth in working-age inhabitants will slow down somewhat and begin decreasing from 2021 onwards. This development will also have an impact on the VET sector. The FSO estimates that the number of new enrolments in VET programmes will fall by around 6% to 77,000 learners by 2020²⁵. Major regional disparities are also expected.

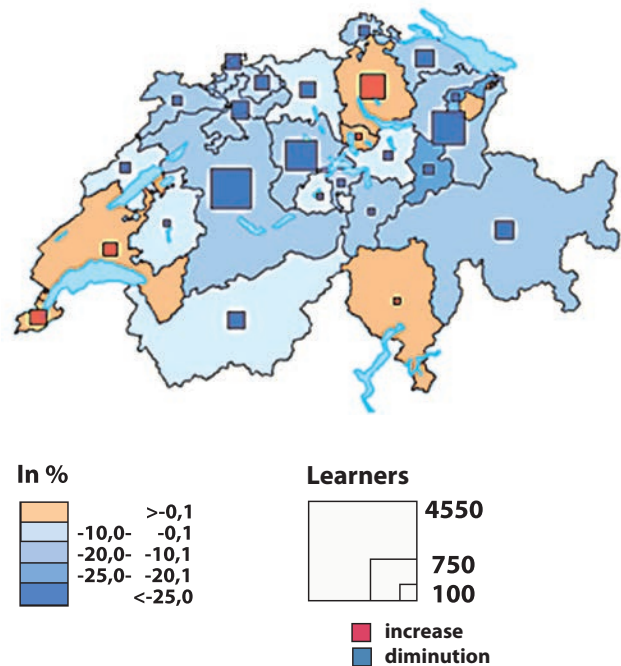
This development will make it even more difficult for companies to recruit suitably qualified workers. It is already a challenge for host companies offering challenging apprenticeship places to find suitable learners.

A broad spectrum of cognitively challenging VET programmes – e.g. in the high tech sector – are available to academically skilled young people, offering them interesting training prospects. Trade associations work to make their occupations appealing. In addition, host companies and VET schools work together to encourage the development of talent. In host companies, academically skilled learners receive individualised attention. Such learners, for instance, are assigned challenging tasks requiring greater levels of responsibility; they may also be encouraged to take part in competitions or attend third-party training courses. VET schools offer a suitable range of electives enabling learners to acquire additional knowledge and skills in various fields.

3.4.1 Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB)

The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB) was introduced in 1994. Since then, the Swiss education system has become much more permeable. Preparatory courses for the FVB are intended to provide learners in VET programmes to develop academic skills (i.e. general education) over and above vocational ones. FVB holders are entitled to enrol in a Bachelor's degree programme at a Swiss university of applied sciences (UAS, ISCED 5A) without having to take an entrance examination. In addition, FVB holders who also pass the University Aptitude Test (UAT) may enrol in a degree programme

Learners enrolled in a VET programme*: Development 2010** – 2020 in the cantons²⁶



The number of learners in the first year of their VET programme is expected to increase in only a few cantons (shown in red). In most cantons, a decrease is expected. In some parts of eastern and central Switzerland, the decrease is expected to be over 15%.

KEY FACTS

- VET offers a wide range of career opportunities to academically skilled young people.
- The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate opens the way to higher education. PET offers the possibility of gaining more advanced training at tertiary level.

at a Swiss traditional university or one of Switzerland's two federal institutes of technology (ETH in Zurich or EPF in Lausanne).

The FVB is intended for more academically minded learners enrolled in VET programmes. Over 10,000 FVBs are issued each year. In 2010, around 490 young men and women passed the University Aptitude Test.

