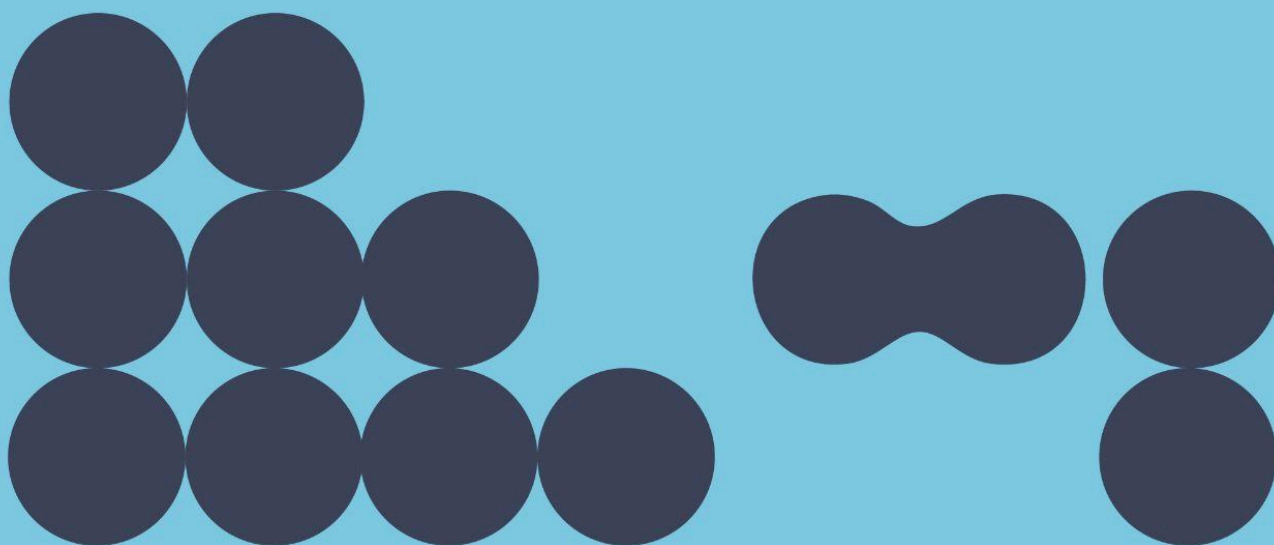




AUTONOMY IN VET:

Strengthening Institutions
to Meet Regional
Workforce Needs



Contents

1. Foreword	5
2. Methodology	8
3. Background and context	13
3.1. Main stages and trends in the development of the vocational education system in Ukraine	15
3.2. Analysis of labour market trends in economic sectors critical to Ukraine's recovery	18
3.2.1. Construction	19
3.2.2. Transport and logistics	22
3.2.3. Agriculture	26
3.2.4. Critical services	31
3.3. Mapping of vocational education institutions and their capacity in the context of strengthening the labour market	37
4. Autonomy of vocational education institutions in Ukraine	42
4.1. Regulatory and legal framework for the autonomy of vocational education institutions	44
4.2. Stakeholder map: influence of key participants in the process of autonomy of vocational education institutions	47
4.3. Administrative autonomy	51
4.4. Financial autonomy	54
4.5. Pedagogical autonomy	57
4.6. Autonomy of partnerships and services	59
4.7. Autonomy of vocational education institutions abroad and in Ukraine: the view of international experts	62
4.8. Best practices of autonomy of vocational education institutions in Ukraine	65
5. Foreign experience in expanding the autonomy of vocational education and training institutions	73
5.1. Prerequisites and role of institutional autonomy in reforming vocational education and training in selected countries	74
5.2. Common and distinctive features of the autonomy of vocational education and training institutions in selected countries	76
5.2.1. Administrative autonomy	78
5.2.2. Financial autonomy	79
5.2.3. Pedagogical autonomy	80
5.2.4. Autonomy of partnerships and services	81
6. Vocational education institutions involved in the project	83
6.1. Project sample and the role of vocational education institutions in the development of autonomy	84
6.2. Results of the VET needs assessment survey	86
6.2.1. General information	86

6.2.2. Target groups	88
6.2.3. Administrative autonomy	90
6.2.4. Financial autonomy	94
6.2.5. Pedagogical autonomy	98
6.2.6. Autonomy of partnerships and services	100
6.3. Key findings of the survey	106
6.3.1. Ideas and advantages	106
6.3.2. Challenges and obstacles	107
6.3.3. Suggestions identified	107
Appendix 1. Indicators of selected countries by level of development of the VET system and current economic development	108
Appendix 2. International experience in expanding the autonomy of vocational education and training institutions: country case studies	111
Estonia	112
Israel	115
Netherlands	117
Germany	120
South Korea	123
Czech Republic	125
Sweden	128

Legend

GDP – gross domestic product
IDPs – internally displaced persons
VPU – higher vocational school
PPP – public-private partnership
SEU – State Employment Service
SSS – State Statistics Service
DFEO – dual form of education
EDEBO – Unified State Electronic Database on Education
EFF – European Education Fund
HEI – Higher Education Institution
VET – vocational education institution
IT – information technology
KNT – municipal non-profit association
CMU – Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
CSR – corporate social responsibility
MES – Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
ILO – International Labour Organisation
M&T – material and technical base
NAQ – National Agency for Qualifications
NPA – regulatory legal act
NPC – Training and Practical Centre
ODA/OVA – Regional State Administration / Regional Military Administration
LCA – local self-government body
TG – territorial community
TOT – temporarily occupied territories
VET – Vocational Education and Training
FPEO – pre-higher education
FEU – Federation of Employers of Ukraine
CPE – Centre for Professional Excellence
CPTO DSZ – Centre for Vocational and Technical Education of the State Employment Service



CHAPTER 1

FOREWORD

The vocational education system in Ukraine plays a key role in providing the country with the skilled workforce needed to support the economy during wartime and in the period of post-war recovery and reconstruction. Its modernisation is determined not only by the need to respond to labour market dynamics, but also by the ability to form institutions capable of operating effectively in conditions of high uncertainty and growing regional challenges. In this context, the issue of **autonomy of vocational education institutions (VEIs)** is of particular importance.

In global practice, the autonomy of VET institutions is a key mechanism for their ability to be effective players in the country's economic development process. Greater freedom in decision-making allows institutions to respond more quickly to labour market needs, expand cooperation with businesses and communities, develop modern educational programmes and improve the quality of training. At the same time, the process of strengthening autonomy requires an adequate regulatory and legal framework, a clear management system, financial instruments and support from the state and international partners (if necessary), as well as the conscious use of autonomy mechanisms and instruments by institutions for their own development for the benefit of the community, region and country as a whole.

The problem of autonomy for VET institutions in Ukraine in the current conditions lies in their limited ability to act independently in key areas of management, financing, teaching and cooperation with a wide range of partners. Although the vocational education reform that began in 2019 aims to increase autonomy, the process of its implementation is, in most cases, still at the starting point. The reason lies not only in the inadequacy of the regulatory and legal framework, but also in the readiness and ability of VET institutions to use the tools already available and move forward in developing their own autonomy.

EasyBusiness (a non-governmental organisation) is implementing the project "Autonomy in Vocational Education: Strengthening Institutions to Meet Regional Labour Needs" as part of the multi-donor initiative Skills4Recovery, which is funded by the European Union, Germany, Poland, Estonia, Denmark and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL). is implementing the project **"Autonomy in vocational education: strengthening institutions to meet regional labour needs"**. The goal is to strengthen the capacity of 40 VET institutions, enabling them to operate more confidently and autonomously, diversify their sources of income and effectively meet the needs of regional employers. In total, this represents about 4% of all VET institutions in Ukraine, but successful piloting will allow the practices developed to be scaled up in VET institutions that are ready for change.

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities for expanding the autonomy of VET institutions. The structure of the report provides a sequential presentation: from consideration of the prerequisites and context of the development of vocational education in Ukraine in general and the autonomy of VET institutions in particular (Section 3), to an examination of various aspects of autonomy based on the experience of Ukraine and a number of other countries (Sections 4 and 5), to an analysis of the needs of the project's target VET institutions, their challenges and opportunities (section 6) (based on [a survey](#) of VET institutions on autonomy). The report contains appendices, the data from which supplement the main sections. A separate document with [a glossary](#) (in **Ukrainian**) complete was also created, containing all the key terms used in the report.

In the future, as part of the project, key recommendations for changes in the vocational education system and a target model for autonomous VET institutions will be developed, and a roadmap for expanding the autonomy of VET institutions will be drawn up. The final product of the project is intended to serve as a practical guide for policy and management decisions in the near future.

The main idea of the report is that the autonomy of VET is not only a tool for the internal development of individual institutions, but also a necessary condition for the formation of a flexible, effective and competitive training system capable of meeting the needs of Ukraine's economy during the stage of recovery and integration into the European space.

This report was prepared by Yaroslav Zhydyk, Viktoria Klimchuk, Snizhana Leu-Severinenko, Pavlo Rad, Yuriy Sukhorskyi, Vadym Fedchyshyn, Valeria Shemshuchenko and Nataliia Yaroshenko.



CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is based on the use of various approaches and methods selected with regard to the specifics of each stage of the work. Different data collection and analysis tools were used for individual sections, which made it possible to respond most adequately to the research questions and ensure a comprehensive coverage of the topic.

An important aspect of this report is the recording of the results of the analysis of VET autonomy as of the period prior to the entry into force of the new Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (12 September 2025). This creates a baseline for further monitoring of changes in the management system and autonomy of VET and will allow:

- ensure a comparative analysis of the development of VET autonomy in the short and medium term;
- assess the actual extent of the expansion of VET rights and responsibilities in the process of implementing the new law;
- identify progress, barriers and regional differences in the implementation of autonomy;
- build an evidence base for further management decisions, policy recommendations and planning of support from state bodies and international partners.

Preserving baseline data on the state of VET autonomy prior to the introduction of the new legal framework is important for ensuring consistent monitoring, strategic planning and evaluation of the effectiveness of reforms in the field of vocational education. This approach can be considered another "starting point" for further comparison and measurement of the effectiveness of VET autonomy development. A preliminary "starting point" is a study by the European Training Foundation (ETF, 2019-2020), which focused on three types of autonomy – managerial, financial and pedagogical – and identified the autonomy to create and develop partnerships and provide services (hereinafter referred to as autonomy of partnerships and services) as the fourth area of development of VET autonomy. The latter area can be considered both cross-cutting, especially when it comes to management and finance, and separate, in line with the current trend of active development of VET partnerships with businesses/companies.

The **labour market research** methodology (section 3.2.) was based on a comprehensive approach to comprehensively assess the labour market situation with a focus on four sectors: construction, transport and logistics, agriculture and critical services. These sectors are important for Ukraine's economy (in terms of employment, GDP formation, etc.) and critical for the country's post-war recovery, as defined in the Ukraine Facility programme and approved by representatives of the Skills4Recovery programme. A desk study reviewing scientific publications, reports and regulatory documents was conducted to form the theoretical basis for qualitative analysis. A quantitative analysis was carried out based on statistical data from official sources of the State Employment Service (SES) and the State Statistics Service (SSS) of Ukraine to ensure the representativeness and reliability of information on employment dynamics, unemployment, labour market structure and other key indicators. In addition, data from popular job portals was analysed to identify real trends in the current demand and supply of labour. The results of studies by other institutions, organisations and authorised executive bodies were also examined, which allowed various expert assessments to be included in the analysis.

To **map VET institutions and analyse their capacity** (section 3.3) in the context of strengthening the labour market in critical sectors of the economy, statistical data on VET institutions (data from the Ministry of Education and Science) were used, which made it possible to comprehensively assess the geographical, sectoral and quantitative coverage of the education

network. Attention was also paid to the relevance of education to current criteria and labour market needs, which was determined through an in-depth analysis of numerous studies. The report analysed reports from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and official information from relevant ministries to identify the prospects and potential of VET to meet future labour market needs. To facilitate the perception of information in the report, all target institutions of this project, regardless of their forms and types, are hereinafter referred to as **vocational education institutions (VEIs)**.

The methodology for researching **the current and expected autonomy of VET institutions** (Section 4) is based on a comprehensive analysis of regulatory and legal acts, stakeholder mapping, and the processing of opinions, practices, and views on the autonomy of VET institutions obtained from Ukrainian and foreign experts during interviews. Therefore, Section 4 records the current state of managerial (staffing, property management, transfer of institutions to management), financial (sources of funding, use of budgetary and extrabudgetary funds), pedagogical autonomy (development of educational programmes, methodological activities, professional development) and autonomy in the development of partnerships and provision of VET services (contractual cooperation, resource mobilisation, vocational training, paid educational services, assessment, etc.). The considerations of foreign experts cover the possibilities and potential measures for developing the autonomy of VET in Ukraine based on the practices of other countries.

Continuing the study of foreign experience, special attention is paid to **the experience** of Estonia, the Republic of Korea, Germany, Sweden, Israel, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, which demonstrate different approaches to the aspects of autonomy of vocational education and training (VET) institutions that are relevant to this project (Section 5). The methodology for selecting countries for case studies was based on comprehensive criteria covering both educational and macroeconomic parameters. The primary filter was membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which ensures the availability of comparable statistics and the reliability of institutional practices. Additional factors taken into account included the proportion of students enrolled in VET at upper secondary level, public expenditure on initial VET and on training for people facing difficulties in the labour market as a percentage of GDP, the level of decentralisation, the level of employment, economic growth dynamics, etc. (Appendix 1). An important aspect was the relevance of the experience to Ukraine, particularly given the similarity of historical development, transformational challenges, and the interaction between education and the labour market. Therefore, the selected countries belong to the group of high-income countries according to the World Bank classification, which creates a specific context – significant investment in education, a developed institutional base and a stable economy. The inclusion of lower-income countries in the sample could have provided a better comparison with conditions similar to those in Ukraine. Due to limited access to systematic, comparable data on the autonomy of VET institutions in countries with less developed economies, as well as the smaller number of successful and documented examples of such reforms, they were not included in the analysis. In general, in many lower-income countries, the autonomy of VET institutions remains at an early stage of implementation or has a different meaning, which complicates meaningful comparison and borrowing of experience for Ukraine. Therefore, the results of the study better reflect approaches that are implemented in the context of high resource availability and mature management systems, but the Ukrainian context requires critical adaptation and careful selection of autonomy tools, taking into account the realities of post-war recovery, limited financial resources and uneven levels of institutional capacity.

To **identify the needs** of the 40 target HEIs, a **survey** was conducted using Google Forms (Section 6). The main objective was to collect comprehensive information for mapping and analysing the target HEIs, assessing their current level of autonomy and identifying needs for further capacity development, in particular for the planned development of a training programme based on the needs of the institutions. The questionnaire consisted of 68 questions, organised into seven thematic sections, namely:

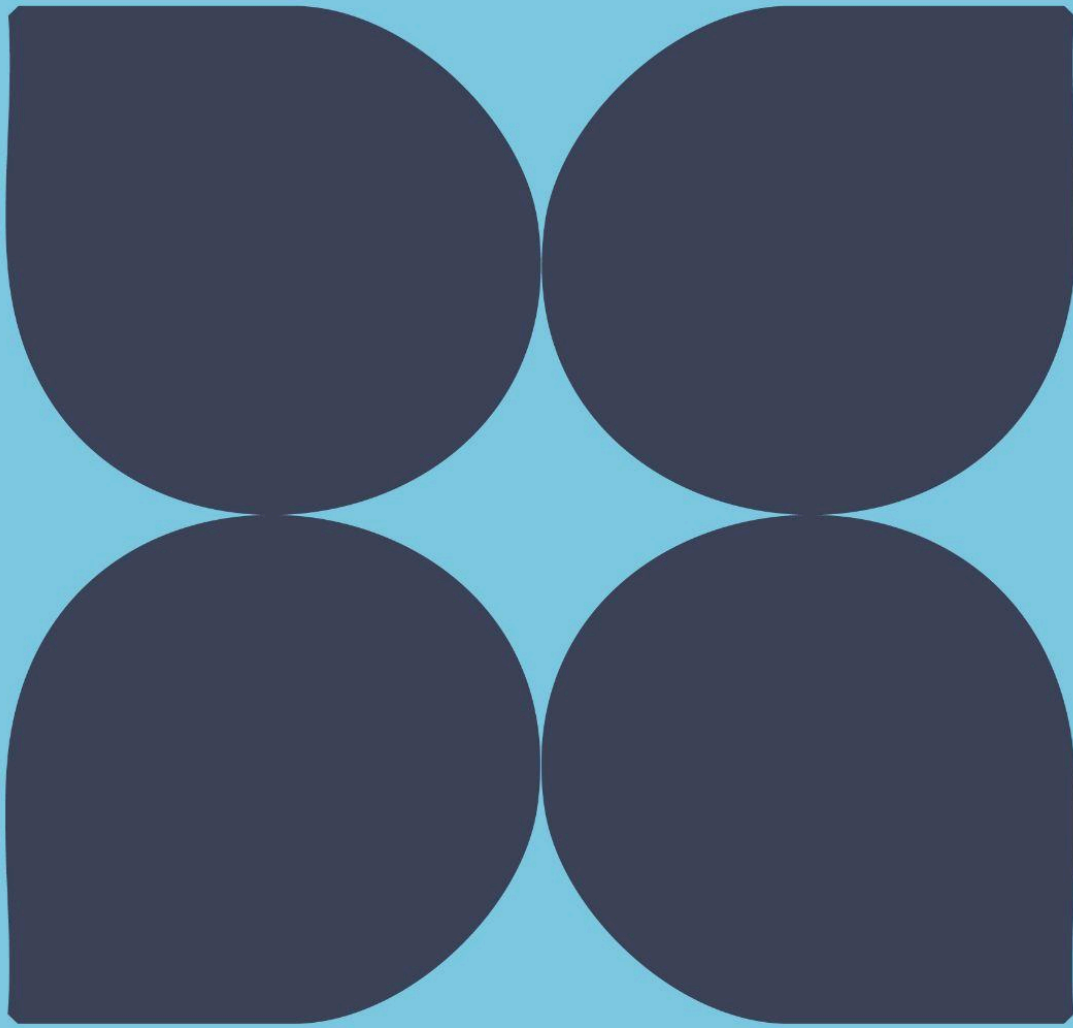
1. General information (8 questions) – basic data about the institution and key economic sectors of its activity;
2. Target groups (9 questions) – opportunities and obstacles in working with different age groups, including vulnerable populations;
3. Financial autonomy (9 questions) – existing mechanisms for financial independence, barriers to its expansion and needs for new tools;
4. Managerial autonomy (13 questions) – the institution's ability to make strategic and personnel decisions and involve stakeholders in management;
5. Pedagogical autonomy (5 questions) – the institution's ability to implement new programmes, methodologies and assessment criteria;
6. Partnership development and service provision (17 questions) – potential for cooperation with businesses, communities, donors, other institutions, as well as a range of additional services, particularly those relevant in wartime conditions;
7. Proposals (7 questions) – open recommendations from respondents on topics for training on tools/approaches to strengthening autonomy.

As a result, 40 questionnaires were collected, of which three were excluded due to repetition or non-compliance with the respondent criteria (position and experience). For further analysis, 37 questionnaires from 37 institutions, completed between 8 and 28 July 2025, were used. The respondents were mainly deputy directors for educational and production work, less often directors and methodologists, with an average work experience of about eight years. The subjectivity of the respondents' assessments was tracked, as the questionnaire reflects their personal views on the current state of autonomy and its development prospects. Three target institutions – the Vocational Education Centres of the State Employment Service (VEC SES) – did not participate in the survey on their own initiative.

A special place in the methodology is occupied by the **interview** method, which was used to collect best practices, additional positions and opinions, and was used throughout all sections of the study. As part of the work, **interviews** were conducted **with 15 experts**, including 6 national experts representing key stakeholders (government, business, non-governmental organisations), seven representatives of Ukrainian VET institutions (four institutions participating in the project and three institutions that do not belong to the community of target VET institutions within this project), as well as two international experts. The interviews provided professional assessments, recommendations and insights into the current state of autonomy in VET, prospects for strengthening it to better meet the needs of regional labour markets, and ensuring the sustainable development of VET in Ukraine, taking into account international experience.

Analysis of the content of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (1998) and the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025), systematisation and classification of norms in the above areas, as well as assessment of the prospects for developing VET autonomy in the context of efficiency, flexibility and transparency of management, are planned to be used at the stage of creating a model of VET autonomy. The results of this analysis will be visualised

through comparative tables. This will allow us to clearly show the changes, new opportunities and limitations of VET autonomy in the current conditions of vocational education development and to develop recommendations for the practical implementation of the proposed model of VET autonomy.



CHAPTER 3

PREREQUISITES AND CONTEXT

Vocational education institutions in Ukraine are already actively moving away from the Soviet legacy and approaching autonomous functioning. During the Soviet period, they were completely centralised: the state determined the areas of training, enrolment numbers and training programmes, and the institutions worked in conjunction with large enterprises that provided practical training and employment.

As of 1990, there were 1,246 VET institutions in the Ukrainian SSR, with 643,400 students/trainees. In 2025, the VET network consists of 653 institutions, with 214,400 students. Both indicators have decreased by approximately half: VET by 47.6% and the number of students by 66.7%.

At the same time, the demographic situation has changed. Let us focus on the population indicator: as of 1 January 1990, the population of Ukraine was 51.8 million people, and according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimate, the population of Ukraine in 2025 will be 32.9 million people.¹ The IMF predicts a further decline in Ukraine's population by the end of this year and a gradual return of people to Ukraine starting in 2026. According to the fund's forecasts, Ukraine's population could reach 33.9 million in 2030. Therefore, the current optimisation of the VET network is a logical response to at least the demographic challenges of today, while the decentralisation of management and expansion of VET autonomy are aimed at developing their capacity to participate effectively in supporting and developing Ukraine's economy.

¹ [Population. International Monetary Fund](#)

3.1. MAIN STAGES AND TRENDS

The key periods and trends in the development of vocational education in Ukraine are important for understanding the context of this project.

Systematicity and planning. During the Soviet period, VET was completely centralised and dependent on the decisions of the central government, as it was created as an element of the planned economy. The state determined the areas of training, enrolment numbers and curricula. The administration of institutions and teachers operated exclusively within the framework of state plans and standards. For their part, VET institutions were tied to large enterprises, which also operated on a planned basis but systematically provided practical training and further employment for graduates.

Survival. In the 1990s, due to the economic crisis, funding for vocational education lost its priority, cooperation with enterprises declined, and the material base became outdated and continued to deteriorate. In the 2000s and 2010s, the system remained centralised: curricula and standards were strictly regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science, and institutions were unable to adapt programmes to the needs of regional labour markets or dispose of alternative income. During that period, there were periodic initiatives to increase the demand and prestige of vocational education, but the growing "need in society to have a higher education despite everything" led to a levelling of the importance of blue-collar professions.

Recovery. In 2010, Ukraine joined the Turin Process, an initiative of the European Foundation for Vocational Education and Training, and began a gradual move towards modernisation and a renewed focus on vocational education. With the start of decentralisation (2016), funding was partially transferred to the local level, but management, personnel policy, pedagogical standards and property management remained regulated at the national level. Full autonomy has not been achieved and remains fragmented to this day. In 2017, the EU Delegation supported the formulation of possible directions for future EU assistance in reforming the vocational education and training system in Ukraine.²

Assistance. In 2019, the EU4Skills: Better Skills for Modern Ukraine project was launched. It aimed to support the creation of a modernised vocational education system that would contribute to sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. Improvements to the system consisted of the effective implementation of a reform plan, optimisation of the VET network, increasing the attractiveness and quality of vocational education for men and women, and increasing its relevance to the labour market. At the same time, the Directorate of

² [AECOM. 2017](#)

Vocational Education was established within the Ministry of Education and Science, which contributed to a further significant step towards the restoration, prioritisation and development of the vocational education system.

Response and development. The COVID-19 pandemic and, subsequently, Russia's full-scale invasion exacerbated the challenges. The war caused infrastructure destruction, educational losses and mass displacement, which reinforced the need for strategic changes. The shortage of personnel became critical. For example, in the construction sector, the shortage reaches 70%, and more than 85% of vacancies are for professions taught in VET – electricians, builders, fitters, welders, cooks, confectioners, hairdressers, drivers, IT specialists, radio technicians, etc. Vocational education institutions are trying to respond to the challenges as best they can – they have mastered online learning, adapted to restrictions (especially those related to the security situation), continue to develop partnerships at various levels, have returned to face-to-face learning, etc.

Since 2016, Ukraine has been gradually developing a dual form of education (DFE). In 2017, it covered 54 professions through training in 49 programmes and in cooperation with more than 300 employers.³ In 2024, 16,900 applicants for 90 professions from 176 vocational education institutions studied under DEE programmes in 1,100 companies in key regions such as Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Lviv, Khmelnytskyi and Kyiv. The highest dynamics in the use of DFZO programmes was observed in 2018-2020 (2018/2019 – 250 vocational education institutions, 2019/2020 – 217 vocational education institutions). The reason for the decline in activity in 2020/2021 (192 ZPO and 161 ZPO in 2021/2022) was COVID-19,⁴ and in 2022/2023, despite Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, there was a slight increase in the number of vocational education institutions teaching under the DFZO (168 vocational education institutions).⁵ Currently, the Ministry of Education and Science is seeking to restore this level of dynamics and strengthen cooperation between education and business.

International partners are also providing significant support. In 2024-2025 alone, donors invested over UAH 500 million through the Ukrainian government in the creation and restructuring of 100 training and practical centres (TPCs) and the modernisation of 200 workshops. The EU and its member states (Poland, Germany, Estonia) have allocated over €58 million under EU4Skills and another €25.5 million to the Skills4Recovery programme. This allows for the strengthening of the material and technical base (MTB), the updating of adult qualifications and the restoration of damaged or displaced facilities.

The Ministry of Education and Science's Strategic Plan "Education of Winners" for 2027 envisages the transformation of vocational education and pre-higher vocational education (PHE) to ensure access to quality vocational education (including level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework⁶) and to prepare competitive personnel for the reconstruction of Ukraine. Key steps include a new Law on Vocational Education, modernisation of institutions, resumption of education in de-occupied territories, improvement of teachers' qualifications, development of partnerships with business, expansion of educational and production income, and promotion of vocational education among young people and adults.

³ [Ministry of Education and Science, 2017](#)

⁴ [Ministry of Education and Science](#)

⁵ [MES, 2023](#)

⁶ The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is designed to harmonise educational and professional qualifications. Level 5 of the NQF corresponds to the educational levels of junior bachelor and professional junior bachelor. It is obtained in vocational education institutions (colleges) after 9 or 11 years of schooling.

In September 2025, one of the key steps was taken: the new Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" came into force. It provides a clear roadmap for the development of VET autonomy (Article 34) and is the basis for the widespread introduction of new approaches to the development of vocational education, for example: a new type of VET institution – vocational colleges, individual educational pathways for applicants, the creation of supervisory boards in VET institutions, the expansion of the target group, simplified licensing and educational programme development conditions, external independent assessment, non-formal/informal education, etc.

At the same time, VET institutions themselves are developing initiatives. They are entering into partnerships with businesses, attracting additional funding (albeit with the necessary approval from the authorities), and creating new opportunities for training personnel. This combination of reforms, external support, and local initiatives forms the basis for a gradual transition to greater autonomy for VET institutions.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF LABOUR MARKET TRENDS IN ECONOMIC SECTORS CRITICAL TO UKRAINE'S RECOVERY

As of 2025, the labour market in Ukraine is in a phase of transformation: the war has significantly changed the structure of labour supply and demand. The gradual recovery of the Ukrainian economy outside the combat zone and structural economic changes are increasing the need for new workers. At the same time, active mobilisation and migration of the population have created significant challenges for employers. According to a study by the European Business Association, 71% of the companies surveyed experienced a significant shortage of skilled personnel in 2024.⁷ In addition, a 2025 labour market study by OLX Robota found that 65% of employers expect the staffing crisis to worsen.⁸ In addition to the general problem of shortages, the war has also created conditions for significant gender, sectoral and regional imbalances. According to a joint study by the State Employment Service and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, 82% of registered unemployed people are women.⁹ New trends in the labour market include retraining, reskilling and inclusiveness with maximum involvement of veterans, people with disabilities, older people and young people.

Despite the general difficulties in the labour market, each sector and field of activity also faces its own unique challenges. Four sectors that are critical to the country's post-war recovery were selected for detailed analysis. The most acute labour shortage is felt in the construction industry, where for 70% of the companies surveyed, staff shortages are a key factor limiting the increase in the volume of work performed. This is due to intensive mobilisation and the need for physical strength, which makes filling these vacancies very difficult. At the same time, demand is also growing in the transport and logistics sector, especially for passenger and rail transport workers. In agriculture, although shortages are not a major problem, there is a shortage of certain specialists, such as tractor drivers and machine operators, and there are also problems with informal and seasonal employment. In the IT sector, the number of job seekers is twice the number of vacancies, but there is a shortage in some professions. The profession of administrator continues to be in demand due to its importance for the operational activities of organisations, and the demand for massage therapists is growing in the context of the need to increase the provision of rehabilitation services.

⁷ [European Business Association, 2024](#)

⁸ [OLX Jobs](#)

⁹ [Helvetas Swiss, 2025](#)

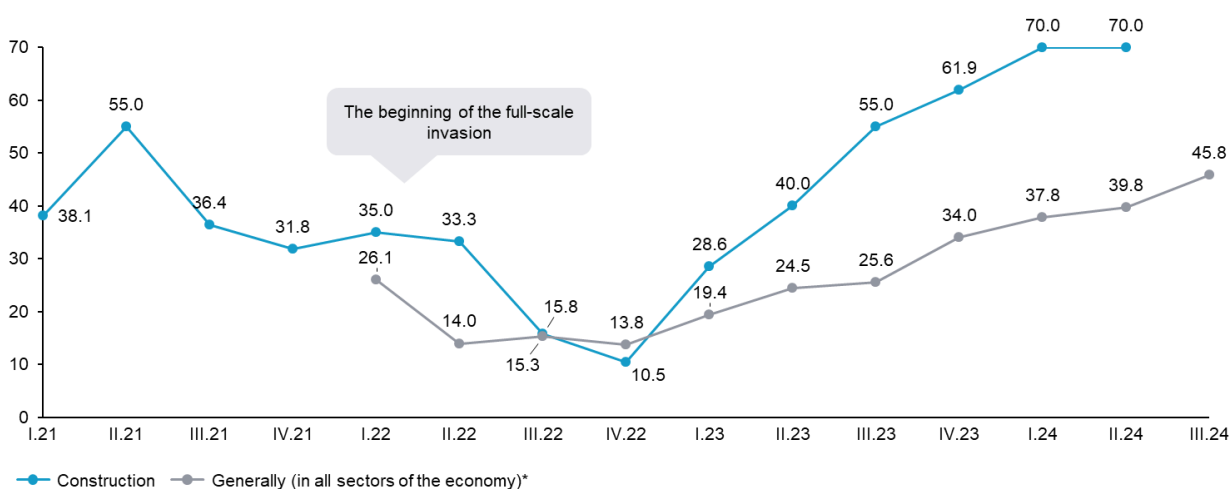
3.2.1. CONSTRUCTION

Construction plays a key role in the reconstruction and creation of fixed assets for production and non-production purposes. According to the DSS, construction accounted for ~1.6% of GDP in 2023 and ~1.3% in 2022. For comparison, in 2021, the construction sector accounted for 2.8% of GDP.¹⁰

Although construction volumes remain below 2021 levels, the sector is showing signs of gradual recovery. In 2023, the volume of goods and services produced in construction increased by 25% compared to 2022.¹¹ The construction of fortifications and shelters, corporate investment in infrastructure development, and the restoration of damaged residential and non-residential buildings have been among the key drivers of growth in the sector in recent years. This, in turn, has helped to maintain demand for labour. At the same time, intensive mobilisation has led to a significant reduction in the supply of labour on the market. According to individual interviews conducted in 2022, the proportion of employees serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in construction companies ranges from 25% to 60% on average.¹²

Thus, the recovery and growth of the sector is limited primarily by a shortage of personnel. According to the results of a survey published by the NBU in April 2024, for ~70% of the construction companies surveyed, the shortage of skilled labour is the most critical factor affecting business development in 2024.

