

## Czech Republic – developing more flexible VET qualifications to respond to students' needs

All initial VET programmes in the Czech Republic are school-based with elements of work-based learning – these practical training and work placements are an integral part of the curricula. Vocational and technical programmes at upper secondary level last three or four years (EQF Level 3- 4). The three-year vocational programmes at EQF Level 3 (students take a final examination and they are awarded a 'vocational certificate') enable graduates to enter the labour market directly and perform manual occupations (such as bricklayer or hairdresser). Graduates of these programmes can follow a two-year follow-up programme (EQF Level 4) and take a 'maturita' examination. Success in this examination enables their access to higher education.

The four-year technical programmes (learners take the 'maturita' school leaving examination) enable graduates to enter higher education or perform mid-level technical, business, and other jobs (such as civil engineering technician, IT system administrator).

Since the start of the 2012/13 school year, 64 secondary schools have piloted in 28 pairs of related fields of education a new type of four-year programme which enables learners to acquire both the vocational certificate and the 'maturita'. Following the evaluation of this pilot, the corresponding legislation was adopted. The Government Regulation No. 211/2010 Coll., on the system of fields of study in basic, upper secondary and tertiary professional education, established 28 complementary fields of education providing upper-secondary qualifications with vocational certificate and upper-secondary qualifications with the 'maturita' exam, effective from 1 September 2021.

Students take the vocational examination after three years and the 'maturita' examination after the fourth and final year of the programme. The aim is to strengthen the position of graduates on the labour market and prevent young people leaving education without a qualification – any student who does not pass the 'maturita' has a vocational certificate and is fully qualified to enter the labour market.

More information is available from the National Reference Point.

The information was gathered in 2022 for more up to date information, please check the national website.