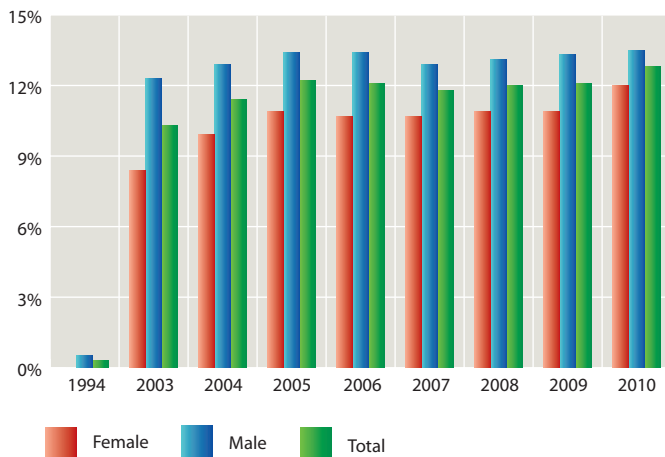
In order to make the FVB even more flexible and permeable, a new Federal Vocational Baccalaureate Ordinance was enacted in 2009. The Confederation, cantons, professional

²⁴ Swiss population growth scenarios for 2010-2060, FSO, 2010. The neutral scenario is the reference scenario, which is based on a continuation of developments over the past few years. The middle scenario also considers the trends since introduction of free movement of persons.

²⁵ FSO: Scenarios for 2011 – 2020 for upper-secondary level.

²⁶ FSO: Scenarios for 2011 – 2020 for upper-secondary level, learners in the 1st year of their VET programmes, based on neutral scenario.

Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB) – a success story²⁷



From 1994 to 1998, the proportion of FVB holders increased dramatically. Since then, the growth rate has slowed down somewhat. In 2009, the proportion of FVB holders stood at 12.8%.

organisations and universities of applied sciences all worked together closely to draft this ordinance, which takes the latest VET developments into account. The new ordinance also gave rise to an amendment to the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, which came into effect in 2004.

This ordinance provides for the creation of a single core curriculum to replace the four core curriculums used previously. The corresponding work along this line began at the end of 2010. As in the past, the emphasis will be placed on the VET occupation and the corresponding degree programme at the university of applied sciences. Particular importance will also be given to improving skills in mathematics and natural sciences as well as on international compatibility and incentives for lifelong learning. The new core curriculum is expected to go into effect at the start of 2013.

3.4.2 Skills competitions

Skills competitions at national and international level offer young people the opportunity to put their vocational skills to the test and develop them further. In addition, such competitions also raise the profile of the VET sector. In Switzerland, numerous trade associations organise national skills competitions, which are supported by the SwissSkills foundation.

This foundation coordinates skills competitions in various branches and makes the necessary arrangements for the Swiss team to take part in international skills competitions. The Confederation also supports the activities of the SwissSkills foundation.

WorldSkills competitions have taken place since 1950; EuroSkills competitions were introduced in 2008. The success of Swiss competitors underscores the quality of the Swiss VET sector and helps to consolidate its reputation at both the national and international level.

At the 2011 Annual Conference on Apprenticeship, the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations decided to contribute even greater support at their respective levels to skills competitions. The aim is to organise SwissSkills competitions for as many occupations as possible and to send Swiss competitors to EuroSkills and WorldSkills competitions.

In 2014, decentrally organised SwissSkills competitions will take place in a single location for the first time. The four-day event will be held in Bern and will include competitions and demonstrations in around 100 occupations. This should serve to raise greater public awareness of the quality and diversity of Swiss VET programmes.

The latest achievements of the Swiss team (national score): WorldSkills

Year	location	CH score
2003	St. Gallen	1
2005	Helsinki	1
2007	Shizuoka	3
2009	Calgary	2
2011	London	3

EuroSkills

Year	location	CH score
2008	Rotterdam ²⁸	–
2010	Lissabon	2

Project “Developing innovation and talent within the VET/PET system”

The Swiss Science and Youth Foundation (SJf) and the Swiss VET/PET Association (BCH) seek to encourage more learners in VET programmes to take part in national and international innovation competitions. Between 2007 and 2010, the proportion of VET projects submitted in the national Swiss Science and Youth Competition increased from below 10% to around 20%.

