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DUAL EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO

Practical training in three-year educational
programmes



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, work-based learning has been a focal point of international – and especially European – discussions on human capital development. Successful school-to-work transition and responding to the skills needs of the labour market are high on the agenda of the European Union (European Commission, 2012). At the Riga Summit in 2015¹, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training (VET) agreed to raise the overall quality and status of VET in order to meet the objectives of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020), and to provide support to a wider European agenda for growth and jobs. Within the Riga process, the candidate countries also have opted for work-based learning as a priority in their reforms (European Commission, 2015).

In the context of its aspirations to join the European Union, Montenegro has made the alignment of vocational education with labour market needs one of the main objectives of its education reform. In the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2015–2020), the introduction of practical training with employers has been defined as one of the prominent measures for boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education (Ministry of Education, 2014). The follow-up Draft Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2020–2024) has given a new impetus to the development of work-based learning, particularly the dual model of three-year secondary VET, by clearly defining the measures and objectives that Montenegro is to implement and attain in this area (Ministry of Education, 2019).

The implementation of the dual model of VET (dual VET) in Montenegro started with the adoption of amendments to the Law on Vocational Education in 2017. In the first year of implementation, the school year 2017/18, a total of 277 students enrolled in the three-year dual VET programmes. Enrolment took place simultaneously in all three grades. In the school year 2018/19, 570 students enrolled in these programmes (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The first two years of dual education received a high degree of interest from employers and vocational schools. Since the adoption of the legal framework, there has been a steady increase both in the number of schools implementing three-year dual VET programmes and in the number of employers participating in dual VET, coupled with an substantial increase in enrolment accounting for 23% of all VET students in academic year 2019/20.

After three years of implementation, the time has come to measure how the system is performing and to ask how it can be improved. Ultimately, such valuable insights provide an enhanced quality of decision making (evidence-based policy making) on VET policy and development. In this context, in August and September 2019, the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, carried out an evaluation of the three-year dual VET programme in the country.

¹ The Riga Conclusions, which set out five VET medium-term deliverables, were agreed upon by the ministers responsible for vocational skill development from all EU Member States, EU candidate countries and European Economic Area countries, along with European social partners and the European Commission when they met in Riga on 20 June 2015. These five deliverables formed the basis of the agenda for modernising VET over the 2015–20 period. For more on these deliverables, see:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7915&furtherPubs=yes>

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess the capacities and capabilities of all the stakeholders who are involved in planning, developing and implementing three-year dual VET. It was carried out by means of online questionnaires and focus group discussions. A specific set of indicators was established for each group of stakeholders on which their capacities for participation in dual VET were assessed.

The conclusions of the evaluation are listed below.

The context for dual vocational education

- The economic context (employment and GDP growth) is suitable for the development of dual VET, but the demographic conditions (decreasing birth rate) are a risk factor for the entire education and training system and the labour market.
- Social partners (business associations and trade unions) play a relatively active role in planning and developing dual VET by participating in the bodies responsible for vocational education policy and development. However, they still do not demonstrate a willingness to take over concrete responsibilities in realisation of three-year dual programmes (selection of employers, licencing of in-company trainers, among others).
- At the initial stage of implementation of dual education in Montenegro, schools were involved in dual VET implementation on the initiative of the Ministry of Education. In the second and third years, as more employers and students entered the programme, schools became increasingly involved in dual VET implementation.
- In the implementation of dual VET, the most important partners for schools are employers. For employers, the most important partners are the Ministry of Education and the Chamber of Economy, and, to a lesser extent, schools and school principals.
- The stipulated duration of practical training with employers is sufficient to achieve the programme goals and outcomes of most of dual VET programmes.

Enrolment

- The enrolment policy for dual VET is based on the programme characteristics (programmes suitable for dual VET), the schools' capacities to implement them (teachers and other resources), but also on labour market needs and employment opportunities for students upon graduation.
- A major motive for students' enrolment in dual VET programmes is greater opportunities for acquiring vocational competences and finding employment upon graduation.
- A large number of male students, who had lower achievement in primary school, have enrolled in dual VET, outnumbering females three to one.
- The total number of students in dual VET has been steadily increasing, but the number of students transiting from grade two to grade three has reduced. It might be accounted for because of the obligation of employers to pay students remunerations during their practical training in grade three.

Employers

- The primary motive for employers to participate in dual VET is to recruit future employees. Students are not regarded as sources of 'cheap labour'.
- The procedure for selection of employers is relatively simple, but the selection criteria (eligibility checks) are neither sufficiently transparent nor straightforward.

- A major obstacle to the participation of employers in the provision of practical training is the lack of direct financial incentives, primarily tax cuts, as well as the insufficient information being provided to employers about dual VET programmes and their implementation methods.
- Given the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises make up 99% of the total number of enterprises in Montenegro, the biggest challenge for dual education in the country is the possibility (capacity) of employers to provide practical training for a relevant number of students.

Students

- Dual VET students enjoy a high degree of protection of their fundamental rights and receive significant support to learn, work and prepare for the end-of-year exams.
- Based on the competences acquired, students are able to find employment with employers (labour market mobility) other than those who have provided them with practical training.
- The alignment of programmes with the needs of employers (coherence between what students learn at school and their work-based learning at an employer) is significant, but the synchronisation of planned learning outcomes is insufficiently coordinated and harmonised (it is highly dependent on the organisation of work and technological processes of employers).
- Learning outcomes within some VET programmes can be quite complex, and students' previous knowledge and skills can have a serious impact on their mastery of the subject.

Teachers and in-company trainers

- Communication and cooperation between practical training teachers or practical training coordinators and in-company trainers is deemed crucial in the direct implementation of dual VET; communication with business associations, trade unions and local communities is perceived as marginal.
- The planning of practical training provided by employers is generally the result of a joint effort by practical training teachers and/or practical training coordinators and in-company trainers. Good planning and implementation are critical factors for student success in dual VET and some employers may be too passive and may not have enough trained in-company trainers to participate fully in that process.
- The role of practical training teachers and coordinators is reduced to their regular visits to students during practical training with employers.
- For a great number of in-company trainers, working with students is an additional obligation and responsibility, an extra duty for which they neither receive additional pay nor they are otherwise motivated.
- Although they receive significant support in their work from practical training teachers and coordinators, especially in planning practical training, in-company trainers have significant difficulties in assessing students' achievements in practical training.

Assessment of students

- The assessment of students' achievements in practical training is not being carried out fully in accordance with the Rulebook on the Method of Assessment and the Procedure for Assessment of Achievement in Practical Training with Employers.

Funding

- A fairly sustainable mechanism for funding student remuneration has been established, involving the government and employers. The government provides for student remuneration in the first two grades and the employer pays remuneration in the third grade. But a considerable number of employers (around 30%) terminate participation in dual VET once they have to pay students (in third grade). Whether it is a coincidence or whether financial difficulties explain this trend remains to be studied in more detail. The survey results tell us that employers deny difficulties in payment of student remuneration.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The establishment of an effective and systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanism in dual VET is in the early stage. Monitoring and evaluation of dual VET is carried out largely by the Ministry of Education. Schools and social partners do not perceive monitoring and evaluation as their function or responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education in Montenegro

In accordance with the Law on Vocational Education, vocational education is implemented as:

- two-year lower vocational education;
- three- or four-year secondary vocational education;
- two-year upper vocational education, as continuation of secondary vocational non-university education.

Two-year upper vocational education belongs to post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational education, and it is entirely regulated by the Law on Vocational Education. The master craftsman exam also belongs to the post-secondary, non-tertiary vocational education.

VET is very popular in Montenegro. Nearly 70% of all secondary school students are enrolled in VET (23% of whom in dual VET in 2019/20). The remaining 30% of the secondary student population attend general secondary schools.

Practical training through work-based learning in Montenegro

There are two types of practical training through work-based learning in Montenegro:

- work-based learning partially delivered by school and partially by employer; and
- work-based learning fully delivered by employer – dual education.

Practical training may also be totally school-based, delivered in school laboratories, studios and workshops, among others.

Work-based learning carried out partially by school and by employer is regulated by a contract on practical training signed between the school principal and the employer. The responsibilities of the employers are defined by the schools.

Dual education in Montenegro

Work-based learning carried out fully by the employer, i.e. company, is so-called ‘dual education’. The student, or their parent/guardian/adopter, signs an individual contract on work-based learning with an employer, which regulates the mutual and respective rights and responsibilities of students and employers during the dual education process, as well as the role of the school. Employers are under no obligation to pay students’ health and pension insurance.

In dual education, first- and second-graders receive a monthly wage from the budget of the Ministry of Education amounting to at least 10% of average net salary in Montenegro (around EUR 51) for first-graders and at least 15% for second-graders (around EUR 76). For third-graders attending dual education, the employer is obliged to pay a monthly wage, which amounts to at least 20% of the average net salary (around EUR 102).

The main difference between school-based practical training and dual education is that the employer is in charge of training students in dual education and the assessment of students’ achievements is conducted at the end of the school year. The check is conducted by the employer and the school.

In the school-based form, regardless of the time spent at an employer, the assessment is conducted only by the school.

Dual education is delivered only for TVET students in three-year curricula. The number of days dedicated to practical training in three-year curricula is growing from grade to grade, starting with one in first grade, two in second grade and three in third grade. On the contrary, TVET students in four-year curricula have one day devoted for practical training in each grade, making it difficult for the organisation of dual education in these curricula.

In dual education, the employer is responsible for the organisation, content and quality of practical training.

KEY INSTITUTIONS FOR DUAL EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO

The Ministry of Education and the Centre for Vocational Education and Training are two institutions in charge of implementing dual education in Montenegro.

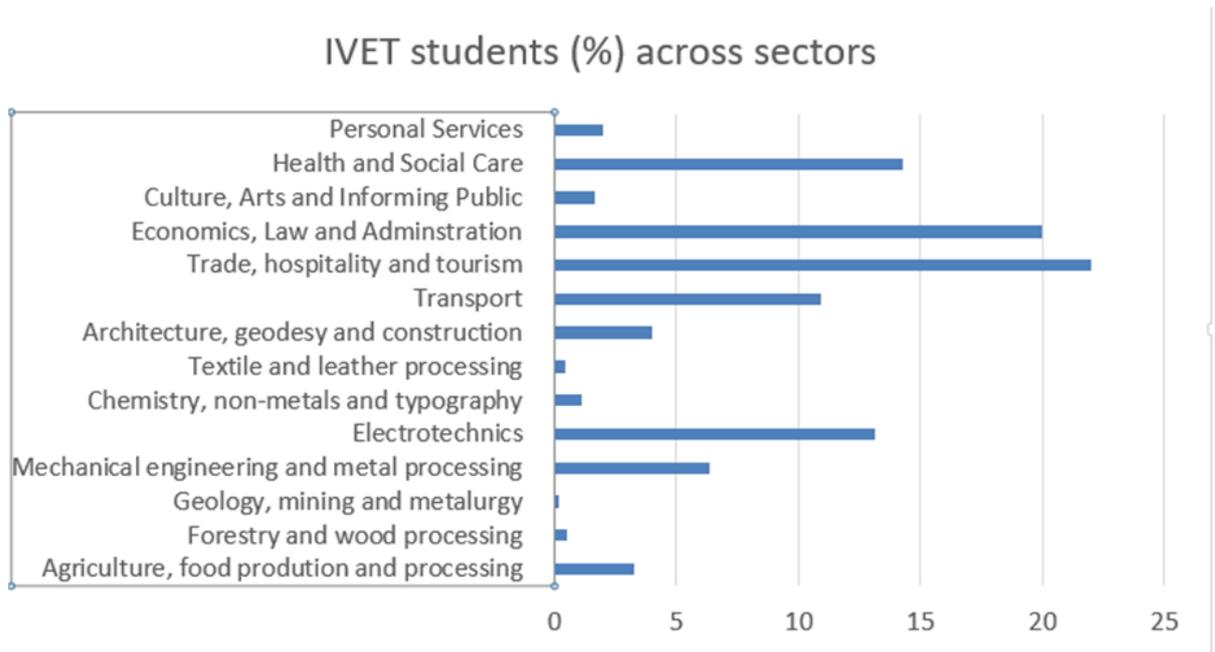
- The **Ministry of Education** creates the legal framework and provides funds for the salaries of first- and second-grade students in dual education. The salaries of third-grade students are the duty of the employer.
- The **Centre for Vocational Education and Training** provides full technical and professional support to schools in the implementation of dual education. The Centre also defines the criteria an employer needs to meet in order to be licensed to participate in dual education. In addition, the Centre licences the employers carrying out work-based learning and monitors their implementation of work-based learning.

The **schools** help in designing the plan of practical training to companies i.e. in-company trainers. They also nominate a team for monitoring students in dual education.

- The **practical training teacher and coordinator** are teachers employed at vocational schools who are tasked with communicating with and helping employers and in-company trainers with the realisation of practical training. They also identify whether it is possible to deliver all the outcomes envisaged by the curriculum in the company. If it is not possible to deliver some of the outcomes, the school organises training in the respective area at another company or in a school workshop.
- The **Coordination Body for Dual VET Monitoring** continuously monitors the activities taking place in schools and with employers regarding dual education. The collected data are analysed, and recommendations are made to schools to provide appropriate support to employers and instructors.

The Rulebook on the Method of Assessment and the Procedure for Assessment of Achievement in Practical Training with Employers (Ministry of Education, 2009), published on 3 July 2009, stipulates how to assess student achievement in dual education.