Figure 1. Lack of skilled workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of construction companies to increase the volume of work performed, % of responses¹³



* The share is reported at the midpoint of each respective quarter (February for Q1, May for Q2, August for Q3, and November for Q4).

¹⁰ [State Statistics Service, 2025](#)

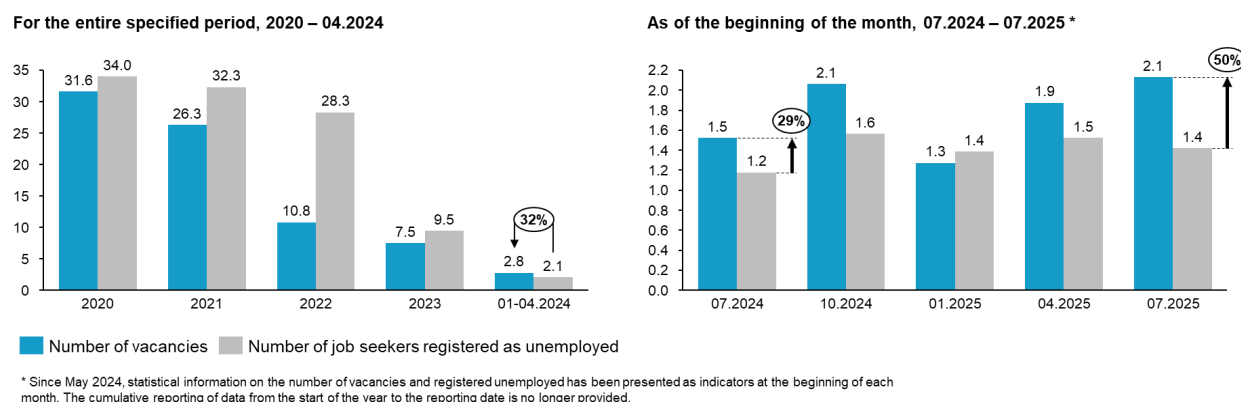
¹¹ [State Statistics Service, 2025](#)

¹² [Property Times, 2022](#)

¹³ [NBU, 2024](#)

The shortage of personnel in construction is also confirmed by published statistics from government agencies. In July 2024, the number of vacancies exceeded the number of unemployed by 29%, and in the same period of 2025, by 50% (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons in the construction sector, thousands of people¹⁴



A similar trend is shown by data from Robota.ua, one of the most popular job search platforms in Ukraine. In January-July 2025, the number of vacancies exceeded the number of active candidates by more than twice.

According to ILO estimates, in order to achieve the GDP target in 2032, the overall employment rate in Ukraine must increase by 67% compared to 2022, or by 37% compared to 2021. About 8.8% of employment growth in 2022-2032 should be provided by the construction sector (Section F of the Classification of Economic Activities). Calculations show that the number of employees in this sector is expected to more than double, from 689,000 in 2022 to 1.45 million in 2032 (see Table 1).¹⁵

Table 1. Proxy indicators of labour shortage intensity in construction

Proxy indicator	Value for 2021	Value for 2023	Latest available value	Source
Lack of skilled workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of enterprises to increase the volume of work performed, % of responses	40.3	46.4	70 (for the period from January to June 2024)	NBU
Number of vacancies per job seeker registered as unemployed	0.81	0.79	1 (as of 1 July 2025)	State Employment Service

¹⁴ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

¹⁵ [ILO, 2023](#)

Number of new vacancies per active job seeker ¹⁶	1.24	1.08	2 (for the period from January to mid-August 2025)	Robota.ua
Required employment growth by 2032 compared to 2022 to achieve the GDP target for 2032.	109.9 (2.1 times)			ILO, 2023

The DSZ study identifies the most sought-after skills in construction as working with equipment, using tools, working with technical documentation (in particular, the ability to interpret drawings, plans, technological maps, etc.), responsibility and the ability to work in a team. Demand for skills in working with the latest construction technologies and materials, including self-cleaning paints, self-repairing concrete, fire-resistant wood, etc., is also expected to grow (see Table 2). The study also notes that the key obstacle to organising internships for applicants is the complexity of ensuring occupational safety and the responsibility associated with it. At the same time, it emphasises the importance of cooperation between educational institutions and employers, as due to insufficient funding, applicants are unable to familiarise themselves with the necessary equipment and materials at educational institutions.¹⁷

The most sought-after professions are also mentioned in the results of a survey of individual construction companies. For example, Intergal-Bud notes difficulties in recruiting workers for physically demanding jobs (bricklaying and block laying, reinforcement, concrete and installation work), which have traditionally been performed by men. Blago (Ivano-Frankivsk) reports a shortage of almost all specialists, including engineers and bricklayers. Training and employment of engineers usually takes 3-4 months. City One Development highlights the high demand for welders, crane operators, special equipment operators and high-altitude installers.¹⁸

Table 2. The most sought-after professions in construction by skill level

Low-skilled workers	General labourers, unskilled workers
Skilled workers	Concrete workers, facade workers, tilers, installers, welders, electricians, plumbers, steel fixers, foremen, crane operators, bricklayers, finishers
Highly skilled workers	Engineers

The demand for labour in the construction sector is unevenly distributed across Ukraine's regions. Internal migration and the relocation of businesses have led to increased demand for real estate in the western and central regions (see Figure 3), particularly for residential and commercial properties. It is important to note that about 20% of the construction market is occupied by the restoration of critical infrastructure, which, in turn, also affects the regional

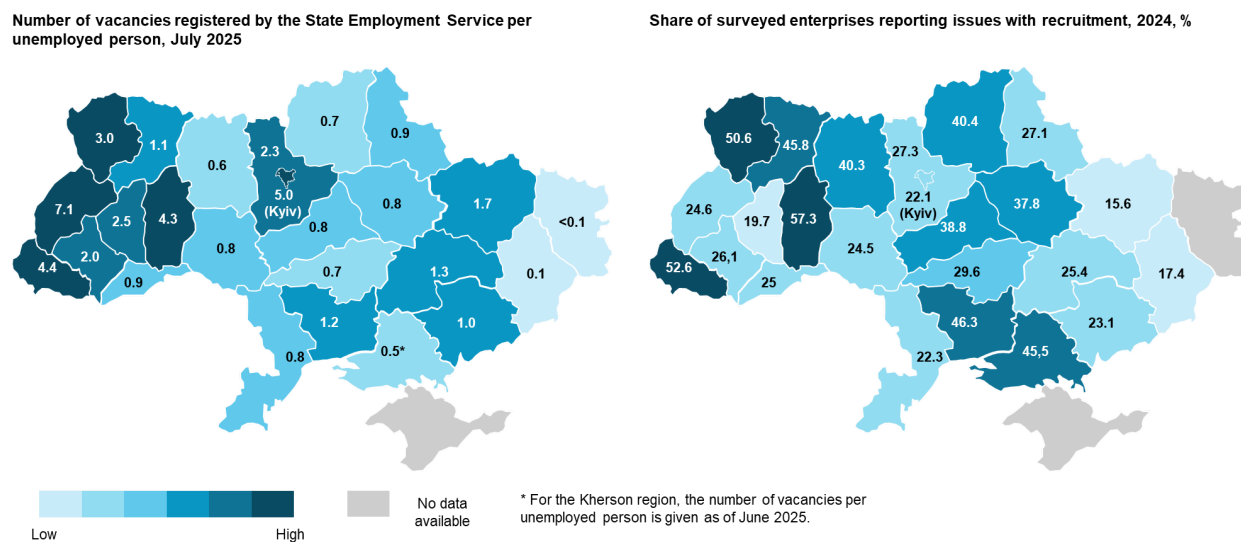
¹⁶ Data on vacancies that have not been filled since the previous year are not taken into account due to the lack of publication. The indicator reflects the number of new vacancies per active candidate.

¹⁷ [State Employment Service, 2023](#)

¹⁸ [Liga.net](#)

distribution of demand for civil engineering. For example, in the Dnipropetrovsk and Mykolaiv regions, one of the largest engineering projects in 2024-2025 is the construction of water pipelines, each over 100 km long, the need for which was caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant. In both regions, the number of vacancies in the sector exceeds the number of unemployed, and in the Mykolaiv region, more than 46% of employers in construction have faced challenges in recruiting workers.^{19,20}

Figure 3. Labour market in the construction sector by region²¹



3.2.2. TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

The transport and logistics sector in Ukraine plays a key role in ensuring the functioning of the national economy and its integration into global markets. In 2021, the sector accounted for about 5.4% of GDP, and in 2023 — 4.6%. The sector experienced a complete shutdown of the civil aviation industry and a sharp decline in transshipment volumes in Ukrainian ports. At the same time, population migration and intensive mobilisation led to an increase in demand for new workers, particularly in the ground transport sector (see Figure 4).

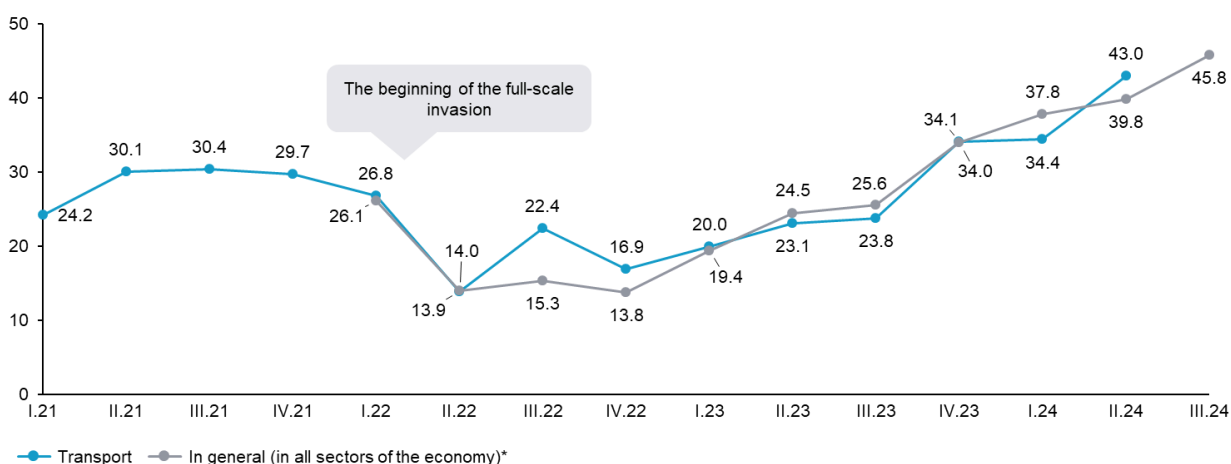
Between the fourth quarter of 2022 and the end of the second quarter of 2024, the share of respondents who indicated that labour shortages were one of the most influential factors limiting the possibility of increasing production grew steadily. This growth in the transport sector is consistent with the general trend of increasing importance of labour resources as the main factor determining production capacity.

¹⁹ [GMK Centre, 2025](#)

²⁰ [State Agency for Infrastructure Restoration and Development of Ukraine, 2025](#)

²¹ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

Figure 4. Lack of qualified workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of transport sector enterprises to increase the volume of services, % of responses²²

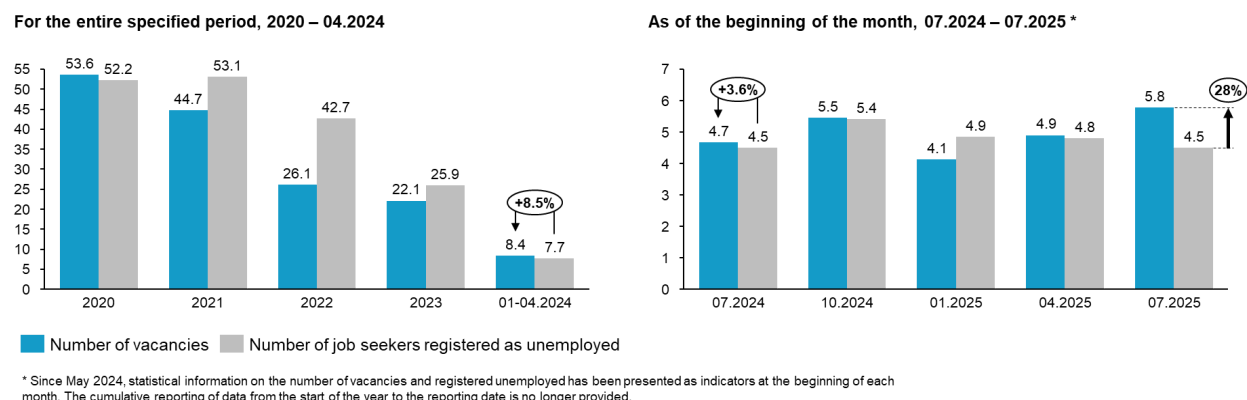


* The share is reported at the midpoint of each respective quarter (February for Q1, May for Q2, August for Q3, and November for Q4).

As of July 2025, the number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service in the transport, warehousing, postal and courier activities sector (Section H of the Classification of Economic Activities) exceeded the number of unemployed by ~28%. For comparison, in the same period of 2024, the number of vacancies almost matched the number of unemployed. It is important to note that demand varies significantly depending on the sector (see Figure 5). Thus, the highest number of vacancies per unemployed person is in the urban and suburban passenger land transport sector (5.1 vacancies per unemployed person), other passenger land transport (3.3), and auxiliary aviation transport services (6.5). For comparison, in 2021, there were 1.9 vacancies per unemployed person in the urban and suburban ground transport sector, while in other passenger ground transport, the number of unemployed exceeded the number of vacancies.

²² [NBU, 2024](#)

Figure 5. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons in the transport and logistics sector, thousands of people²³



Between January and mid-August 2025, ~94.7 thousand new vacancies in logistics, customs and warehousing were published on the Robota.ua platform, while the number of active job seekers was ~75.8 thousand, which corresponds to 1.3 vacancies per candidate. In 2024, there were 1.1 vacancies per candidate, and in 2023, there were 0.6. The most popular professions in the first half of 2025 are drivers, particularly categories B and C, and warehouse workers (see Table 3).²⁴

According to ILO estimates, ~7.3% of the employment growth in 2022-2032 needed to achieve the GDP target in 2032 will be provided by the transport and warehousing sector. Calculations show that the number of employees in this sector should increase by ~67%, from 935,000 in 2022 to 1.56 million in 2032.²⁵

Table 3. Proxy indicators of labour shortage intensity in the transport and logistics sector

Proxy indicator	Value for 2021	Value for 2023	Latest available value	Source
Lack of skilled workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of enterprises to increase the volume of work performed, % of responses	28.6	25.3	38 (for the period from January to June 2024)	NBU
Number of vacancies per job seeker registered as unemployed	0.84	0.85	1.2 (as of 1 July 2025)	State Employment Service
Number of new vacancies per active job seeker ²⁶	0.47	0.59	1.25 (for the period from January to	Robota.ua

²³ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

²⁴ [Robota.ua, 2025](#)

²⁵ [ILO, 2023](#)

²⁶ Data on vacancies that have not been filled since the previous year are not taken into account due to the lack of their publication. The indicator reflects the number of new vacancies per active candidate.

			mid-August 2025)	
Required employment growth by 2032 compared to 2022 to achieve the GDP target for 2032.	67			ILO, 2023

Table 4 lists the most in-demand professions in the sector. Demand is expected to grow for skills such as the use of GPS technologies and software for integrated logistics management, customer communication, teamwork, etc. The situation with staff shortages in the field of rail transport (train drivers, mechanics, fitters, etc.) remains difficult because, unlike in the field of land transport, due to the impossibility of independent training in the relevant professions, staff training is carried out almost exclusively on the basis of state educational institutions. In addition, the study emphasises the importance of closer cooperation between educational institutions and employers in order to update the curriculum.²⁷

Table 4. The most sought-after professions in the transport and logistics sector by skill level

Low-skilled workers	Loaders, pickers, warehouse operators, unskilled workers
Skilled workers	Drivers, machinists, logistics specialists, mechanics, dispatchers, car mechanics
Highly qualified employees	Engineers, fleet management and warehouse operations specialists, CRM system specialists

As of July 2025, the highest number of registered job vacancies per unemployed person in the transport and logistics sector is in Kyiv and the western regions (see Figure 6). In total, ~34% of all companies in the sector in Ukraine experienced difficulties in recruiting staff in 2024. In particular, more than 40% of companies in Volyn, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Rivne, and Cherkasy regions faced problems in finding employees. During the full-scale invasion, new logistics centres appeared in Ukraine, the operation of which directly affects the labour market in the logistics sector. In 2024, Epicentre K LLC launched the first phase of a new 57,000 m² logistics centre in Khmelnytskyi, and in February 2025, construction of the 77,000 m² PARK logistics centre was completed in Lviv.^{28,29} Construction of the ~150,000 m² Formatsiya industrial park is also underway in Lviv. The park is expected to provide ~3,600 new jobs.^{30,31} It should be noted that the largest employers in the sector remain state-owned companies, in particular JSC Ukrzaliznytsia and JSC Ukrposhta, which together employ more than 220,000 people as of 2022.³²

²⁷ [State Employment Service, 2023](#)

²⁸ [Ukrainian Retailers Association, 2025](#)

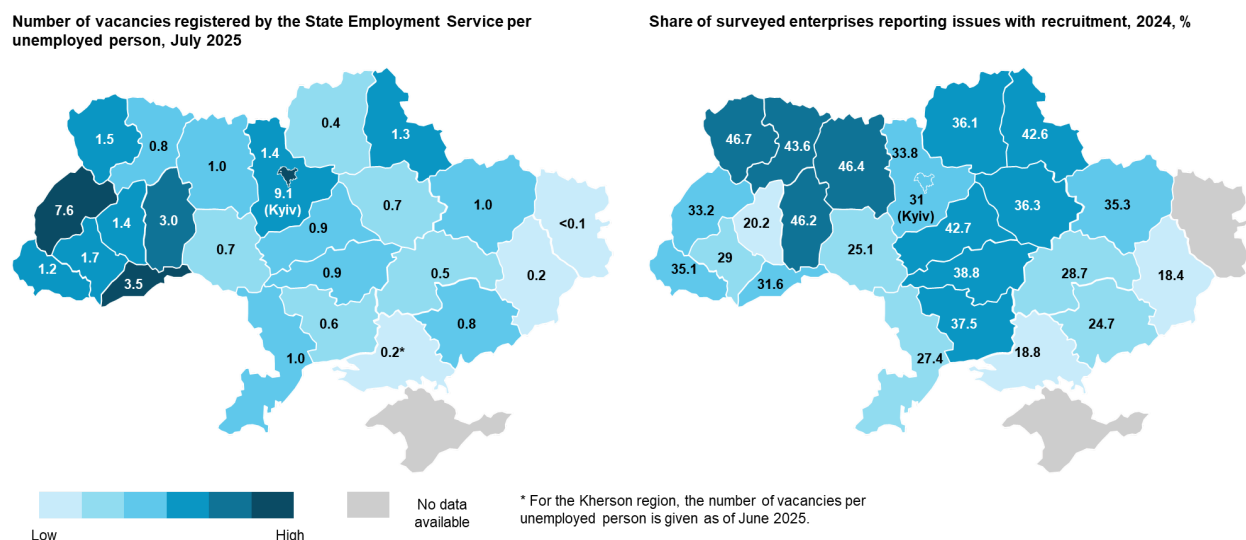
²⁹ [Alterra Group, 2025](#)

³⁰ [Interfax-Ukraine, 2024](#)

³¹ [Investment and Project Management Department of the Lviv City Council, 2025](#)

³² [YouControl, 2022](#)

Figure 6. Labour market in the transport and logistics sector by region³³



3.2.3. AGRICULTURE

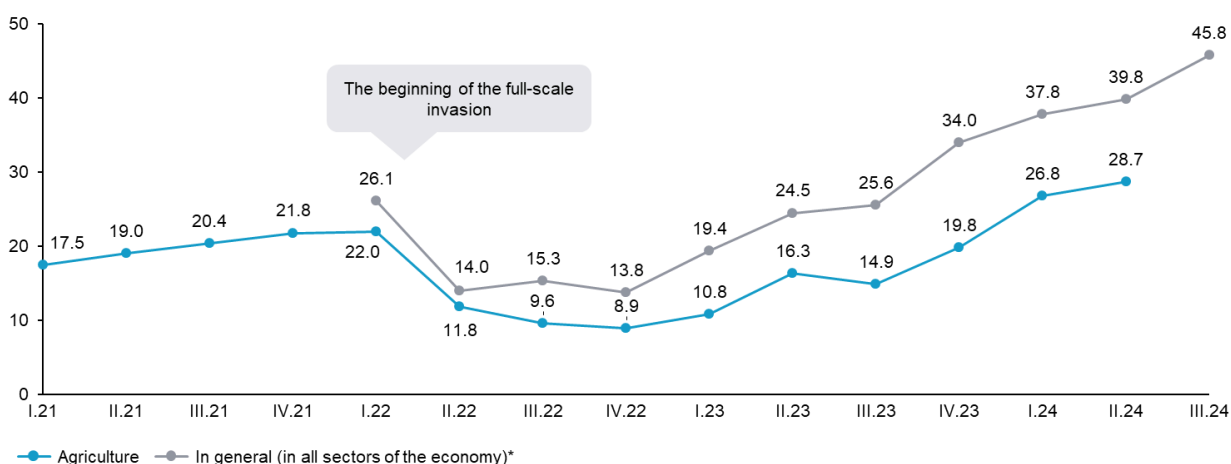
Agriculture in Ukraine is one of the key sectors of the economy, accounting for a significant share of foreign trade and determining the country's role in the global food system. In 2021, approximately 17% of the employed population aged 15-70 worked in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Despite the sector's share of GDP remaining at the 2021 level of 11% in 2022, the sector experienced a 25% decline in output. However, in 2023, the sector's share of GDP rose to 12%, and production increased by 11% compared to 2022 (see Figure 7).³⁴

As in other sectors, the demand for labour among agricultural entities was affected by active hostilities, population migration and mobilisation. At the same time, after the start of the full-scale invasion, labour shortages were not the only problem facing the sector. Agricultural producers had to deal with unstable electricity supplies, logistics disruptions, soil contamination, lack of financial resources, etc. According to the NBU, in the second quarter of 2024, only ~29% of respondents cited the shortage of skilled workers as one of the most significant factors limiting production growth, which is 11 percentage points below the average for all sectors of the economy. This does not deny the existence of a labour shortage in the sector, but it does indicate that it is often not a key factor holding back the industry's recovery.

³³ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

³⁴ [State Statistics Service, 2025](#)

Figure 7. Lack of skilled workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of enterprises in agriculture to increase the volume of production, % of responses³⁵

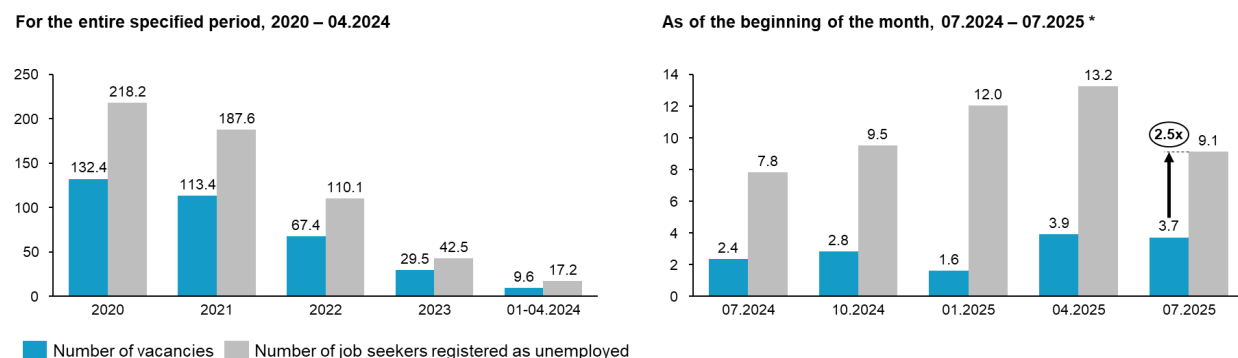


* The share is reported at the midpoint of each respective quarter (February for Q1, May for Q2, August for Q3, and November for Q4).

According to the State Employment Service, as of 1 July 2025, there were approximately 2.5 unemployed persons per vacancy in the sector (see Figure 8). However, labour demand varies significantly across subsectors. In particular, in freshwater fishing (NACE 03.12), the number of vacancies is twice the number of unemployed job seekers, and in the cultivation of other annual and biennial crops, the number of vacancies per unemployed person reaches 2.7.

³⁵ [NBU, 2024](#)

Figure 8. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, thousands of people³⁶



* Since May 2024, statistical information on the number of vacancies and registered unemployed has been presented as indicators at the beginning of each month. The cumulative reporting of data from the start of the year to the reporting date is no longer provided.

In addition to reports from government agencies, data from alternative sources should also be considered. For example, between January and mid-August 2025, ~16.8 thousand new vacancies in the agriculture, agribusiness and forestry sector were published on the Robota.ua platform, while the number of active job seekers was 5.7 thousand people. Thus, in the first half of 2025, the sector was characterised by an average of almost three vacancies per job seeker.³⁷ This discrepancy between official statistics and private platforms can potentially be explained by the high level of informal employment in agriculture in Ukraine compared to other sectors, as the State Employment Service only registers vacancies that offer formal employment. In particular, in 2021, ~45.5% (1.4 million people) of all informally employed people in Ukraine aged 15-70 worked in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.^{38,39}

According to an ILO study, about 12.6% of the employment growth needed to achieve Ukraine's GDP target for 2032 should come from agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The number of people employed in this sector is expected to increase from 1.94 million in 2022 to approximately 3.02 million in 2032 (by 55.5%) (see Table 5). It is important to note that the estimate is based on the assumption that by 2032, labour productivity in Ukraine will recover to 2021 levels and show linear growth in the intervening years.⁴⁰

³⁶ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

³⁷ [Robota.ua, 2025](#)

³⁸ [State Statistics Service, 2022](#)

³⁹ [Kurkul, 2024](#)

⁴⁰ [ILO, 2023](#)

Table 5. Proxy indicators of labour shortage intensity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector

Proxy indicator	Value for 2021	Value for 2023	Latest available value	Source
Lack of skilled workers as one of the most influential factors limiting the ability of enterprises to increase the volume of work performed, % of responses	19.7	15.4	27 (for the period from January to June 2024)	NBU
Number of vacancies per job seeker registered as unemployed	0.6	0.69	0 (as of 1 July 2025)	State Employment Service
Number of new vacancies per active job seeker ⁴¹	1.34	1.59	2.9 (for the period from January to mid-August 2025)	Robota.ua
Required employment growth by 2032 compared to 2022 to achieve the GDP target for 2032.	55			ILO, 2023

The vast majority of professions in demand in the agricultural sector require vocational education. According to the results of a study by Helvetas Ukraine and the State Employment Service, the profession of tractor driver-operator in agricultural (forestry) production became the most sought-after in Ukraine in 2024-2025. The importance of updating the material and technical base and methodological base of vocational education is also emphasised, since the agricultural equipment used by enterprises is often more modern than that used by students, and as a result, employers have to provide additional training for their employees themselves. It is also important to note that small farms have a greater need for versatile specialists who understand all the key aspects of agriculture and are able to work with a variety of equipment, while medium and large enterprises are more likely to seek employees with knowledge and skills in more specific areas of work, such as precision farming, automated systems, etc.(see Table 6).^{42,43,44}

⁴¹ Data on vacancies that have not been filled since the previous year are not taken into account due to the lack of their publication. The indicator reflects the number of new vacancies per active candidate.

⁴² [State Employment Service, 2023](#)

⁴³ [Kurkul, 2025](#)

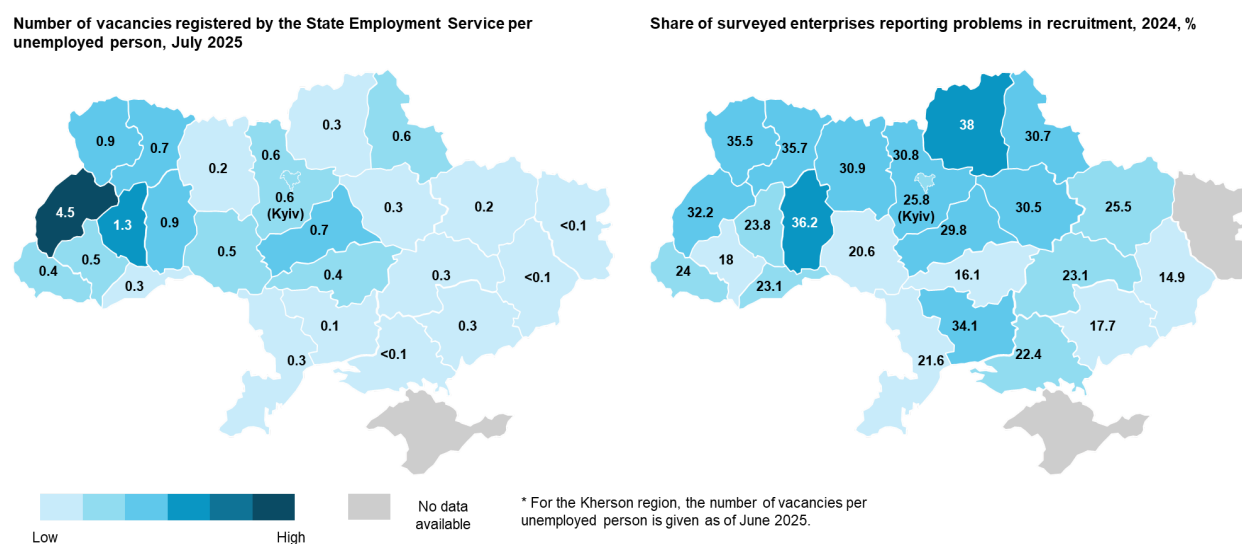
⁴⁴ [AgroPortal, 2025](#)

Table 6. Most sought-after professions in the agricultural sector by skill level

Low-skilled workers	Unskilled workers
Skilled workers	Tractor drivers, truck drivers, combine harvester operators, tractor operators, machine operators, mechanics, production maintenance specialists, agricultural production maintenance workers, operators of technological equipment (elevators, drying lines, etc.), mechanics, welders, foresters
Highly skilled workers	Engineers, agronomists, veterinary doctors, enterprise managers, hydraulic engineers

According to the State Employment Service, in July 2025, the only regions where the number of vacancies exceeded the number of registered unemployed in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector were Lviv and Ternopil (see Figure 9). In contrast, in 13 regions, mainly in eastern and southern Ukraine, the number of unemployed is more than twice the number of vacancies. As of March 2025, ~52 thousand hectares of agricultural land are contaminated with explosive objects.⁴⁵ The problem of mined territories is particularly acute in the Kharkiv, Kherson and Donetsk regions.⁴⁶

Figure 9. Labour market in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector by region⁴⁷



⁴⁵ [The Page, 2025](#)

⁴⁶ [Ukrinform, 2024](#)

⁴⁷ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

3.2.4. CRITICAL SERVICES

The modern service sector in Ukraine needs qualified personnel to ensure the country's stability, economic growth and social recovery, including specialists who ensure the development of information technology (IT), support public health and the effective functioning of service processes. The IT sector forms the basis of digital transformation, ensures the continuity of business and public services, and creates high added value and jobs even in crisis conditions. Employees who specialise in physical recovery and disease prevention contribute to the comprehensive rehabilitation process for military personnel and veterans. At the same time, the work of qualified administrators and managers in the field of effective organisation of work and customer processes is essential for the smooth and uninterrupted functioning of enterprises.