The purpose of the second phase of the project to 2015 is to institutionalise the structures and processes listed. In addition, the level of participation of French- and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland should be increased and learners from all occupations should be reached. The number of competition projects from the VET sector should also continue to increase (10 to 20% each year). OPET will continue to provide financial support for the project (CHF 1 million until 2015).

²⁷ Education indicator: FVB graduation rates, FSO, 2011.

²⁸ Three Swiss contestants took part in the EuroSkills 2008. All three earned a medal.

Developing talent in art, dance, design and sports

The VET sector also enables young people to develop their musical and creative talents. As a case in point, A three-year VET programme leading to issuance of a Federal VET Diploma in Dance was introduced in 2009. This VET programme offers learners the option of specialising in “classical dance” or “modern dance”. Other VET programmes lead to issuance of a Federal VET Diploma in Glass Painting, 3D Polydesign, Wood Carving and Stone Carving and are intended for young people with artistic talent, enabling them to obtain a federal recognised qualification authorising them to carry out these occupations.

Particularly talented athletes also benefit from specific support measures. Based on Art. 18 para. 1 of the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, athletes can apply to the authorities in their canton to extend the duration of their VET programme in order to better coordinate their vocational and athletic training. In addition to extending the duration of VET programmes, athletes can also schedule their work schedules and holiday time around their athletic training and competition schedules. VET schools with specific courses for athletes carry the Swiss Olympic quality label. Examples include the commercial school in Liestal (BL), which offers VET programmes in athletics (both basic and advanced). Athletes receive intensive guidance and individual lessons. The weekly schedule is designed in such a way as to ensure that classroom instruction and work-based training do not conflict with their athletic training. Another form of support can be found at the VET school in Emmental in Langnau i. E. (BE), which has hired a talent development coordinator. This person helps young people to schedule their activities on the basis of individual objectives. The talent development coordinator maintains regular contact with the learners, host companies and coaches.

The Swiss VET/PET system is highly permeable. Learners can pursue higher levels of training and can change occupation/profession over the course of their working life with relative ease.



“VET AS THE ROAD TO SUCCESS.”

Interview with Franck Le Vallois, Head of Training and Development, Bobst Group SA, Lausanne



Mr Le Vallois, can people pursue a career through VET?

Franck Le Vallois: The Swiss VET/PET system is based on the premise that all qualifications should lead to higher qualifications. Thanks to the permeability of the system, we at Bobst have repeatedly had apprentices who do not stop moving upward through the education system – some who even ended up with a degree from the EPF in Lausanne. I can therefore state without hesitation that the answer is yes: people can pursue a career through VET, whether it be career development within a company or pursuit of education and training at a higher level. VET/PET and academic pathways are complementary.

What sets VET graduates apart?

The lack of general education, which at first glance may be considered a flaw, is more than compensated by the learner's practical intelligence, quality know-how and understanding of economic and business aspects. Upon completion of a four-year VET programme, VET graduates have gold in their pockets. They have acquired the knowledge and skills of a recognised occupation that holds a certain value on the labour market. In a challenging and complex world, this is an undisputed trump card. VET graduates have learnt that things do not always come easy in life and that life within a company is based on trust; with clearly defined rights and obligations. VET graduates have learnt that people have to help each other within

a company. As they move up the ladder, VET graduates find new opportunities to increase their knowledge, education level and know-how. The company should assist learners in this process.

In your opinion, how important are VET programmes from an economic and business perspective?

From a Human Resources standpoint, the training of new qualified workers is an important concern. For companies, active involvement in the training of learners offers considerable potential if know-how and values can be imparted. Training learners is not a cost factor for the company but rather as a medium to long-term investment. This can be seen, for example, by the fact that learners in the third, and mainly in the fourth year of their apprenticeships produce nearly the same level of output as a fully trained employee.

What role does VET play in international competition?