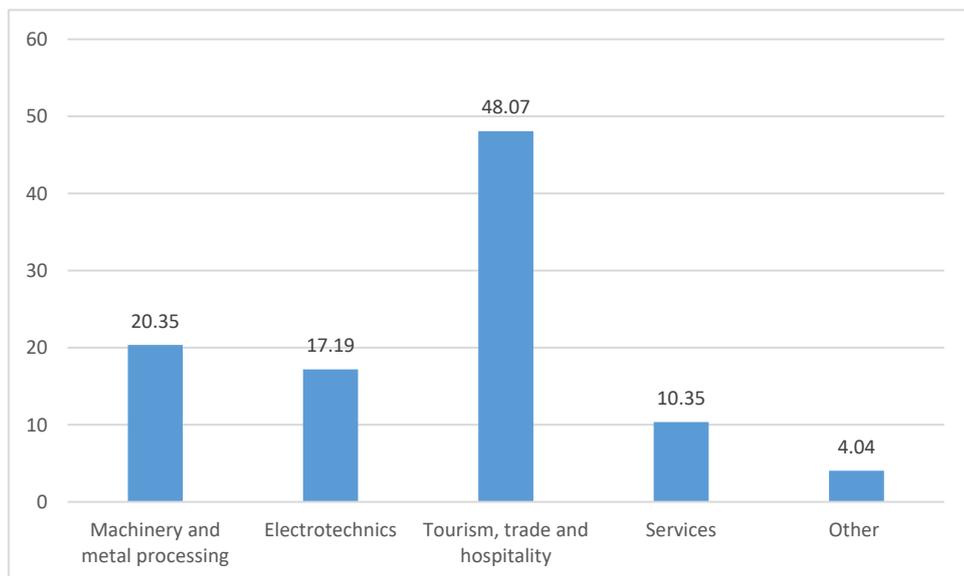
FIGURE 1. IVET STUDENTS ACROSS SECTORS, 2018/19 (%)



Source: Ministry of Education (2018).

The Montenegrin economy is heavily based on services (more than 70%), with tourism and trade being the main drivers of the economy. The allocation of students in dual education across sectors clearly represents the situation within the labour market.

FIGURE 2. STUDENTS IN DUAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACROSS SECTORS, 2018/19 (%)



Source: Ministry of Education (2018).

The implementation of dual education continues in the 2019/20 school year and around 800 students from all municipalities in Montenegro will be able to acquire practical knowledge with 280 employers, through 20 programmes.

- Dual VET – in particular, practical training with employers – is identified as the basic mechanism for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of VET.
- Improving dual VET is a strategic priority of the government in the upcoming development period (2020–24), with a special emphasis on greater involvement of business associations in practical training.
- Dual VET is implemented in the three-year secondary vocational education system, offering 20 programmes in 26 schools, evenly covering the country's territory.
- Aiming to provide for the successful implementation of dual VET, the appropriate legal framework has been established, in which the rights and duties of key stakeholders are fairly clearly defined.

Education reform in Montenegro

Aligning vocational education with labour market needs is one of the main objectives of education reform in Montenegro. In the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2015–2020), practical training has been defined as one of the measures for boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education. The Strategy has set the foundations for the development of a verification system of employers providing practical training, the establishment of an employer database, the development of financial incentive models for employers, the development of guidelines for improving the quality of student assessment, including in practical training, and an increased number of employers participating in practical training (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Amendments to the Law on Vocational Education in 2017 have made it possible to pursue vocational education by combining learning at school and practical training with employers. In the school year 2017/18, the first generation of students enrolled in three-year dual VET programmes.

When monitoring Montenegro's progress in education reform, the European Commission confirmed progress had been made in VET, noting an improved match with labour market needs through the implementation of the new dual VET programmes and introduction of practical training with employers. With this in mind, the European Commission particularly encouraged Montenegro to introduce a quality assurance system and monitoring mechanisms in vocational education (European Commission, 2018).

To ensure continuity in the reform and further development of dual VET, in the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro for 2020–2024 (Ministry of Education, 2019), the government has proposed the following measures:

- creating a better environment to increase the participation of business associations in establishing the requirements for employers to take part in practical training;
- establishing clear procedures for licensing employers capable of providing practical training to students;
- providing ongoing training for in-company trainers;
- providing incentives for employers that recruit students upon graduation;
- providing incentives for students (reimbursement of transportation, work equipment, insurance, food and other costs); and
- establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of practical training with employers as the basic elements of the practical training quality assurance.

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Economic context

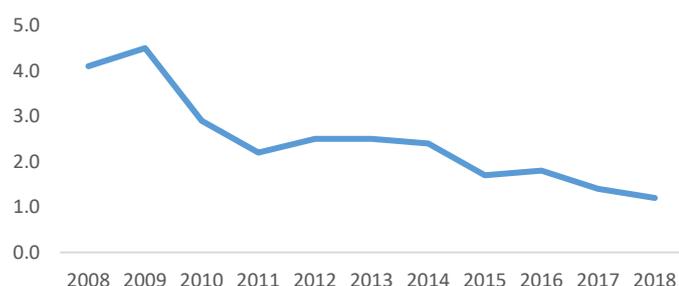
Montenegro is the smallest economy in the Western Balkans and is among the smallest economies in Europe – its economy significantly lagging behind EU countries. In 2018, GDP per capita according to the purchasing power standard was 47.5% of the EU 28 average (Eurostat). After the double-dip recession, in 2007 and 2012, net average salaries declined significantly, and have not yet recovered to the level before the recession. In 2008, the average monthly net salary was EUR 564 (Monstat, 2008), and in 2019 it was EUR 516 (Monstat, 2019a). At the same time, Montenegro is a heavily indebted country. Total public debt amounted to EUR 3,269 million or 70% of GDP at the end of 2018, and total government debt was EUR 3,153 million, or 68% of GDP (Ministry of Finance, 2019).

Even with a significant economic lag behind the European Union, Montenegro is a growing economy. At 5.1% real GDP growth rate in 2018 (Eurostat), it ranked third among 38 countries (EU 28 and candidate countries), just after Ireland (8.2%) and Malta (6.8%). The largest contribution to the country's economic growth, according to the gross added value, is made by the sectors of wholesale and retail trade (13%) and accommodation and catering services (7.6%) (Monstat, 2019b). In order to ensure continuity in economic growth, the government has set the development of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized businesses, especially in the sectors of agriculture and food processing industry, as its strategic goal for the upcoming period (Ministry of Finance, 2018).

1.2 Demographic indicators

In 2019, the number of inhabitants in Montenegro was 622,182 (estimated), with the share of those over 65 years of age being 15%, and the share of young people between 15 and 19 years of age only 6% (40,324) (Monstat, 2019c). The rate of natural increase is declining, and in 2018 it was only 1.2%.

FIGURE 1.1 RATE OF NATURAL INCREASE, 2008–18



Source: Monstat (2018). Population estimates and demographic indicators.

Domestic migration generally occurs from the north to the south and to the capital Podgorica. In 2018, life expectancy at birth was 77 years (Monstat, 2019d).

Taking into account the low birth rate and changes in the population age structure, the government predicted a decrease in the number of inhabitants in the upcoming period, which will affect certain social systems, primarily education, labour market, households and families (Ministry of Finance, 2018).

1.3 Labour market

In 2019, the working-age population (ages 15–64) in Montenegro stood at 416,557, or 66.9% of the total population (Ministry of Finance, 2018). In the first quarter of 2019, the number of employed persons in the country was 235,100, or 56.4% of the total working-age population. Almost 45% of the employed persons are those who completed secondary vocational education.

TABLE 1.1 EMPLOYED PERSONS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 2019 (%)

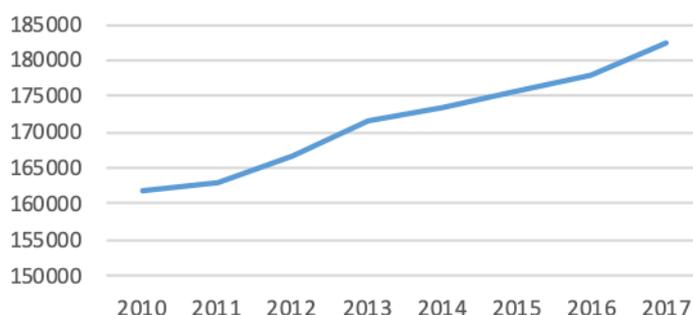
Total	100.0
No education or incomplete elementary education	1.2
Elementary education	7.1
Vocational education after elementary education	12.8
General secondary education	4.3
Vocational secondary education	44.4
Higher and higher vocational education – of which:	30.2
▪ Higher vocational education	3.9
▪ Faculty, academy or college, PhDs and MScs	26.3

Source: Monstat (2019e). Labour Force Survey, 1st quarter 2019.

The largest part of the population works in the service sector (72.3%), most of whom work in the wholesale and retail sector (19.5%) (Monstat, 2019e).

According to the labour force survey, between 2010 and 2017 a steady employment increase was registered.

FIGURE 1.2 NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS, 2010–17



Source: Monstat. Number of employed persons 2010–17. Last accessed 10 June 2020 at: www.monstat.org/cg/page.php?id=23&pageid=23

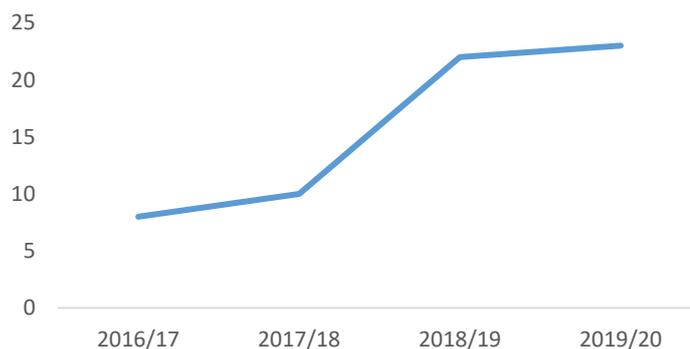
In the first quarter of 2019, the overall unemployment rate was 13.6%, a significant decrease compared to the first quarter of 2017, when the unemployment rate was 17.7% (Monstat, 2019f). The lowest unemployment rates are among those who completed higher education and those who completed secondary vocational education.

In 2019, the overall activity rate of young people (ages 15–24) stood at 9.9%, the employment rate at 8.3%, the unemployment rate at 18.8%, and the inactivity rate at 26.2% (Monstat, 2019g).

1.4 Three-year vocational education and training

In the school year 2019/20, there were 27,302 students enrolled in secondary education in Montenegro, of whom 18,840 (69%) in secondary vocational education (Ministry of Education, 2019). The interest in three-year vocational education programmes has been increasing over the past few years.

FIGURE 1.3 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THREE-YEAR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, 2016/17–2019/20 (%)



Source: Ministry of Education (2019), Draft Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education in Montenegro (2020–2024).

Vocational education in Montenegro offers a three-year modality and a four-year modality². While the four-year modality is implemented exclusively at schools, the three-year modality is provided by schools (school model), or by a parallel ‘dual track’, under which schools and employers collaborate in the training delivery (work-based learning/dual model). Both tracks are based on the same curricula. The difference between the two is that in the school-based model, both the theoretical and practical components are realised by schools (even though a share of practical training can be realised in a company in the form of an internship), whereas in the dual model, all practical training is realised at companies.

The Centre for Vocational Education assesses whether employers comply with the requirements for the provision of practical training to students. The examination of students in practical training is carried out by employers and schools at the end of each school year. The assessment board is made up of an in-company trainer and two schoolteachers (a practical training teacher and one teacher from the same sector). The exam is taken at the employer’s premises.

Responsibility for practical training rests in the hands of an in-company trainer employed in the company. During the implementation of practical training with employers, the students are entitled to student remunerations.

The majority of students in dual VET are enrolled in programmes for professions in tourism, trade and catering, mechanical engineering and metalworking, electrical engineering and services (Ministry of Education, 2018). None of the dual VET programmes are in those sectors currently experiencing

² In three-year VET, students spend 40% of their time in practical training, whereas in four-year VET practical training amounts to 20% of the total number of hours. Four-year VET students can go to universities whereas three-year students go into the labour market upon graduation.

a significant labour shortage, such as construction (wood floor, tile, and drywall installers, painters) or healthcare professions.

The implementation of dual VET programmes is monitored by the Coordination Body for Dual VET Monitoring, comprising representatives of the Chamber of Economy, the Employers' Federation, the Centre for Vocational Education and the Ministry of Education.

Out of 34 schools (24 vocational and 10 mixed) that implement three-year dual VET programmes, 26 secondary vocational schools and 200 employers have been involved in dual VET between 2016 and 2019. The National Council for Education has accredited the training programme for in-company trainers, which has already been delivered to 88 in-company trainers (Ministry of Education, 2019).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation objectives

The general objectives of the evaluation of the three-year dual VET in Montenegro were to:

- assess the capacities and capabilities of all stakeholders to participate in governance, planning and implementation of dual VET programmes;
- identify the main obstacles to the implementation of dual VET programmes; and
- create a possible scenario (set of recommendations) for further development of the dual VET system.

2.2 Methodological approach

The evaluation was carried out during August and September 2019, by means of online questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews with all stakeholders involved in the implementation of dual VET programmes.

To achieve the set objectives, the methodology employed a combined qualitative and quantitative approach in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

- Desk research – collecting and analysing data on the dual model of education from relevant international and national documents and statistical publications.
- Questionnaires – based on a comprehensive analysis of the model of dual VET in Europe, and especially in Montenegro, a number of quality indicators were identified, and five questionnaires developed for different groups of respondents.
- Focus groups – discussions and analysis with the representatives of stakeholders in dual model of education and training in Montenegro. The authors of this report moderated the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions provided for the collection of data from a wider range of stakeholders as well as obtaining more detailed explanations of the data received through the questionnaires. These discussions also helped to formulate new hypotheses about the state of play and opportunities for development of the dual model of education and training in Montenegro. The following focus groups were formed:
 - school principals and practical training coordinators;
 - practical training teachers;
 - employers and in-company trainers.