Information technology

The IT sector generates high added value and provides significant foreign exchange earnings from exports. In 2024, Ukraine exported computer services worth ~\$6.4 billion, accounting for 37.4% of total service exports and 11.5% of total exports. While in 2011-2021 the sector's exports grew by ~27% annually, in 2022 they grew by only 6%, in 2023 they decreased by 8%, and in 2024 they decreased by 4%. At the same time, the industry continues to play an important role in Ukraine's economy – the share of the information and communications sector in the country's GDP grew from 4.7% in 2021 to 5.3% in 2023.⁴⁸

The data provided in this section by the State Statistics Service refer to sections 62 (computer programming, consulting and related activities) and 63 (information services) of the Classification of Economic Activities, unless otherwise specified.

Compared to other sectors described in this report, the Ukrainian IT sector is quite adaptable and resilient, partly due to the relatively high mobility of IT companies and the ability of their employees to work remotely. In addition, this sector often offers salaries that are significantly higher than the average for Ukraine. In 2020-2021, according to the State Employment Service, the number of unemployed job seekers in the IT sector was on average more than twice the number of available vacancies, and in 2022, there were almost 4 unemployed candidates per vacancy (see Figure 10). The number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies on Robota.ua, where ~30.2 thousand vacancies and 31.5 thousand active job seekers in the IT sector were registered.⁴⁹

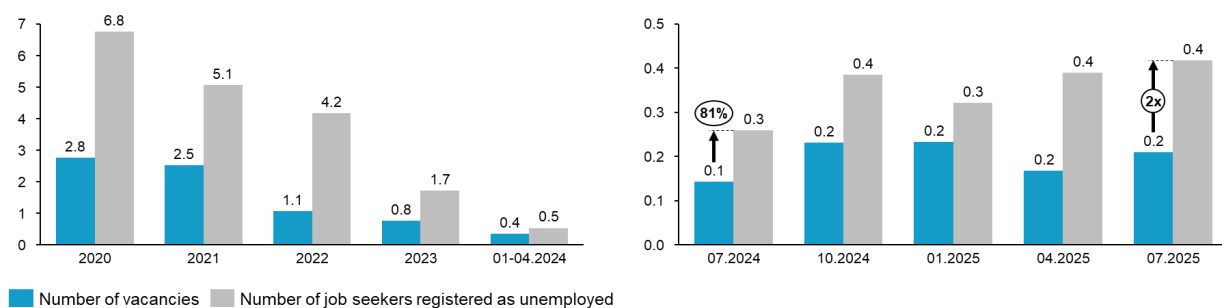
⁴⁸ [NBU, 2025](#)

⁴⁹ [Robota.ua, 2025](#)

Figure 10. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons in the IT sector, thousands of people⁵⁰

For the entire specified period, 2020 – 04.2024

As of the beginning of the month, 07.2024 – 07.2025 *



* Since May 2024, statistical information on the number of vacancies and registered unemployed has been presented as indicators at the beginning of each month. The cumulative reporting of data from the start of the year to the reporting date is no longer provided.

According to an ILO study, about 1.5% of the employment growth in 2022-2032 needed to reach Ukraine's GDP target in 2032 should come from the information and telecommunications sector (KVED Section J). The study shows that the number of employees in this sector should increase by approximately 46.7%, from 276 thousand people in 2022 to 405 thousand people in 2032.

Table 7. Proxy indicators of labour shortage intensity in the IT sector

Proxy indicator	Value for 2021	Value for 2023	Latest available value	Source
Number of vacancies per job seeker registered as unemployed	0.5	0.4	0 (as of 1 July 2025)	State Employment Service
Number of new vacancies per active job seeker ⁵¹	1.2	0.5	0.96 (for the period from January to mid-August 2025)	Robota.ua
Required employment growth by 2032 compared to 2022 to achieve the GDP target for 2032.	46 ⁵²			ILO, 2023

Table 8 lists the most in-demand IT professions. In addition to technical skills, employers in the IT sector require candidates to know English. There are more and more vacancies offering remote work appearing on the labour market in this sector. According to Dou.ua, in March 2025, the number of remote vacancies increased by ~39% compared to the same period in 2024.^{53,54}

Table 8. The most sought-after professions in the IT sector by skill level

⁵⁰ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

⁵¹ Data on vacancies that have not been filled since the previous year are not taken into account due to the lack of their publication. The indicator reflects the number of new vacancies per active candidate.

⁵² The indicator applies to the entire information and telecommunications sector (KVED Section J).

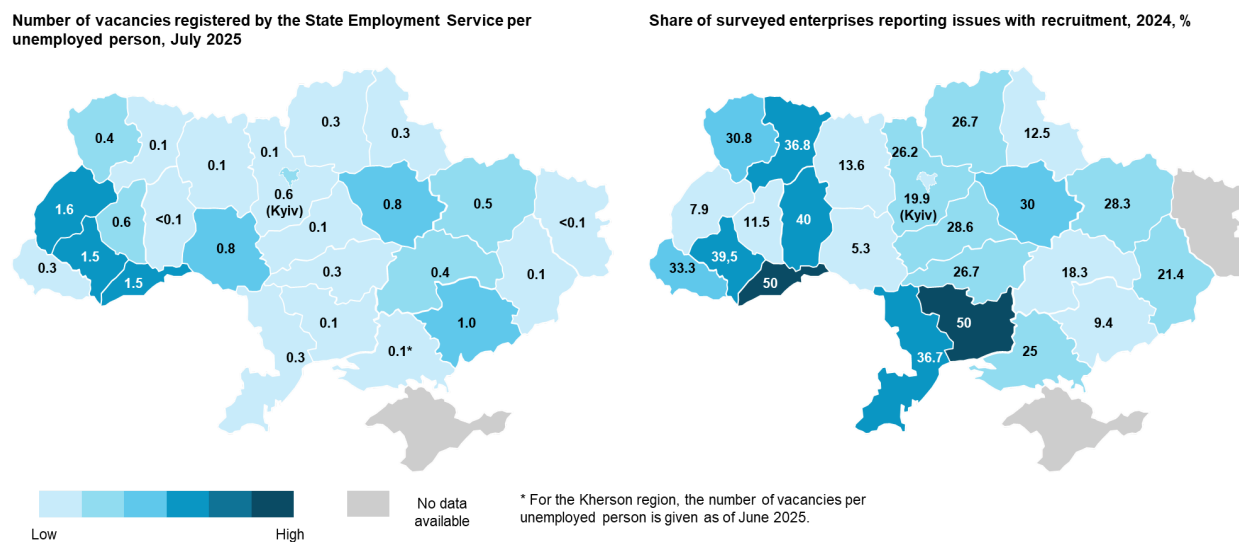
⁵³ [Dou.ua, 2025](#)

⁵⁴ [State Employment Service, 2023](#)

Low-skilled workers	Data entry operators, junior support staff, call centre operators
Skilled workers	Software testers, front-end developers, network technicians, technical support specialists
Highly skilled workers	Machine learning engineers, software architects, software engineers, cybersecurity specialists, database administrators, IT project managers

As of July 2025, the number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service in the IT sector exceeds the number of unemployed job seekers in only three regions, namely Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi (see Figure 11). On average, 22% of companies in the information and telecommunications sector in Ukraine faced recruitment challenges in 2024. For comparison, this figure was 15% in 2023. The IT sector is characterised by relatively low dependence on the regional distribution of labour. This is due to the specifics of the industry, in which remote working opportunities play a key role, allowing companies to flexibly form teams of specialists located in different regions of the country and abroad.

Figure 11. Labour market in the IT sector by region^{55,56}



⁵⁵ The share of surveyed enterprises reporting problems with recruitment (figure on the right) refers to respondents from the entire information and telecommunications sector (NACE Section J).

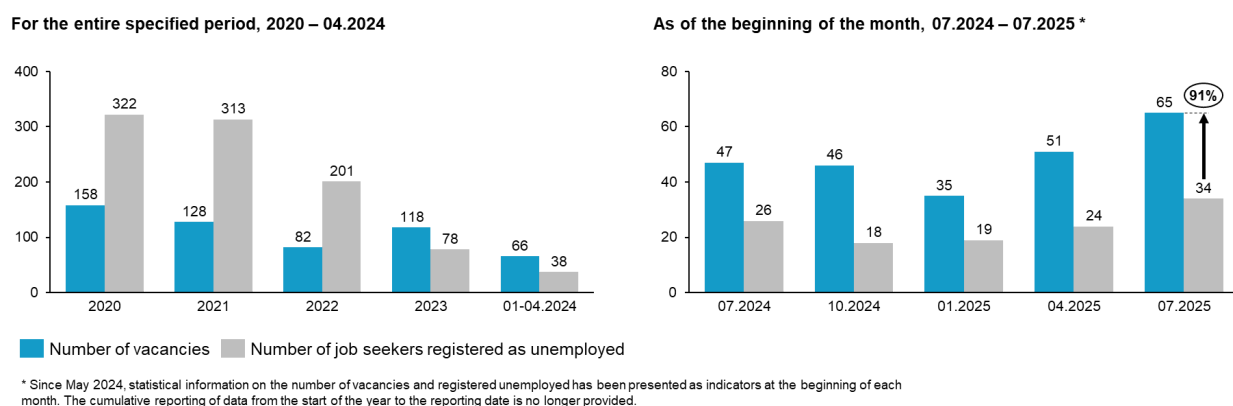
⁵⁶ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

Physical therapy and rehabilitation

Physical therapy and rehabilitation are an important part of modern medicine, and the profession of massage therapist is becoming increasingly relevant, especially in the context of growing demand for rehabilitation services in Ukraine.

During 2020-2022, the number of unemployed job seekers consistently exceeded the number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service for the professions of massage therapist and sports massage therapist. However, starting in 2024, there will be more than one vacancy per unemployed person, and in July 2025, the number of vacancies exceeded the number of unemployed by 91%. As of 2023, more than 78% of unemployed job seekers in the massage therapist profession were women (see Figure 12).

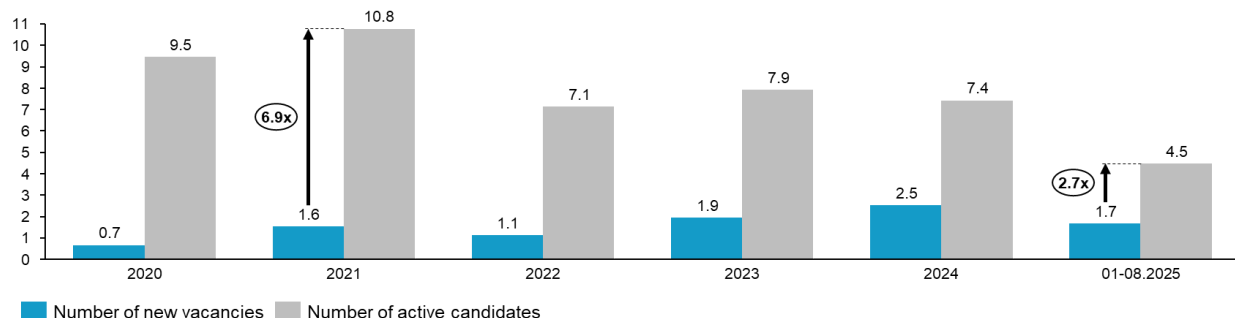
Figure 12. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons in the massage therapist profession, persons⁵⁷



In addition to official statistics, it is also worth considering data from alternative sources. The number of massage therapist vacancies published on Robota.ua is significantly lower than the number of active job seekers each year. Thus, in 2020-2021, there were, on average, more than 9 candidates per vacancy. However, after the start of the full-scale invasion, the number of candidates decreased sharply, while the number of new vacancies increased. In January-August 2025, there were about 2.7 candidates per vacancy, which is more than three times lower than in 2020-2021 (see Figure 13).

⁵⁷ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

Figure 13. Number of new vacancies and active job seekers on the Robota.ua platform in the massage sector, thousands of people



The significant decrease in competition among candidates in the massage sector is likely due to the growing demand for rehabilitation services in Ukraine. Thus, the profession of massage therapist is becoming more socially significant and in demand in the labour market.

Administrative management

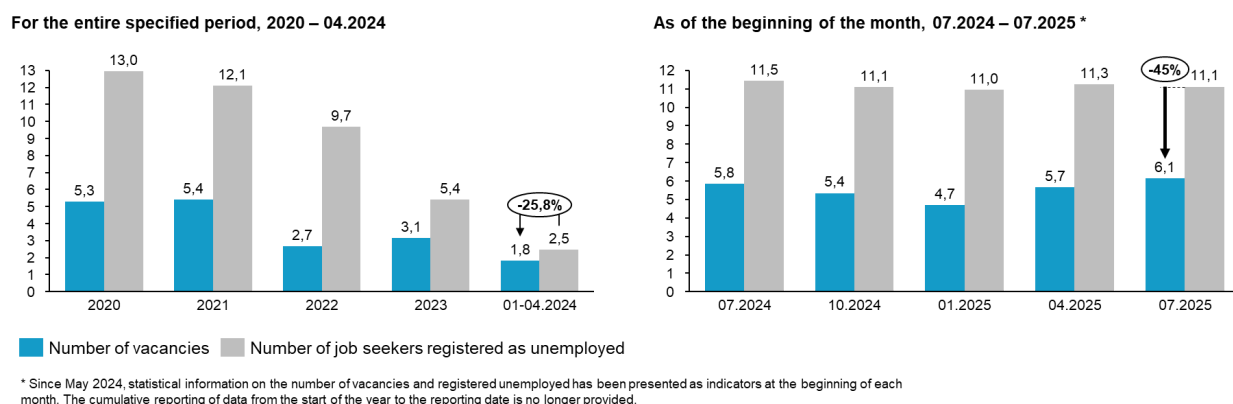
There is currently a steady demand for administrative management specialists on the market. The role of an administrator is quite versatile and in demand in organisations of various types of economic activity and forms of ownership. All this affects the nature of the shortage and demand for these specialists. Among the factors that significantly exacerbate the problem are the requirements for multifunctionality, the complexity and uniqueness of management processes, competition for qualified specialists, and insufficient training of personnel in this field in general.

The greatest demand for administrative managers in Ukraine is observed in the following sectors: the public sector and public administration, small and medium-sized business organisations, non-profit and public organisations, the service sector, in particular the hotel and restaurant business, trade, logistics, as well as educational and medical institutions. According to information from the State Employment Service, the profession of "administrator" and other related variations was among the most in demand and ranked 8th in terms of the number of vacancies in 2025, with 3.2 thousand offers.⁵⁸

According to the State Employment Service, in 2020-2021, there were approximately 2.5 candidates per vacancy. 2022 was the peak, reaching almost 4 unemployed per vacancy, after which the number of vacancies rapidly declined – in the first quarter of 2024, the difference was only 25.8%. Over the past year, the ratio has stabilised at approximately two candidates per vacancy (see Figure 14).

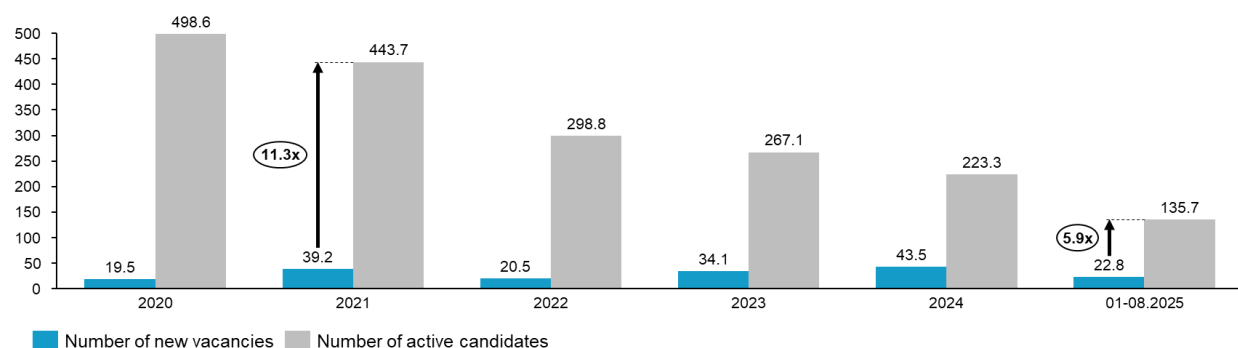
⁵⁸ [State Employment Service](#)

Figure 14. Number of vacancies registered by the State Employment Service and unemployed persons by profession: administrator, thousands of people⁵⁹



Let us also consider data from alternative sources. The number of administrator vacancies published on Robota.ua is significantly lower than the number of active job seekers each year (see Figure 15). Thus, in 2020-2021, there were more than 11 candidates per vacancy. However, in 2022-2025, there was a trend of a steady increase in the number of vacancies on the one hand and a significant decrease in the number of active candidates on the other. As a result, today there are on average about 6 candidates per administrator vacancy.

Figure 15. Number of new vacancies and active job seekers on the Robota.ua platform for the profession of administrator, thousands of people



It is also worth noting that all these vacancies belong to different fields, and therefore candidates cannot be universally interchangeable, which also complicates the selection process and increases the search time. In general, with the increase in business and services, there will be a growing need for qualified specialists who ensure organisational order, coordination of work and quality customer service. Therefore, the profession of administrator will retain its importance and demand in the labour market in the coming years.

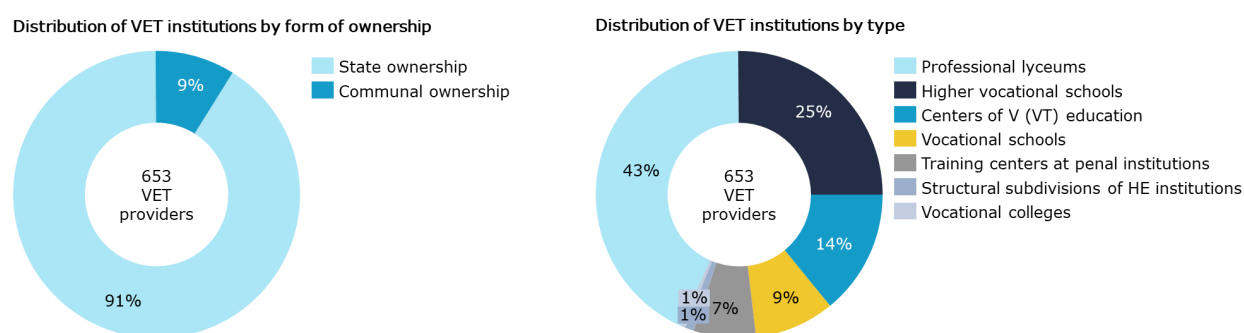
⁵⁹ [State Employment Service, 2025](#)

3.3. MAPPING OF VET INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CAPACITY IN THE CONTEXT OF LABOUR MARKET STRENGTHENING

Vocational education in Ukraine can be obtained through a wide network of formal and informal education institutions, as well as through informal education. The mapping of VET institutions and the assessment of their capacity in this report focuses on formal education institutions. Non-formal education institutions have the potential to gradually strengthen their capacity through the EIT, but this issue is not currently a key focus of study and is therefore presented in a generalised form.

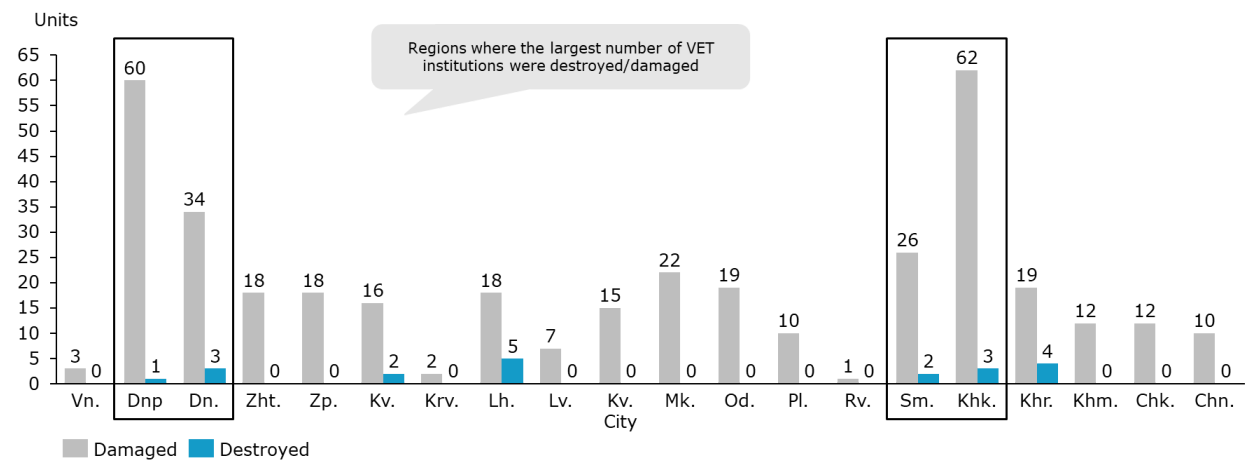
Formal vocational education in Ukraine is represented by a network of VET institutions. As of early 2025, **there are 653 VET institutions** in Ukraine – 595 state-owned and 58 municipal. Of these, 278 are vocational lyceums, 160 are higher vocational schools, 94 are vocational (vocational-technical) education centres, 61 are vocational-technical schools, 50 are training centres at penal institutions, 7 are VET institutions that are structural subdivisions of higher education institutions, and 3 are vocational colleges. According to the EDEBO, VET institutions are most concentrated in the Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv and Vinnytsia regions, which remain the leaders in terms of the number of applicants (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Distribution of VET institutions by form of ownership and type as of early 2025, %



Due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the infrastructure of vocational education institutions is suffering significant losses. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, as of August 2025, 20 vocational education institutions were destroyed and 384 were damaged. The regional distribution of damaged and destroyed vocational education institutions is shown in Figure 17.

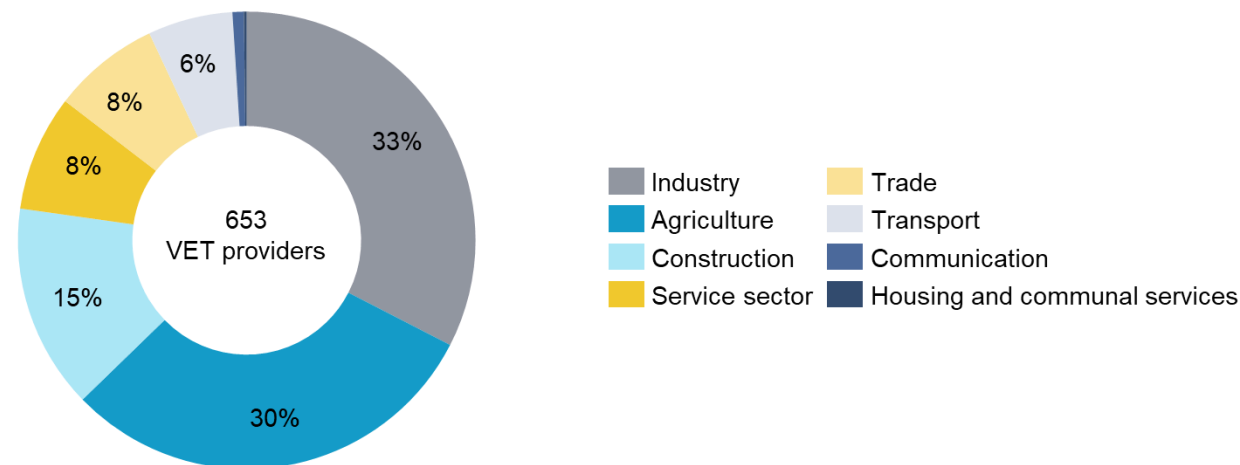
Figure 17. Number of damaged and destroyed VET institutions by region as of August 2025.



There are 9 UXOs with no communication in the temporarily occupied territories (TOT): Luhansk region – 6 UXOs, Kherson region – 1 UXO, Donetsk region – 2 UXOs. A total of 60 educational institutions have been relocated, including those in Luhansk (12), Kherson (9), Donetsk (2) and Zaporizhzhia (16) regions.

The largest number of VET institutions are focused on training specialists for industry (32.5%) and the agro-industrial complex (see Figure 18). Only one institution in Ukraine trains specialists in housing and communal services, although, according to research by the Federation of Employers of Ukraine (FEU), the water supply sector is currently the most deficient (53% of vacancies remain unfilled).⁶⁰

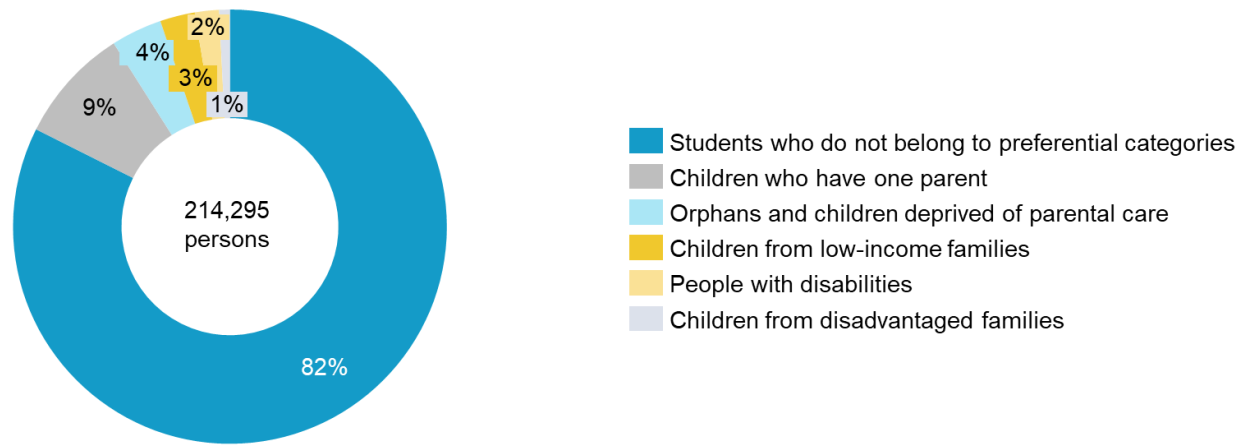
Figure 18. Distribution of VET institutions by sector as of the beginning of 2025, %



⁶⁰ [Federation of Employers of Ukraine, 2025](#)

The total audience of vocational education seekers is 214,395 people. Of these: people with disabilities (3,840 people), orphans and children deprived of parental care (8,230 people), those with one parent (18,501 people), those from dysfunctional families (1,668 people), and those from low-income families (5,591 people) (see Figure 19).

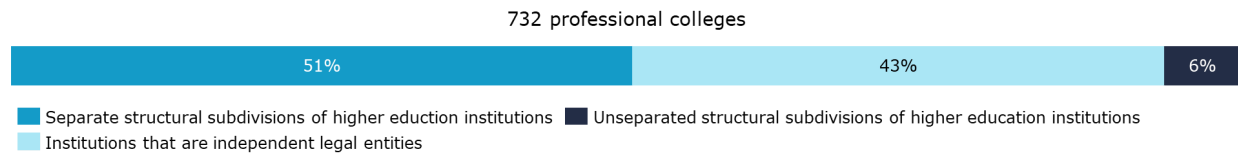
Figure 19. Distribution of VET applicants by preferential category %



In the 2023-2024 academic year, 81,900 VET graduates (76.6%) found employment in their field of study, particularly in such sectors as industry (27%), trade and services (21.4%), agriculture (15.3%), transport (15.1%), construction (11.6%), housing and communal services and non-productive consumer services (9.4%) and communications (0.2%). 17,900 graduates (16.7%) remained unemployed, 6,500 young people (6.1%) continued their education, and 600 young people (0.6%) were called up for military service.⁶¹

There is also a network of **732 vocational colleges** in Ukraine. Of these, 370 are separate structural units of higher education institutions, 46 are non-separate structural units of higher education institutions, and 316 are educational institutions that are independent legal entities (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Distribution of vocational colleges by type, %



They offer vocational education and training upon completion of a junior bachelor's degree (5th level of the National Qualifications Framework). Although this is a step towards higher education, the focus remains on the applied and practical aspects of the profession. There were

⁶¹ NV. 2025

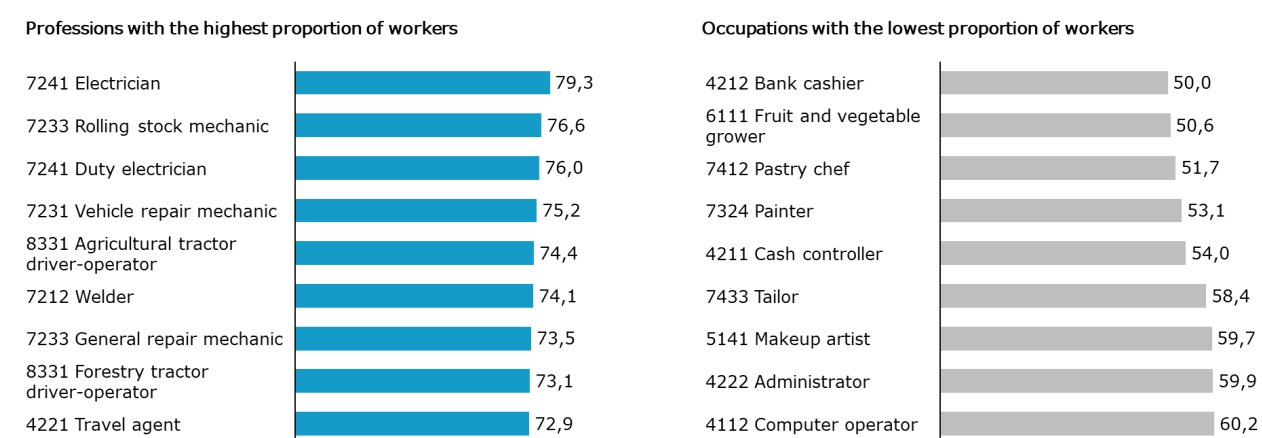
51 FPE institutions in the TOT, all of which were relocated from the Luhansk (16), Kherson (6), Donetsk (13) and Zaporizhzhia (16) regions. The total number of FPE institutions is 416,488.

The State Employment Service provides vocational training to registered unemployed persons at the expense of the Ukrainian State Unemployment Insurance Fund. **Eight of the 11 existing DSZ vocational training centres** are operating in the Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy and Kharkiv regions. The PES VET centres in Luhansk, Donetsk and Kherson regions have ceased operations due to the full-scale invasion and partial occupation of the territories.⁶² The PES VET training programmes cover 95 professions and 335 educational programmes (including 92 partial qualifications) lasting up to 10 months.

A network of adult education centres and other vocational training providers offers informal training to the adult population, offering a wide range of short-term courses and programmes. They often collaborate with formal education institutions to provide state-recognised certificates upon completion of training. This category of training providers is highly adaptable to the needs of its target groups or partners. The quality of training is determined by the target audience's engagement with a particular course, and their autonomy is greater than that of formal education institutions.