Young people who begin working in a company upon completion of lower-secondary school, quickly become familiar with the rules and risks of competition. They immediately understand what the expression “customer is always right” means, and understand why it is important to meet deadlines, keep costs low, ensure the right level of quality, etc.

“Thanks to continuous relays from graduation to enrolment, we at Bobst have repeatedly had apprentices who do not stop moving upward through the education system – some who even ended up with a degree from the EPF in Lausanne.”

4 INNOVATIONS AND PROJECTS

4.1 FEDERAL FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROJECTS

According to the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, the Confederation contributes funding for projects intended to develop VET/PET programmes and improve quality (Art. 54) as well as for specific activities that serve the public interest (Art. 55). In 2011, the Confederation contributed a total of CHF 47.9 million to the VET and PET sectors.

Projects funded by the Confederation under Art. 54 help to further the development and expansion of VET/PET structures in preparation for the future. This includes funding for pilot projects, studies and evaluations. It also includes start-up funding (e.g. creation of support structures for new occupations).

Art. 55 of PETA provides for targeted funding of specific activities which serve the public interest but which could not be carried out without public funding. Activities include measures to promote gender equality, offer education and training to people with disabilities, measures taken in favour of disadvantaged regions and groups of people as well as measures to ensure adequate or greater availability of apprenticeship places.

In 2011, the Confederation allocated a total of CHF 47.9 million in support of VET and PET. Funding contributions under Art. 54 and 55 of PETA was used to develop the VET/PET system through projects that the Confederation was itself involved in (Art. 4.2) as well as funding contributions for examinations leading to issuance of the Federal PET Diploma or Advanced Federal PET Diploma as well as PET college degree programmes (Art. 56).

CURRENT EXAMPLE OF PROJECT FUNDING

Viadukt

For the Viadukt project, twenty-five young people between the ages of 16 and 25 were offered an apprenticeship at a regular restaurant in downtown Zurich. These young people were slow learners (academic, language) and had difficulties integrating in society (migration, family problems, juvenile delinquency). At first glance, these were young people who were not (yet) ready for the demands of the labour market and therefore needed a carefully supervised environment in which social workers, teachers and restaurant staff could help them.

Additional information: www.restaurant-viadukt.ch*

Overcoming difficulties faced by people with disabilities

The creation of an information platform that offers advice on concrete measures that can be taken in the VET Sector to compensate for difficulties faced by people with disabilities. This information on legislation is intended for people with disabilities, education institutions, VET/PET offices, professional organisations, examiners and (potential) host companies.

Additional information: www.szb.ch, www.bsfb.ch*

Intercantonal apprenticeship day

As part of the intercantonal apprenticeship day, the topic of VET programmes and apprenticeships will be covered intensively in radio broadcasts (media reports, interviews, calls upon companies to create apprenticeship places, etc.). This coordinated approach (i.e. jointly produced content and media work) between cantons and radio stations has proven its merits, generating a strong media response.

Additional information: www.lehrstellentag.ch**

KV Business English plus – apprenticeships on the international stage

The host company network bildxzug has launched the KV Business English plus – apprenticeship on the international stage with two objectives in mind: first, to encourage international companies that use English as their working language to invest in Swiss VET programmes over the long term; second, to offer motivated and academically skilled young people the chance to acquire additional skills in business English as part of their VET programme in commerce. Learners attend specific language courses to improve their language skills and use German and English as working languages at the host company. At present, there are around twenty international companies taking part in apprenticeship training through this programme

Additional information:
www.bildxzug.ch/kv-business-english-plus-bildxzug

* Information available in German only.

** Information available in German, French and Italian only.

Following enactment of the new Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act in 2004, all professions falling into the ISCED 5B category are now subject to the same rules. This also includes artistic professions (e.g. theatre painter, Federal VET Diploma).