Interviews were also conducted with the Ministry of Education, the Centre for Vocational Education, the Chamber of Economy and trade unions.

2.3 Evaluation instruments

Questionnaires were designed for the following target groups:

- school principals and practical training coordinators in (vocational) schools (37 questions);
- practical training teachers in (vocational) schools (25 questions);
- employers (31 questions);

- in-company trainers (32 questions), and
- students (25 questions)³.

The questionnaires contained two types of questions: (1) multiple choice questions, where the respondent chooses one or more possible answers; and (2) questions in which the respondent expresses the degree of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement, on a five-point scale ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree').

The responses were scored and a total score was obtained for each statement, which expressed the general attitude of the respondents to the particular question or issue. Thus, two statistical measures were obtained:

- the percentage of respondents opting for a particular statement; and
- the score on a scale that expresses the intensity of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement (minimum value 1, maximum value 5).

All questionnaires were posted online, and all possible respondents were informed of how to access the questionnaire and the deadlines for completing the questionnaire.

2.4 Respondents

The questionnaires were completed by 25 school principals and practical training coordinators, 58 practical training teachers, 19 employers, 20 in-company trainers, and 92 students.

Although online questionnaires may not be so common for some dual VET stakeholders, the obtained data showed that the sample included respondents representing:

- schools and respondents from different regions of Montenegro;
- implemented programmes related to different sectors;
- both small and large businesses;
- students from the second and third grades.

Detailed characteristics of the sample are provided in Annex 2. It should be noted that the sample was not based on probability theory and cannot be used for drawing conclusions related to the entire population. Given that the number of respondents in each group was very small, one should be cautious when interpreting the data.

³ In order to improve their validity and objectivity, all questionnaires were cross-checked by the ETF, the ILO and the Ministry of Education.

3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

3.1 The place of the dual model of education in the education system

3.1.1 Contract with employer

The implementation of dual VET is based on an individual ‘contract of education’ concluded between the student, i.e. his or her parent or guardian, and the employer. The students enrolling in dual VET are 15-year-olds, and they have graduated from primary school lasting nine years⁴. The contract regulates the mutual rights and obligations of the student and employer, and details like the beginning and duration of the student’s education, the amount of practical training and knowledge that the employer must provide to the student, the schedule of practical training during the school year, the rights and duties of the student, the duties of the employer, the student’s monthly remuneration during practical training, among others.

FIGURE 3.1 REGULATING THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN DUAL VET BY CONTRACT



Note: Respondents’ degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

According to the school principals and practical training coordinators, the rights and obligations of all stakeholders in the implementation of dual VET are clearly defined in the individual contract, and the possibility of any misunderstanding is minimal.

The first important steps in the organisation of dual education are the enrolment of students, the selection of employers and the signature of the contract between a student and an employer. Much of the responsibility to identify potential employers and involve them in practical training falls on the shoulders of vocational schools and their respective principals. However, vocational schools often lack the capacity to select employers who will deliver practical training, which has led to the conclusion that the Chamber of Economy and employers’ associations should be engaged more actively in the selection of employers.

As early as February, vocational schools make contacts with potential employers. They provide information on the organisation of dual education, employers’ obligations and responsibilities in the process (for employers who are in their first year of providing practical training). They also motivate employers to participate in dual education and, together with the employer, determine the number of students who will be trained by the employer.

⁴ See the Montenegrin education system in Annex 1.

The Ministry of Education publishes the announcement for the enrolment of students in secondary schools in May, while the students apply for enrolment in the third week of June. The enrolment announcements specifically indicate the programmes implemented through the dual model of education.

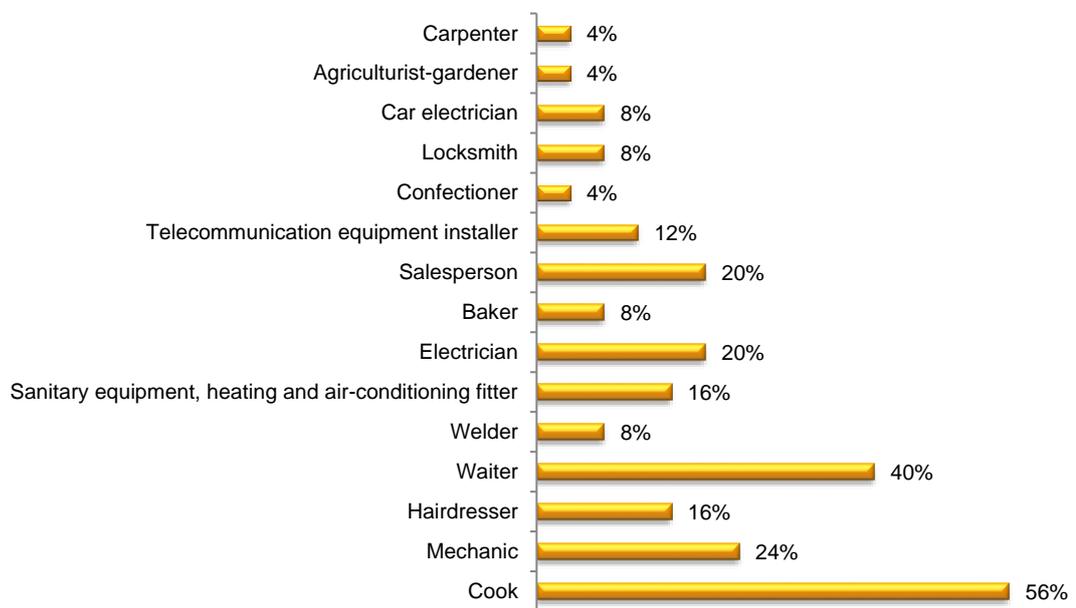
In the enrolment announcement, the Ministry of Education establishes the type of programmes that can be implemented through the dual model of education. Following the enrolment of students, the school directs them to the employers who have signed up for the dual model of education and with whom the students then sign individual contracts on education.

3.1.2 Selection of schools and programmes

The following three-year dual VET programmes are being implemented currently: agriculturist/gardener, baker, car electrician, carpenter, confectioner, cook, dairy worker, electrician, hairdresser, horticulturalist/florist, locksmith, mechanic, metalworker, precious metal worker, sanitary equipment, heating and air-conditioning fitter, salesperson, telecommunication equipment installer, tinsmith, orchardist/viticulturalist/cellar worker, waiter and welder.

In the school year 2018/19, out of 25 surveyed schools, 52% implemented one to two programmes, 40% implemented three to four programmes, and 8% implemented five or more programmes. Most of the schools implemented programmes for cooks (56%) and waiters (40%). The number of schools implementing other programmes was slightly lower: for mechanics (24%), salespersons (20%), electricians (20%), hairdressers (16%), sanitary equipment, heating and air conditioning fitters (16%), and telecommunication equipment installers (12%).

FIGURE 3.2 SCHOOLS BY TYPE OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED IN DUAL VET



According to the obtained data, the reasons for which schools are attracted to implementing dual VET programmes are primarily: (1) the initiative (enrolment announcement) of the Ministry of Education (4.65); (2) to improve their offer by adding new programmes (4.04); (3) the interest of students (3.96) and parents (3.80) in dual VET; and (4) the interest of employers (3.32) to participate in dual VET.

In the school year 2019/20, the majority of schools (64%) have continued to implement programmes they offered in the previous years, while 36% of schools have started to implement new dual VET programmes. This might be an indicator of more successful schools' practice in the selection of employers, based on gained experience, as well as an indicator of employers' increased interest in dual VET as schools begin to introduce new programmes taking into consideration the employers who have registered for dual VET.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND WITH EMPLOYERS

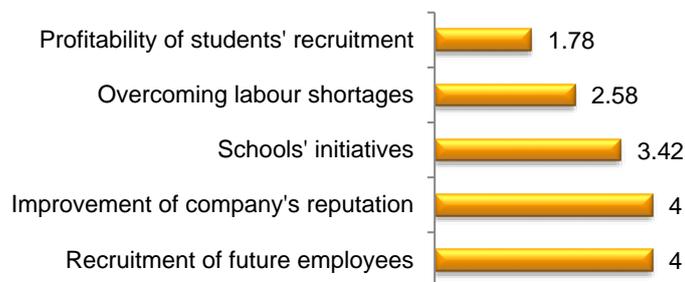
Dual VET does not include programmes for the construction sector, the reason being that construction occupations may be hazardous and dangerous, besides not being traditional occupations in Montenegro. There are domestic construction companies, but a large number of construction workers from neighbouring or distant countries work in Montenegro. This shows that dual VET programmes are not only conditioned by labour market needs, but also by health and cultural considerations as well as labour markets in neighbouring countries.

3.1.3 Selection of employers

Understanding the selection of employers for participation in dual VET requires answering the following two questions: (1) What are the main motives for employers to participate in dual VET; and (2) How are employers selected?

The average value of motives of employers indicates that they primarily get involved in dual VET: (1) to recruit future employees; (2) to increase their social reputation and demonstrate their social responsibility; and (3) in response to the initiatives and requests by schools to participate in students' practical training.

FIGURE 3.3 EMPLOYERS' MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN DUAL VET



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH EMPLOYERS

Some small employers (hairdressers) proactively participate in dual VET, in the hope of recruiting future employees. They even approach and encourage schools to take part in dual VET and initiate the procedure for obtaining the licence to participate in the process.

Overcoming a shortage of workers ranks low on the ratings given by employers (2.58), and the lowest scores were given to profitability (1.78).

The procedure for the selection of employers is relatively simple. Vocational schools identify employers interested in participating in dual VET, draft a contract, and then inform the Centre for Vocational Education thereof. The Centre verifies that the employer meets the material and personnel requirements for the provision of practical training to students. These requirements are set forth in the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Centre for Vocational Education, 2017).

The analysis of the three-year VET programmes showed, however, that the criteria for the selection of employers delivering practical training provided in the curricula are neither separately set out nor consistently and clearly formulated. That is why guidelines for the realisation of practical training (or another similar document) should explain the process and expectations so that employers get a clear picture of what they are supposed to do, and which selection criteria are used.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PRINCIPALS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING COORDINATORS

There are neither clear quality assurance standards that employers must meet in order to provide practical training nor clear and transparent criteria for the selection of employers. Although they are stated in the curricula, the criteria for employer selection are not available to the employers themselves. An employer would have to devote a lot of time to find the curriculum and all the necessary information in the present recruitment process.

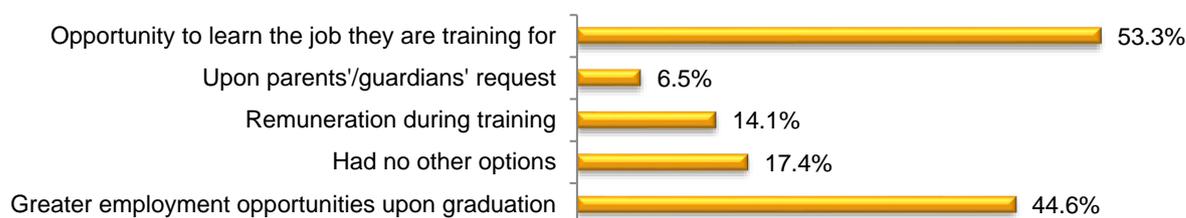
3.1.4 Selection of students

In terms of the achievements of the student population, almost 75% of the students enrolled in dual VET in the school year 2018/19 had lower academic achievement in primary school (satisfactory or acceptable achievement, and poor or minimal achievement). The number of students who enrolled in dual VET with an excellent achievement in primary education is tiny.

The number of students enrolled in dual VET is quite skewed by gender. Out of the total number of students enrolled in dual VET in the 25 surveyed schools, 75% were male and 25% female. There are some occupations that traditionally are considered as typically male (welder, car mechanic, various installers, among others), and further study would be needed to understand the gender imbalance.

The main motives for students' enrolment in dual VET are: (1) an opportunity to learn the job they are trained for (53.3%); and (2) employment opportunities upon graduation (44.6%). All other reasons, including student remuneration during training, are of minor importance.

FIGURE 3.4 STUDENTS' MOTIVES FOR ENROLMENT IN DUAL VET PROGRAMMES



It should also be noted that a certain percentage of students (17.4%) enrol in dual VET programmes because they have few other options available. This is probably due to the decision of the Ministry of Education to limit enrolment in four-year secondary education to students who have not earned the required number of credits based on their previous academic achievements (the threshold of 48 points has been established for enrolment in the four-year education programmes).

According to the data of the Ministry of Education, the number of new enrolments in dual VET programmes is steadily increasing. In the school year 2019/20, the number of newly enrolled students in dual VET programmes increased by 30% compared to the school year 2017/18.

As can be seen from Table 1.2, the dual model started in 2017 in all three grades simultaneously. The students in second and third grades in 2017 transited from school-based programmes into dual programmes.

TABLE 1.2 NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DUAL VET PROGRAMMES, 2017/18–2019/20

	I	II	III	Total
2017/18	192	79	6	277
2018/19	324	193	53	570
2019/20	332	382	134	848

Source: Ministry of Education.

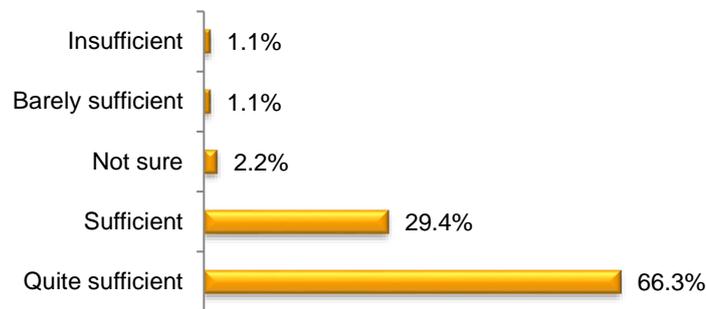
A careful analysis of the data in Table 1.2 shows, however, that the number of students transiting from second to third grade in dual VET programmes is steadily decreasing. That reduction was 20% in the school year 2018/19 (79:53), and 30% in the school year 2019/20 (193:134). This indicates a significant drop-out of students in the transition from the second to the third grade, and/or a decrease in the number of employers participating in practical training in the third year of study. It is possible that one of the main reasons for this negative trend is that employers are obliged to pay the student remuneration in the third year (during the first two years it is covered by the Ministry of Education).