According to a study by the International Solidarity Fund, it is easiest for graduates to find jobs in professions related to technical maintenance, transport and agriculture (see Figure 21). One of the main reasons for postponing employment is continuing education: 70% of vocational education graduates continue their education in higher education institutions, while the rest attend vocational courses at employment centres, private vocational courses or training sessions.⁶³

Figure 21. Top 10 professions by share of employed graduates, %⁶⁴



Further economic development and post-war reconstruction will create even greater demand for new personnel. According to the results of a study by the M.V. Ptukha Institute of Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Ptukha Institute of Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, in order to ensure real annual GDP growth of 4% during 2025-2030, the demand for labour will grow at a faster rate (up to +10%) than the supply of labour (up to +7%). Overall, this means that there will

⁶² [State Employment Service, 2024](#)

⁶³ [International Solidarity Fund, 2024](#)

⁶⁴ [International Solidarity Fund, 2024](#)

be fewer people competing for each vacancy in Ukraine than there are now. The situation is particularly acute in agriculture and industry, where the demand for workers will exceed the number of applicants by 30-40% each year starting in 2026.⁶⁵ According to preliminary estimates by the Ministry of Economy, a shortage of ~4.5 million people is expected in the labour market over the next decade.⁶⁶ These trends are confirmed by the ILO's assessment, according to which the need for additional workers will be even higher: Ukraine will need 8.6 million additional workers.⁶⁷ In other words, in order to achieve the GDP target in 2032, employment in Ukraine must increase by 67% compared to 2022 levels and by 37% compared to pre-war levels. Approximately 60% of this additional employment should come from the service sector, 27.4% from industry, and 12.6% from agriculture. This includes 4.08 million (47.6%) jobs requiring medium-level qualifications. Regarding the educational requirements for these additional jobs, it is estimated that achieving the GDP target will require 4.73 million additional workers with higher education, 2.27 million workers with secondary education, and 1.58 million workers with basic education. In particular, the construction sector will need an additional 318,000 vocational education graduates, transport and logistics – 218,000, agriculture – 362,000, and IT – 4,000.⁶⁸

The above brief analysis of Ukraine's vocational education system in 2025 reveals significant structural limitations that hinder its ability to fully meet the needs of the labour market in critical sectors. Despite a sufficient level of graduate employment (76.6% in 2023-2024) and a basic institutional framework, the system is experiencing a constant decline in enrolment, low average enrolment (370 people), and the destruction of infrastructure due to Russia's armed aggression (damage or loss of 178 vocational education institutions, 12 of which have been completely destroyed). This reduces its potential to quickly replenish human resources in regions with high labour demand.

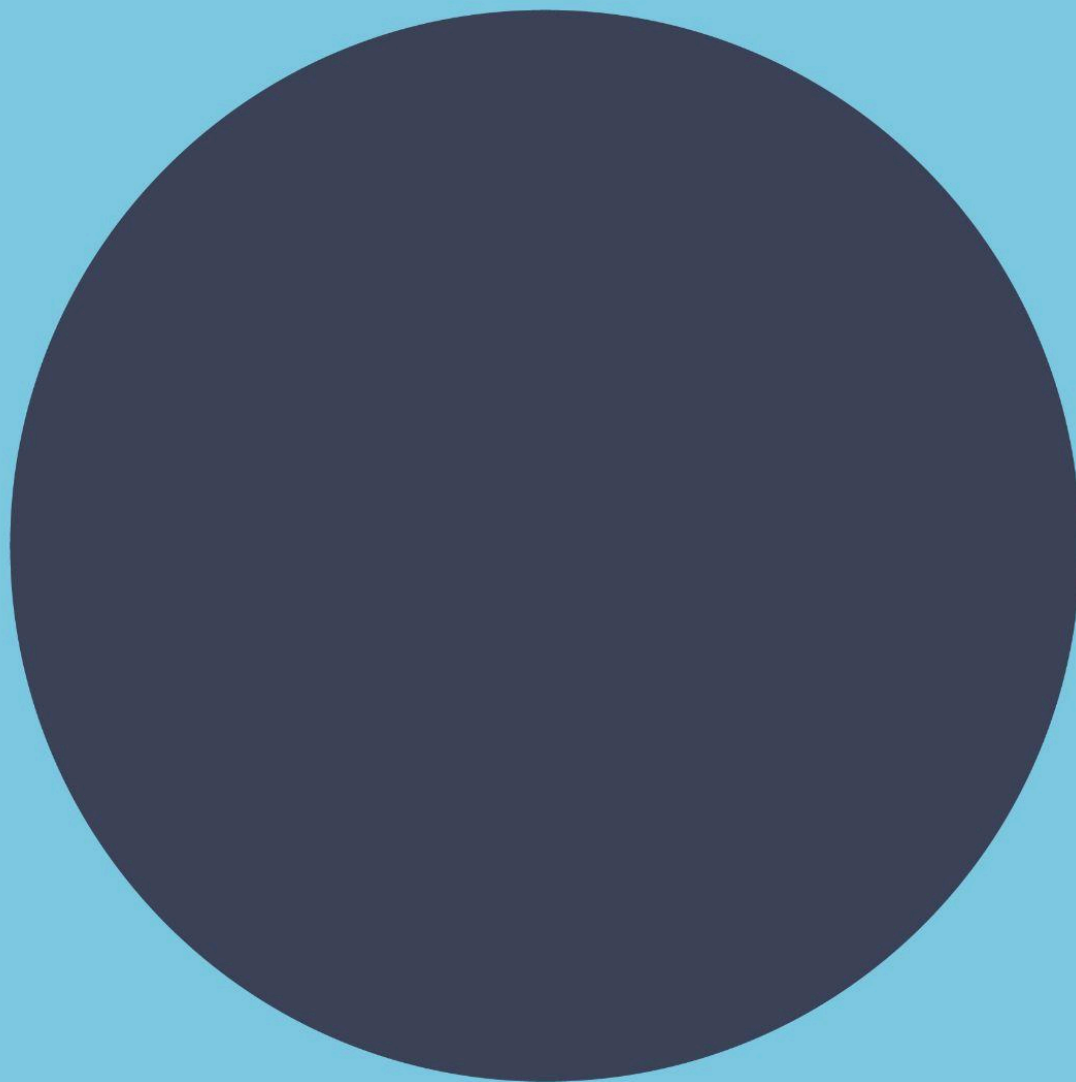
Thus, the vocational education system is currently unable to fully compensate for the labour shortage in critical sectors. However, in the medium term of post-war reconstruction, provided that the autonomy of VET is expanded, infrastructure is modernised, formal and informal education is integrated, and partnerships with employers are developed, this system has the potential to become one of the key drivers of Ukraine's economic recovery. Its effectiveness will be determined not only by the number of graduates, but also by its ability to quickly develop the skills and (re)train the skilled workers and specialists needed for rapid economic restructuring and regional development.

⁶⁵ [Institute of Demography, 2025](#)

⁶⁶ [Ministry of Economy, 2023](#)

⁶⁷ [ILO, 2023](#)

⁶⁸ [ILO, 2023](#)



CHAPTER 4

AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS IN UKRAINE

The autonomy of VET institutions is a key condition for their effective functioning in the context of the transformation of the Ukrainian economy and labour market. This is not only about expanding the rights of institution management in the areas of administration and finance, but also about giving them a real opportunity to shape educational offerings, develop partnerships with business and the community, and respond flexibly to the challenges of the current armed aggression and the country's post-war recovery. In this sense, autonomy is not so much a formal right as the ability to ensure innovation, competitiveness and sustainability in the development of vocational education. At the same time, the current level of autonomy remains fragmented and insufficient to realise the potential of VET.

Limited financial resources, as evidenced in particular by the share of only 2.6% of expenditure on vocational education in the consolidated education budget for 2025,⁶⁹, lead to dependence on state subsidies and international aid. Fragmented examples of financial support from business partners do not allow for the formation of a sustainable material and technical base for the vocational education system as a whole. The high probability of inefficient use of VET funds directly limits the development of their financial autonomy. Managerial autonomy remains limited by excessive bureaucracy and centralised regulation.

An additional problem is the insufficient managerial competence of managers, who often lack the appropriate training to implement the principles of autonomous management. Supervisory boards, which can increase transparency and accountability, are formed only in isolated cases, which weakens the democratisation of management. Pedagogical autonomy is limited by the lack of powers of vocational education and training institutions to develop and implement educational programmes in line with labour market needs. This deprives them of flexibility in adapting the learning process, in particular for retraining programmes for adults or veterans, which are socially important in the context of Ukraine's recovery. Initiatives by the state and international partners to create NECs have the potential to strengthen this autonomy, but so far their effect has been mostly limited.

Thus, the autonomy of VET in Ukraine is an important and at the same time problematic aspect of vocational education reform. It determines the ability of the vocational education system to meet the economy's need for skilled workers, but its implementation faces a number of challenges that require a systematic approach to overcome: a combination of legislative changes, institutional strengthening, management training, and the establishment of sustainable partnerships with business and the community. Only under such conditions can autonomy transform from a formal principle into a real mechanism for improving the quality and competitiveness of vocational education in Ukraine.

In the new Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025), Article 34 considers the autonomy of VET institutions as a multidimensional phenomenon covering managerial, pedagogical, financial and institutional dimensions. Under the new law, VET institutions have been granted the right to organise their activities independently, determine their internal structure, approve regulations and rules, implement personnel policies and form self-government bodies. In pedagogical terms, they can develop and implement their own educational programmes, determine the content of academic disciplines, combine formal and informal education, organise professional development and issue their own certificates, which strengthens their role

⁶⁹ 198.9 billion hryvnia for education in total, of which UAH 200 million is for vocational education in professions of national importance, UAH 275.5 million is for vocational education in state-owned social rehabilitation and adaptation institutions, methodological support for vocational education institutions, and UAH 4.7 billion is for training by higher vocational education institutions. [Ministry of Finance, 2025](#)

in the system of continuous learning. Financial autonomy, in its "new version", provides the right to dispose of funds and property, open bank accounts, including foreign currency accounts, place deposits, and attract resources through financial leasing. An important element is autonomy in the field of partnerships and service provision: VET institutions can establish qualification centres, cooperate with enterprises, other institutions and international organisations, develop career guidance activities and offer educational or additional services to the population. Such multi-vector autonomy creates the conditions for the innovative development of the vocational education system, strengthening its competitiveness and ability to respond quickly to the needs of the labour market.

4.1. Legislative and Regulatory Framework for Autonomy of VET Institutions

4.1. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS

The establishment of autonomy for vocational education institutions in Ukraine is taking place within the framework of broader educational reform and the process of decentralisation of management. The conceptual basis for reform in vocational education includes a number of strategic documents, including the Concept of the New Ukrainian School, the Concept for the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Vocational Education "Modern Vocational Education" until 2027, analytical materials from the Ministry of Education and Science on the decentralisation of vocational education (2017) and the new Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025). Key regulatory and legal acts governing the autonomy, accountability and decentralised management of VET include the Laws of Ukraine "On Education" (2017), "On Vocational Pre-Higher Education" (2019) and "On Complete General Secondary Education" (2020).

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Education", the state guarantees the academic, organisational, financial and personnel autonomy of educational institutions. Financial autonomy includes setting up the structure, budget, and staffing, figuring out pay, bonuses, and financial help, buying stuff and services on their own, including routine repairs, paying for staff training, signing contracts to keep things running, and finding extra funding (in particular, leasing space or running a subsidiary farm). The expansion of autonomy also provides for the

possibility of conducting economic activities on the basis of a state or municipal non-profit enterprise.

The impetus for expanding the autonomy of VET institutions came from the decentralisation reform that began in 2016. As part of this process, funding for most VET institutions was transferred from the state to the regional level, laying the foundation for greater managerial flexibility and accountability of local authorities. In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science, with the support of the EFA, published an analytical report entitled "Decentralisation of vocational and technical education in Ukraine – a push for action", which identified strategic directions for reform, including the gradual expansion of autonomy. The Law on Education (2017) enshrined the right of institutions to academic, organisational, financial and personnel autonomy, and in 2019, the Law on Vocational Pre-Higher Education introduced new approaches to the management of vocational colleges, in particular: defined the status of an institution as a business entity (budgetary institution, non-profit or for-profit educational institution), established state, municipal or private forms of ownership, guaranteed academic, organisational, financial and personnel autonomy, mechanisms for internal self-government, the creation of supervisory boards and the development of partnerships with business.

In 2020-2021, the reform gained momentum through the launch of educational clusters, the piloting of updated educational standards and the growing role of employers in shaping the content of vocational education, which laid the groundwork for the legislative consolidation of autonomy during 2022-2025. During this period, significant legislative changes were aimed at strengthening the autonomy of VET, deregulating management processes and actively involving employers.

Law No. 2312-IX of 19 June 2022 amended the Law on Vocational (Vocational and Technical) Education (1998) to improve access to vocational education for students and adults, ensure rapid retraining and reduce unemployment. The law provided for education without complete secondary education and without reference to the place of registration, and guaranteed the right to free retraining three years after previous training, subject to insurance experience. Over the past few years, the Ministry of Education and Science has been actively signing memoranda of cooperation with social partners for the joint training of skilled workers, establishing cooperation between vocational education institutions, companies and state bodies, and actively supporting the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs).

On 12 September 2025, the new Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" came into force, which is part of Ukraine's implementation of the Ukraine Facility programme and aims at a comprehensive transformation of the system. The law introduces a single type of institution – a vocational college, a transition to the term "student" instead of "pupil", strengthens the role of business through supervisory boards, simplifies management procedures and introduces institutional autonomy, in particular the possibility for VET institutions to operate as non-profit associations (enterprises – KNT). KNTs will be able to manage funds independently (open foreign currency accounts, place deposits, attract investors), move away from staffing tables and tariff grids.

The 2025 law provides more freedom in shaping the content of education. Institutions will receive a single licence for the level of vocational education. The submission of documents will be simplified, including in electronic format, with verification through state registers. The Ministry of Education and Science will no longer approve education standards for each profession. Educational programmes will be launched without licensing and will be developed jointly with businesses based on professional standards: "The basis for developing an

educational programme for training specialists in specific professional qualifications (professional qualifications) is the standard of vocational education and professional standards (in their absence, the qualification characteristics of the relevant professions). The educational programme defines a set of educational components aimed at achieving the learning outcomes envisaged by such a programme (Article 15, paragraphs 3-4)" and "The educational programme for training specialists is agreed upon by the pedagogical council and the supervisory board and approved by the head of the vocational education institution" (Article 15, paragraph 6). There will be a transition to a credit-modular system – a step towards integration into the common EU educational space.

The new law also strengthens business participation through the widespread creation of supervisory boards in VET institutions (Article 42). The supervisory board, which may not have more than 14 members, shall be composed of representatives of the founder of the VET institution and representatives of employers and their associations on a parity basis. The board will ensure careful monitoring of the effectiveness of a number of aspects of the activities of the head of the VET institution and the institution as a whole. All the powers of the supervisory board are set out in more detail in Article 42.

The law also proposes new approaches to assessing learning outcomes. Professional qualifications will be awarded by separate qualification centres accredited by the National Agency for Qualifications. Such a centre may be established on the basis of a VET institution, but without the right to assess its own students (Article 11). This implements the European principle of "one teaches, another assesses", which increases employers' confidence in learning outcomes. In addition, it strengthens the role of non-formal education, as knowledge acquired through non-formal education or on-the-job training can be confirmed through qualification centres, legalising experience without the need for retraining. The specifics of on-the-job training are outlined in Article 44.

In general, the legislative initiatives for 2022-2025 reflect a systematic transition to a model of autonomous, flexible and responsible management in the vocational education system, focused on expanding access to education (removing restrictions based on place of residence and previous level of education), strengthening financial autonomy (budgeting, use of extra-budgetary resources, economic independence), simplifying administrative procedures and deregulation (licensing, certification, reporting), and increasing the role of employers in the strategic management of VET and institutional renewal of the system.

4.2. STAKEHOLDER MAP: INFLUENCE OF KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE AUTONOMY PROCESS OF VET INSTITUTIONS

This section presents a map of stakeholders who play a key role in the process of ensuring the autonomy of VET institutions. The list is not exhaustive, but covers the main stakeholders identified in the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025).

According to the Law, the vocational education management system in Ukraine is characterised by a multi-level structure of distribution of powers and influence among key stakeholders – from state authorities to VET self-government institutions. This model ensures the coordinated functioning of state policy, regional development and the internal autonomy of VET, creating a comprehensive management system that combines centralised regulation with institutional responsibility.

At the national level, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) plays a leading role in implementing state policy in the field of vocational education. Its powers include approving methodological recommendations on the formation of the VET network, the procedure for organising inclusive education, the formula for the distribution of expenditures and state target programmes, etc. A detailed list of the CMU's powers is provided in Articles 55 and 62. The CMU's influence is considered to be high, as it is this body that determines the main financial and regulatory principles of the system's functioning.

The Ministry of Education and Science has direct powers in the field of vocational education management (Article 48). The Ministry ensures the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of vocational education. A detailed list of the powers of the MES is provided in Articles 48, 56, 62-63 and 65. Thus, the MES is the main coordinator of vocational education policy, and its influence in the system is decisive.

The State Service for Quality of Education (SSQE) and its territorial bodies exert an indirect but significant influence by performing the functions of external quality control, institutional audits, licensing and monitoring. A detailed list of the SQAE's powers is provided in Articles 49, 58 and 60. In general, the activities of the SQAE contribute to ensuring transparency, accountability and compliance with uniform standards in the vocational education system.

Among the bodies that have a supporting or advisory influence, the State Employment Service (as an institution that ensures the link between vocational education and the labour market) and the Scientific and Methodological Centre for Higher and Pre-Higher Education (which provides methodological guidance and support to vocational education institutions) stand out. They perform the functions of information and analytical support for policy implementation, so their influence is assessed as moderate.

International organisations and governments of other countries play an additional but significant role in the development of the sector, providing advisory influence through the implementation of technical assistance programmes, grants and partnership projects. Article 70 reveals a wide range of opportunities for the development of international cooperation (Article 70), etc. The influence of international organisations on the development of vocational education can be described as moderate, but with a strong advisory expertise component.

At the regional level, state bodies responsible for managing VET have a significant influence. They provide funding, coordinate the activities of subordinate institutions, ensure social protection for participants in the educational process, monitor the quality of education, etc. A detailed list of their powers is provided in Articles 57, 62 and 63. Alongside them, there are regional vocational education councils, which have an indirect but noticeable influence on the formation of regional policy, forecasting labour market needs and coordinating admission plans, etc. Their powers are detailed in Article 43.

The founders of VET institutions occupy a special place, as they have a high level of influence, determining development strategies, approving financial plans, ensuring the modernisation of material and technical resources, and supervising the activities of the institution. A detailed list of their powers is provided in Articles 37-38, 62-63 and 67-68.

Businesses and employers also have a significant influence, participating in governance through supervisory boards, the development of professional standards, practical training for applicants, and the modernisation of educational programmes and production facilities, etc. Their powers are set out in Articles 17, 42-44 and 48.

At the institutional level, the main actor is the VET institution, which implements management decisions taken at higher levels and formulates its own development policy. Articles 34, 37, 61, 64-66 and 69 set out the main powers of the VET institution. It should also be noted that state VET institutions have a number of additional rights, which are detailed in part 2 of Article 34.

Among the internal management bodies, the head of the institution has a medium level of influence, as he or she ensures the implementation of the strategy, reports to the founder and the supervisory board, and is responsible for the quality of education. A complete list of the powers of the head of a VET institution is set out in Article 39.

The pedagogical council is a collegial management body of a vocational education institution. It makes decisions on the educational process, teaching methods, professional development of staff, etc. A complete list of powers is provided in Article 41. Its influence can be described as moderate, since decisions made within its powers are implemented by orders of the head of the VET institution, but are binding on all participants in the educational process at the VET institution.

The supervisory board performs a wide range of management powers, which are detailed in Article 42. The influence of the supervisory board is assessed as high, as its decisions, taken within the limits of its powers and in accordance with the law, are binding on the founder and must be implemented by the head of the VET institution.

Internal self-government bodies include the general meeting of the labour collective and student self-government bodies, which have an advisory influence. Their powers are set out in Articles 29 (staff meeting) and 30 (student self-government). Their activities ensure the participation of employees and students in local decision-making and the formation of internal rules and

regulations, and contribute to the development of democratic principles of management. It should be noted that student self-government is enshrined in law for the first time. According to the authors of the report, this will contribute to the gradual increase in the capacity of vocational education students to actively participate in the development of various spheres of life in the country.

Thus, the stakeholder system in the field of vocational education demonstrates a clearly structured hierarchy of decision-making and distribution of responsibilities (Table 9). Higher state authorities determine the strategic policy framework, regional structures adapt it to local needs, and vocational education institutions implement it in practice. This management model combines the principles of state regulation and institutional autonomy, ensuring the balanced development of the vocational education system in Ukraine.

Table 9. Description of the influence of key stakeholders in the field of vocational education in Ukraine

Scale	Stakeholder	Decision-making	What is the impact	Impact
National level	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	Makes decisions (directly)	Articles 55, 62 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High
	Ministry of Education	Adopts decisions (directly)	Articles 48, 56, 62, 63, 65 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High
	State Service for Quality of Education (SSQE) and its territorial bodies	Makes decisions (indirectly)	Articles 49, 58, 60 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High
	State Employment Service	Affected by the decision (indirectly)	Section II, Article 1 of the Regulations on the State Employment Service	Medium
	Scientific and Methodological Centre for Higher and Pre-Higher Education	Affected by the decision (indirectly)	Paragraph 1.6 of the Statute of the State Institution "Scientific and Methodological Centre for Higher and Pre-Higher Education"	Medium
	International organisations, governments of other countries	Advisory influence on decisions	Article 70 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Medium
Regional level	State bodies responsible for managing vocational education institutions	Makes decisions (directly)	Articles 57, 62, 63 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High

	Regional Council for Vocational Education	Makes decisions (indirectly)	Article 43 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Medium
	Founder(s) of vocational education institutions	Makes decisions (directly)	Articles 37, 38, 62-63, 67-68 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High
	Business and employers	Advisory influence on decisions	Articles 17, 42-44, 48 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025); Procedure for developing, implementing and reviewing professional standards	High
Institutional level (VET)	Head of VET	Makes decisions (directly)	Article 39 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Medium
	Pedagogical Council	Makes decisions (indirectly)	Articles 37, 41 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Medium
	Supervisory Council	Makes decisions (directly)	Articles 37, 42, 67 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	High
	Self-government bodies of vocational education and training employees - general meeting (conference) of the labour collective	Advisory influence on decisions	Articles 29, 37 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Low
	Student self-government bodies	Advisory influence on decisions	Article 30 of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025)	Low

The table below summarises the relationships between these levels, reflecting the nature of each stakeholder's influence, some of the legal and regulatory bases for their activities, and their level of involvement in management processes. It is an analytical tool that allows assessing the balance of power, advisory and executive functions, as well as the degree of implementation of the principles of decentralisation, accountability and autonomy in the current architecture of vocational education management. The articles of the Law of Ukraine "On Vocational Education" (2025) proposed for more detailed consideration are of a recommendatory nature and are not defined as providing completely comprehensive information on each case. It is recommended to take into account the provisions of other articles, depending on the situation and needs.

4.3. MANAGERIAL AUTONOMY

Administrative autonomy is the ability of an educational institution to independently make decisions regarding the organisation of internal activities, management structure, personnel policy and strategic development.

The administrative autonomy of HEIs in Ukraine is gradually expanding, but remains significantly limited due to the centralised management system. Formally, directors have the opportunity to determine the internal structure of the institution, distribute responsibilities among deputies and resolve personnel issues within the approved staffing table. Some freedom is also granted in the organisation of the educational process and participation in projects.

However, these opportunities often prove ineffective due to strict legislation. For example, the **staffing table** system restricts budgetary institutions due to its strict adherence to a specific number and structure of staff.

The **tariff grid** system deprives managers of tools for motivating staff. For example, it is almost impossible to attract young teachers because the level of remuneration is determined centrally and remains uncompetitive compared to the private sector. Thus, autonomy in recruitment exists only nominally. Only when management is able to offer competitive salaries and provide flexible funding will management decisions have a real impact.

The professionalism of the manager plays a special role. Some directors perceive autonomy as a duty to take responsibility and actively develop strategies (as in the case of an institution that is transforming into a Centre of Professional Excellence (CPE) and implementing development projects). At the same time, there are directors who prefer to shift responsibility to governing bodies, which reduces the effectiveness of even those autonomous tools that are already available. Experts emphasised that increasing the effectiveness of autonomy is possible mainly through the professional training of managers, for example, through training, consultations and seminars for directors and management teams:

“There must be a competent head of the institution. It is necessary to have the appropriate authority and history, to work actively with donors and to show by example how it all works. Do not be afraid of this, because not everyone likes everything. We started the process of participating in dozens of grants, which we have been doing since 2018. And we opened a foreign currency account for the first time, for which I received criticism from the department, ‘how can you do that’, even though it was already written in our charter at that time. But not everyone likes how things happen. However, if it is justified, if we see the result in the end, then I think it is very important. Therefore, it is necessary to train and educate managers, give them opportunities, and, of course, supervise them, because this is an administrative and other responsibility.” – expert comment in an expert interview.

"Autonomy depends on the professionalism of the manager as an educational manager, because in many cases autonomy must be earned and one must know how to use it. If autonomy begins and ends where it is profitable to make such decisions, then it is a bad tool. If autonomy is the ability to use regulatory and legal support properly for effective management and a high-quality process in vocational education, then it is a complex issue. [...] If this system is built step by step, holistically, then it is possible to achieve results." – expert comment during an expert interview.

One of the main limitations to increasing managerial autonomy is **the regulation of regional orders**. Restrictions on training areas based on regional orders complicate the development of multidisciplinary institutions. Even if there is demand from business or the community, the institution is forced to comply with regional decisions, which hinders flexibility and innovation. This is particularly noticeable in technical specialities, where competition with the private sector is high. According to experts, the ideal model provides for greater rights for VET institutions in shaping enrolment and specialities based on labour market analysis in cooperation with employers. This will shift the focus from bureaucratic regulation to partnership.

The lack of flexible financial instruments for asset management also hinders the expansion of managerial autonomy. VET institutions often remain dependent on the decisions of the Ministry of Education and Science or regional state administrations in matters of economic management. A striking example is an institution where the inability to write off dilapidated buildings from the Ministry of Education and Science's balance sheet not only creates a hazard but also blocks the process of transferring the institution to municipal ownership.

At the time of the interviews, participants expressed their expectations for the adoption of a new Law on Vocational Education, which should consolidate broader powers for VET institutions at the local level. They hope that this will primarily concern **personnel policy**, the organisation of internal structures and the ability to respond flexibly to the needs of the labour market.

The interviewees also emphasised that the development **of supervisory boards** could become a tool for greater accountability and quality strategic planning. The existence of supervisory boards will allow VET institutions to avoid dependence on the situational decisions of regional authorities and focus on long-term development goals.

An expert representing big business expressed his willingness to participate in supervisory boards during the interview:

"It was a pilot project [for business – participation in the supervisory board of one LBO] in order to understand how it all works. As a large business with CSR, we are ready to join supervisory boards. For us, education and business are two things that are impossible without each other. Education cannot be separated from business, just as business must also take education into account. Therefore, we must be active participants in supervisory boards." – comment by a business representative in an expert interview.

However, another expert expressed concerns about the viability and effectiveness of the supervisory board mechanism as described in the new law:

"The powers vested in them effectively limit both the managerial and pedagogical autonomy of vocational education institutions. Without the approval of the supervisory board, an institution will

not be able to implement an educational programme or financial plan, which creates a situation of dependence on an external body that may be incompetent in these matters.” – comment by an expert in an expert interview.

The expert also notes the risk of formal business representation: large companies have the resources and expertise to participate in education management, but in many communities, small entrepreneurs who do not understand the specifics of the educational process may be appointed to councils, thereby gaining management powers:

“About 9 of the 18 rights of the supervisory board enshrined in the law are clearly managerial and regulatory in nature, while in global practice, supervisory boards mainly perform only strategic and control functions and meet once or twice a year.” – expert comment during an expert interview.

During the discussions, the topic of autonomy in **FHEI institutions** was discussed separately. In particular, it was emphasised that independent professional colleges (outside universities) have more freedom in decision-making, while those within universities are significantly dependent: restrictions on property, land, and premises. There is a lack of autonomy in personnel matters (staffing tables, job titles). There are also problems with small single-profile colleges (with fewer than 200 students), which are at risk of closure. Separately, there is a need for a legally defined roadmap for the separation of vocational colleges from universities, strengthening the role of supervisory boards (provided that they are truly active, not just formal) and developing the management skills of directors and teams through systematic professional development.

Thus, the state of managerial autonomy of higher vocational education institutions today can be characterised as transitional: formally provided tools exist, but they are largely limited by centralised control mechanisms and financial dependence. The prospects for expanding autonomy are directly linked to comprehensive reforms – the adoption of a new law, strengthening the role of supervisory boards, developing strategic planning and financial decentralisation. The experience of individual HEIs shows that autonomy can be a powerful tool for development if it is combined with management accountability and systematic support from the state and local authorities.

4.4. FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

Financial autonomy is the ability of an educational institution to generate extra-budgetary income independently.

Financial autonomy remains the most limited of all types of autonomy in higher education institutions. This was emphasised during all expert interviews, as other processes also depend on financial autonomy.

In HEIs that operate as budgetary institutions, financial autonomy is significantly limited by **staffing levels and pay scales**, as salary costs are strictly regulated. The institution cannot independently reallocate funds between positions or create new jobs without the approval of a higher authority or budgetary regulations. This hinders rapid response to changing needs, the development of new areas of activity and the introduction of innovations, and may also reduce employee motivation due to the inability to offer flexible bonuses or rewards for additional work (see the section on “Managerial autonomy”). However, during the interviews, one of the experts emphasised that the independent ability of HEIs to determine the amount of funds for the implementation of curricula and programmes is currently rare. This highlights the need for additional training of the administrative staff of institutions to build the relevant capacity:

“There are not many people in Ukraine who understand well how to implement curricula and programmes for a specific amount of money. If there are any, they work at Nova Poshta or some other corporations where they pay significantly more for this. Therefore, we have to work with the existing management of vocational education institutions so that they at least understand that this is possible in their case – that is, to obtain resources and, in accordance with these resources, not to hire 15 people for 5 hryvnias each, for a total of 60 hryvnias, but to hire 6 people for 12 hryvnias each in order to motivate people. Of course, as long as there is a staffing table, this is generally impossible.” – expert comment in an expert interview.

As budgetary institutions, VET institutions also do not have sufficient mechanisms to independently dispose of the profits from their economic activities. VET institution budgets are formed mainly from state and local funds, which cover only basic needs – salaries, scholarships and utility costs. This significantly limits the opportunities to invest in the development of material and technical resources and innovative training areas.

At the same time, institutions are gradually expanding the practice of using **special funds**, which receive funds from courses, educational and production services, as well as grant and donor programmes. It is within the special fund that VET institutions have the greatest freedom in making decisions on expenditures – for example, on repairs or equipment upgrades. But even here, certain restrictions apply. VET institutions can only dispose of premises or land, lease them or carry out reconstruction with the permission of the State Property Fund, the Ministry of

Education and Science or the Regional State Administration. The head of the institution is not required to agree on each transaction with the founder within the special fund, but must submit a budget estimate regulating the expenditure items of the special fund in particular to the founder for approval. Such complex bureaucratic procedures effectively negate the flexibility of financial autonomy and reduce business interest in investing in educational projects.