5 COOPERATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL OFFICES

OPET works with other federal offices and institutions to encourage young people to become integrated in working life. Both bilateral and multilateral contacts have been institutionalised. In 2011, efforts were centred primarily on optimising interinstitutional cooperation (see chapter 3.1).

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

OPET works closely with SECO's Labour Directorate, which is responsible for unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is intended to enable jobseekers to quickly return to the labour market for the long term. The most important measures for young people include motivation semesters, traineeships, company simulations, coaching and apprenticeship placement. For young people, the principle of "education takes precedence over work" applies; the priority for young people must be to obtain an upper-secondary qualification (whether it be academic or vocational). The Interinstitutional Cooperation Committee (IIZ Fachstelle) is administratively tied to SECO. The IIZ Fachstelle was created in early 2011 and includes members from the FSIO, SECO (chairmanship: 2011 & 2012) and OPET (see chapter 3.1).

Federal Office for Migration (FOM)

The FOM coordinates measures to integrate foreigners in Switzerland by virtue of Art. 57 of the Foreign Nationals Act. This role will be reinforced following enactment of the revision of this act, which the Federal Council submitted for consultation on 23 November 2011. Among the various changes, the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act will also be revised to explicitly mention "equal opportunities and integration of foreigners" among its various objectives (see chapter 3.3).

Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO)

In 2010, the Federal Council adopted its strategy on preventing and fighting poverty, which includes special measures to help young people. Cross-cutting processes will be established for individuals who face complex challenges that cannot be addressed by any single institution (state pension, invalidity, unemployment, welfare, etc.). The Federal Council has also adopted a programme to tackle the issue of "youth and violence" and protect young people from the effects of the media. This programme includes preventive measures to help disadvantaged youths become integrated through VET. OPET is part of support groups to implement this programme and the poverty strategy.

The VET sector is both flexible and geared to the needs of the labour market. It can be adapted in response to structural changes and technological developments (e.g. solar energy).