3.1.5 Duration of and alternation between school-based and work-based learning

The duration and alternation between school-based learning and work-based learning are among the most important issues in dual VET. In the three-year curricula, the share of practical training in the total student workload is 45 to 50%. Accordingly, in dual vocational education, the student spends one day with the employer in the first grade, two days in the second grade, and three days in the third grade.

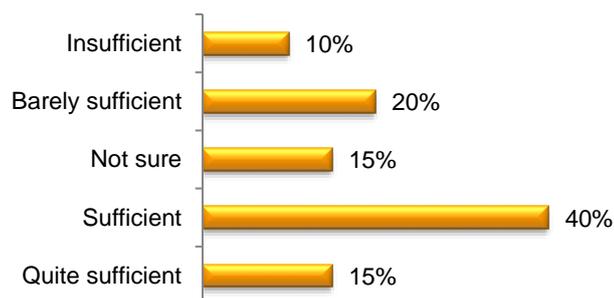
The vast majority of students consider that the amount of time they spend in work-based learning with the employer is quite sufficient (66.3%) or sufficient (29.4%) to achieve the programme objectives and outcomes.

FIGURE 3.5 DURATION OF PRACTICAL TRAINING WITH THE EMPLOYER – STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT



Likewise, 40% of in-company trainers believe that the amount of time students spend in practical training with employers is sufficient, and 15% of in-company trainers believe that it is quite sufficient to achieve the programme objectives and outcomes.

FIGURE 3.6 DURATION OF PRACTICAL TRAINING WITH THE EMPLOYER – IN-COMPANY TRAINERS' ASSESSMENT



A significant percentage of in-company trainers (30%) assessed that the defined duration of work-based learning with the employer is insufficient or barely sufficient to achieve the programme objectives and outcomes. For some professions, reconsidering their complexity and students' expected learning outcomes is necessary to determine the total duration of practical training with the employer and the alternating periods between school-based and work-based learning. Given that the total duration of work-based learning is clearly defined (45 to 50% of the total class load), there is not much room for flexibility in this regard. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the possibility of having the immediate implementers (schools and employers) decide on how to organise the alternation

between learning at school and learning at work. In doing so, they will take into account the complexity of specific occupations, the capacities and needs of schools and employers, and especially the capacities and needs of students to acquire knowledge and skills.

3.2 Management

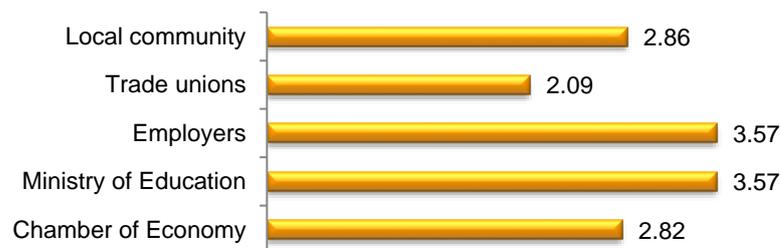
3.2.1 Partnership – formal roles and responsibilities

Social partners (business associations, trade unions) have a role in planning and developing vocational education in Montenegro, as they are represented in the decision-making and policy-making bodies.

In accordance with the Law on National Qualifications Framework⁵, the government has established a Qualifications Council, which includes, among others, representatives of the Chamber of Economy, the Employers' Federation, the Trade Union of Education and the Association of Trade Unions of Montenegro. According to this law, representatives of the Chamber of Economy are also members of different sectoral commissions. In all these bodies, social partners participate in the processes of adopting laws, by-laws, decisions, different methodologies and guidelines.

In line with the Law on National Vocational Qualifications⁶, the Chamber of Economy and representative trade unions, representative business associations and the Chamber of Craft and Entrepreneurship of Montenegro monitor and analyse labour market needs and the particular needs of the professions under their remit. They also inform and advise employers on opportunities, requirements, methods and procedures for obtaining occupational qualifications and for the recognition of foreign certificates. Under the Law on Vocational Education⁷, relevant business associations can organise the preparation for master craftsman exam.

FIGURE 3.7 MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERS TO SCHOOLS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DUAL VET



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

In the opinion of school principals and practical training coordinators, the most important partners of the school in the implementation of dual VET programmes are those employers delivering the practical training and the Ministry of Education. Partnerships with a trade union, the Chamber of Economy and

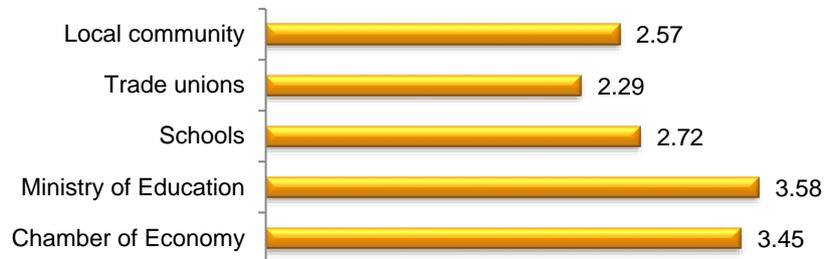
⁵ Law on National Qualifications Framework, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, 29/11.

⁶ Law on National Vocational Qualifications, *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, 80/2008 and 14/2009.

⁷ Law on Vocational Education, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro*, 64/2002, 49/2007, 45/2010, 39/2013 and 47/2017.

the local community have been assessed to be of lesser importance for the successful implementation of dual VET.

FIGURE 3.8 MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERS TO EMPLOYERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DUAL VET



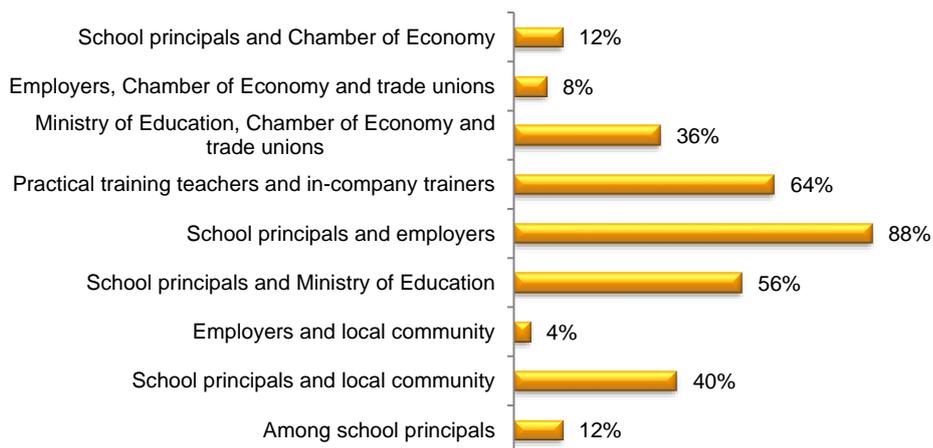
Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

To the employers, the most important partners in the implementation of dual VET are the Ministry of Education and the Chamber of Economy. The local community, trade unions and even schools have not been indicated as prominent partners in the implementation of dual VET.

3.2.2 Communication between all major partners

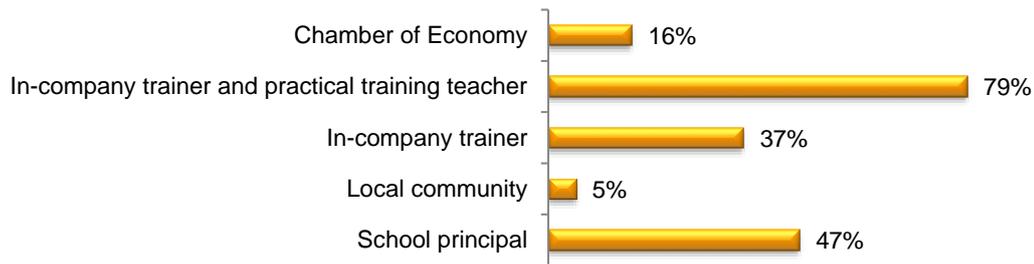
In the opinion of school principals and practical training coordinators, communication between school principals and employers, and between practical training teachers and in-company trainers, is crucial for the successful implementation of dual VET. Communication between school principals and the Ministry of Education is of fair importance. Communication with the Chamber of Economy, trade unions and the local community, and even communication among the school principals themselves, is considered less relevant to the dual VET implementation process.

FIGURE 3.9 LINES OF COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT TO SCHOOLS



To employers, communication with both in-company trainers and practical training teachers (at the same time) is the most important factor for the successful implementation of dual VET. Less than 50% of employers think their communication with school principals is important. Communication with the Chamber of Economy and the local community, however, is of secondary importance for the dual VET implementation.

FIGURE 3.10 LINES OF COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYERS



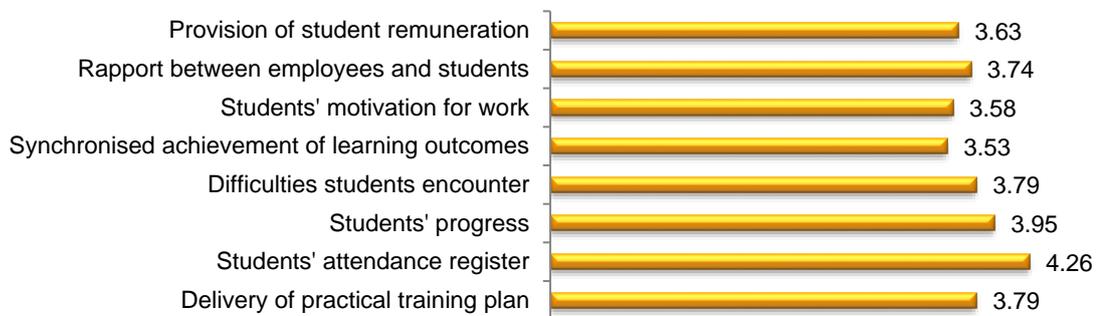
The overall findings indicate that the establishment of communication and cooperation between in-company trainers and practical training teachers is essential to the development and improvement of dual VET in Montenegro.

3.2.3 Cooperation between schools and employers

The vast majority (80%) of school principals and practical training coordinators are convinced that employers completely or almost completely fulfil their contractual obligations in the dual VET implementation process.

The most significant indicator of the school-employer cooperation is the frequency of the employer's provision of information to the school about various issues in the delivery of practical training (Figure 3.11).

FIGURE 3.11 FREQUENCY OF PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON DUAL VET IMPLEMENTATION – EMPLOYERS

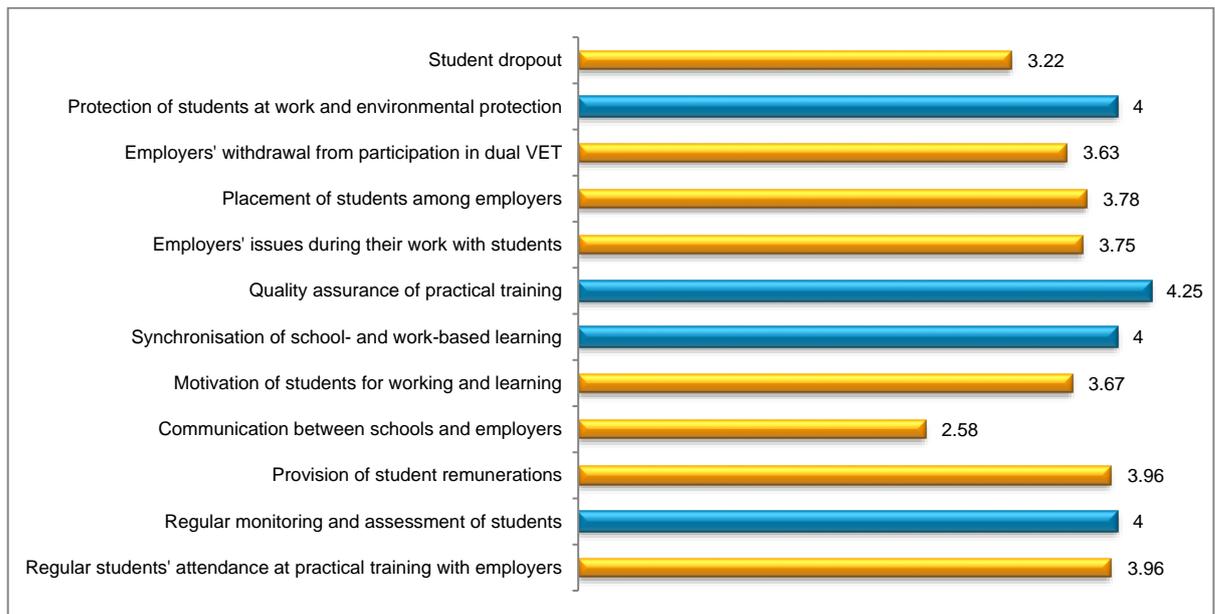


Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

Although all employers gave moderately high values for this indicator, suggesting that employers inform schools of all issues relevant to the effective implementation of dual VET, it is quite obvious that employers most often inform the school of students' attendance at practical training.

According to the assessment of school principals and practical training coordinators, the key areas of cooperation between schools and employers are practical training quality assurance, occupational safety and health of students, synchronised activities of schools and employers, and regular monitoring and assessment of students.