Examples of individual institutions illustrate this situation. One of the interviewed representatives of the VET institution pointed out that the funding of the institution remains insufficient and covers only basic needs, while the funds earned from paid services (driving courses, mobile kitchen, agricultural activities) are in fact very limited in their use. Another example of a VET institution transforming into a VET centre shows that the main budget is spent on maintaining the institution, but the administration actively compensates for the lack of resources through dozens of grants, international programmes and partnerships with businesses. This experience demonstrates that a proactive management strategy can significantly expand the real limits of financial autonomy, even within regulatory constraints.

Another paradox is the procedure whereby the state withdraws savings, for example on heating or electricity bills, instead of reinvesting them in the development of the institution. This discourages HEIs from saving and planning their expenditure rationally.

The prospects for financial autonomy are directly linked to the transition to new funding models, which are mainly provided through the form of **a municipal non-profit association**. One possible solution is to introduce a "money follows the student" mechanism, similar to the 2018 medical reform ("money follows the patient"). Experts believe that this approach will ensure competition between HEIs, enable them to receive funds directly for each student, and create incentives for development.

Another important area is **the development of public-private partnerships**, which can promote investment in material and technical resources. Some regions are already introducing innovative practices. In the Rivne region, for example, funding is linked to the preparation of business plans and transparent reporting, which fosters a more responsible approach to financial activities.

According to respondents, in the long term, financial autonomy can also be strengthened through income diversification. In addition to grants and cooperation with businesses, an important area could be the development **of energy autonomy**, in particular the installation of solar power plants, which would reduce utility costs and at the same time ensure resilience in crisis situations.

Financial autonomy is also limited in **vocational colleges**. Funds are spent only according to the budget through the treasury, even if they were earned by the institution itself. Colleges cannot independently dispose of property, premises or land, or have certain restrictions on participation in international projects. However, there are also positive cases (Ilyinets Agricultural Vocational College, Lypkovativsky Agricultural Vocational College, Bar Vocational College of Transport and Construction, etc.) that attract international projects and additional resources. The prospects for the development of financial autonomy of vocational colleges lie in the creation of mechanisms for greater flexibility in the use of their own revenues, the expansion of PPP practices with transparent procedures (e.g., through Prozorro) and the development of partnerships with businesses based on DFZO.

Thus, the state of financial autonomy of vocational colleges today can be described as minimal and formal. Vocational colleges have the right to attract additional sources of funding, but the actual mechanisms for their use remain overregulated, and most decisions depend on state or regional authorities. The budget covers only basic needs, and own earned funds cannot always be reinvested. Prospects for expanding financial autonomy are linked to the transition to new funding models (in particular, the "student-based" contract), the development of PPPs, the wider use of special funds, as well as the attraction of grants and energy autonomy. The experience of individual HEIs shows that a proactive stance on the part of management and support from local authorities and businesses can gradually transform financial autonomy from a formal to an effective tool for development.

4.5. PEDAGOGICAL AUTONOMY

Pedagogical autonomy is the right of an educational institution to independently determine the content, forms, methods and organisation of the educational process, as well as the rules for assessing knowledge, curricula and individual learning trajectories.

Pedagogical autonomy in vocational education in Ukraine is currently developing faster than administrative or financial autonomy, but its limits are still defined by **the rigid framework of state standards**. Formally, teachers and vocational training instructors have been granted significant rights – **academic freedom**, the ability to create their own programmes, flexibly select teaching methods and adapt the learning process to the needs of students. The law enshrines the right to vary the content of education and freedom in the choice of assessment methods. In practice, however, these opportunities are not always realised, as educational standards are often outdated (lagging 7-10 years behind) and do not meet the current requirements of the labour market. This creates contradictions between educational and professional standards, which significantly limits the scope for pedagogical innovation.

Despite formal restrictions, VET institutions already have a certain degree of freedom in **adapting educational programmes to the needs of the labour market**: they create optional courses, develop short courses and experiment with new learning formats. However, this autonomy is often ineffective due to the lack of timely updates to state standards and underdeveloped tools for interaction with the labour market.

International and national initiatives are accelerating the adaptation of programmes to labour market needs. For example, VET institutions that have participated and continue to participate in GIZ, USAID, Erasmus+ or Helvetas projects develop and implement relevant programmes on energy efficiency, construction, green skills or working with IDPs. This experience shows that autonomy becomes a reality when institutions receive external support and can experiment with new forms of learning. For example, a VET institution can actively combine state programmes with adult education within the framework of grant projects, and its pedagogical autonomy is manifested in the creation of short-term courses and micro-qualifications for veterans, IDPs and people with disabilities. This approach allows the classical system of diploma education to be combined with more flexible forms of learning that meet the requirements of business and donors.

An important trend is the development **of DFZO**. It opens up space for VET institutions to align programmes with the real needs of enterprises, although its implementation remains partial so far. The experience of one institution, which in partnership with UkrAVTO has begun training auto electricians, shows that even the initial level of such cooperation can become the basis for the gradual expansion of pedagogical autonomy through deeper integration of business into the educational process.

Vocational colleges have the opportunity to shape up to 50% of the content of educational and professional programmes, adapting them to market needs. Employers play an important role in shaping the educational content (e.g., long-term internships lasting 4 to 6 months). Students at vocational colleges have the opportunity to choose educational components (up to 20%) according to their preferences or interests for professional development. The prospects for the development of pedagogical autonomy in vocational colleges are seen in the further implementation of new generation standards with a competence-based approach, the development of DFZO as a key form of training, and mandatory internships for teachers at modern enterprises to ensure the relevance of knowledge.

The prospects for pedagogical autonomy for interview participants look more optimistic than in the areas of managerial or financial autonomy. It is expected that its strengthening will take place thanks to the digitalisation of the educational process, the transition to a credit-modular system, integration into the European educational space and the development of individual educational trajectories. Professional standards will increasingly become a key benchmark, which will help to bridge the gap between education and labour market needs. Thus, pedagogical autonomy in VET can be seen as the area with the greatest growth potential, which is already demonstrating successful cases and has the potential to become a driver of modernisation of the vocational education system.

In general, the state of pedagogical autonomy in VET today can be characterised as the most advanced among other types. Formally, it is enshrined in legislation through the academic freedom of teachers, the ability to create original programmes and flexibly adapt teaching to the needs of learners. At the same time, its implementation in practice remains limited due to outdated standards and strict certification requirements. The prospects for expanding pedagogical autonomy are linked to the updating of the regulatory framework, the transition to professional standards as the main guideline, the development of DFZO, digitalisation and the individualisation of educational trajectories. The experience of individual VET institutions shows that, with partnerships with business and donors, pedagogical autonomy can become an effective tool for modernising the system, shaping relevant and in-demand programmes. Thus, pedagogical autonomy has the greatest potential for strengthening, capable of determining the quality and competitiveness of Ukrainian vocational education in the coming years.

4.6. AUTONOMY OF PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES

Autonomy in developing partnerships and providing relevant services is the ability of an educational institution to independently initiate, create and develop partnerships with various stakeholders, organise and provide relevant educational and/or additional services to the population, enterprises, communities and specific target groups within the community. It is a cross-cutting category that builds on existing autonomies.

The autonomy of partnerships and services of VET institutions is currently considered the most dynamic and promising area of development. Institutions are actively building cooperation with businesses, local communities and international organisations, which enables them to create NCPs, implement DFZOs and involve adults, veterans and IDPs in training. At the same time, the very logic of its development again largely depends on the initiative of the leadership. Active directors are able to build lasting alliances, while less proactive VET institutions often remain passively waiting for external changes. Barriers include the lack of systemic mechanisms and incentives for business, excessive bureaucracy, and the low attractiveness of public VET institutions for long-term investment due to the lack of tax incentives.

At the same time, examples from individual institutions demonstrate the significant potential of this area. For example, a VET institution that has established cooperation with companies such as UkrAVTO or Boguslavskia Sillogotechnika receives equipment and support in conducting production practices. In this case, businesses set specific requirements, such as a minimum internship duration of three months, which helps improve the quality of student training. Another example of an institution transforming into a VET centre highlights the well-established broad partnerships with machine-building and agricultural enterprises, local authorities and international donors. Participation in grant programmes and support from the European Investment Bank have enabled the launch of large-scale projects, including the construction of a modern agricultural college costing over UAH 1.5 billion. Such cases demonstrate that the autonomy of partnerships and services can be one of the key drivers of the system's development, especially if VET institutions are integrated into regional economic ecosystems and operate in a PPP format.

According to the interviewees, the prospects for development in this area lie in the expansion of business clusters, the formalisation of cooperation agreements, the introduction of individualised forms of distance learning, and the development of new educational areas – from "green skills" to the training of drone operators or solar power plant installers. Effective interaction with local authorities and communities is also an important condition, in particular

through regional and sectoral councils, which can become coordinators of cooperation between education and business. In the long term, recognition of the service function of vocational education institutions as a separate component of their autonomy may become the key to strengthening their role as local centres for community and economic development.

During the interviews, it was found that vocational colleges are actively developing partnerships with businesses (e.g., MHP) and participating in international projects. However, there is a lack of a clear formula for interaction and distribution of responsibilities – colleges are often unable to make decisions on their own. Colleges have a number of property restrictions (land, premises) that hinder the development of partnerships. The prospects for the development of autonomy of partnerships and services are seen in the strengthening of PPPs through transparent mechanisms, the possibility of using college land and property for educational, research and economic purposes (based on European models), and more active involvement of employers in the development of standards and educational programmes.

Thus, the autonomy of partnerships and VET services is currently the most dynamic and promising direction for the development of the system, demonstrating a gradual transition from a supporting function to an independent institution for interaction between education, business and the community. VET institutions are increasingly building cooperation with employers, local authorities and international donors, creating NCPs and implementing projects to meet their professional development needs and modernise their material and technical base. At the same time, the level of autonomy in this area still largely depends on the initiative of management and remains limited due to insufficient institutionalisation of PPP mechanisms, restrictions on the use of property and the lack of economic incentives for business. Prospects for further development are linked to strengthening the role of regional and sectoral councils, expanding PPP practices, creating transparent mechanisms for the use of VET resources, and integrating VET into regional economic ecosystems, which will transform them into full-fledged centres for community and local economic development.

Summarising the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the autonomy of public-private partnerships is in a state of gradual development, with significant differences between its components. The most dynamically developing area is the autonomy of partnerships and services focused on cooperation with business, communities and international donors. Pedagogical autonomy has stable but limited potential due to outdated standards, while managerial autonomy remains largely formal due to excessive centralisation. Financial autonomy is the least developed, which significantly limits opportunities for institutional growth. The general trend in the development of VET autonomy is towards greater decentralisation, strengthening the role of supervisory boards, expanding PPPs and updating educational content (see Table 10).

Table 10. Development and dynamics of autonomy in higher education institutions

Dynamics ↓	Level of development ↓		
	High	Medium	Low
High			Autonomy of partnerships and services – most dynamic, integrated with business and communities, potential for growth.
Medium			Administrative autonomy – formally exists, but depends on centralised decisions.
Low			Financial autonomy – minimal, mostly formal.
Trend →	Increased decentralisation, role of supervisory boards, public-private partnerships, modernisation of educational content		

4.7. AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS ABROAD AND IN UKRAINE: PERSPECTIVES OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

The EasyBusiness team also interviewed international experts. We have summarised their expert opinions, ideas, examples from other countries and recommendations. You can read them below. The general opinion is that managerial autonomy is deeply dependent on context. In traditionally centralised countries such as France, Spain and Italy, ministries still exercise strong control, while in Latvia, Belgium, the Netherlands and, especially, Estonia, vocational education and training (VET) institutions have greater independence. However, autonomy alone is not enough: it only makes sense if institutions are able to use it effectively. Without trained managers and functioning governance structures, autonomy risks remaining symbolic.

In interviews, experts emphasised the role of VET institution councils or committees. In developed systems such as Slovenia, Estonia and Armenia, these are genuine decision-making bodies comprising representatives of employers, government, teachers, students and communities. In Armenia, for example, directors are even legally excluded from the council to ensure a system of checks and balances. In Moldova, on the other hand, councils remain largely advisory and have little real independence.

With regard to Ukraine, experts stressed the importance of not copying any of the models, but rather drawing on the country's own best internal examples, while implementing pilot reforms in selected institutions or regions. They stressed that autonomy must be accompanied by capacity building for directors and boards, as well as a clear legislative division of roles between the ministry, regional and local authorities, and CSOs.

International experts have argued that financial autonomy is the most sensitive but also the most transformative aspect. In most countries, state budgets remain the main source of funding. However, approaches to obtaining funds and spending flexibility differ sharply from Ukraine: in foreign experience, regulatory authorities monitor spending, but VET institutions have the right to independently determine the amount and type of expenditures that will most contribute to the development of the institution.

Armenia's 2023 VET Law was decisive, as it gave VET institutions the right to set up companies, conduct business and reinvest profits in development and salaries. Moldova has also introduced per-student funding, which gives VET institutions greater flexibility, but resources remain insufficient. Kosovo, with the support of the EU and GIZ, is moving towards greater autonomy in spending, but still restricts income generation. Switzerland was presented as an example of a high level of financial autonomy embedded in strong cantonal governance (a

decentralised governance model) and a tradition of dual learning. The latter is closely linked to the economy and employers, which contributes to the sustainability of the system and ensures its legitimacy in society. In Switzerland, the cantons have key powers in the financing, planning and regulation of education, allowing institutions to be more flexible in their use of resources, set priorities and adapt funding to the specific needs of regional labour markets. The funding models in Poland are considered a useful example, as they combine state support with active regional participation and the possibility of attracting additional sources, making the system more flexible and labour market-oriented.

In the context of Ukraine, experts noted that at the beginning of the process of decentralising vocational education management, there was some tension as local authorities were given responsibility without sufficient resources. Therefore, any reform must ensure accountability, transparency and capacity building. VET institutions in Ukraine need training in financial management to avoid the risks of inefficiency or corruption. Experts stressed that autonomy without resources is a burden and recommended piloting financial reforms before scaling them up.

International experts believe that pedagogical autonomy is the most achievable and least politically sensitive form of autonomy. In centralised systems, such as France, curricula remain under the control of the ministry. In more flexible systems, such as Austria or Armenia, governments only set professional standards and learning outcomes, leaving VET institutions free to develop their own curricula. This allows them to adapt to local labour markets, student needs and the strengths of educational institutions.

However, experts emphasised that autonomy in curriculum development requires well-trained teachers and managers. Without training, VET institutions may struggle to develop relevant programmes; with support, they often outperform ministries in innovation and responsiveness. Austria's strong regional role and France's "campuses of professions and qualifications" were cited as useful examples of linking pedagogy to the labour market and industry needs. It should be noted that the examples of Austria and France demonstrate different models of linking education to the labour market. In Austria, regions play a key role, actively shaping education policy and cooperating with employers. In France, this function is performed by "campuses of professions and qualifications," which bring together schools, universities, and businesses around specific industry needs.

For Ukraine, experts recommended expanding the flexibility of training programmes, linking programmes to professional standards and including new priorities such as digitalisation, green skills, entrepreneurship, adult learning and career guidance. In their opinion, pedagogical autonomy should be closely linked to initiatives to improve the quality of vocational education and Ukraine's integration into the EU.

Experts described the autonomy of partnerships and service provision as the most dynamic and transformative dimension of autonomy. Unlike some EU or Eastern Partnership countries, where institutions must rely on ministries to establish partnerships, Ukraine was recognised as relatively progressive. Vocational education and training institutions in Ukraine often cooperate

directly with enterprises, including foreign companies (e.g. Snieszka, Geberit), and employers in Ukraine sometimes even co-finance student scholarships, which is an unusual practice at the international level.

However, obstacles remain. Many directors do not have sufficient experience to establish and maintain relationships with employers. Employers, in turn, may not be interested in cooperation unless they are convinced of its obvious benefits. The example of Armenia shows that although employer participation is formalised through chambers of commerce, the real challenge is to build a "culture of participation", i.e. to genuinely involve employers in education. Switzerland and Slovenia have been identified as examples of how VET institutions can become drivers of local development through partnerships with business. The example of the Basque Country in Spain, according to experts, highlights the effectiveness of regional centres that concentrate resources, businesses and educational institutions in one environment and can thus respond quickly to the needs of the economy and formulate a comprehensive development policy.

For Ukraine, experts recommended positioning VET institutions as regional development centres within the framework of recovery processes, strengthening PPPs and investing in communication and marketing to raise the status of vocational education compared to higher education. They argued that the chronic shortage of skilled workers in Ukraine is in itself a powerful incentive for employers to join this process, provided that VET institutions are trained in partnership management.

General recommendations from international experts:

- Autonomy should be introduced gradually and with prior preparation, through the implementation of pilot projects in selected VET institutions or regions, before extending it to the whole country.
- An appropriate preliminary step is capacity building: directors, teachers and regional and local authorities must undergo training to use their new freedoms responsibly.
- Autonomy also requires clear legislation that not only grants rights but also fairly distributes roles between levels of government.
- Accountability mechanisms are vital, especially in finance, to prevent misuse of resources.
- Ukraine's European integration process offers a strategic opportunity to align autonomy reforms with broader European priorities: digitalisation, green transition, lifelong learning, inclusion, career guidance and workplace training.
- Ukraine should not copy any country, but rather combine best practices from different contexts with its own successful experience.

Overall, interviews with international experts highlight a common understanding: autonomy in VET is not a separate reform, but a multidimensional process that requires capacity, accountability and gradual adaptation.

Pedagogical autonomy seems the most achievable, financial autonomy the most politically sensitive, managerial autonomy the most dependent on capacity, and partnership autonomy the most transformative.

For Ukraine, the way forward lies in pilot reforms, strengthening institutional capacity, developing the existing culture of partnership, and including autonomy in the EU integration and post-war reconstruction programme.

4.8. Best Practices of Autonomy

4.8. BEST PRACTICES OF AUTONOMY IN UKRAINIAN VET INSTITUTIONS

This section provides selected examples of positive manifestations of financial, managerial, pedagogical autonomy, as well as autonomy of partnerships and services. These examples were collected during interviews with experts and through content analysis of open sources. It should be noted that this is by no means an exhaustive list of Ukrainian VET institutions that demonstrate their autonomy.

Higher Vocational School No. 41 in Tulchyn (Vinnytsia region)

VPU 41 specialises in agricultural professions (repair of agricultural machinery, harvesting, etc.) and is currently in the process of transforming into a CPD. As part of this transition, the institution receives modern equipment from employers that meets production requirements, and educational programmes are developed taking into account the needs of local and regional companies. At the same time, teachers are offered professional development opportunities and the chance to learn new tools for implementing modern approaches to the educational process. An important element of development is conducting stakeholder surveys, which allows us to identify and analyse the situation with graduate employment.⁷⁰ Tulchyn VPU 41 has a supervisory board that includes representatives of business, in particular a large agricultural company.

⁷⁰ [Employer survey questionnaire](#)

Dnipro VET Centre (soon to be the Centre for Professional Excellence in Dnipro)

This institution is a striking example of comprehensive autonomy and social orientation. It stands out among other vocational education institutions in terms of the number of students, a large proportion of whom are adults, including veterans. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the institution taught 712 students and 1,046 adult learners, including 172 veterans and their family members, 513 internally displaced persons and 361 representatives of other categories. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the numbers increased: 1,265 pupils, 90 students and 1,469 adult learners (271 veterans and their family members, 615 IDPs, 583 other categories). The capacity of the institution allows for the simultaneous training of 5,740 students: initial vocational training for 9th grade graduates – 1,750 people, for 11th grade graduates – 670 people, junior bachelor's degree – 500 people, vocational and technical training and retraining – 260 people, adult education and rehabilitation of veterans – 2,560 people. The institution has special spaces for the reintegration of veterans into society and professional activities.⁷¹

Kvasyliv Engineering and Technology Vocational College (Rivne region)

The college demonstrates effective management thanks to the leadership and managerial qualities of its director, his initiative and adaptability, as well as the motivation of the staff. Over the past eight years, the institution has managed to transform itself from a state of decline into a competitive educational centre that trains specialists in automotive, repair and culinary professions. The college is currently being transformed into a vocational training centre. Despite a sufficient number of applicants (about 900), the management flexibly adapts the training programmes to the needs of the labour market, systematically building partnerships with businesses. This approach allows the institution to respond quickly to companies' requests and ensure high employment rates for graduates, even in a highly competitive environment where a significant number of vocational education institutions are involved in training chefs and related specialists.

Additional resources are attracted and partnerships are developed through active participation in national and international projects. Thanks to participation in the project "Improving the training system for the needs of the Volyn subregion economy" with financial support from the EU, the material and technical base of the NTC for the profession "Wheeled vehicle repair mechanic" was modernised, and victory in the MES project competition for the creation of an NTC made it possible to attract more than UAH 2 million to create the NRC "Modern Transport Technologies"⁷². However, such cooperation is not limited to improving the material and technical base, but also includes the exchange of experience with foreign colleagues and participation in the reform of vocational education in Ukraine. Therefore, the participation of the Kvasyliv Engineering and Technology Vocational College in the Ukrainian-Estonian project "Exchange of Estonian experience to support vocational education reforms in Ukraine" made it possible for representatives of the institution to visit leading vocational schools in Estonia. At the same time, the college participated in the project "EU4Skills: Better Skills for Modern Ukraine", thanks to which project materials for the creation of the CPD⁷³ were developed and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science.

⁷¹ [Presentation materials of the Dnipro City Employment Centre, 2025](#)

⁷² [Kvasyliv Engineering and Technology Vocational College](#)

⁷³ [Kvasyliv Engineering and Technology Vocational College](#)

Mukachevo Vocational Polytechnic College of the Transcarpathian Regional Council

The college successfully implements the principles of autonomy in the educational process, focusing on flexibility, innovation and partnership with business. The institution is actively updating its educational and practical base, creating modern workshops with new equipment, which is made possible, in particular, by the support of businesses and their participation in the development of the NCP (in particular, in metalworking, climate technologies, and energy conservation). Cooperation with companies also includes work placements for students at enterprises, consultations during the development of training programmes when specific qualifications are required (e.g., a programme for air conditioning installers), as well as support in finding employment for graduates. Such interaction allows for the implementation of relevant educational programmes that meet the real requirements of the labour market.

"Our students go on work placements at the company and bring great value to it with their work. To show its gratitude for the valuable work of the students, the company finances the equipping of the training centre and, in the future, the purchase of the necessary consumables for it," commented a representative of the institution in an expert interview.

In addition, Mukachevo College is actively implementing modern energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, combining them with the educational process. The institution has established an R&D centre for climate technologies and energy-saving systems, equipped with the support of the Ukraine Facility programme, which financed 70% of the costs, with the remaining 30% covered by the college's special fund and the Regional State Administration. Solar panels with a capacity of 15 kW have been installed on the roof of the dormitory, providing electricity to the dormitory itself, partially to the R&D Centre, and also to a car charging station, which creates an additional source of income. In addition, solar systems for heating and water heating are in operation in the dormitory and the NPTs. All these energy solutions not only help to reduce the institution's costs and increase its autonomy, but are also used in the educational process as practical examples of the application of modern technologies.

The college actively implements elements of STEM education, which promotes the development of critical thinking and engineering skills in students and meets modern requirements for training specialists in technical fields. The institution organises training sessions, workshops, meetings with employers and provides opportunities for professional growth for students. At the same time, the institution ensures transparency of its activities by publishing reports, financial documents and information about educational programmes on its official website, thereby increasing trust among students, parents and partners.

MHP and Smila Technological College

MHP cooperates with about 60 educational institutions, of which approximately 35 are vocational schools. During an expert interview, a company representative highlighted the case of cooperation with the Smila Technological College. This has become an example of effective interaction between business and vocational education institutions, which is close to the promising ideal model of DFZO.

Initially, the college, like most vocational education institutions, was not ready to implement DFEI, but through dialogue, the parties were able to find mutually beneficial solutions. At the beginning of each semester, company representatives visit students, talk about the company's

activities, invite them on excursions and give guest lectures. When it is time for internships, usually in the autumn for senior students, they have the opportunity to do them at the company, familiarise themselves with real working conditions and decide whether they want to continue their studies with elements of DFO. An individual schedule and programme is developed for such students, allowing them to combine classes with work in production. At the end of the semester, the results of the internship are summarised in the format of a joint commission: the meeting takes place either at the college or at the company. Students present the results of their work, defend their achievements and receive feedback from both teachers and company representatives. At the same time, the vocational school is responsible for the official assessment, while the business participates in the process as experts and provides feedback and recommendations.

In addition, the company helped to create two modern laboratories at the college, which expanded the learning opportunities. Unfortunately, the VET premises were destroyed by a rocket strike in the summer of 2025,⁷⁴ and part of the infrastructure that had been created was lost.

This example shows how the company and the vocational school accumulate resources primarily not in the equipment of the research and development centre and other premises, but in the practical training of students at the company's production facilities. This creates conditions under which students receive high-quality vocational education and meaningful professional development experience. After checking the VET institution for its ability to train personnel, the company has greater confidence to invest financial resources in the equipment of the R&D centre and other premises at the VET institution.

Odessa VET Centre

The VET centre in Odessa is unique in its administrative and academic autonomy. The institution independently develops training programmes in line with the needs of the regional labour market and organises vocational training for adults as part of programmes to improve and/or change qualifications. This allows the institution to respond quickly to changes in the transport sector and support the professional mobility of the adult population.

The centre also works with vulnerable groups, including IDPs and veterans. It provides wounded veterans with the opportunity to start a new life in the civilian world. Vulnerable groups such as people with mental/psychological disabilities, people with musculoskeletal disorders, and people with sensory impairments are also involved in training, ensuring their smooth transition into the labour market. Women are also encouraged to enrol in courses that are traditionally considered "male-dominated". For example, in 2024, half of the participants in a plumbing course were women.

The Odessa VET Centre actively cooperates with the Employers' Council, which brings together representatives of key industries and leading companies in the region. This allows the institution to align its training programmes with the real needs of the labour market. The Employers' Council also provides feedback on training programmes, participates in qualification exams and contributes to the development of the Centre's long-term development strategy.

⁷⁴ [Media outlet "Eighteen Three Zeros". 2025](#)

Rivne Work Hub

Rivne Work Hub is a platform for dialogue between business, vocational education institutions and the State Employment Service, launched in 2021. The Rivne Regional State Administration moderates the process: businesses voice their staffing needs, educational institutions present their capabilities and resources, and then the parties find areas for cooperation. As a result, partnership projects are launched to train specialists who meet the real needs of the labour market.

The initiative quickly became successful: currently, 989 employers in the region are involved in the partnership, and other regions are adopting the Rivne experience. Among the results of Rivne Work Hub's work: almost 1,000 entrepreneurs in the region received UAH 218.2 million to start or develop a business, and 1,800 new jobs were created. This case is an example of effective partnership between business, government and education, as business actively influences the development of curricula, and the vocational education system in the region is adapted to the needs of the market.

The primary focus is on training workers: vehicle repair mechanics, cooks, confectioners, electric and gas welders, and tractor drivers. Rivne region has a strong vocational education system: 43% of schoolchildren choose vocational education (the average for Ukraine is 16-23%), and over 90% of graduates find employment. There are 31 modernised vocational training centres and five branches of the State Employment Service's Vocational Training Centre in the region. Trainees work on modern equipment with the support of leading companies (BOCH, Śnieżka, GROHE, etc.), which ensures a direct link between training and employment.

With the start of the full-scale invasion, the initiative was supplemented with weekly meetings with employers, where they provided information about state programmes and new initiatives, also involving relocated enterprises.

Rivne VET Centre

In order to strengthen ties with the labour market, the Rivne VET Centre of the State Employment Service established a supervisory board comprising representatives of business and local authorities. The board is headed by the director of a construction company. Among its members is the director of the Department of Education and Science of the Rivne Regional State Administration.

The supervisory board plays a key role in determining the strategic direction of the Centre's development, updating educational programmes and methodologies, engaging stakeholders, donors and partners to obtain additional resources, monitoring activities and ensuring financial control, as well as bringing educational training closer to the needs of business and the labour market. This management model creates a direct mechanism for employers and local authorities to influence the development of vocational education in line with real economic needs. Importantly, all these activities are carried out on a voluntary basis, without external funding.

The VET centre also pays special attention to gender inclusion, preparing women for professions that are not typical for their gender and creating inclusive learning spaces. Thanks

to this approach, the institution creates an educational environment in which every student has the opportunity to master modern skills and receive high-quality vocational training.

Sumy Higher Vocational School of Construction and Design

With limited budget funding, VPU is actively developing course training and short-term programmes for individuals and legal entities. VPU provides graduates with partial qualification certificates that are approved and recognised by grantors and employers.

The VPU combines financial diversification with active participation in state and international projects. In particular, it joined the "100 Workshops" programme, mobilising local businesses for co-financing, with the aim of reconstructing and modernising the NPT. It also participates in the Erasmus+ Excellence for Housing programme, a European Commission project. At the same time, the VPU cooperates with a French project based at Caritas-Sumy in the field of inclusive education. As a result, micro-qualifications for people with special needs have been developed, methodological materials for employers have been created, etc.

Cooperation with business has become an important area of focus. Employers confirm the high quality of student training. The VET workshops have established entrepreneurial activities: carpentry, tailoring and culinary products are manufactured on a commercial basis to order for citizens, organisations and partners. An example of successful practice was the sewing of branded clothing for an international project, which turned out to be of higher quality and cheaper for the client than market offers, and also provided students with valuable practical experience. The funds received from economic activities are used to modernise the material and technical base – purchasing equipment, furniture, tools, setting up shelters, etc.

Thus, the autonomy of this VET institution is manifested in its ability to independently generate resources, attract donors and employers and cooperate effectively with them, develop entrepreneurial practices and, at the same time, fulfil its social mission by supporting inclusion and meeting the needs of the community.

Kharkiv Vocational College of Construction and Industry

The institution's autonomy is particularly evident in the development of partnerships with businesses, other higher and pre-higher education institutions, and donor organisations. The institution actively cooperates with leading construction and engineering companies, in particular JSC "Trust Zhitlobud-1", KP "Trolleybus Depot No. 2", KP "Kharkivspetsbud", PJSC "Pivdenkabel Plant", KP "Kharkiv Heat Networks", as well as manufacturing companies, including TES, Henkel Bautechnik Ukraine, Caparol, Sniezka Ukraine, Rehau, Wavin and others.

The college provides a wide range of services for both partners and the community. These include training and retraining of employees, training and advanced training for the unemployed, short-term courses for community residents, consulting support on training organisation, career choice and employment, as well as expertise and evaluation of educational programmes. An important area of activity is the organisation of dual and practical training, as well as promoting the employment of graduates through job fairs, training and the dissemination of information about current job offers.

Considerable attention is paid to adapting educational services to the needs of different population groups, including war veterans, people with disabilities, internally displaced persons,

etc. Since the start of the full-scale invasion and as of the end of 2024, the institution has developed 43 programmes for partial qualifications, 18 of which have already been implemented. For example, a four-week course entitled "Be Your Own Master" was introduced for women, aimed at acquiring practical skills to perform tasks that are usually performed by men (e.g., replacing a lock, changing a tap or drain, repairing window slopes after installation).⁷⁵

The institution has a supervisory board, which includes representatives of enterprises, organisations, parents, students, employees and student self-government bodies. This allows the interests of various parties to be taken into account when making management decisions.

The college demonstrates effective management thanks to the initiative and motivation of its leadership:

"You have to love your job and look for solutions, rather than waiting for someone else to give you tasks. The same applies to autonomy. That is, you don't wait for orders from above, but you come up with internal mechanisms [...]. Therefore, it is important to involve as many people as possible who work at the institution so that everyone feels part of the community in which they are growing and developing. [...] It is also necessary to create an active team at the institution. A team of like-minded people, a team of those who want to develop the institution alongside you, who understand this, and who spread and convey this to the students." – comment by a representative of the institution during an expert interview.