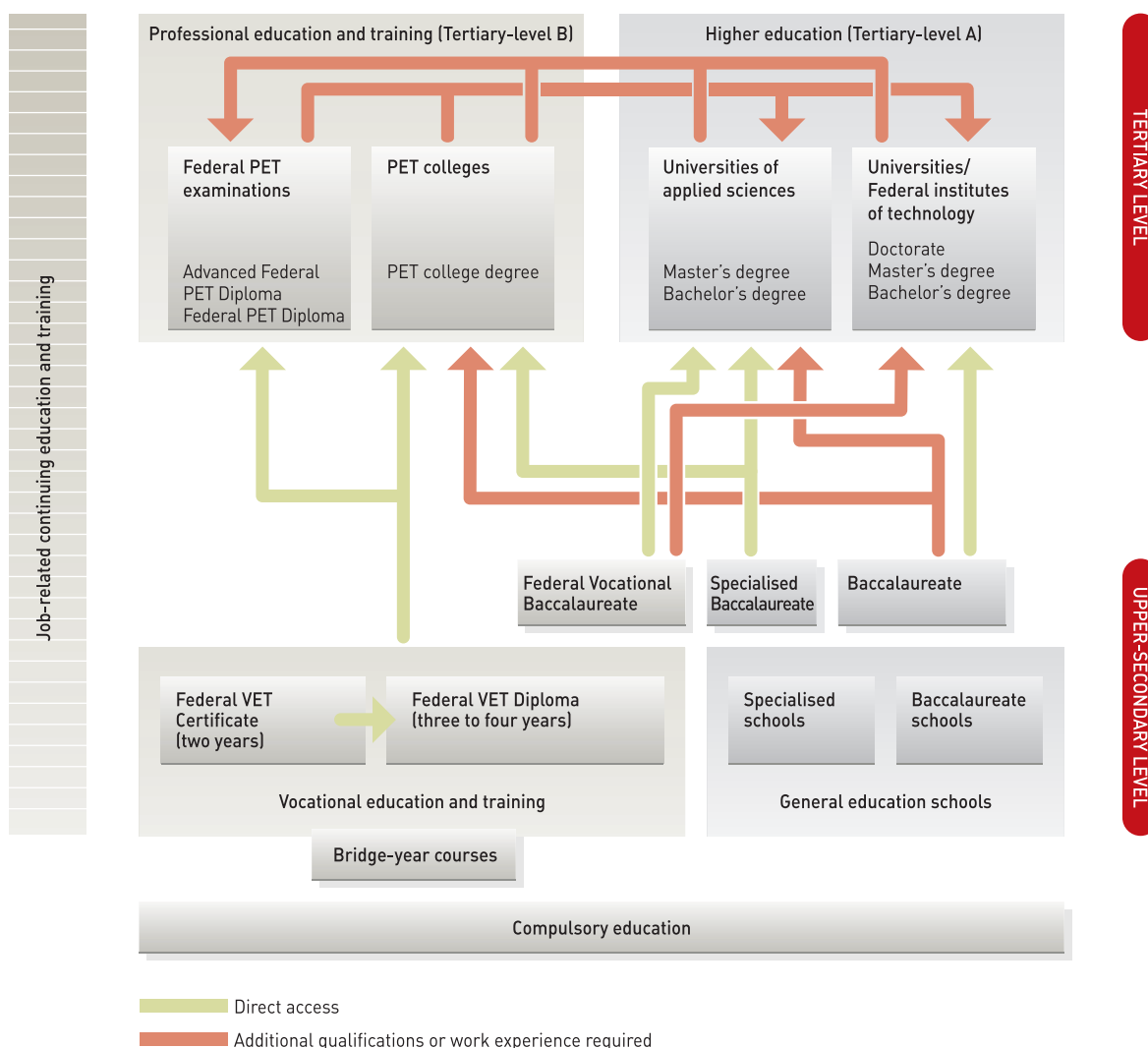


APPENDIX

I. VET/PET FACTS AND FIGURES

Swiss education system

The VET and PET sectors form an important part of the Swiss education system at post-compulsory level. Based on clearly defined education and training options and national qualification procedures, the VET and PET sectors are highly permeable. VET and PET programmes cover a broad spectrum of training options, take different aptitudes into account and are designed to meet the needs of different age groups.



VET sector

Three-year or four-year VET programmes lead to issuance of the Federal VET Diploma, which serves as the entry-level qualification to carry out a given occupation. Two-year VET programmes lead to issuance of the Federal VET Certificate, which provides more practically minded learners with a recognised VET qualification based on a unique occupational profile.

PET sector

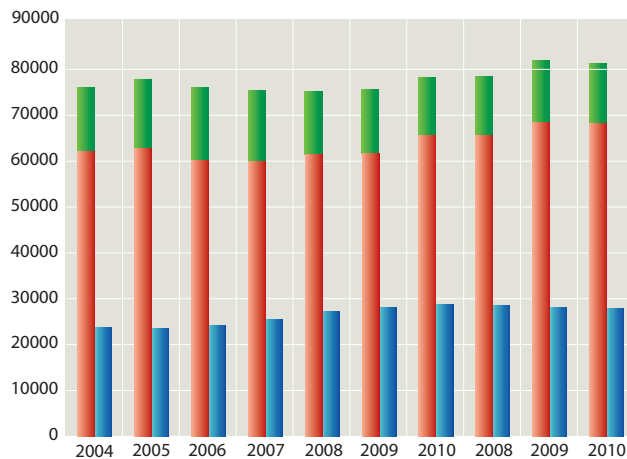
The Swiss tertiary-level education is divided into the higher education sector (i.e. ISCED 5A, comprised of cantonal

universities, federal institutes of technology, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education) and the professional education and training sector (i.e. ISCED 5B). The PET sector is highly correlated with the practical realities of specific professions and provides a greater level of qualification than the VET sector. Like VET programmes, PET programmes serve the needs of the labour market. The PET sector can be broken down into PET colleges, which offer programmes leading to issuance of a PET college degree and externally guided or self-guided preparation for federal PET examinations (i.e. for the Federal PET Diploma or the Advanced Federal PET Diploma).