FIGURE 3.12 KEY AREAS OF COORDINATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND EMPLOYERS



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

Upon summarising these findings, it can be concluded that the purpose of the coordination between schools and employers is for students to be provided with the right package of knowledge and skills in a safe work environment and undergo a clear assessment process.

3.3 Employers – participation and support

3.3.1 Working conditions provided by employers

Students give high values to the working and learning conditions provided by employers.

FIGURE 3.13 WORKING CONDITIONS PROVIDED BY EMPLOYERS – STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

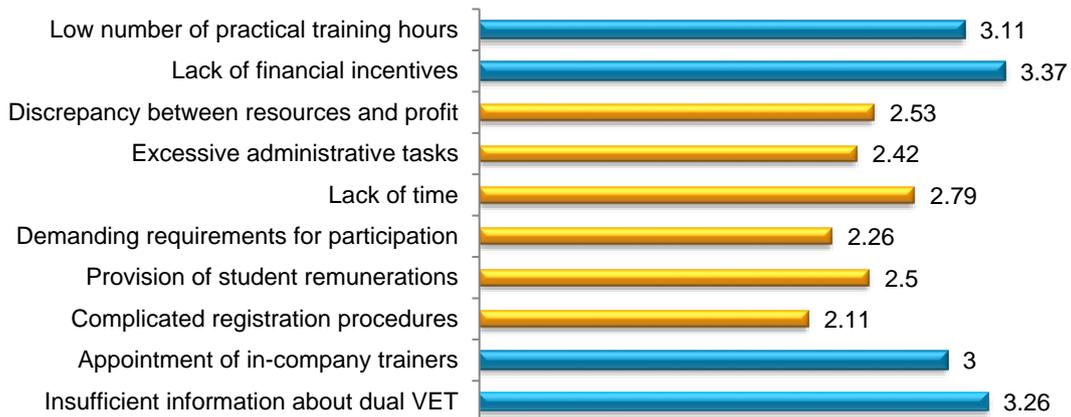
In the questionnaires, school principals and practical training coordinators assessed the working conditions provided by employers almost identically.

The significance of this data is not only that it indicates that students have good working and learning conditions at the companies, but also that despite the lack of resources, the Centre for Vocational Education selects employers who provide safe training conditions.

3.3.2 Support provided to employers

The obtained data show that employers encounter four major obstacles to participation in dual VET: (1) lack of financial incentives, (2) insufficient information about dual VET, (3) low number of practical training hours, and (4) appointment of in-company trainers (insufficient number of motivated and trained in-company trainers).

FIGURE 3.14 OBSTACLES TO THE PARTICIPATION OF EMPLOYERS IN DUAL VET



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

The issue of financial incentives for employers was tackled in the focus group discussion with employers. They underlined that their tax burden should be reduced for participation in dual VET, since they bear real costs in the delivery of practical training to students. Another important issue for employers is the insufficient information about dual VET. They gave very low values for: the availability of information on vocational schools (2.47); the ability to obtain information about their obligations and responsibilities (2.53); the benefits they may have from participating in dual VET (2.68); and the information about dual VET obtained from the Chamber of Economy (1.95).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH EMPLOYERS

Employers participating in dual VET delivery should be granted tax incentives based on the following effectiveness criteria:

- number of employed students who received training with the given employer;
- number of students employed by the given employer;
- number of students who received remuneration from the employer in third grade.

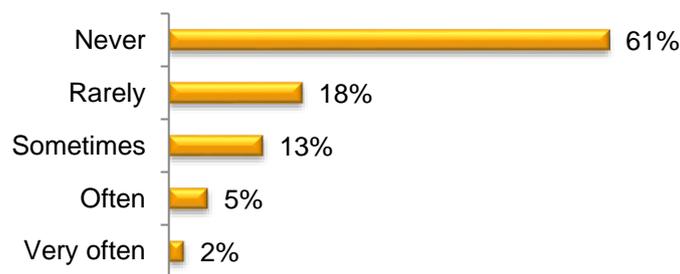
3.4 Students – protection and support

3.4.1 Protection of students' rights

The issue of student rights in dual VET is a particularly sensitive one. In addition to the right to safe working conditions and occupational health and safety, the students have a number of other indisputable rights arising from the general legal framework and general pedagogical principles. Among these rights, especially important ones are the right to learn based on the work they are able to perform, and the right to rest during the weekend.

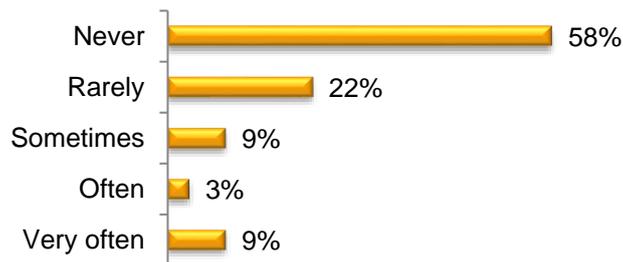
According to the findings of the survey among students, almost 80% of students believe that, during practical training, the employers never or rarely give them tasks they are unable to perform.

FIGURE 3.15 STUDENTS BEING ASSIGNED WORK TASKS THEY ARE UNABLE TO PERFORM



It should be noted that about 20% of students did receive work assignments they were not able to complete. As was the case with the duration of training, it is worth analysing the complexity of work and learning requirements, in order to identify occupations and programmes that might require the students to perform excessively demanding tasks, considering their prior knowledge and skills. It is also necessary to define the possible role of in-company trainers and employers in preventing work assignments that are unsuitable for students.

FIGURE 3.16 STUDENTS WORKING ON WEEKENDS TO MEET THEIR EMPLOYER'S NEEDS



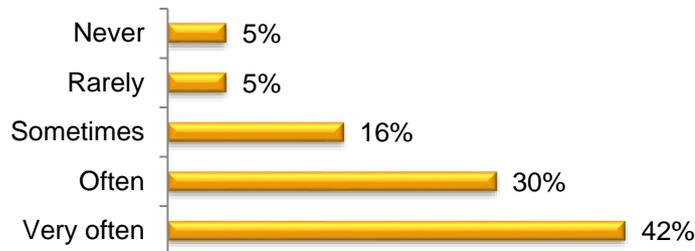
Nearly 80% of the students said they never or rarely work on weekends to meet their employer's needs although the contract between an employer and a student stipulates that they can reach an agreement about when practical training is realised.

3.4.2 Providing support to students in learning

The main type of support provided to students in learning is the visit their practical training teacher or practical training coordinator pays them during the practical training with the employer.

According to the majority of students (73.8%), the practical training teacher or coordinator visits them very often or often. However, the percentage of those who say that the visits occur sometimes, rarely or never is not negligible (27.2%).

FIGURE 3.17 FREQUENCY OF VISITS BY PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS OR COORDINATORS



A majority of students found the visits to be very useful (53.3%) or useful (29.4%). According to the assessment of 53% of the students, the teachers' visits last up to 30 minutes, while 33% of the students assessed that the visits last up to 120 minutes.

The students are very appreciative of all types of learning support they receive, especially the feedback from in-company trainers, the assistance in performing work assignments, and the availability of materials and equipment for work.

FIGURE 3.18 TYPES OF SUPPORT THAT STUDENTS RECEIVE IN LEARNING AND TRAINING

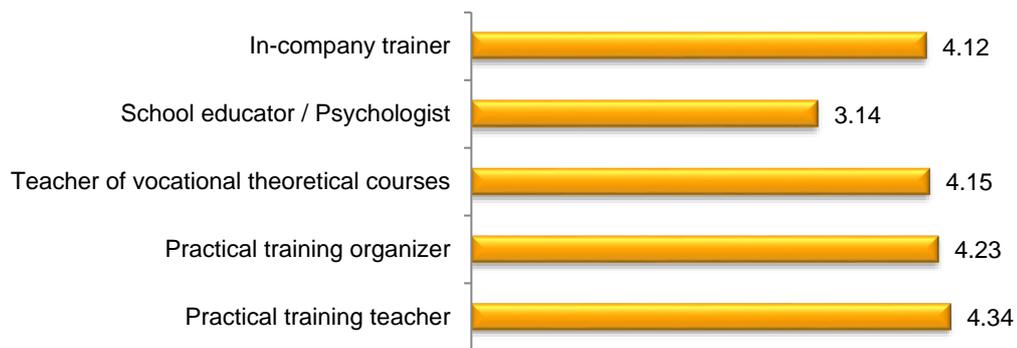


Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

While it is well documented that students tend to give slightly higher assessments of teachers' performance in the evaluation of their work, it is also indisputable that students receive diverse and significant support in learning and working during their practical training.

The most valuable support provided to students is the assistance in the preparation for the exam at the end of the school year. Their assessment of the level of support they receive from the in-company trainers and other pedagogical staff in the exam preparation process is high, ranging in value from 3.14 to 4.34.

FIGURE 3.19 SUPPORT PROVIDED TO STUDENTS IN LEARNING AND PREPARING FOR THE END-OF-YEAR EXAM



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

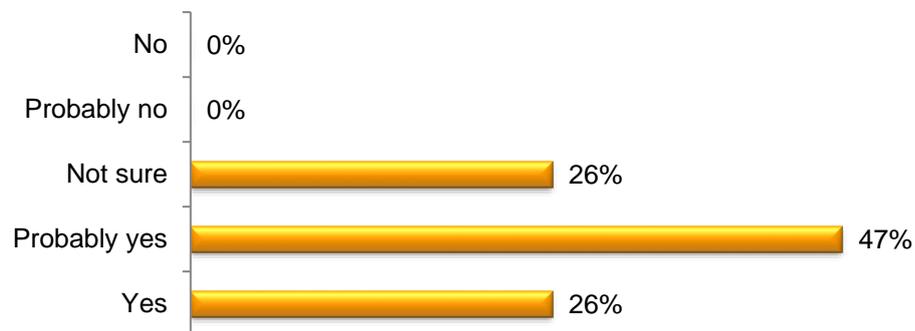
3.4.3 Providing support to students in finding employment

One of the main reasons for students to enrol in dual VET is prospective employment opportunities (see Section 3.1.4 – Selection of students). Almost 84% of students expect to find employment after graduation. Only about 7% of students do not expect such an outcome. Such expectations of students are matched by the employers' expectations and plans concerning their employment opportunities. Nearly 50% of employers believe that students will be employed upon graduation. Only a smaller share of employers (10%) is not convinced that such opportunities will arise. It is surprising that a large majority of employers (88%) say they plan to recruit students who received practical training from them. This demonstrates the reliability of the aforementioned data that the primary motive of employers to participate in dual VET is to find qualified future employees. A high percentage of dual VET graduates get a job upon completion of three-year schooling. Out of a total of 56 students enrolled in the third grade of dual VET in 2018/19, 50 students completed their education, of whom 26 (52%) were employed⁸.

The most important indicator for the support provided to the students in finding employment is the improvement of their employability, i.e. their ability to obtain employment with another employer, due to the competences acquired during practical training. One of the main risks of the concept and practice of dual VET is overspecialisation, i.e. training students exclusively for work with the employer from whom they receive the practical training (see Ainley, 1996; Euler, 2013). However, the data obtained show that the vast majority of employers (73.7%) assess that the students who received practical training in their companies were competent to work and find employment in other companies.

⁸ Information from the director of the Centre for Vocational Education to the Minister of Education, 11 October 2019.

FIGURE 3.20 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH OTHER EMPLOYERS – EMPLOYERS’ ASSESSMENT

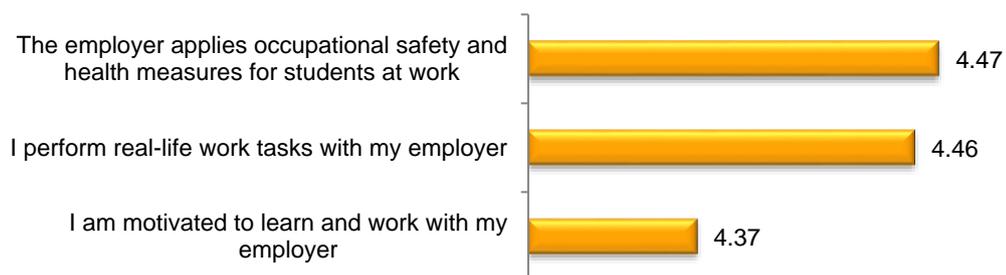


The obtained data indicate that the organisation of work and technological processes in companies that delivered students’ practical training are widely applied in the labour market, and do not represent a limiting factor in the students’ future work and employment. One quarter of employers are not entirely sure that the students are competent to work with other employers (probably due to a different organisation of work and different technological processes). This information provides an incentive for the key stakeholders in dual VET (practical training teachers, practical training coordinators, in-company trainers) to plan students’ practical training and design additional forms of practical training for students, either at school or with another employer, based on the analysis of occupational standards, curricula, and the specificities of the technological process in a company, which would result in improving students’ mobility in the labour market.

3.4.4 Students’ satisfaction

One of the best indicators for the state of play and (non-economic) effects of dual VET in Montenegro is the students’ perception of dual VET, in terms of its organisation and the support that students receive while working and learning.

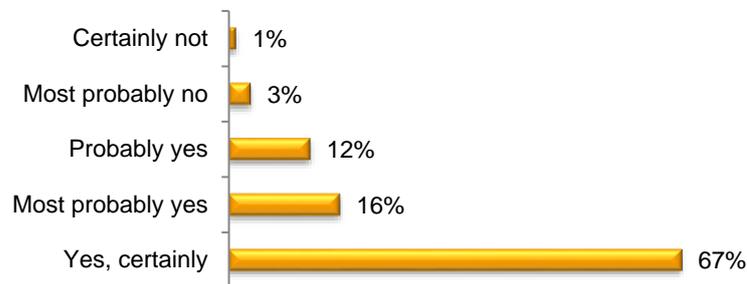
FIGURE 3.21 STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF DUAL VET



Note: Respondents’ degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

Students perceive dual VET as the model of education system that provides them with an opportunity to learn by performing real-life work assignments in an environment ensuring a high level of occupational safety. Furthermore, they see themselves as individuals strongly motivated to learn and work, which is especially important, since students with low achievements in primary schools have been the ones enrolling in dual VET programmes.