Chervonohrad Vocational Mining and Construction Lyceum

The institution's autonomy is manifested in the development of partnerships with business, the public sector, donor organisations, as well as local and state authorities. With the support of GiZ, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Lviv Regional State Administration and the OMS, the institution opened a renewable energy centre, which includes a workshop, a laboratory and recreation areas for students.

Cooperation with the Ukrainian Wind Energy Association has made it possible to identify demand for new professions related to renewable energy. With the support of donor organisations, the institution equipped the workshop with wind turbines and subsequently began to establish close dialogue with companies interested in relevant specialists.

At the same time, the management of the institution emphasises the need to adapt existing professions to the current needs of the labour market. Thanks to its participation in the "One Hundred Workshops" programme under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science, the institution has managed to create a modern training centre for metalwork, and donor funding has enabled the purchase of a robotic complex. Plans include updating the curriculum with the participation of specialists from Fanuc, one of the leading manufacturers of industrial automation equipment.

Representatives of the lyceum see establishing cooperation with other educational institutions as an important area of work. They have already established cooperation with the Institute of Energy and Control Systems at Lviv Polytechnic National University, and further plans include providing university students with the opportunity to undergo practical training at the Chervonohrad Vocational Mining and Construction Lyceum.

⁷⁵ [Ukrinform, 2024](#)

Thanks to the modernisation of the material and technical base and the introduction of new approaches to teaching, the institution has not only managed to increase the prestige of certain specialities, but also to involve representatives of enterprises with practical experience who can pass it on to students in the teaching process.⁷⁶

Chernihiv Vocational Lyceum of Railway Transport

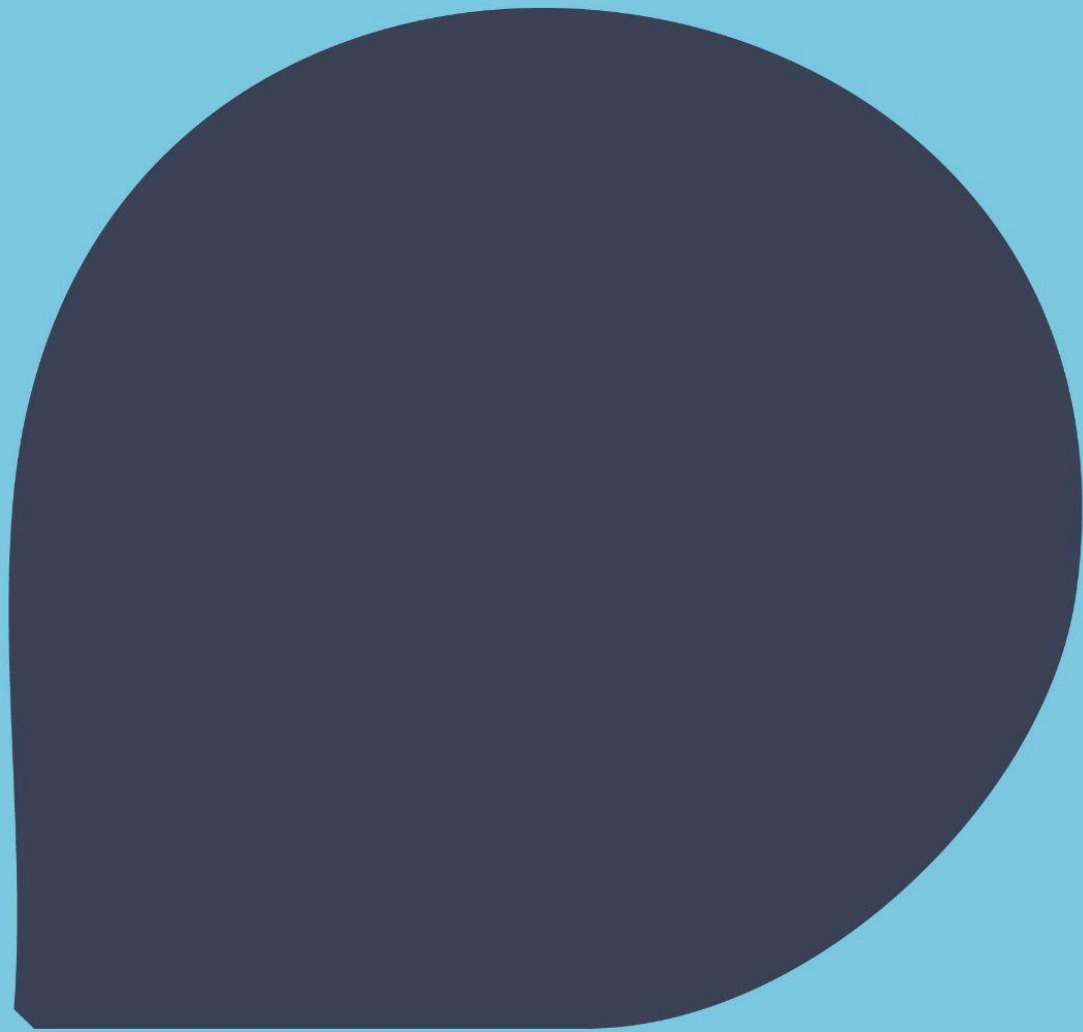
The autonomy of the institution is manifested not only in the formal dimension of managerial or financial powers, but also in the ability of the management to respond quickly to changes in the local labour market and the socio-economic situation in the region. At the Chernihiv Vocational Lyceum of Railway Transport, this logic is implemented through the active position of the administration, which focuses not so much on general Ukrainian trends as on the local specifics of the micro-region.

The management of the institution constantly monitors which enterprises are opening or closing in the region, expanding or relocating, what new professions and skills are needed by the local population, and what demand there is from the community for short-term or additional educational services.

The director of the lyceum regularly attends business forums, follows local events, and initiates personal meetings with company executives. Such proactivity allows the lyceum to independently develop new educational offerings based on current demand, rather than waiting for official orders from employers or decisions from above.

"As a result, the lyceum is gaining a reputation as a flexible partner for business and the community: it can quickly offer training or retraining programmes that are really needed in the local market. This is a manifestation of real autonomy – not declarative, but practical, when the institution independently builds development trajectories, focusing on local needs," commented a national expert in an expert interview.

⁷⁶ [Annual Skills4Recovery Conference: Workforce Development on Ukraine's Path to the EU 2025](#)



CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN EXPANDING AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS

5.1. PREREQUISITES AND ROLE OF AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORM IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

An analysis of the experience of the selected countries made it possible to identify their common and different prerequisites for reforming VET. The common ones include the gap between education and the labour market and the need for flexibility in VET (Estonia, the Netherlands, Germany, South Korea, the Czech Republic, Sweden), demographic challenges (ageing society and declining youth population) that have affected demand and the network of VET institutions (South Korea, Czech Republic), and the availability of external support in adhering to specific guidelines through programmes and recommendations from international organisations (Czech Republic). For some countries, the following were relevant: the need to update or clearly define the regulatory framework, institutional reboot (Estonia, Netherlands, Czech Republic), strengthening cooperation between VET institutions and businesses and social partners (Estonia, the Netherlands, Germany, South Korea) and improving the adaptability of VET, in particular through decentralisation of the system and granting autonomy to VET institutions (Estonia, Israel, the Czech Republic, Sweden).

Additional factors that influenced the process of establishing autonomy include: post-Soviet economic transformation and privatisation (Estonia), the absence of a comprehensive VET system at the start of reforms (the Netherlands), systemic reform after the political change of 1989 (the Czech Republic), historically integrated VET in upper secondary school and municipal policy implementation (Sweden), a traditionally strong dual VET system with national standards (Germany), a shortage of skilled workers during the investment boom and high demand for higher education (South Korea), VET reporting to two ministries and different approaches to organising training (Israel).

Comprehensive approaches to reforming VET combined regulatory, organisational and financial instruments. One of the key areas was the creation or strengthening of the regulatory framework, along with granting greater autonomy to VET institutions through broader powers to independently organise the educational process (Estonia, Israel, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Sweden). The optimisation of the VET institution network (the Netherlands, the Czech Republic) and the decentralisation of management (Sweden) also played an important role. Significant attention was paid to the content of education through the introduction of modularity and selectivity of VET programmes (the Netherlands), the integration of general education and vocational components (South Korea, the Czech Republic), and the combination of general and

vocational training (South Korea, the Czech Republic, Sweden). In some countries, there was a clear differentiation of educational trajectories, for example, the division into academic and vocational programmes in Sweden after the 2011 reform. Changes in financial mechanisms also became an important factor, in particular the transition to funding based on student numbers (Czech Republic). Countries actively piloted new (Israel, South Korea, Sweden) or refined traditional (Germany) models of practical training and used external support to test them (Czech Republic).

Cooperation between institutions and business and social partners played a special role in the reform of VET. Such partnerships supported the establishment of national standards and ensured that training met the needs of the labour market (Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea). They contributed to the introduction of various training models that combined theory and practice, such as dual training (Germany), 15-week internships (Sweden), a combined format of two days of training at a VET institution and three days of paid work in a company (Israel), and even the creation of specialised institutions for sectors with high demand (meister schools in South Korea).

The results of implementing such approaches varied, but were clearly noticeable. VET systems became more flexible and responsive to labour market needs (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Sweden) or even developed into a fully-fledged and structured sector (the Netherlands). Some ensured high-quality training and low youth unemployment (Germany) or promoted early employment of graduates through close cooperation with industry (South Korea). Strengthening the autonomy of VET institutions contributed to increasing their accountability and effectiveness (Estonia, Czech Republic, Sweden). Optimising the network of VET institutions has made it possible to adapt the system to demographic challenges (Czech Republic). Strengthening practical training has ensured broad access to VET (Sweden) and informed choices by young people (Israel, Germany). More details on each country's case can be found in Appendix 2.

5.2. COMMON AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF VET INSTITUTIONS' AUTONOMY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

Based on the analysis, a comparative table of the presence of key features of autonomy in selected countries has been compiled (see Table 11). The features are grouped into four types of autonomy: financial, pedagogical, managerial, and autonomy in the field of partnerships and services. The degree of presence of a particular approach or instrument of autonomy is marked as: "yes" – the feature is fully present, "partially" – not fully present, "no" – absent, "n/a" – no data available or impossible to determine clearly.

Table 11. Comparative table of the presence of key features of autonomy in selected countries

Type of autonomy / country	Ukraine	Estonia	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Sweden	Germany	South Korea	Israel
Management								
Conclusion and termination of employment relationships with teaching staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
Setting the salary level for teaching staff	No	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Involvement of employer representatives in teaching	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes	No
Appointment of the director by the council of the institution PONS	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Functioning of councils and advisory bodies at the PSE	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	No
Distribution of workload among teaching staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Financial								

Type of autonomy / country	Ukraine	Estonia	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Sweden	Germany	South Korea	Israel
Freedom in the use of public funds	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Partially	No	No
Fundraising	Partially*	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	Partially	Yes	n/a
Attracting targeted and project grants	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Partially	n/a	n/a
Receipt of income from the sale of goods	Partially*	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	Partially	n/a
Receiving income from providing services	Partially*	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	Partially	n/a
Pedagogical								
Application of dual form of education	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flexibility in curriculum design	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Partially	Partially
Independent regulation of educational workload	Partially	No	Yes	No	No	No	n/a	No
Cooperation with employers in developing curricula	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	No	Yes	Partially
Teachers undergoing internships at enterprises	Yes	Yes	N/A	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a
Partnerships and services								
Lifelong learning programmes	Partially	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a
Educational programmes for adults, unskilled persons and people aged 50+	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially
Opportunity for on-the-job training in cooperation with enterprises	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internships for students and teachers at enterprises	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Raising funds is possible, but the decision on the further use of these funds is made by the founder of the institution.

5.2.1. MANAGERIAL AUTONOMY

Administrative autonomy is a key component of the effective establishment of operational processes by VET institutions. An analysis of the experience of selected countries reveals both similarities and differences in the granting of freedom of action.

1. Conclusion and termination of employment relationships with teaching staff, lecturers and directors of VET institutions. In most countries, VET institutions have fairly broad powers in the context of their own personnel policy. According to one approach, heads of VET institutions have the authority to independently conclude, change or terminate employment relationships with teaching staff and lecturers, as well as to set salaries (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic). At the same time, the appointment of directors of VET institutions is the responsibility of the ministries of education or local authorities, thus balancing autonomy at the local level (Estonia, Czech Republic). There are cases of even greater autonomy, where VET institution councils have powers in the context of personnel management, and their powers even extend to the appointment of institution directors (the Netherlands). However, this approach is not very common, and in some systems, VET institutions face significant restrictions, as regional authorities (Germany) or the Ministry of Education, which conducts competitions to fill vacant positions, including directors (South Korea), are responsible for the selection process.

2. Involvement of external actors in the teaching process and distribution of workload among teachers. In a number of countries, decisions on the distribution of workload among teachers are made by VET institution councils (Estonia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, South Korea). In some countries, it is common practice to involve external specialists in specific fields who have a lighter teaching load, allowing them to combine professional and teaching activities, thereby passing on practical experience to students (the Netherlands, South Korea). Despite the seemingly obvious advantages of this approach, there are cases where the practice of employing industry experts in VET institutions on a part-time basis is less common due to organisational barriers in the form of identical qualification requirements for full-time and part-time teachers (Israel).

3. Functioning of councils and advisory bodies at VET institutions. VET councils can play the role of both the highest collegial management body (Estonia, Netherlands) and an advisory body (Czech Republic). Their members include the director of the institution, his or her deputies, heads of structural units, representatives of student self-government, business (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic) or even parents of students (the Netherlands, the Czech Republic). The powers of such bodies include approving the institution's development plan, budget schedule, procurement plan (Estonia, Germany), monitoring the implementation of educational programmes, approving the annual report on the institution's activities (Czech Republic), making proposals on inclusive education (Germany), etc.

4. Impact on the VET system. The experience of countries with well-developed administrative autonomy (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic) shows that institutions have a wide range of opportunities to organise operational processes, manage staff and develop new approaches to teaching at their own discretion. At the same time, in countries with a more rigid and centralised system (Israel, partly Germany and South Korea), VET institutions have a lower level of managerial autonomy, which inevitably creates limitations in the context of their activities.

Therefore, the analysed experience shows that the most optimal approach is one based on granting VET institutions autonomy in the context of concluding and terminating employment relationships with employees, distributing the workload among them, and involving external experts in the educational process on flexible and convenient terms, which allows them to gain advanced experience from business representatives. The functioning of councils at VET institutions creates opportunities for discussing important management decisions on the basis of the principles of transparency and accountability.

5.2.2. FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

The financial autonomy of VET institutions is one of the key factors in their effectiveness, sustainability and ability to adapt to the needs of the labour market. An analysis of the experience of selected countries shows both common features and significant differences in the mechanisms for ensuring financial autonomy and the results of their implementation.

1. Combining public funding with own revenues. In most countries, VET funding is based on public appropriations. However, institutions have the opportunity to obtain additional resources through economic activities, the provision of educational and related services, participation in international programmes (Estonia, Czech Republic), and the conclusion of contracts with private individuals and organisations (Netherlands). This ensures diversification of revenue sources, allows institutions to reduce their dependence on public funds and invest in the development of educational programmes and material resources.

2. Freedom to use resources. The difference between countries is reflected in the level of autonomy of institutions in terms of resource allocation. There are cases where VET institutions have considerable freedom in financial management and are only required to report on the use of funds (Estonia, Netherlands), or where financial decisions are mainly made by the head of the institution (Czech Republic). There are also cases where municipalities exercise control over the activities of the institution (Czech Republic) or may be the main administrators of funds in parallel with the responsibility of VET institutions for their effective use, in particular with regard to remuneration (Sweden). Financial autonomy may also depend on local conditions, such as location in a particular federal state (Germany). Some states may grant institution heads the authority to enter into agreements, but at the same time limit their ability to attract additional resources (Germany). Some countries have experience where financial flows are under strict control by the state and local authorities (South Korea) or the Ministry of Education (Israel). Interestingly, in the latter case, in parallel with controlling the main distribution of funds, the Ministry of Education is also piloting projects to expand the autonomy of institutions (Israel).

3. Additional support and incentive mechanisms. An important aspect of financial autonomy is the existence of programmes that expand access to education and create new sources of funding. For example, the STAP (STimulans Arbeidsmarkt Positie) programme, supported by the Dutch government, is a system of personal training vouchers for adults (the Netherlands) that operated during 2023-2024 and allowed VET institutions to obtain additional resources through adult education. In other cases, there is active support from employers who finance the infrastructure and equipment of institutions (Czech Republic). Networks of educational institutions can be an additional source of resources and staff development, creating a multi-level system of financial support (Israel).

4. Impact on the VET system. The experience of countries with well-developed financial autonomy (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Sweden) shows that institutions are able to respond more quickly to labour market needs, diversify educational offerings and attract adults to learning. At the same time, countries with lower levels of autonomy (Israel, Germany, South Korea) maintain a more rigid centralised management system, which ensures stability of funding but also limits the flexibility and ability of institutions to independently develop innovative solutions.

Thus, the analysed experience shows that the optimal model of financial autonomy combines basic state funding with the freedom of VET institutions to attract and use additional resources. A high degree of autonomy promotes the development of the entrepreneurial potential of VET institutions, expands the range of educational services and attracts new categories of students. Limited autonomy maintains stability but can hinder the innovative development of the system.

5.2.3. PEDAGOGICAL AUTONOMY

The pedagogical autonomy of VET institutions allows them to effectively adapt curricula to the needs of students and to respond more quickly to new trends in the labour market. However, the degree and characteristics of the implementation of pedagogical autonomy differ in each country.

1. Different degrees of freedom in curriculum design. Among the countries analysed, the most common approach is one in which educational institutions can flexibly design curricula and teaching methods within the framework of the national curriculum (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Sweden). In the case of greater control by state structures, programmes are developed at the state level, and institutions can only implement teaching methods, form study groups and use teaching aids at their own discretion (Germany). In some countries, the VET system combines both autonomy and state control, with the result that the content of education is generally determined by the national curriculum, but VET institutions have the opportunity to adjust some of the credits according to local needs (South Korea, Israel). The most flexible of all the approaches analysed is one in which educational institutions can independently determine the workload and adjust it according to the needs of students, in particular by exempting students who have the necessary skills and knowledge from certain classes or reducing the duration of classes for them (the Netherlands).

2. Cooperation with employers in the context of curriculum development. An important aspect of ensuring that curricula meet the real needs of the labour market is their development by VET institutions in cooperation with local businesses. Cooperation can take the form of special EU-funded programmes (Czech Republic), direct interaction between VET institutions and enterprises (Estonia, South Korea) and even more unusual formats, such as the delegation of part of the curriculum by the director of the institution to local enterprises (South Korea).

3. Internships and practical training at enterprises. The dual education system has been introduced in all selected countries, and thanks to the establishment of cooperation mechanisms with local enterprises, VET institutions have the opportunity to strengthen the human resources potential of their teaching staff and provide practical training for students. It is common for VET institutions to establish long-term partnerships with local companies and institutions (the Netherlands, Germany) and to send their students on internships and work

placements (South Korea). There are also opportunities for professional development for teachers, such as experience sharing or internships for teaching staff at enterprises (Estonia).

4. Impact on the VET system. The experience of countries with well-developed pedagogical autonomy (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic) shows that institutions are able to better adapt to labour market trends, adjust curricula to their needs, establish effective formats for cooperation with business, and ensure the development of their own employees. At the same time, countries with lower levels of autonomy (Germany, Israel) have a more rigid system, which makes it more predictable but creates limitations for its development.

Therefore, the most optimal approach is one in which educational institutions can flexibly develop curricula and teaching methods within the framework of the national curriculum (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Sweden), while collaborating with local businesses in the context of curriculum development, ensuring elements of practical training, and strengthening the human resource capacity of their employees.

5.2.4. AUTONOMY OF PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES

The autonomy of partnerships and services is one of the factors that allows VET institutions to work with different population groups, be involved in retraining programmes, develop new formats for interaction with business and adapt to the realities of the labour market.

1. Implementation of training programmes for adults and vulnerable groups. VET institutions play an important role in the professional adaptation of the population and, therefore, provide retraining and upskilling services in cooperation with state structures and employers. A number of countries have introduced programmes for adults, unskilled people, people aged 50+, and those who have lost their jobs due to health problems or economic changes (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, South Korea). In addition, there are cases where VET institutions implement programmes designed for people with special educational needs (the Netherlands, the Czech Republic). Such initiatives are implemented through voucher funding provided by state structures (Estonia), government financial support for employers involved in training (Sweden), or at the expense of the employers themselves in cooperation with VET institutions (Germany) or at the expense of the applicants (Israel).

2. Cooperation with enterprises in the context of implementing workplace learning (hereinafter referred to as WPL). WBL can be implemented through participation in practical work under the supervision of an employer and is accompanied by a structured combination of practical and theoretical training, while the organisation and management of the learning process is flexible and tailored to the needs of students and local employers (Sweden). There are programmes under which employers can organise specialised courses for people who want to change their type of activity (Israel).

3. Internships for teachers and students at companies. Within the framework of autonomous partnerships and services, there are practices where students have the opportunity to directly familiarise themselves with the production environment, undergo internships, receive advice from relevant specialists, and teaching staff can update their professional knowledge through practice at relevant industry enterprises (South Korea). Short-term internships are also offered

to students in important fields under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, and employers receive financial incentives from the state for training personnel (Israel).

4. Impact on the VET system. Similar to other types of autonomy (Estonia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic), countries with greater freedom for VET institutions in the context of partnerships and services have a wider range of opportunities to establish various formats of cooperation with employers, particularly in the context of implementing educational programmes for adults and vulnerable groups, as well as organising internships for teachers and students.

The most effective approach is to develop cooperation between VET institutions, local and state authorities, and businesses, which enables institutions to enlist the support of both state and non-state actors, better understand the needs of the state and business in the context of training, and take a more flexible approach to training specific categories of people, which is particularly relevant for Ukraine in the context of war and post-war recovery.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that all elements of VET institution autonomy are cross-cutting and interrelated. Therefore, they cannot be considered in isolation from one another, and for an institution to function successfully, it is not enough to have broad powers in only one of these areas. Thus, a high level of financial autonomy contributes to the development of the entrepreneurial potential of VET institutions, the expansion of the range of educational services and the attraction of new categories of students. Expanding the range of educational services and innovative development of the institution are impossible without a mechanism for implementing an independent personnel policy, autonomous formation of curricula, and the search for optimal and flexible forms of interaction with employers, which makes it possible not only to strengthen the practical component of training and develop the personnel potential of VET institutions, but also to better understand the needs of the labour market and, as a result, to form stable and productive links with business and state institutions. Only a comprehensive and holistic approach to the implementation of autonomy in VET institutions can have a long-term positive result.



CHAPTER 6

VET INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

6.1. PROJECT SAMPLE AND THE ROLE OF VET INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPING AUTONOMY

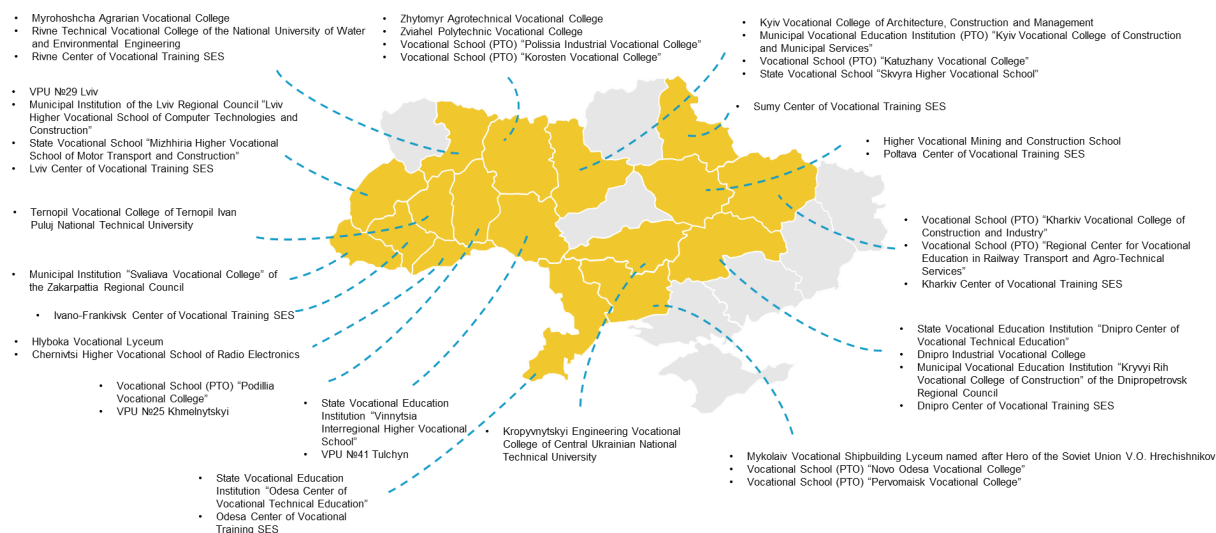
At the initial stage of the Skills4Recovery project "Autonomy in vocational education institutions: strengthening institutions to meet regional labour force needs", 40 VET institutions from different regions of Ukraine were involved. The target group of VET institutions includes various types of institutions – vocational colleges, VET institutions and VET centres of the State Employment Service – ensuring both institutional and sectoral diversity.

The main areas of geographical coverage include, but are not limited to:

- large industrial regions (Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Poltava regions)
- border areas (Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi regions)
- cities with a high concentration of the labour market (Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa).

This distribution will allow us to test different models of autonomisation – from integration with local educational institutions to partnerships with employers in specific sectors of the economy (construction, agriculture, transport, mechanical engineering, IT and services).

Figure 22. 40 VET institutions involved in the Skills4Recovery project “Autonomy in VET: strengthening institutions to meet regional labour force needs”



As of the end of July 2025, 37 out of 40 VET institutions had already participated in the diagnosis of their own needs, challenges and opportunities for institutional autonomy. This

stage showed that the issue of autonomy is not uniform: some institutions demonstrated a relatively high level of readiness for independent planning of financial, academic and administrative activities, while others are only at the initial stage of recognising the need for change. This differentiation provides a good basis for implementing the already planned and more targeted approach to further support.

The next step will be to train the participating HEIs in working with various aspects of institutional autonomy and to prepare for the selection of 25 HEIs that will receive mentoring support for the development of their targeted and conscious aspects of autonomous activity. For a positive selection decision, the involved HEIs must formulate and defend short concepts regarding their own needs for mentoring support in order to develop the aspect(s) of autonomy that they need. This creates a competitive selection mechanism that encourages institutions to actively reflect on and clearly define their strategic priorities. At the same time, this approach is not without risks: institutions with greater institutional capacity may have advantages in preparing and presenting concepts, which may lead to increased inequalities between participants.

Despite this, the 25 selected HEIs will have the potential to become "locomotives of change." They will receive not only individual mentoring support, but also the opportunity to test practical tools for management autonomy, working with finances, personnel, developing partnerships, and providing services to various partners. In this way, they will become experimental platforms, the results of which can serve as an example for other participants in the system. The role of these institutions is not only in their own institutional development, but also in transferring their experience to a wider range of VET institutions.

However, it is important to avoid a scenario where only a select group demonstrates progress while the rest remain on the sidelines. That is why it is advisable to establish mechanisms for horizontal exchange of experience between all 40 VET institutions and create an open platform for disseminating best practices among other institutions that did not participate in the selection process. This will reduce the risk of system segmentation and enhance the effect of scale.

In this way, the involved HEIs play a dual role: on the one hand, as direct participants in the process of forming autonomy at the practical level, and on the other, as agents of change for the entire system. Only by combining individual mentoring support with mechanisms for disseminating results and integrating them into public policy can we expect the autonomy of vocational education institutions to become not a one-off achievement, but a sustainable component of the modernisation of the vocational education system in Ukraine.

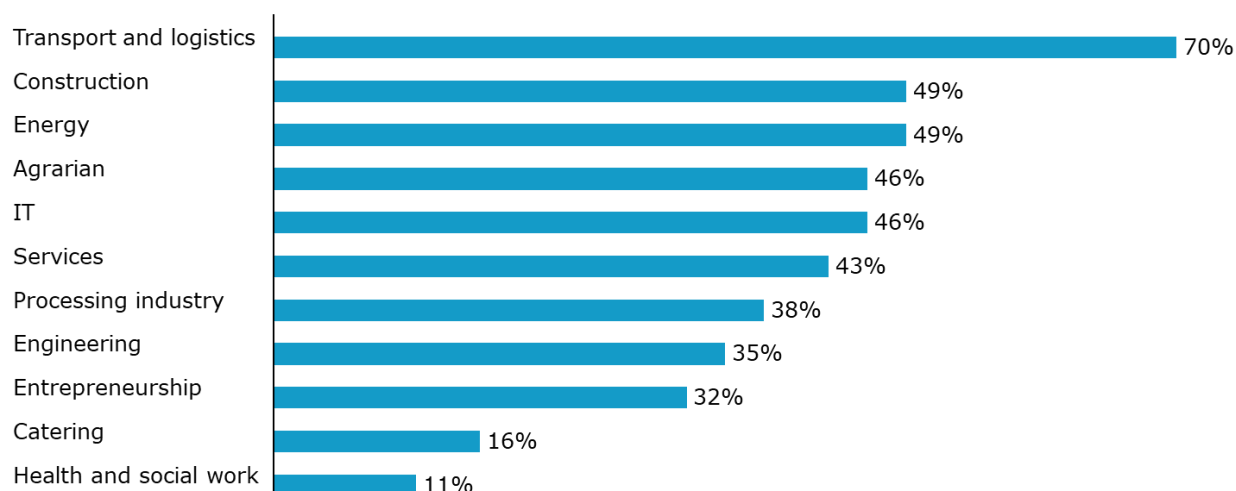
6.2. SURVEY RESULTS ON THE ASSESSMENT OF VET INSTITUTIONS' NEEDS

6.2.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

An analysis of the questionnaires completed by the VET institutions involved revealed considerable diversity in their size, staff structure and the range of economic sectors covered. In terms of the number of students, most institutions are medium-sized and large: 43% have between 501 and 1,000 students, another 35% have between 200 and 500 students, while 22% are large institutions with over 1,000 students. This indicates that the majority of the institutions surveyed have a sufficient number of students to ensure stable functioning and development, while maintaining significant diversity in terms of scale of activity. The average number of employees (teaching and administrative staff) is 97, but there are significant differences between institutions: the largest staff numbers 341 people, while the smallest has only 29. This variability indicates significant differences in human resources, which directly affects the possibilities for developing autonomy and the ability to update educational programmes.