Entering the labour market

Around two-thirds of young people coming out of compulsory education – i.e. between 70,000 and 80,000 young people a year – decide to enrol in VET. This makes VET the largest sector of upper-secondary education in Switzerland. While dual-track VET is the predominant form of VET, entirely school-based VET programmes are also offered on a part-time or full-time basis. This latter form of VET is mainly found in the French- and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland.

Learners in 1st year of upper-secondary level²⁹



VET, of which

- Dual-track VET
- Entirely school-based VET (incl. commercial and IT schools)
- General education

Upper-secondary qualifications³⁰

Around 90% of all young people in Switzerland hold upper-secondary level qualifications. VET qualifications account for 75% of these qualifications.



²⁹ Pupils and students in 2009/10, FSO, 2011.

³⁰ Upper-secondary and tertiary-level qualifications in 2010, FSO, 2011.

³¹ Upper-secondary and tertiary-level qualifications in 2010, FSO, 2011.

Tertiary-level qualifications³¹

The PET sector makes a substantial contribution to training qualified technical and managerial staff at tertiary level. In 2010, around 28,000 qualifications were issued in the PET sector, compared to around 37,600 qualifications (excl. PhD) in the higher education sector (i.e. cantonal universities, federal institutes of technology and universities of applied sciences).



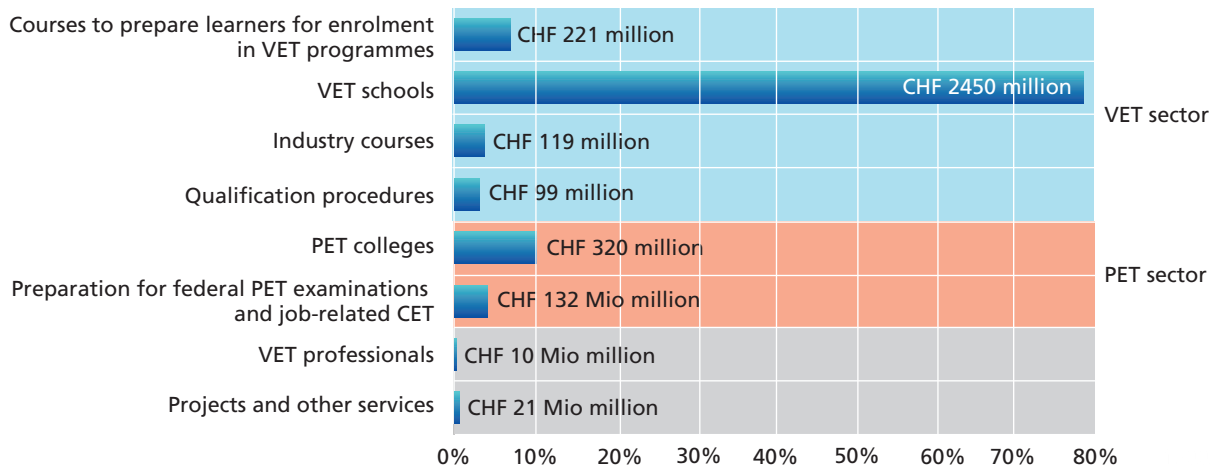
One mission, three partners

The Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations work together to ensure high-quality VET and PET programmes as well as an adequate number of apprenticeship places and CET courses. Specifically, the Confederation is responsible for strategic management and development of the VET/PET system as a whole. The cantons are responsible for implementing and supervising VET programmes. This is normally done through the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) or EDK's specialised conference, the Swiss Conference of VET/PET Offices (SBBK). Professional organisations (trade associations, companies, social partners, other organisations and VET/PET providers) establish training content and offer apprenticeship positions.