FIGURE 3.22 STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-ENROL IN DUAL VET PROGRAMMES



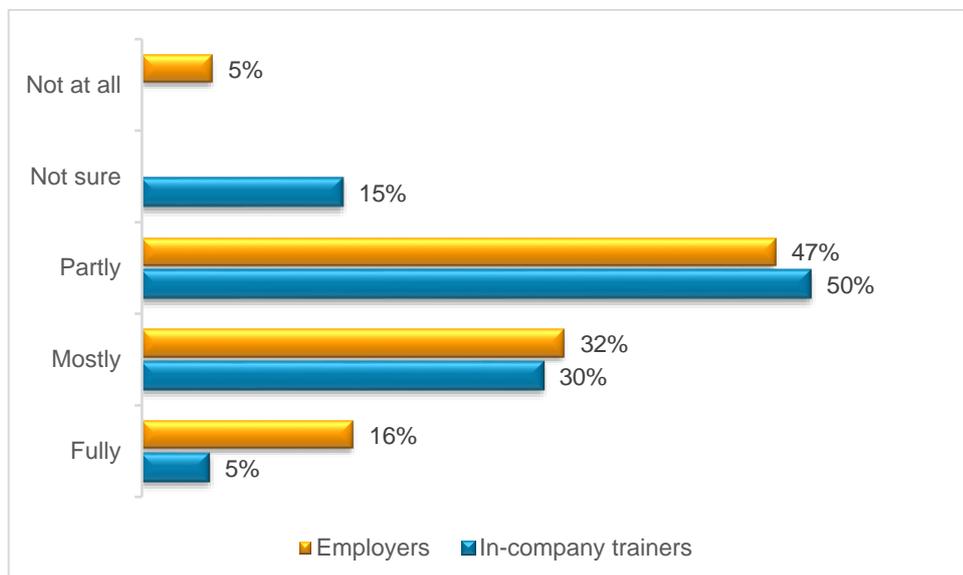
In the hypothetical situation of having to re-enrol in secondary education, more than 80% of the students would opt for a dual VET programme again.

3.5 Provision, content and quality assurance

3.5.1 Consideration of employers' needs in curricula

The indicator that takes into account employers' needs in the curricula is the assessment of employers and in-company trainers of the extent to which classroom and workplace learning are aligned.

FIGURE 3.23 TO WHAT EXTENT IS CLASSROOM LEARNING ALIGNED WITH THE WORK STUDENTS PERFORM WITH THEIR EMPLOYER?



The data indicate that curricula are largely based on the employers' needs. A significant number of employers and in-company trainers think that the students' school-based learning is fully or mostly aligned with their work-based learning. Only a small number of employers (5.3%) believe that students' school-based learning is not at all aligned with the work students perform with the employer.

It is particularly significant that about 50% of the employers and in-company trainers think that the alignment between work-based learning and school-based learning is only partial. On the surface, this

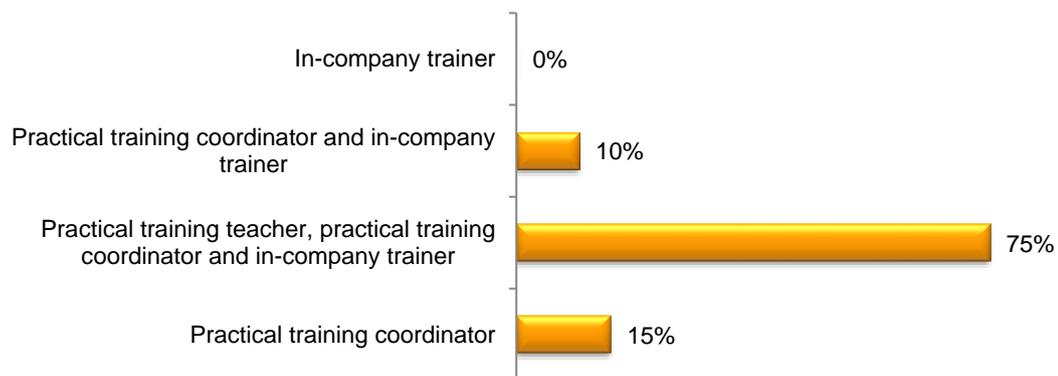
calls for continuous monitoring of the employers' work requirements, adjustment of the curricula to the employers' needs and improvement of practical training planning.

3.5.2 Planning of practical training

Planning the learning outcomes with the in-company trainer for the company-based part of the training is a key step for quality assurance in dual VET. It is an essential precondition for successful learning with the employer, as well as for monitoring the students' achievement and for a better coordination of the learning process between the school and the employer. The practical training teachers and coordinators at vocational schools, jointly with the in-company trainers, develop work-based learning plans and curricula for incoming students.

A large majority of the employers (83.3%) stated that in-company trainers deliver practical training according to the practical training plan. Only a small share of the employers (16%) stated that in-company trainers do not have a practical training plan.

FIGURE 3.24 IN-COMPANY TRAINERS' SURVEY – DEVELOPMENT OF A PRACTICAL TRAINING PLAN



According to the obtained data, in most cases, planning is the result of joint work of school representatives and employers. The in-company practical training plan is usually developed jointly by practical training coordinators, practical training teachers and in-company trainers. The in-company trainers never develop the plans on their own, and in 15% of the cases, they take no part in the planning process, leaving the plan to be developed by the practical training coordinators. This is a clear sign that schools provide significant support to novice in-company trainers in the planning process.

3.5.3 Delivery of practical training in line with the curriculum

Almost 80% of employers and 65% of in-company trainers believe that they are capable of delivering practical training in line with the curricula. According to 26% of employers, the main obstacle to such practical training delivery is the students' inadequate level of previous knowledge and experience. High tech requirements (30%) and lack of adequate equipment (25%) are second-ranked and third-ranked, respectively. In-company trainers made almost identical assessments.

In the opinion of 92% of school principals, all the learning outcomes that employers are not capable of transferring in the company can be achieved at vocational schools. Only 8% of the schools organise trainings with other employers, based on an agreement between the school and the employer where the student is not normally trained. The outcomes that cannot be achieved with an employer are

determined at the planning stage of the in-company training, based on an analysis carried out by the practical training teacher, practical training coordinator and in-company trainer.

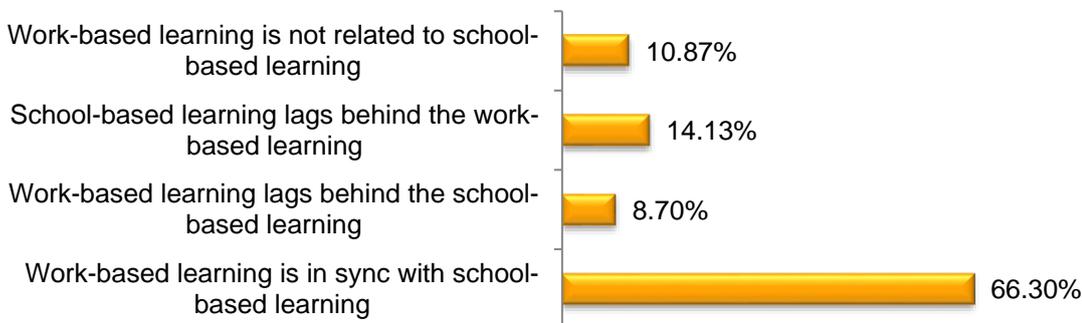
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS

Defining just the amount of time the student spends with the employer does not suffice. It is necessary to determine a minimum set of learning outcomes that students must achieve with employers, so that the education and training that students are provided with can be considered dual, and both students and employers can fully exercise the rights and obligations arising therefrom.

3.5.4 Synchronisation of school-based and work-based learning

There are significant differences between schools and employers in their assessments of the synchronisation of school-based and work-based learning. A very high percentage (77%) of school principals and practical training coordinators say that school-based and work-based learning are fully synchronised. Only 40% of employers, and 50% of in-company trainers, believe that synchronisation of school-based and work-based learning is fully achieved. Among the students, this figure is 66.3%.

FIGURE 3.25 STUDENTS' SURVEY – SYNCHRONISATION OF SCHOOL-BASED AND WORK-BASED LEARNING



School principals and practical training coordinators believe that schools can completely (16%) or to a great extent (40%) adjust their organisation of work (class schedule) to the requirements and needs of employers, which is a basic requirement for synchronising learning at school and learning with an employer.

In addition to adjustment of the class schedule, there are other effective ways to establish satisfactory levels of synchronisation in learning. According to principals, coordinators and employers, the most significant ways to increase the level of synchronisation include: joint planning of practical training with the employer (4.32), periodic adjustments of theoretical learning at school to the work organisation and business activities of the employer (3.92), and periodic revisions of the practical training plan (3.88). In the opinion of employers, synchronisation is hampered mostly by regular business activities (3.36) and inadequate planning of learning outcomes by schools (3.22).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH THE CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The idea of 'flexible class schedule' has been promoted as the most appropriate way to synchronise learning at school and learning with the employer. Such schedule would enable the student to spend an extended period of time with the employer, so as to participate in complex work processes from start to finish, to get acquainted with all stages of work and the final product or service. In a schedule currently laid out by the Ministry of Education (e.g. year one: one day per week at the company, year two: two days at the company, year three: three days), the student may participate in some stages of the work process and may not be available for other stages for longer periods of time, because of duties at school.

3.5.5 Assessment of students' achievements

The assessment of students' achievements in the practical training delivered by employers is carried out in the last 20 days of the school year, by a commission consisting of the practical training teacher, the in-company trainer and a teacher who teaches the same or a related course to the one the exam is administered for. The student is given a practical assignment or topic. The duration of the assessment depends on the complexity of the practical work but cannot last more than 120 minutes. The preparation for completion of the practical work usually takes up to 30 minutes, the completion up to 60 minutes and the presentation of the work up to 30 minutes. The commission assesses the application of practical knowledge, skills and competences in the design of practical work, the autonomy in performing the work, the use of instruments, tools and machines, the use of professional terminology and the application of safety measures. The grade obtained by the student in the assessment of achievement in the practical training delivered by the employer is taken into account when awarding the final grade (Ministry of Education, 2009).

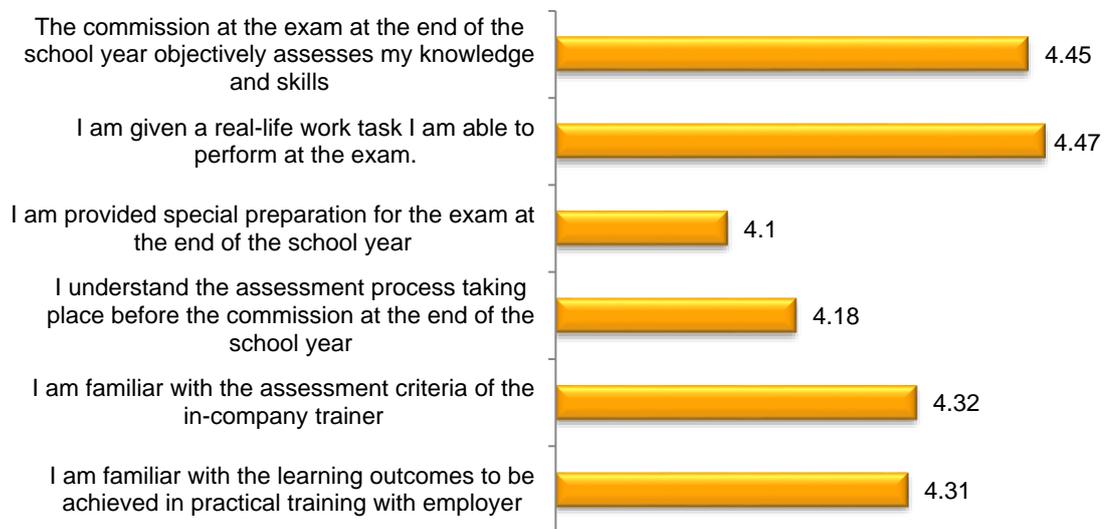
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS

In addition to the fact that many in-company trainers have not completed the appropriate training, in this focus group discussion, it was indicated that in-company trainers do not fully understand the importance and function of the assessment or the principles of objectivity and fairness in the assessment. Therefore, they are inclined to give high grades in the first and second year of study.

The other problem is that the assessment of students at the end of the school year is done by testing theoretical knowledge rather than practical work, as stipulated in the Rulebook.

According to the data obtained from students, over 80% of them received the highest grades in the assessment of achievement in practical training with the employer. The students also gave high values to the assessment method and to the support they received in the process.

FIGURE 3.26 STUDENTS' SURVEY – STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON THE EXAM AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

Students strongly believe (4.47) that they performed real-life work assignments in the assessment. In addition, they state they received significant support in the process of the achievement assessment (awareness of the outcomes to be achieved and assessment criteria, understanding of the process, special preparation for the assessment). The Rulebook on the organisation of this exam could be updated and more precise regarding all the exam stages. The results of these exams deserve to be continuously monitored and analysed in order to improve the process.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING COORDINATORS, AND WITH IN-COMPANY TRAINERS

It is a common belief that the visits to the students are a necessary and significant activity of practical training teachers and coordinators. Practical training teachers rarely visit students, as the visits have been entrusted to the coordinators, which has led many teachers to express their concern about the drop in the numbers in their classes and loss of work. Another problem is that often the coordinators are not experts for the specific programmes the students are enrolled in, which diminishes their ability to effectively monitor students' progress as well as the implementation of the practical training plan with employers.