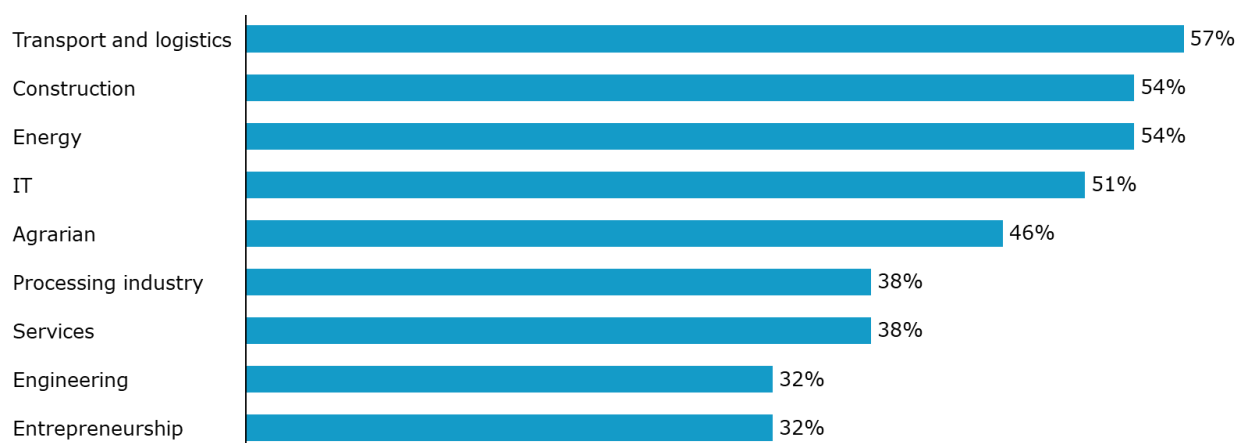
The structure of the educational programmes of the institutions clearly reflects the main sectors of the economy with which they interact. The most common sectors are transport and logistics (70% of institutions), as well as construction and energy (49% each). IT (46%), the agricultural sector (46%) and services (43%) are also well represented. Manufacturing (38%), engineering (35%) and entrepreneurship (32%) also account for a significant share. Less represented are areas such as catering (16%) and healthcare and social work (11%). Some institutions implement programmes in the fields of electrical engineering, tourism and hospitality, metallurgy and metalworking, management and administration, but their share is insignificant. The least developed specialisations remain Military Tech, mining, industrial engineering, art and design, agricultural processing, heat supply, food trade and chemical production.

Figure 23. Main sectors of the economy represented in the structure of VET programmes, % of responses



Institutions' requests to open or update educational programmes demonstrate a focus on further strengthening cooperation with leading sectors of the economy. In particular, 57% of institutions expressed a need to open or update programmes in the field of transport and logistics, 54% in construction and energy, and 51% in IT. There also remains significant interest in developing programmes in the agricultural sector (46%) and the service sector (38%). In manufacturing, entrepreneurship and engineering, institutions see potential for updating educational content (32-38% each). Less attention is paid to healthcare and social work (14%), which correlates with the current level of representation of this sector in the structure of educational programmes.

Figure 24. Sectors of the economy where educational programmes need to be updated or launched, % of responses



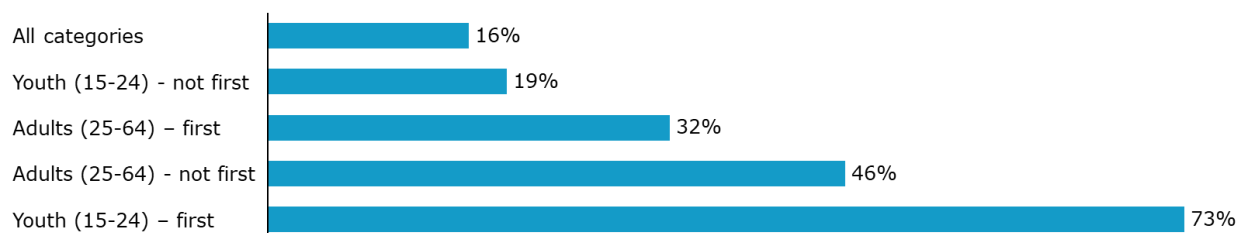
At the same time, the survey revealed a number of sectors that HEIs currently consider non-priority. These include tourism and the hotel business (8%), military tech (5%), industrial engineering with in-depth study of robotics, catering, metallurgy, horticulture, fruit and vegetable growing and viticulture, landscape design and greening, management and administration (3% of institutions each). This indicates a certain gap between national economic trends and local educational initiatives, which may indicate insufficient institutional readiness or a lack of resources for developing programmes in these areas.

The results show that, despite significant differences in scale and human resources, VET institutions in Ukraine share common goals for updating educational programmes in key sectors that determine the country's economic recovery. At the same time, there remains a significant proportion of industries with low levels of educational programme involvement, which requires targeted support and development through mechanisms such as educational-business partnerships, institutional autonomy and mentoring. Thus, the survey results not only outline the current state of vocational education, but also highlight priority areas for strategic interventions.

6.2.2. TARGET GROUPS

Analysis of the survey under the "Target groups" section shows that the vast majority of VET institutions surveyed are primarily focused on young people aged 15-24 who are pursuing higher education for the first time (73%). A slightly smaller percentage of institutions work with adult learners, of which 46% focus on people who already have previous learning experience, while 32% focus on adults who are pursuing education for the first time. The lowest rates were found for young people who are returning to education (19%). At the same time, only 16% of institutions were able to identify all of the above groups as equally important consumers of their educational services.

Figure 25. Categories of persons targeted by VET, % of responses



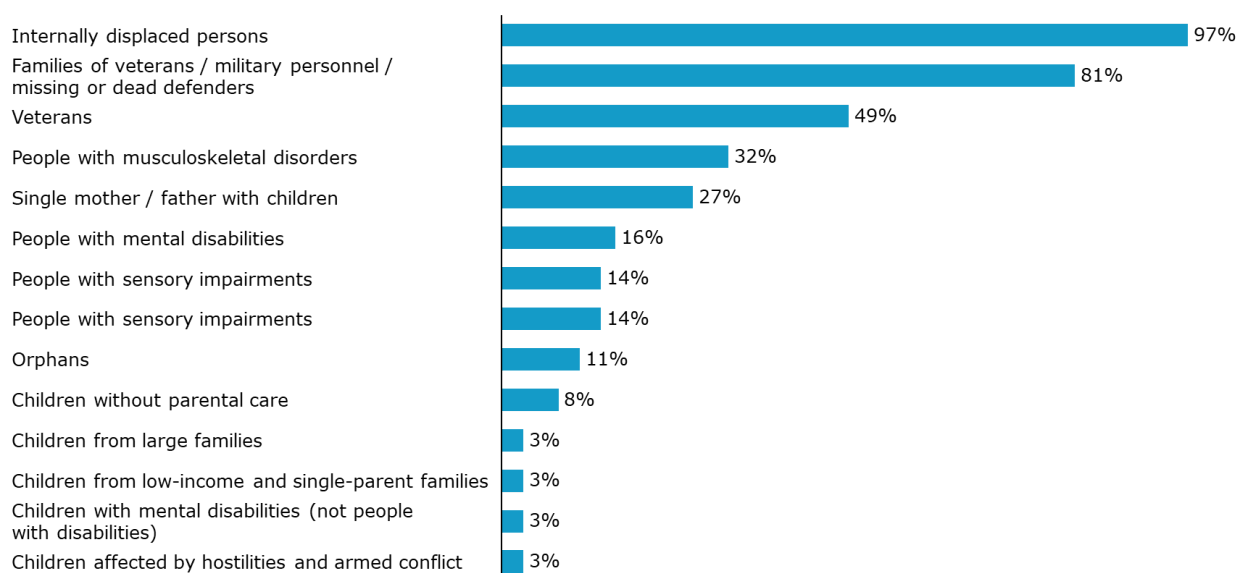
The degree to which VET institutions target different age groups also varies significantly: 19% demonstrate a very high level, 51% a high level, while 30% are limited to an average level. This indicates uneven approaches to working with different target groups and potential for further development of inclusive educational practices.

Figure 26. Degree of focus of VET insitutions on different age groups, % of responses



The range of vulnerable groups involved is particularly revealing. The vast majority of institutions work with internally displaced persons (97%) and families of military personnel or fallen defenders (81%), reflecting the current social context. Almost half (49%) cover veterans, while people with physical disabilities are involved much less frequently (32% with people with musculoskeletal disorders, 16% with people with mental disorders, 14% with sensory disorders). At the same time, only 14% involve older people (60+), which demonstrates the limited development of the lifelong learning segment. Additionally, 11% of institutions work with orphans, 8% with children deprived of parental care, and only 3% with children affected by war or from large, low-income families.

Figure 27. Vulnerable groups with which VET institutions work, % of responses



Only 46% of institutions have separate programmes for such groups, mainly in the fields of construction, technical specialities and social professions, while the remaining 54% do not offer them.

Figure 28. Availability of separate programmes for vulnerable groups in VET institutions, % of responses



Barriers to wider inclusion include insufficient funding for inclusive practices (81%), lack of inclusive infrastructure (59%), weak support mechanisms (27%) and low levels of digital marketing (16%). At the same time, 57% of institutions actively use short-term programmes with partial or micro-qualifications, aimed primarily at IDPs, veterans and war-affected populations. The most popular areas are construction, technical professions, logistics, entrepreneurship and the social sphere, which corresponds to the challenges of infrastructure restoration and the integration of vulnerable groups into the new labour market conditions.

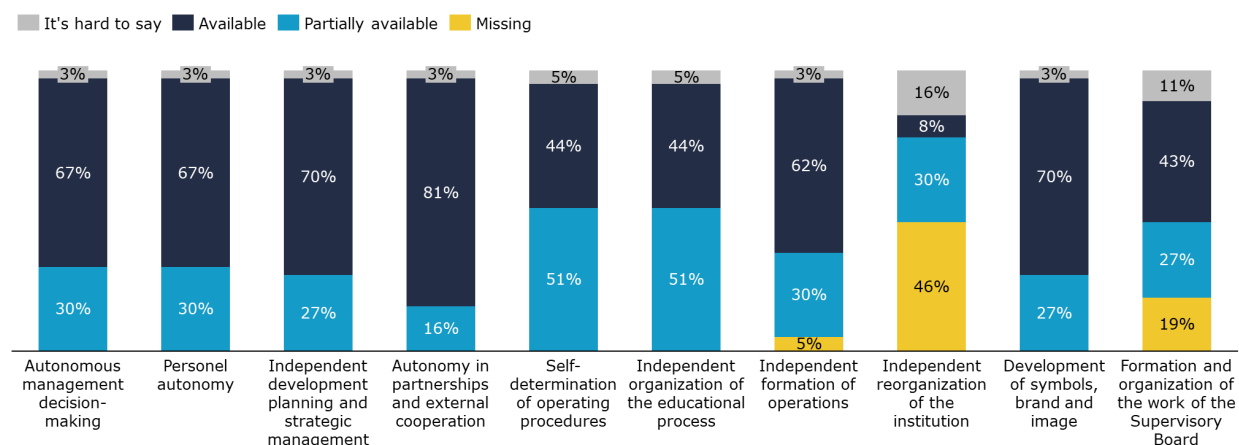
Thus, the survey results demonstrate both the high level of sensitivity of institutions to the military context and the existing systemic constraints that require comprehensive support for the development of inclusive and flexible learning formats.

6.2.3. MANAGERIAL AUTONOMY

According to the survey results, most of the target VET institutions demonstrate a high level of managerial autonomy in various areas of activity. Thus, 67% of respondents indicated the existence of autonomous management decision-making and distribution of powers, while 30% assess it as partially existing. A similar situation is observed with regard to personnel autonomy: 67% of VET institutions have the opportunity to form the structure of the team, staffing table and select personnel independently, while another 30% assess it as partially implemented. Independent development planning and strategic management are available to 70% of respondents, 27% consider it partially available, and 3% find it difficult to assess.

A particularly high level of autonomy is observed in the area of partnerships and external cooperation, which HEIs assess as existing (81%). The development of symbols, branding and image of the institution is available to 70% of respondents, while autonomous formation of the institution's working regime is implemented in 62% of institutions, partially in 30%. At the same time, the most limited area is the independent reorganisation or re-profiling of the institution in accordance with the law – respondents noted the absence of such powers (46%), their presence (8%), and partial presence (30%). Restrictions are also observed in the formation and organisation of the institution's supervisory board. They have this opportunity (43%), partially implement it (27%) or cannot perform these functions (19%).

Figure 29. Level of availability of elements of managerial autonomy in higher education institutions, % of responses

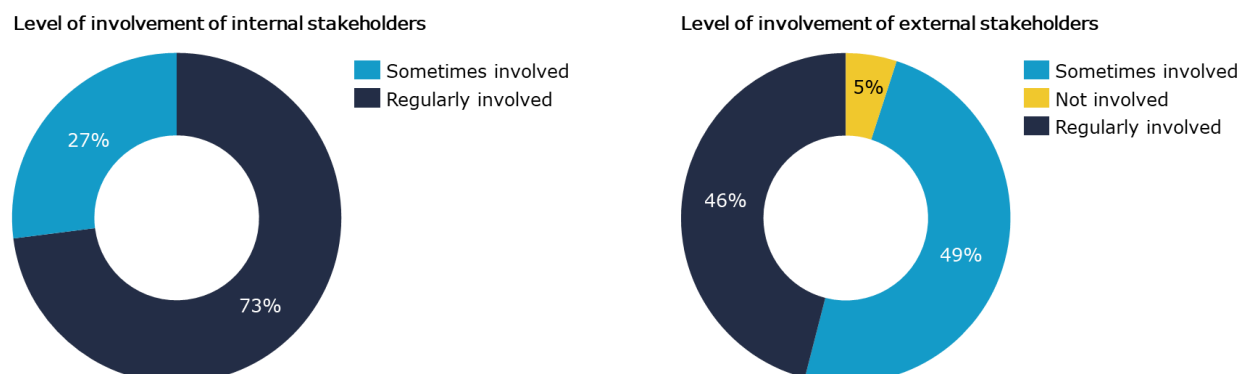


Open-ended responses confirm trends towards greater managerial autonomy. Respondents most often mentioned the ability to independently determine staffing levels (14%), conclude cooperation agreements (11%) and establish supervisory boards (11%). Some institutions also mentioned the development of their own systems of material and non-material incentives for teachers and other employees (8%), the implementation of a development strategy and symbols for the institution (8%), introducing an internal system for ensuring the quality of education (3%), independently determining the internal organisational structure and forming departments (3%), creating working groups to modernise educational programmes with the involvement of business (3%), and delegating powers to structural units (3%).

At the same time, institutions point to a lack of authority for effective work. Thus, 51% of respondents noted that the pedagogical council does not exercise full collegial management, 38% noted that there is no real involvement of students and parents in management, as well as insufficient capacity of methodological commissions to implement innovations.

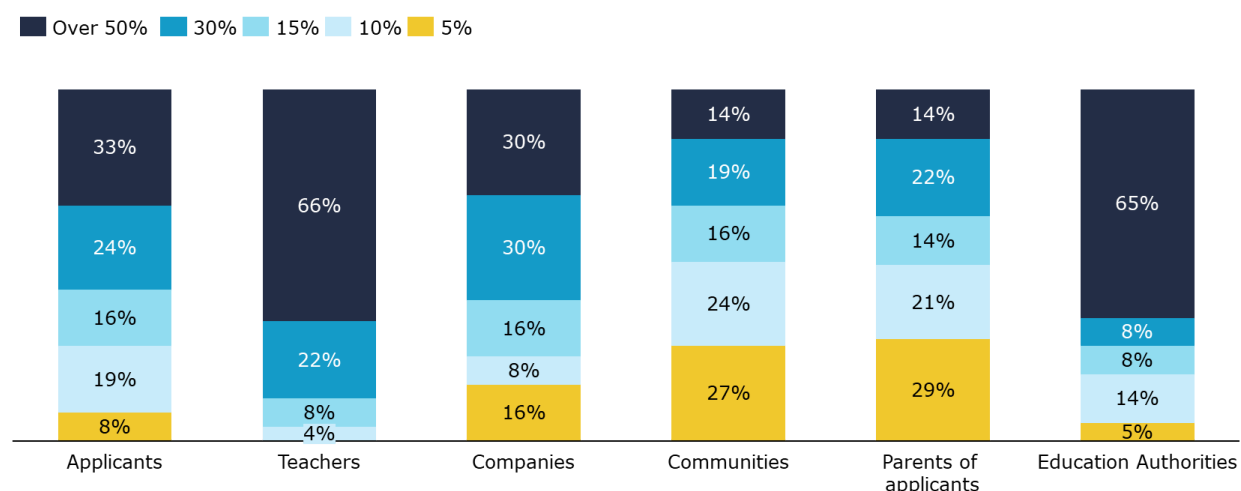
In the context of stakeholder involvement in management decisions, internal groups – teachers, students and technical staff – participate more actively than external ones. Thus, 73% of respondents indicate that internal stakeholders are regularly involved in decision-making, 27% – sometimes. Among external participants, such as employers, industry representatives, parents and education authorities, 46% of respondents indicated regular involvement, 49% – sometimes, and 5% – never.

Figure 30. Level of involvement of internal and external stakeholders in management decision-making at VET institutions, % of responses



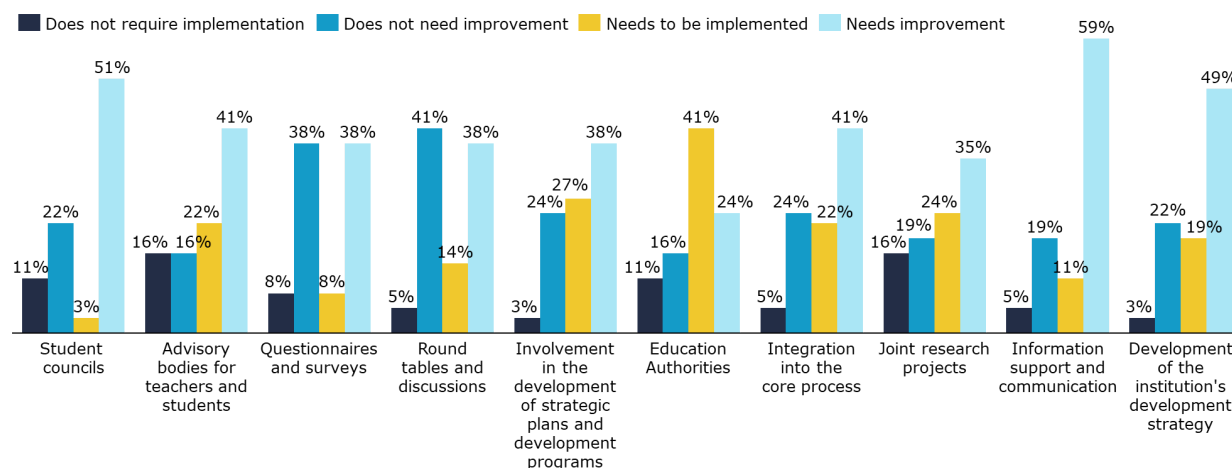
The distribution of stakeholder involvement showed that among internal participants, teachers (66% involved more than 50% of the time) and students (33%) are the most active, while among external participants, education authorities (65%), companies (30%), the community and parents (14%) are the most active. The main formats for engaging internal stakeholders include questionnaires and surveys (78%), round tables and discussions (78%), student councils (59%), involvement in the development of strategic plans and development programmes (57%) and advisory bodies of teachers and students (35%).

Figure 31. Level of involvement of individual stakeholder categories in management decision-making, % of responses



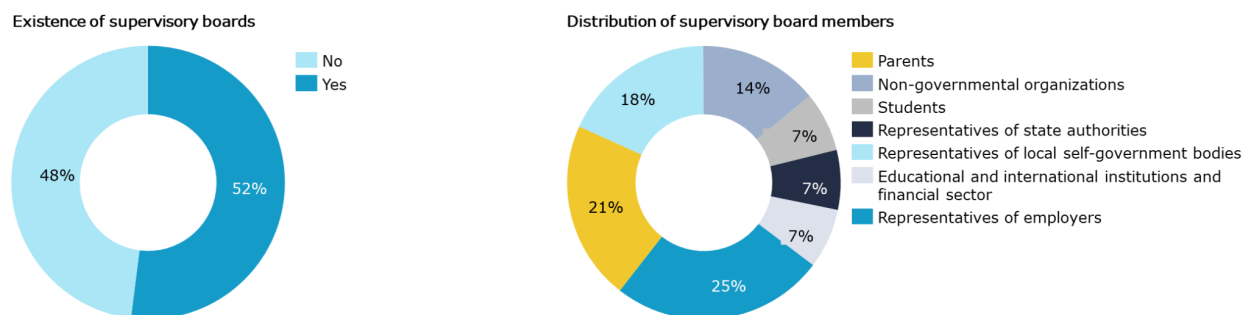
The involvement of external stakeholders is most often achieved through integration into the educational process (92%), information support and communication (57%), consultative and advisory bodies (51%), participation in the development of the institution's development strategy (43%) and joint research projects (41%). Stakeholder engagement practices need further development: 51% of respondents consider it necessary to improve the activities of student councils, 59% – information support and communication, 49% – the development of the institution's development strategy, 38–41% – consultation and integration mechanisms.

Figure 32. Distribution of practices for involving stakeholders in management decision-making, % of responses



As for supervisory boards or their equivalents, 54% of institutions have such bodies, while 46% do not. They mainly consist of representatives of employers (25%), parents of applicants (21%), local government bodies (16%) and public organisations (14%), and less frequently – applicants, state bodies, educational and international institutions, and the financial sector (7% each).

Figure 33. Presence of supervisory boards and their composition, % of responses



Respondents emphasise the need for organisational changes to improve efficiency: 89% consider it important to involve external stakeholders, 78% – to introduce new management models, 57% – to improve interaction between departments, and 24% – to change the structure of existing departments.

An assessment of satisfaction with the level of managerial autonomy showed that 46% of respondents are satisfied, 41% are moderately satisfied, 8% are dissatisfied, and 5% reported a high level of satisfaction. Overall, the results of the study indicate the high potential of management autonomy of target HEIs in strategic planning, partnership development, and internal process regulation. At the same time, there are significant limitations in reorganization, the formation of supervisory boards, and the involvement of external stakeholders in collegial management.

Figure 34. Assessment of satisfaction with the level of managerial autonomy from 1 to 5, % of responses

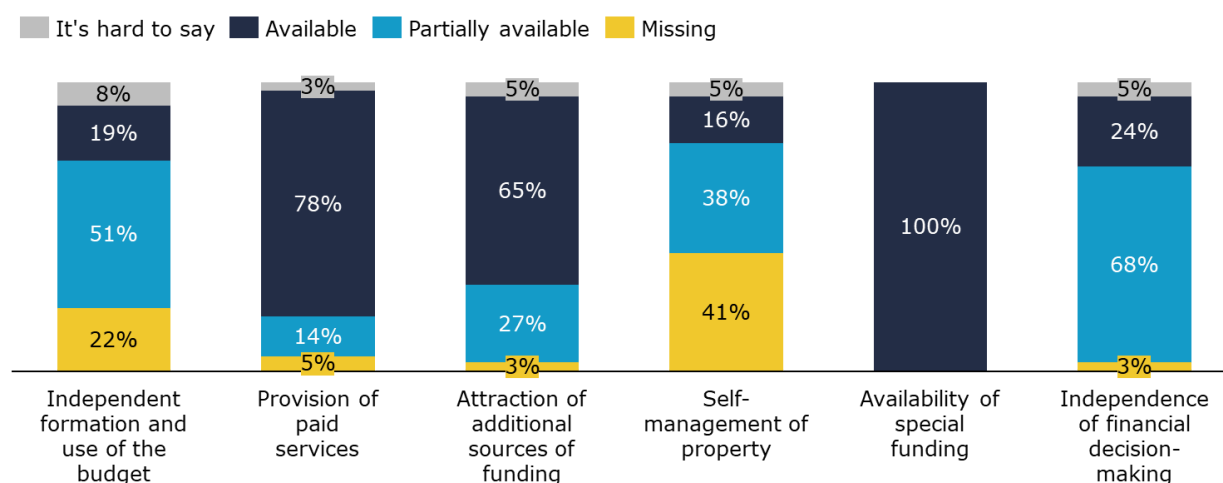


In general, target HEIs have a sufficient level of managerial autonomy, with fairly broad powers in making management decisions, implementing personnel policy, developing partnerships, with the possibility of involving mainly teachers and education management bodies in this process. To improve managerial autonomy, respondents emphasise the need for organisational changes, in particular greater involvement of external stakeholders, the introduction of new management models, improved interaction between departments, etc.

6.2.4. FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

Analysis of the respondent survey shows that the financial autonomy of the target HEIs is at a stage of partial formation and is characterised by a high degree of fragmentation. The most common elements are the existence of a special fund or special account (100% of the institutions surveyed), the provision of paid services (78%) and the involvement of additional sources of funding (65%). This indicates the relative readiness of institutions to work in conditions of diversification of funding sources and the desire to compensate for the budget deficit through their own activities. At the same time, the most problematic aspects remain independent property management (41% indicated its absence) and independent budget formation and use (22% absence), which effectively limits the strategic independence of institutions.

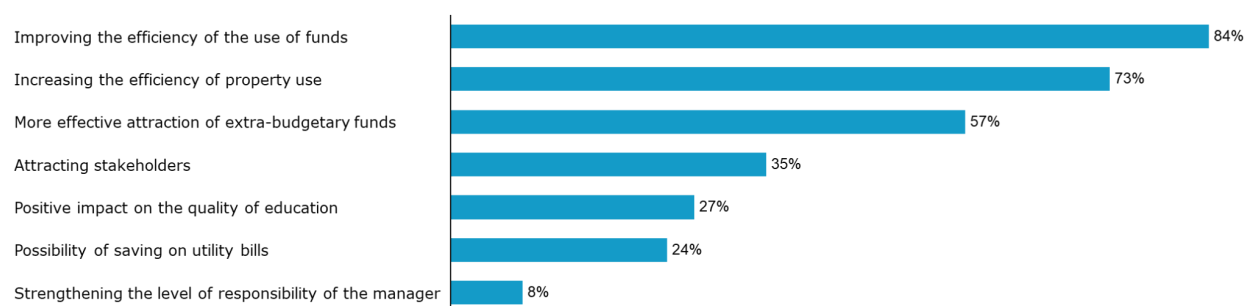
Figure 35. Level of financial autonomy in higher education institutions, % of responses



Respondents gave examples of the practical implementation of financial autonomy, in particular, receiving income from paid educational services (the most common practice), participation in grant programmes, the use of special funds for repairs and procurement of materials, as well as the organisation of work placements for students. At the same time, 13 out of 37 institutions (35%) reported that they do not have any practice of autonomous financing at all, which indicates significant differences between different institutions in their ability to implement financial independence.

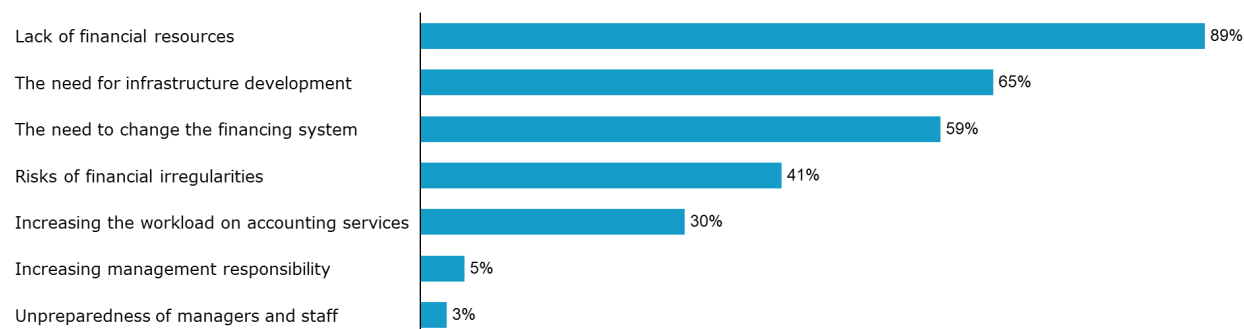
Among the advantages of expanding financial autonomy, the vast majority of HEIs (84%) see an increase in the efficiency of fund use, 73% see more efficient use of property, and 57% see the opportunity to more actively attract extrabudgetary resources. At the same time, arguments such as stakeholder engagement (35%) and improving the quality of education (27%) were less important to respondents. Only 8% of respondents believe that financial autonomy can increase the level of accountability of managers, demonstrating that respondents do not consider this aspect to be a serious advantage.

Figure 36. Advantages of expanding the financial autonomy of HEIs, % of responses



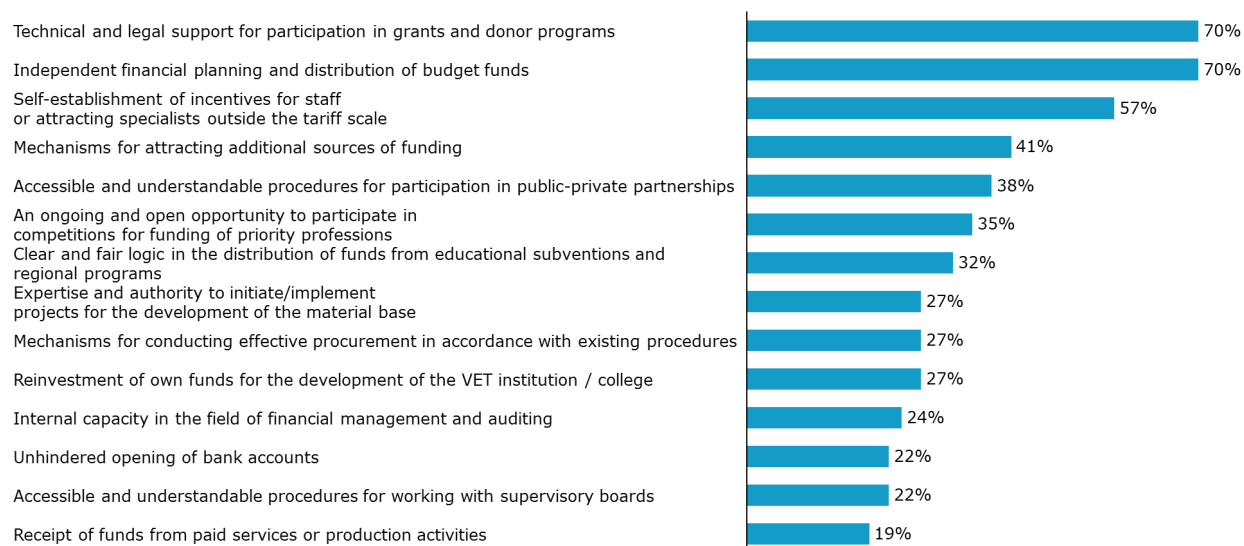
The main obstacles to expanding financial autonomy are insufficient financial resources (89%), the need to develop infrastructure (65%) and the complexity of changing the financing system (59%). Another important factor is the risk of financial irregularities due to a lack of management expertise (41%) and an increased workload for accounting services (30%). This shows that even if institutions are given greater financial powers, there is a risk that they will be used inefficiently without proper organisational and human resources support.

Figure 37. Obstacles to expanding the financial autonomy of HEIs, % of responses



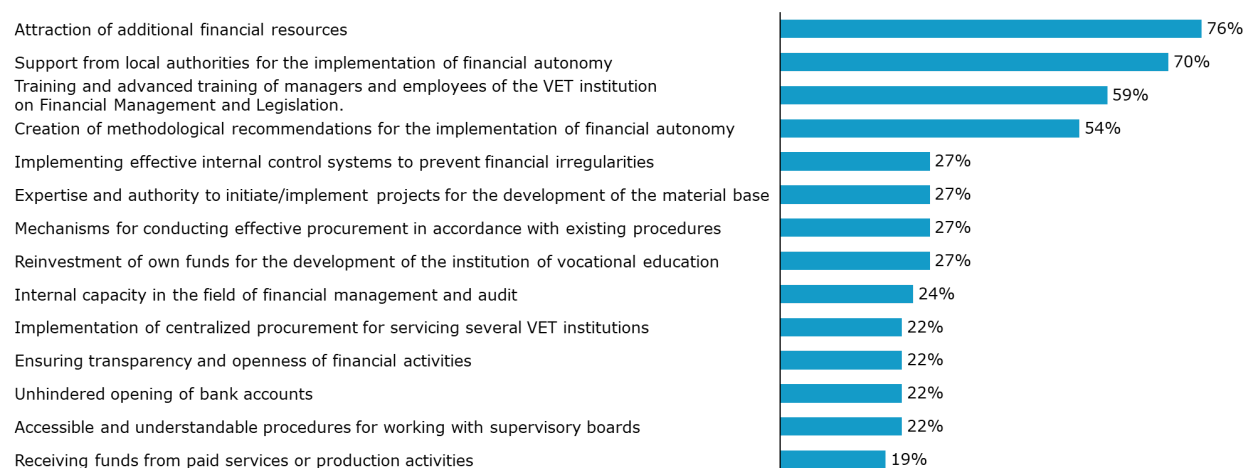
The institutions surveyed identified a number of financial instruments and mechanisms that they lack for full autonomy. The most requested are technical and legal support for participation in grants (70%), the ability to independently plan and allocate funds (70%), and the introduction of their own incentives for staff (57%). The need for PPP mechanisms (38%), the ability to reinvest own funds (27%) and open bank accounts (22%) further indicates the limited financial flexibility of current institutions.

