

Three- and four-year VET programmes for Federal VET Diploma

A three- or four-year VET programme for the Federal VET Diploma provides the learner with a comprehensive range of competences needed for one of over 200 regulated occupations. In Switzerland, around two-thirds of all young people pursue this pathway, also known as a "dual-track" apprenticeship. While they all combine practical training with classroom instruction, each programme places different practical and academic demands on the learner.



WHAT IS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)?

Most Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Switzerland combines practical training (at a company and in branch courses) with theory (at a vocational school). At all three of these learning locations, the aim is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills needed to find employment and participate fully in society. There are also VET programmes where learners attend classes at the vocational school on a full-time basis. Such programmes include short-duration traineeship phases. This model is mostly found in the French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland (see page 34).

Host companies

In a dual-track VET programme, you spend 3 to 4 days per week working at your host company. You develop practical know-how while also improving your social and methodological skills.

Branch courses

Over a period of several days per year, branch courses provide you with fundamental techniques and skills needed for the chosen occupation.

Vocational school

In addition to your practical training, you will spend 1 to 2 days per week attending classes at a vocational school to acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge. The vocational part of the classroom instruction focuses on the technical competences needed for your occupation. The general-knowledge part focuses on two main areas: "Language and Communication" provides you with the verbal and nonverbal skills you need to communicate successfully in a variety of personal, occupational and social situations. "Society" mainly covers political, environmental, legal, social and cultural topics.

Tips and suggestions for parents

Instead of focusing on one specific occupation right from the beginning, look at the whole occupational field first. This way, it will be easier to find the occupations which match your child's school education.

Take sufficient time to analyse carefully, together with your son or daughter, where exactly their skills and interests lie.

Talk to the teacher at an early stage to find out what more your son or daughter can do to be prepared for the demands of their favourite occupations.