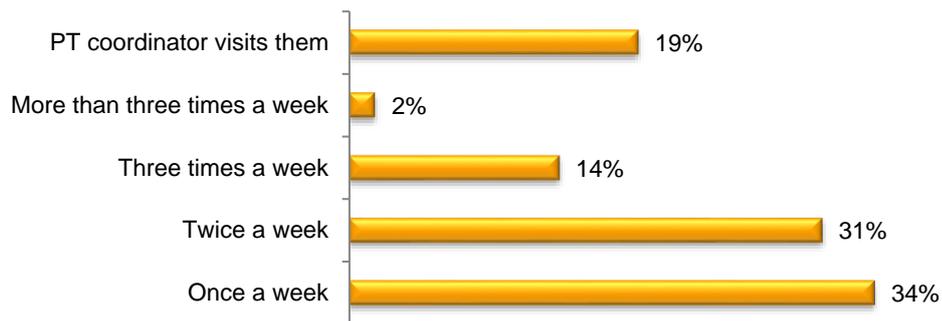
3.5.6 Support provided to practical training coordinators and teachers

In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the practical training coordinators' work, the Ministry of Education organises two cycles of training: training about the legal framework and training for the planning and monitoring of practical training. All the current practical training coordinators have been trained on these issues.

Out of the 25 surveyed schools, 80% have one to five practical training teachers working in dual VET classes. Their primary activity, in addition to teaching practical skills at school, is to plan practical training with the employer, participate in the assessment of practical skills at the end of the school year and visit students during practical training with the employer.

Most teachers stated that they visited students once or twice a week, which is quite sufficient given the number of days the students spend in practical training.

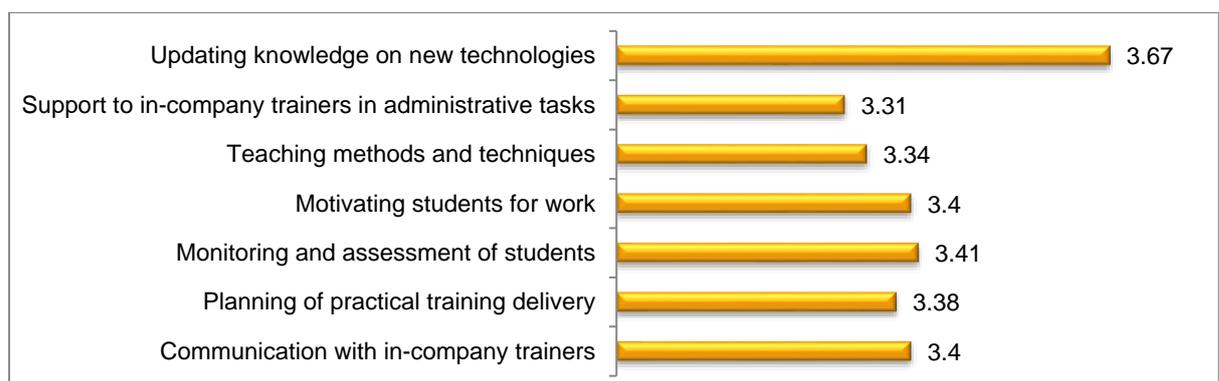
FIGURE 3.27 PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS' SURVEY – FREQUENCY OF PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS' VISITS TO STUDENTS IN PRACTICAL TRAINING



Note: PT – practical training

The main obstacle to the work of practical training teachers is the lack of adequate resources. About 40% of them personally pay for a portion of the costs (transportation, communication with the in-company trainer and students) incurred during their visits to students in practical training. The main problem, however, is that the visits are very short. Some 46% of teachers, in their own estimate, stay from 30 to 60 minutes (40% only up to 30 minutes), which is not enough to provide substantial support to students in their work and learning.

FIGURE 3.28 PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS' SURVEY – TYPES OF SUPPORT THAT PRACTICAL TRAINING TEACHERS NEED



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

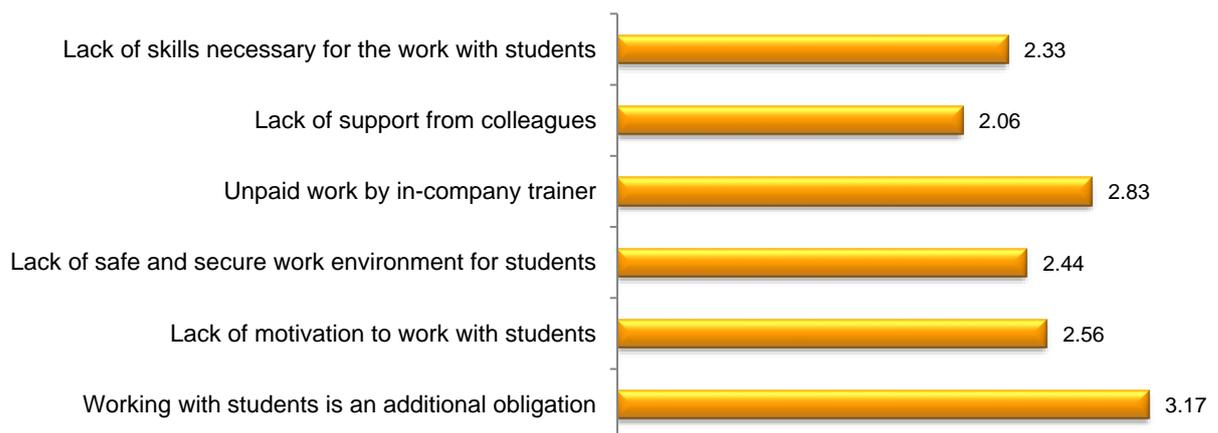
Practical training teachers expressed a moderate need for improvement of pedagogical knowledge and skills, and a fairly strong need for training in the monitoring and assessment of students (3.41). The need to update their knowledge of new technologies is the strongest.

3.5.7 Support provided to in-company trainers

Internships in companies have been a standard part of student training in Montenegro for some time. Even students who are in the school-based model of education have to spend a defined number of hours in a company for practical training. Thus, most in-company trainers already have significant experience in the implementation of work-based learning and work with students. Most of them (45%) have been in-company trainers for two years, and in the school year 2019/20, 30% of them began their third year of work with students.

According to employers, obstacles encountered by in-company trainers in the delivery of practical training to students are minor. The main drawback for employees who take on the role of in-company trainer is that it represents an additional responsibility for them (for which most in-company trainers do not receive extra compensation). Employers do not think that an employee's lack of the skills needed to work with students is a significant obstacle to their appointment as in-company trainer. However, both school principals and practical training teachers think that in-company trainers need a lot of support to develop a set of teaching skills.

FIGURE 3.29 EMPLOYERS' SURVEY – OBSTACLES TO THE APPOINTMENT OF IN-COMPANY TRAINERS

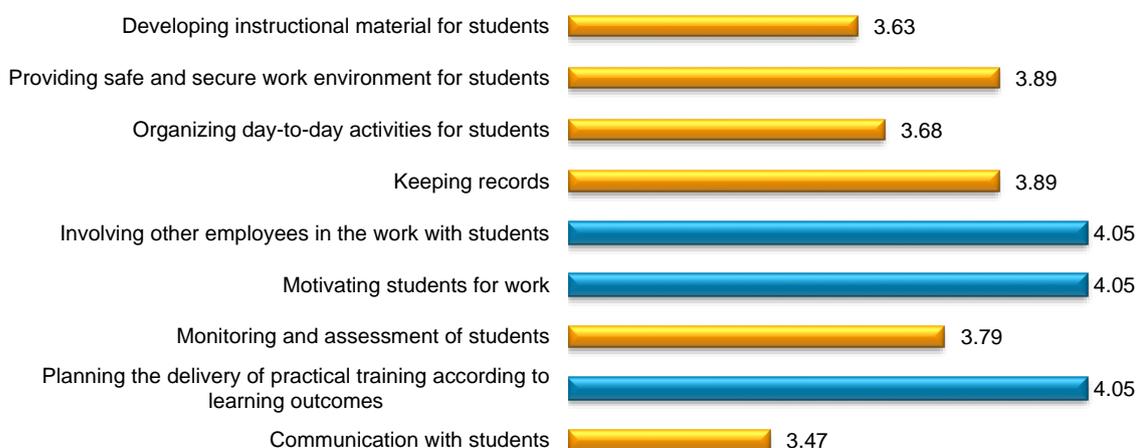


Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

According to the obtained data, 65% of in-company trainers had not received any pedagogical training. Of those who did, almost 50% found the training useful for their work with students, while 50% were of the opposite opinion. At the same time, less than 30% of in-company trainers think they lack skills needed to train students.

In the opinion of employers, the most valuable support to in-company trainers concerns: planning the delivery of practical training, motivating students for work and involving other employees in student practical training. It is important to note that over 90% of employers believe that schools provide full support to in-company trainers in their delivery of practical training.

FIGURE 3.30 EMPLOYERS' SURVEY – TYPE OF SUPPORT NEEDED BY IN-COMPANY TRAINERS



Note: Respondents' degree of agreement, total average score on a five-point scale (5 being the highest)

In-company trainers expect to receive the greatest support in their work from practical training teachers (4.15) and practical training coordinators (4.05). However, a limiting factor is the short duration of visits that practical training teachers and coordinators make to students during their practical training with employers. Like the students, a vast majority of in-company trainers (75%) estimate that practical training teachers/coordinators stayed 30 to 60 minutes when visiting employers, and mainly performed administrative tasks.

3.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the dual VET system is carried out by the Coordination Body for Dual VET Monitoring, the Ministry of Education, the Chamber of Economy and vocational schools. An important instrument for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of dual VET is the Montenegrin Education Information System.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education carries out a biannual analysis of dual VET implementation. In order to collect the necessary data from all vocational schools, the Ministry of Education submits a questionnaire to the schools. Once the answers are received, the ministry undertakes an analysis of the organisation and implementation of dual VET over the specific time period and develops recommendations for vocational schools. The questionnaire allows for a monitoring of vocational schools' activities such as contract signing with employers, number of employers abandoning the system during the training period, placement of students with employers, planning of practical training delivery, visits to students in the companies, students' occupational health and safety, student dropout, student assessment, cooperation between in-company trainers, practical training coordinators and practical training teachers, among others (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Coordination Body

The implementation of dual VET is monitored by the Coordination Body for Dual VET Monitoring. The Coordination Body is composed of representatives of the Chamber of Economy, the Employers' Federation, the Centre for Vocational Education and the Ministry of Education. This body monitors the activities that take place in schools and with employers, using data collected by the Ministry of Education, and makes its decisions accordingly.

Schools

Schools have yet to apply a systematic and methodical approach to the monitoring and evaluation of dual VET. Schools' monitoring is based on visits by practical training teachers to employers, and the questionnaire on the delivery of practical training by the employer. When visiting students in practical training, practical training teachers and coordinators gain insight into the methods and quality of practical training delivery and then report back to the school principals. The employers are not motivated to complete the school questionnaire on practical training delivery. At the end of the school year 2017/18, only 11 employers answered the questionnaire received from schools, which is a very low number given the number of employers involved in practical training delivery.

Chamber of Economy

The Chamber of Economy collects information on dual VET through regular meetings with employers but has not developed and established a systematic dual VET monitoring and evaluation method.

Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS)

The MEIS has a special section dedicated to dual VET. However, vocational schools do not enter the necessary data into the information system in a timely manner. The report on dual VET implementation at the end of the first semester of the 2018/19 school year states that: 'Data is not being entered timely, most schools did not enter the students' names into the MEIS, at least according to the data available in the MEIS. Furthermore, the data that has been entered does not match the actual situation, not even the number of students in dual VET programmes.'

3.7 Funding mechanism

According to the Law on Vocational Education from 2017, students in practical training are not treated as employed persons; however, they are still entitled to remuneration. The Law stipulates that student remunerations in the first and second grades of dual VET programmes are funded from the budget of the Ministry of Education. Remunerations to students in the third grade are to be paid by their employer. The remuneration of students in dual VET programmes in the first grade is at least 10% of the average monthly salary; in the second grade at least 15%; and in third grade, at least 20% of the average monthly salary. Participating employers are exempt from paying students' pension and health insurance.

It appears that employers are pleased with the existing funding mechanism. According to 57.9% of employers, the existing mechanism for funding student remunerations is fair, 36.8% of employers are undecided, and only 5.3% of employers find the current funding mechanism inappropriate.

The majority of employers (63.2%) believe that student remunerations are not high, considering the time students spend at work, while 26.3% do not have a clear position on this matter. Only 10.5% of employers believe that the remunerations are high. Moreover, a great number of employers (68.4%) assessed they could pay a monthly remuneration in the amount of EUR 100 to third grade students, while only 5.26% of employers said they could not do so.

Regarding the profit earned from students' work, 55% of in-company trainers believe that employers do not gain profit from students' work, while 20% of them believe the opposite.

When interpreting the obtained results, it should be emphasised that the sample of employers who participated in the survey is small, thus, one should be cautious when drawing conclusions. Similarly, it should be taken into account that, according to the official data, there has been a significant decrease in the number of students who have contracts with employers in the third year of study, i.e. a decrease in the number of employers participating in dual VET programmes (see Section 3.1.4 – Selection of students). This suggests that, after all, funding student remuneration is a significant burden for some employers. Unfortunately, we do not have any information regarding the size (or other characteristics) of the companies that abandoned the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results have helped to formulate some preliminary recommendations concerning the activities to be undertaken by all stakeholders in the realisation of dual VET programmes.