VET qualifications make it easier for young people to find employment and are the basis for lifelong learning. The VET sector is one reason why Switzerland has one of the lowest youth unemployment rates in Europe.

Public expenditure for VET and PET sectors³²

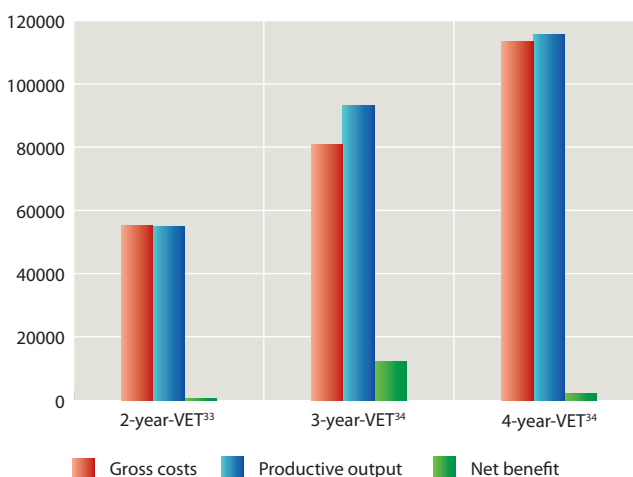


The Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations contribute funding to cover the costs of the VET and PET sectors. The costs of the PET sector are generally paid by the companies and individuals. The cantons pay three-fourths of the total costs for the VET and PET sectors. The cantons are also responsible for implementation of VET and PET. With enactment of the new Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, the Confederation is required to pay one-fourth of the costs.

Total public costs for the VET and PET sectors stood at around CHF 3.44 billion in 2010. Over 70% of this expenditure went to VET schools as the main generators of costs, followed by PET colleges (10%) and courses to prepare learners for enrolment in VET programmes (7%).

Cost-benefit ratio of VET programmes by duration of apprenticeship

Scientific findings on the costs and benefits for host companies that offer apprenticeships within the framework of VET programmes indicate that for two-year, three-year and four-year VET programmes host companies derive a positive net benefit. This means that the productive output of learners during their apprenticeships is generally higher on average than the costs incurred by host companies to train learners.



³² Full costs of VET incurred by the cantons in 2010, OPET, 2011.

³³ Kosten und Nutzen von zweijährigen beruflichen Grundbildungen aus der Sicht der Betriebe – Final Report, SFIVET, June 2010 (survey year 2009).

³⁴ Lehrlingsausbildung ökonomisch betrachtet – results of the 2nd cost/benefit study, S. Mühlemann et al. Contributions to economics of education, Vol. 3, Rüegger publishing: Zurich, 2007 (survey year 2004).

II. USEFUL INFORMATION

Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET)

Legal basis, implementing provisions and background information on PET sector.
www.opet.admin.ch

Federal Statistical Office (FSO)

Statistics and education indicators on VET and PET sectors.
www.education-stat.admin.ch

Directory of occupations

List of all federally recognised occupations: Legal bases and addresses.
www.bbt.admin.ch/bvz*

OPET documentation

Collection of OPET publications on VET and PET.
www.bbt.admin.ch/doku-bb*

Portal for occupational, educational and career guidance

Among other things, this website provides complete information regarding VET and PET courses.
www.berufsberatung.ch*

Vetplus.ch

This website provides information about the many different VET and PET options in Switzerland.
Links to additional offers.
www.vetplus.ch

Berufsbildung.ch

This website provides information about the Swiss VET/PET system, working instruments used in the VET sector (incl. VET/PET Lexicon of terminology in German, French and Italian as well as the addresses of authorities and organisations).
www.berufsbildung.ch*

Panorama

This is an electronic newsletter and trade journal for the VET and PET sectors.
www.panorama.ch*

Swiss education server

www.educa.ch

Document server for education

www.edudoc.ch

VET/PET Lexicon

www.lex.berufsbildung.ch*

* Information available in German, French and Italian only.

Contact

Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET

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