- Empower and encourage key stakeholders, especially social partners, to take on particular duties and responsibilities in the development and realisation of dual VET.
- Develop an enrolment plan for dual VET programmes, through joint efforts of the Ministry of Education and the social partners (Chamber of Economy, representative trade unions). The enrolment plan would be built upon the analysis of:
 - labour market needs for vocational qualifications, as well as employment opportunities for students, based on insights into the number of suitable employers and potential vacancies;
 - the capacities and motivation of schools and employers to participate in dual VET;
 - the motivation of students and their guardians to enrol in dual VET programmes.

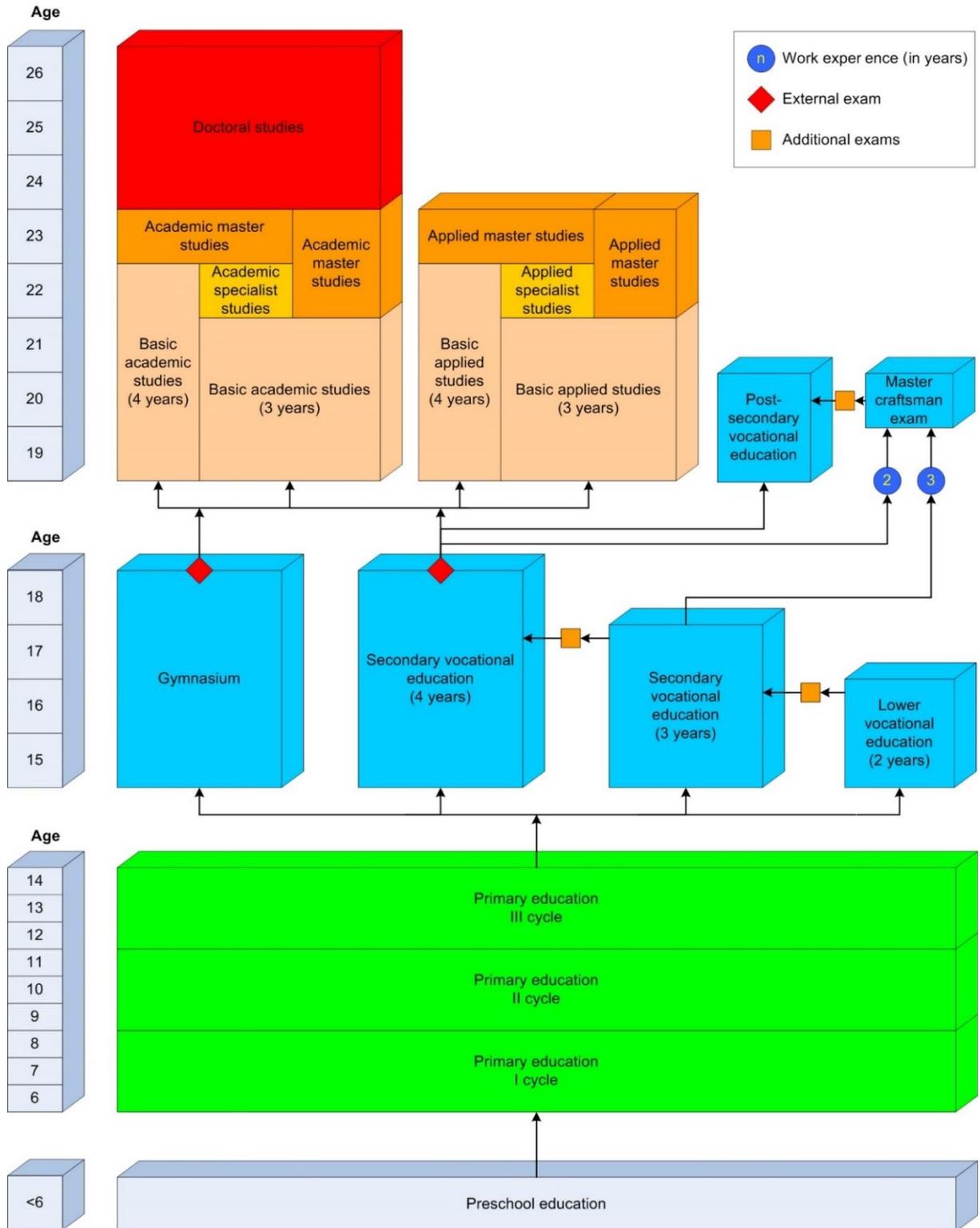
By correlating these parameters, the Ministry of Education and the Chamber of Economy develop an enrolment plan for three-year dual VET programmes, in which they clearly identify the programmes, schools and employers involved in specific programmes. Based on such a plan, the Ministry of Education would be able to publish an enrolment announcement for students, thus better aligning training supply with training demand. The information on employers and schools must be publicly available by February at latest, for the students' enrolment scheduled for June.

- Motivate students to enrol in dual VET programmes by promoting examples of good practice (employers with good working and learning conditions) and positive effects of dual VET (post-graduation employment).
- Develop positive discrimination measures to increase the enrolment of female students in dual VET programmes.
- Include in individual education contracts the duties and responsibilities of employers and students over the three-year period, as well as clear consequences for unjustified contract termination.
- Establish an accreditation system for jobs offered by employers for practical training within the employer selection procedure. In this manner, a proper balance would be struck between schools' demand for a specific number of students (schools are funded per student) and employers' tendency to have more students in practical training than they can realistically train. The schools' and employers' demand for students should be analysed in the context of the total number of employers that could potentially recruit the students upon graduation. This implies that the Chamber of Economy and the Employers Federation need to assume responsibilities in defining enrolment quotas.
- Make the criteria for employer selection public and accessible to both employers and students before publishing the announcement for enrolment in secondary schools.
- Establish companies' economic performance as a basic criterion in the selection of employers. The companies interested in delivering practical training must be active for at least three years. Other criteria might include the number of students an employer has recruited among those who received practical training with that employer, the number of students who were recruited by other employers, and the number of students the employer paid student remuneration to in the previous year.

- Develop a system of quality assurance standards for practical training with employers, and define clear and transparent criteria for the selection of employers for participation in dual VET. The development of standards and criteria, as well as the process of employer selection, is the responsibility of the Chamber of Economy.
- Introduce a licensing system (independent competency assessment) for in-company trainers. The development of such a programme is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and the licensing is the responsibility of the Chamber of Economy.
- Improve the provision of information to employers about schools, programmes (including occupational standards), training delivery and professional competences that students should acquire. This could be done through a system similar to the MEIS application (informing schools about employers and practical training with employers) and would be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.
- Improve the practical training planning process and involve in-company trainers in the process. This is the only way to achieve an optimal synchronisation of school-based and work-based learning. Such a plan can only be developed once the practical training teacher or coordinator and the in-company trainer have established which programme outcomes cannot be implemented with a particular employer and have informed the school principal thereof. Then the school principal can decide in writing on the organisation of practical training to obtain those outcomes with another employer or in a school workshop. This would also be one of the ways to secure that practical training with the employer is delivered in accordance with the curriculum.
- Encourage schools to enter dual VET data into the MEIS in a timely manner, enabling timely access to the necessary data, their review and the analysis of the current state of play. Thus, they would allow the Ministry of Education and social partners to further develop and implement their dual VET monitoring and evaluation function.
- Develop a system of measures and incentives (trainings), based on which schools and employers would carry out more methodical analyses of the quality of dual VET implementation. Different methods and techniques (surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and so on) can be used for this purpose, in order to obtain answers from students, employers, practical training coordinators and teachers, and in-company trainers.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. The Montenegrin education system



Source: Ministry of Education (2019).

Annex 2. Sample characteristics

Schools by region and programme

Region	Number of schools by region	Programme	Number of schools by programme
Northern region	13	Cook	14
Central region	7	Waiter	10
Southern region	5	Mechanic	6
Total	25	Electrician	5
		Salesperson	5
		Hairdresser	4
		Fitter	4
		Installer	3
		Welder	2
		Baker	2
		Locksmith	2
		Car electrician	2
		Confectioner	1
		Agriculturist/gardener	1
		Carpenter	1

Respondents by role and region

Region	Practical training teachers		In-company trainers		Employers		Students		
Northern region	25		8		5		17		
Central region	20		3		6		33		
Southern region	13		9		6		39		
No answer					2		3		
Total	58		20		19		92		
	Works in grade		Completed training		Number of employees		Grade		
	I	51	Yes	7	Up to 10	5	II	75	
	II	52	No	13	11–50	3	III	14	
	III	47	Total	20	51–100	4	No answer	3	
					> 100	5			
								Achievement	
								Satisfactory	2
								Good	10
								Very good	27
								Excellent	47
								No exam	5
								No answer	1

Annex 3. Sample contract of student practical training

Number: _____

Place: _____

Date: _____

Pursuant to Articles 4 and 45 of Law on Vocational Education (*Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos 64/02 and 49/07 and *Official Gazette of Montenegro*, Nos 45/10, 39/13 and 47/17), the employer represented by (hereafter: employer) and the student, i.e. his parent/guardian or adopter, conclude

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACT of student practical training in an enterprise

Student's name and surname: _____

Student's place of birth and date of birth: _____

Parent/guardian/adopter's name and surname: _____

Student's and parent/guardian/adopter's dwelling place: _____

Student's previous education: _____

The educational programme the student attends: _____

Employer's name, seat and line of work: _____

Name and surname of and data on qualifications of the employee who is responsible for students' practical training in an enterprise: _____

The person in charge who, on behalf of the school, will cooperate with the employer in delivery of practical training of the student: _____

Article 1

The employer is obliged to realise the programme of practical training in line with state-approved educational programme lasting three years.

The volume of practical empowerment and knowledge the employer has to equip the student with (in hours) by grades is: _____

Beginning and duration of student's training is: _____

Timetable of practical training is: _____

The employer is obliged not to burden the student with tasks that are not linked with his training.

Article 2

If the defined contents and outcomes, for whatever reasons cannot be achieved, the employer is obliged to conclude a contract with another employer or ask for help from the institution to find another place where those contents and outcomes can be achieved.

Article 3

The employer and the school are obliged to organise delivery of practical training in such a way that students can attend their theoretical classes regularly.

Article 4

The employer is obliged to provide safety at work for the student and to look after the student's health during practical training.

Article 5

The employer is obliged to keep the record on attendance of practical training.

Article 6

The employer is obliged to allow the authorised person from school to monitor the delivery and quality of realisation of practical training by direct observation and looking through the defined documentation.

The employer is obliged to provide delivery of practical training programme in line with his working hours, but not longer than 36 hours a week.

Article 7

If uninterrupted practical training lasts for more than four (4) hours a day, the student has the right to a daily break lasting 30 minutes at least.

During the school year the student shall have at least eight weeks of leave if he is trained for more than nine months in an enterprise.

Article 8

During the realisation of practical training, first-grade and second-grade students shall be paid the monthly wage from the state budget amounting to 10% for first-graders and 15% for second-graders of an average net salary in Montenegro.

The employer is obliged to pay the monthly wage amounting to at least 20% of an average net salary in Montenegro to the third-grade student during practical training delivery.

Article 9

The employer is obliged to, in particular:

- provide students regular attendance of practical training and accomplishing work tasks;
- provide the conditions for the student to be able to acquire skills and competences in line with the programme by regularly attending practical training;
- keep record and documentation on the student's presence/attendance and achievements during practical training;
- provide protection during practical training in line with regulations that stipulate protection at work and familiarise the student with regulations;
- look after the student's health during work;
- make sure that the student, in addition to the vacation regulated by this law, has at least five more days for preparation of the final exam.

Article 10

The employer is obliged to provide all the necessary materials, machines, devices and tools and appropriate measures of hygiene-technical protection for practical training that has been agreed upon, the exam assessing knowledge and skills and other exams if they are held on his premises, rooms or workshops.

The products made or the value of services provided belong to the employer who delivers practical training or who organises the exams from paragraph 1 of this article.

Article 11

The student who is practically trained in an enterprise has the following duties:

- regularly attend practical training and other subjects at school in line with the educational programme and accomplish work tasks;
- act in line with instructions from employer and in-company trainers and school during practical training;
- keep neat student's diary during practical training;
- keep employer's business confidential;
- respect rules and code of conduct in an enterprise;
- act in line with regulations about safety at work;
- fulfil other obligations defined by individual contract on education.

Article 12

The level of achievement of student's practical training at an enterprise is assessed by the school and the employer at the end of each school year.

The manner and the procedure of assessment of practical training achievement from paragraph 1 of this article is prescribed by the ministry.

Article 13

Individual training contract shall be terminated if:

- it was concluded on the basis of inaccurate data and documents;
- the student has ceased to be a regular student in line with the law;
- safety at work has not been provided;
- the student is taken ill permanently by a disease which, in a doctor's opinion, can jeopardise life and health of employees and students;
- in other cases defined by the contract.

Article 14

If an individual training contract is terminated because the employer has not fulfilled his obligations, the school is obliged to conclude a new contract with another employer.

If the school does not provide practical training to a student at another enterprise, the student has the right to carry on with his education at school.

Article 15

If there is a change of employer, or owner of the employer, rights and duties from the individual training contract are transferred to the new employer if a parent/guardian/adopter has no objections.

Article 16

If the contract is not terminated mutually and on the basis of agreement, the school shall make a decision at the request of the interested party.

If the argument cannot be solved in line with paragraph 1 of this article, the Court in charge will solve it.

Article 17

The articles of Law on Vocational Education and General Law on Education defining the rights and obligations of students at school shall also apply for the students who are trained at an enterprise.

Article 18

Supervision over the execution of stipulations of this contract related to students training at an enterprise shall be conducted by inspection in charge of education.

Article 19

This contract shall be applied from the beginning of school year _____ until completion of education, i.e. at latest until _____ .

Student (parent/guardian/adopter): _____

Signature

Employer: _____

L.S.

Signature

School principal: _____

L.S.

Signature

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IVET	Initial vocational education and training
MEIS	Montenegrin Education Information System
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
VET	Vocational education and training

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