Figure 38. Financial instruments and mechanisms lacking in HEIs, % of responses



Among the solutions for strengthening financial autonomy, the most support was given to attracting additional financial resources (76%), support from local authorities (70%) and improving the financial management skills of managers (59%). It is positive that institutions recognise the importance of training management personnel and the need to develop methodological recommendations (54%), but much less attention is paid to internal control (27%) and transparency of financial reporting (22%).

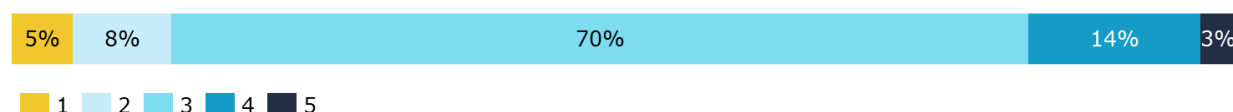
Figure 39. Solutions for strengthening the financial autonomy of HEIs, % of responses



An important topic is the experience of institutions transitioning to the KNT form: only 8% had such practice, 11% are in the process, while 81% have not started the transformation. Key challenges include financial and economic risks (loss of property, financial insecurity), legal problems (regulatory uncertainty, bureaucracy) and staffing difficulties (lack of experience, need for retraining). This indicates that the non-profit enterprise model itself is not currently perceived as a widespread or effective tool.

Overall, the level of satisfaction with financial autonomy remains low: 70% of respondents reported an average level of satisfaction, 5% reported a very low level, and only 3% reported a very high level. The results confirm that the system of financial autonomy of HEIs is underdeveloped and requires comprehensive reforms. Along with the expansion of financial powers, it is necessary to strengthen organisational capacity, develop infrastructure and management competencies, without which autonomy risks remaining formal and not leading to real qualitative changes.

Figure 40. Assessment of satisfaction with the level of financial autonomy from 1 to 5, % of responses

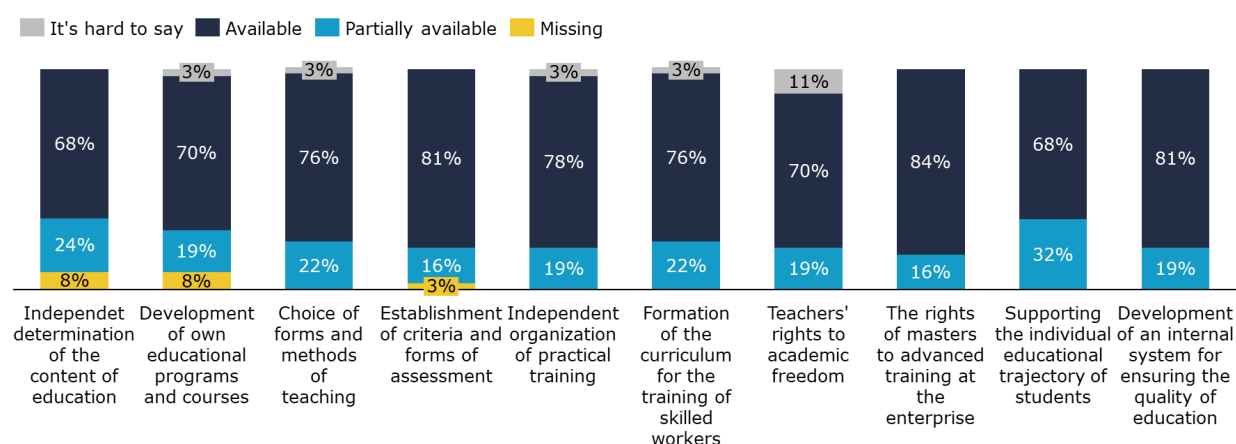


In summary, the financial autonomy of target HEIs is moderate, because despite the freedom to provide paid services and attract additional sources of funding, HEIs face greater restrictions in terms of independent budget formation and use, property management, etc. The main obstacles include a lack of financial resources, poor infrastructure and an outdated funding system. To increase financial autonomy, respondents suggest training and professional development for employees and management of HEIs in financial management, attracting additional resources and support from local authorities.

6.2.5. PEDAGOGICAL AUTONOMY

According to the survey results, pedagogical autonomy in the target VET institutions is quite high, although there are certain limitations that affect the flexibility of responding to labour market needs and external challenges. The most common elements of pedagogical autonomy among respondents are the rights of master craftsmen to professional development and internships at enterprises away from the educational process, which are available in 84% of institutions. The possibility of establishing criteria and forms of assessment (81%) and the development of an internal system for ensuring the quality of education (81%) are also highly valued.

Figure 41. Level of availability of elements of pedagogical autonomy in VET institutions, % of responses



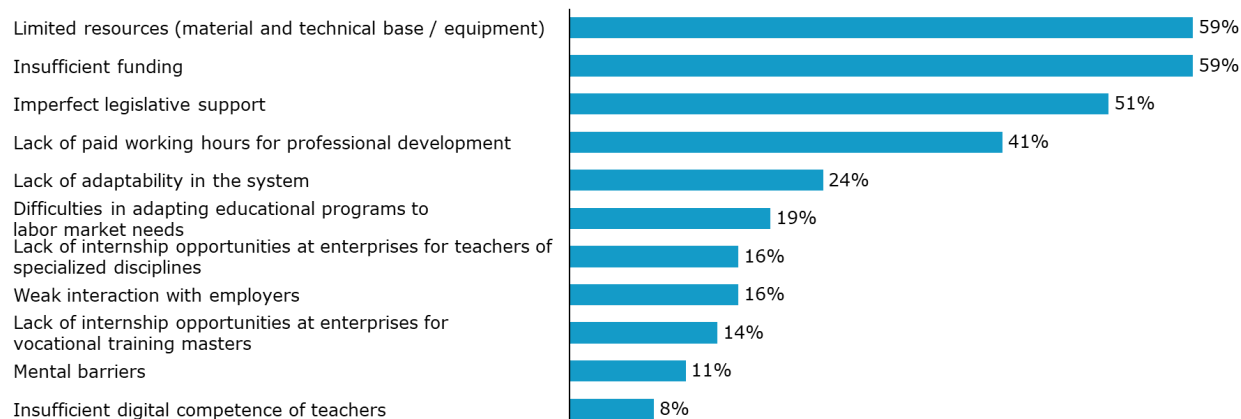
With regard to specific aspects of pedagogical autonomy, 68% of institutions independently determine the content of education, 70% develop their own educational programmes and courses, and 76-78% independently choose forms and methods of teaching, organise practical training and develop a training plan for skilled workers. Teachers' rights to academic freedom are confirmed in 70% of institutions, support for the individual educational trajectory of applicants in 68%, and the rights of masters to internships in 84%. At the same time, these features are partially present in 16-32% of institutions, while the absence of individual elements is recorded in only 0-8% of cases.

Despite the generally high level of autonomy, respondents point to a number of constraints that make it difficult to respond quickly to labour market needs. The most frequently mentioned difficulties are making changes to educational programmes, the need to reduce the duration of training for certain professions, the introduction of electronic journals for recording educational activities, and flexibility for integrating new competencies required by employers. In addition, the need to create safe conditions for offline classes and to develop adaptive approaches that allow for responding to student mobility and changing life circumstances is emphasised. Some respondents also note the need to develop skills for working with adults and vulnerable groups.

Among the main obstacles to the implementation of new programmes and teaching methods, institutions cite insufficient funding (59%) and limited material and technical resources (59%),

imperfect legislative support (51%), lack of paid working time for professional development (41%) and inertia of the system (24%). Other problems include difficulties in adapting educational programmes to the needs of the labour market (19%), weak interaction with employers (16%), lack of internship opportunities for teachers of specialised subjects (16%) and vocational training instructors (14%), mental barriers (11%) and insufficient digital competence of teachers (8%).

Figure 42. Barriers to expanding pedagogical autonomy in VET, % of responses



The assessment of satisfaction with the level of pedagogical autonomy showed that 27% of respondents consider it mediocre, 60% consider it sufficient, and 13% consider it high. This indicates that most VET institutions are satisfied with the current level of autonomy, but need further expansion to effectively adapt to the challenges of the modern labour market and wartime conditions.

Figure 43. Assessment of satisfaction with the level of pedagogical autonomy from 1 to 5, % of responses

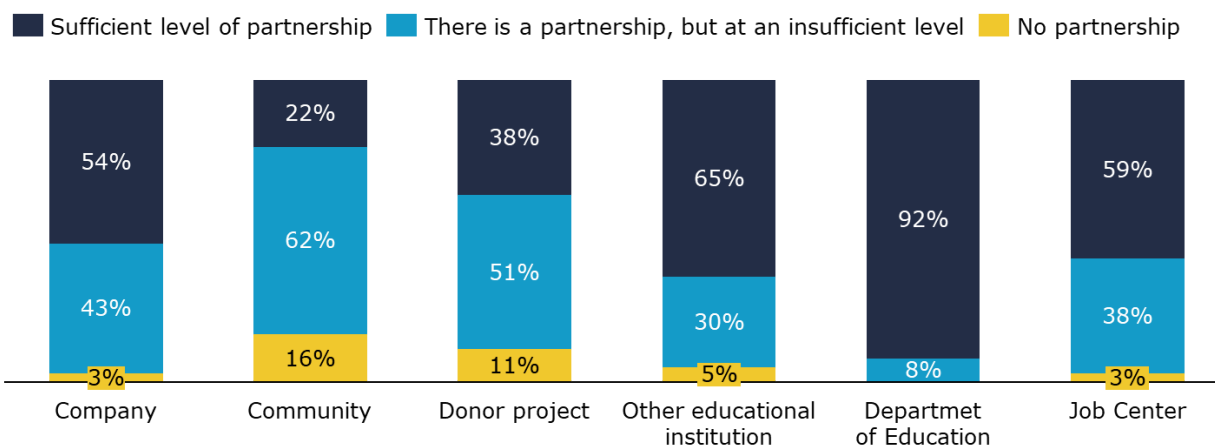


In summary, pedagogical autonomy in the target VET institutions is characterised by a high level of independence in determining the content of education, organising practical training, choosing teaching and assessment methods, as well as broad opportunities for staff development. The main constraints are related to resources, legislative norms and organisational inertia. To increase the effectiveness of pedagogical autonomy, respondents suggest simplifying procedures for changing educational programmes, more flexible learning models, ensuring the safety and adaptability of the educational process, and developing digital competences and skills for working with adults and vulnerable groups.

6.2.6. AUTONOMY OF PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES

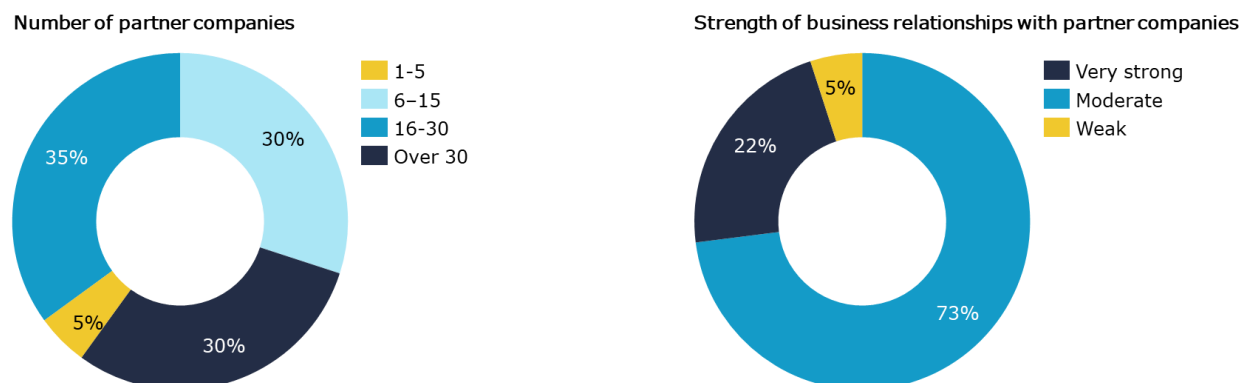
According to the survey results, 81% of the target VET institutions indicated that they have the opportunity to independently initiate and develop partnerships with companies, local communities, donor projects and other educational institutions, while another 19% indicated that this opportunity is only partial. The highest level of cooperation is observed with education authorities: 92% of institutions rate it as sufficient. 65% of institutions are actively developing partnerships with other educational institutions, and 59% with employment centres. At the same time, partnerships with local communities and donor projects remain underdeveloped: 16% and 11% of VET institutions, respectively, reported a complete lack of such interactions. Cooperation with companies needs to be further strengthened: only 54% of institutions rate it as sufficient, while 43% indicated a low level of partnership.

Figure 44. Level of development of partnerships between HEIs and external stakeholders, % of responses



In terms of the number of partner companies, 5% of institutions cooperate with 1-5 companies, 30% with 6-15, 35% with 16-30, and another 30% have partnerships with more than 30 companies. An assessment of the strength of business ties showed that 22% of respondents consider them to be very strong, 73% consider them to be moderate, and only 5% consider them to be weak.

Figure 45. Number of VET partner companies and strength of business relationships with them, % of responses



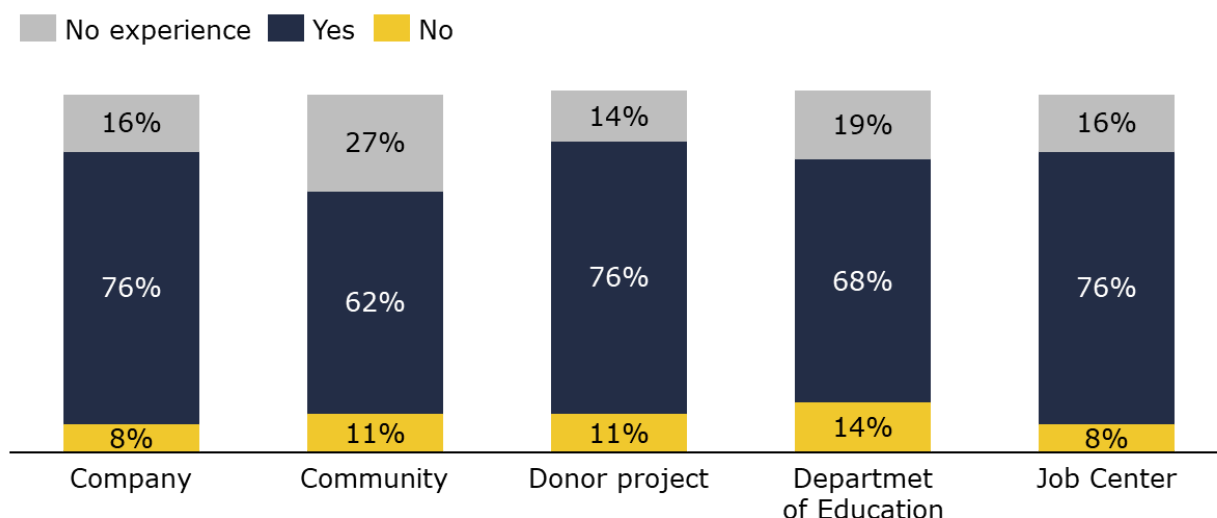
With regard to associations and network initiatives, 54% of VET institutions are involved in formal or informal associations with other educational institutions and/or companies in their communities, while 46% do not participate in such initiatives. Most often, these are professional associations of educators (regional methodological associations of a professional orientation, the All-Ukrainian Union of VET Employees), employers and business associations, as well as associations of public organisations and volunteer initiatives. To improve the networking of education and business, respondents note the need to create an online platform for partnership and communication, develop roadmaps for cooperation, support from the state and local authorities, and increase business interest in VET practices.

Figure 46. Level of involvement of VET institutions in associations and networking initiatives, % of responses



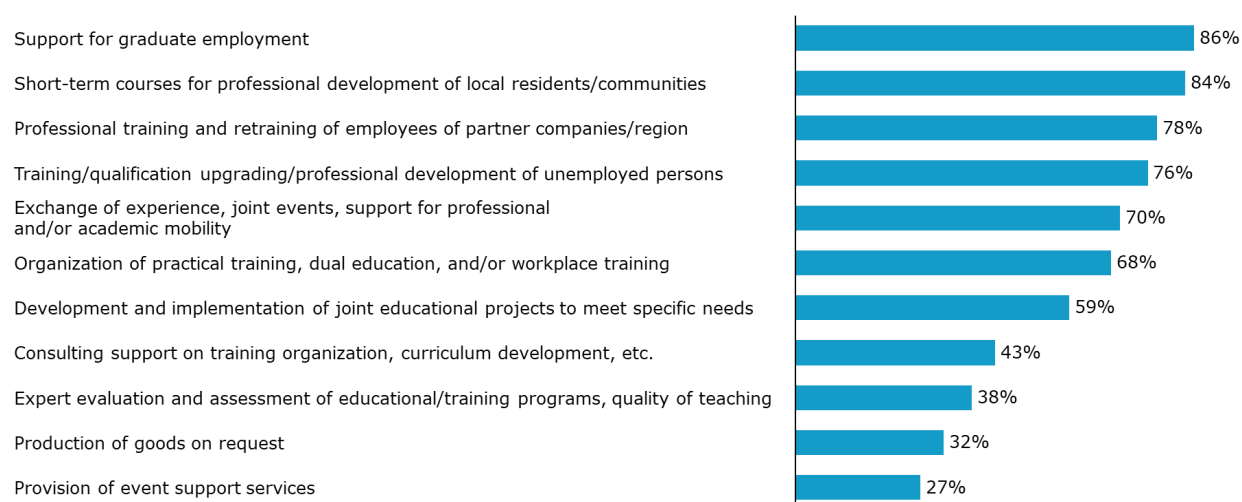
The autonomy of VET institutions in providing services at the request of partners shows high indicators: 76% of respondents can provide services to companies and employment centres, 62% to communities, 76% to donor projects, 68% to education authorities, while only 8–14% of institutions do not have this opportunity or do not have experience.

Figure 47. Ability of VET institutions to provide services to specific categories of partners, % of responses



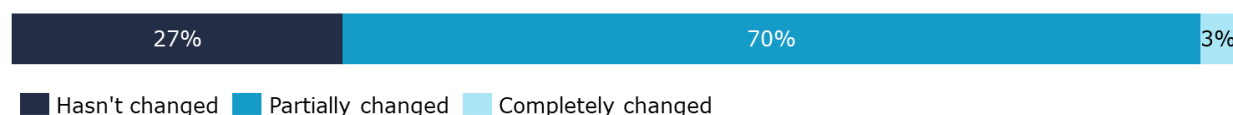
Over the past ten years, institutions have been actively providing a wide range of services to partners: 86% promote graduate employment through job fairs, information dissemination and training; 84% organise short-term professional development courses for the local community; 78% are involved in the training and retraining of company employees; 76% provide training and upskilling for the unemployed; 70% exchange experience and promote academic and professional mobility; 68% organise vocational training or training under the DFZO; 59% develop joint educational projects; 43% provide advice on organising training and choosing a profession; 38% provide expertise and programme evaluation; 32% manufacture customised products; 27% provide event support, including catering and venue hire. Some institutions also implement new educational programmes for different population groups, in particular for IDPs, people with disabilities and national minorities.

Figure 48. Services provided by VET institutions to partners % of responses



Over the past three years, 70% of institutions have partially updated their list of services, 27% have left it unchanged, and only 3% have carried out a complete update. An assessment of independence in the implementation of new services showed that only 8% of respondents rated it as low or very low, 24% as average, 57% as high, and 11% as very high.

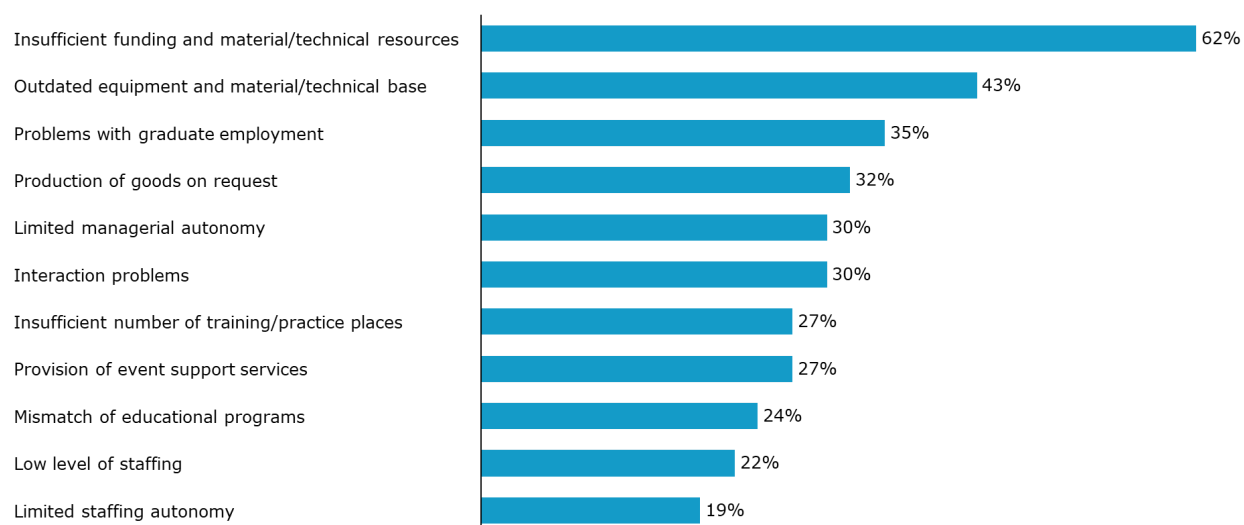
Figure 49. Level of updating the list of services provided by VET institutions, % of responses



With regard to the need to improve services, 62-73% of VET providers indicated the need to improve or introduce services such as advice on training and employment, joint project development, educational programme expertise, vocational training, graduate employment assistance and experience sharing. Less attention is needed for custom manufacturing and event support, although the corresponding indicators still range from 27% to 35%.

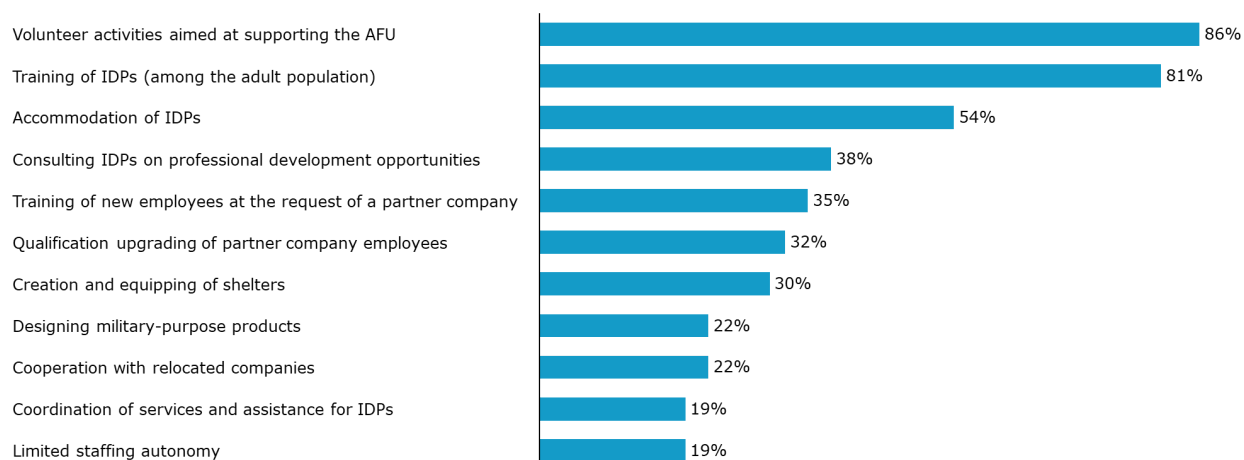
Respondents cited insufficient funding and material and technical support (62%), outdated equipment (43%), problems with graduate employment (35%), interaction and managerial autonomy (30% each), limited training/internship places (27%) and the inadequacy of educational programmes (24%).

Figure 50. Barriers to providing VET services, % of responses



In response to the challenges of modern times, in particular Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, targeted CSOs are actively providing services to support IDPs and communities: 86% are involved in volunteer activities for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, 81% in training IDPs, 54% in providing temporary accommodation, 38% in counselling on professional development for IDPs, 35% train new employees at the request of partner companies, 32% provide advanced training for employees of partner companies, and 30% create and equip shelters. 22% of institutions cooperate with displaced companies, 22% participate in the manufacture of military products, and 19% coordinate services and provide assistance to IDPs.

Figure 51. Types of services provided by CSOs to support IDPs and communities, % of responses



An assessment of the level of autonomy in developing partnerships and providing relevant services showed that 54% of respondents consider it to be moderate, 38% consider it to be high, and 8% consider it to be very high. There are also low (5%) and very low (2.5%) ratings, which indicates that there is room for growth in building the capacity of institutions in terms of autonomy in developing partnerships and providing services.

Figure 52. Assessment of satisfaction with the level of autonomy of partnerships and services, % of responses



In summary, the level of partnerships and services among target CSOs is sufficient, and institutions most often cooperate with their partners in the context of graduate employment, conducting courses for the professional development of community/settlement residents, as well as training and retraining company employees. VET institutions have quite broad opportunities to provide services to partners, including local businesses, communities, donor projects, etc. However, the main obstacles to improving this type of autonomy include insufficient funding, poor material and technical base, and problems with graduate employment.

6.3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

6.3.1. IDEAS AND ADVANTAGES

The target VET institutions are mainly focused on young people aged 15-24 and IDPs, actively work with veterans and families of the deceased, and offer short-term programmes for IDPs and war-affected populations. The main advantages are rapid adaptation to the war context, a focus on current market needs, and a high level of sensitivity to vulnerable groups.

The managerial autonomy of target CSOs is characterised by a high level of independence in strategic planning, human resource management and partnership development, as well as in the formation of internal procedures and the institution's brand. The main advantages include the ability to make autonomous decisions (67-70%), active involvement of internal stakeholders (73-78%) and integration into external partnerships (81-92%).

The financial autonomy of target HEIs is in the process of formation and is characterised by a high degree of fragmentation: 100% of institutions have special funds, 78% provide paid services, and 65% attract additional funding, but independent management of property (41%) and budget (22%) is limited. The advantages of autonomy are identified as increased efficiency in the use of funds (84%), property (73%) and more active attraction of extrabudgetary resources (57%).

Pedagogical autonomy in target HEIs is high: 68-84% of institutions independently determine the content of education, develop programmes, choose forms of training and organise practical training, while providing ample opportunities for staff development. The main advantages include academic freedom, support for individual trajectories of applicants, and the development of an internal system for ensuring the quality of education.

Autonomy in developing partnerships and providing services is high: 81% of VET institutions actively initiate cooperation with companies, communities and other institutions, and 76-86% actively provide a wide range of educational and practical services, including graduate employment, community training and IDP training. The strongest partnerships are observed with education authorities (92%) and other institutions (65%), while cooperation with business (54%), communities (22%) and donor projects (38%) needs to be strengthened.

6.3.2. CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

The challenges faced by target HEIs in working with different target groups include uneven coverage of different age and vulnerable groups, limited inclusive programmes and infrastructure, as well as insufficient funding and weak support mechanisms.

Challenges to managerial autonomy include limited capacity to reorganise and repurpose the institution (46%), the formation of supervisory boards (43%), and insufficient involvement of external stakeholders in collegial management (14-49%).

The main challenges of financial autonomy are related to insufficient resources (89%), limited infrastructure (65%), the complexity of changing the funding system (59%), and the risks of inefficient use due to a lack of management expertise (41%).

The challenges of pedagogical autonomy for target VET institutions are related to limited funding and resources (59%), legislative barriers (51%), imperfect interaction with employers (16-19%) and organisational inertia (24%).

The main challenges to autonomy in developing partnerships and providing services include insufficient funding and resources (62%), limited participation in network initiatives (46%) and the need to improve or introduce key services (62-73%). Despite this, autonomy allows CSOs to respond flexibly to societal needs and implement new educational practices.

6.3.3. IDENTIFIED PROPOSALS

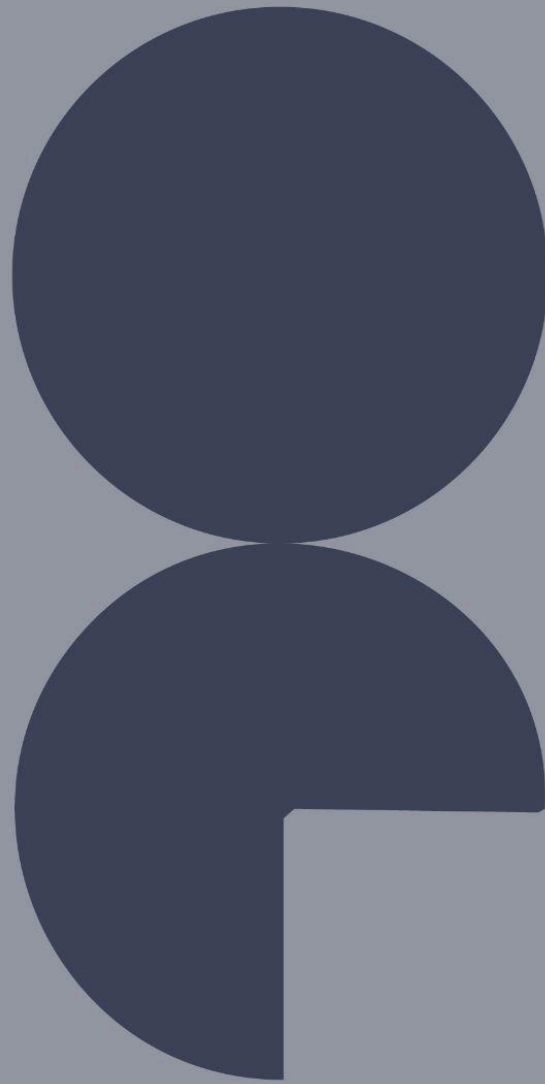
Expanding access to vocational education for different target groups requires comprehensive support for inclusiveness, flexible learning formats and digital marketing.

To increase the effectiveness of managerial autonomy, it is necessary to strengthen the organisational structure, develop mechanisms for engaging external partners and improve forms of collegial management.

To strengthen financial autonomy, additional financial instruments, support from local authorities and improved training for managers in financial management are needed.

To increase the effectiveness of pedagogical autonomy, flexible learning models, simplified programme update procedures, safe conditions for offline classes, and the development of digital competencies are needed.

To improve the autonomy of partnerships and services, it is advisable to create an online platform for communication, develop roadmaps for cooperation, strengthen support from the state and business, and encourage companies to participate in DFZOs.



APPENDIX 1

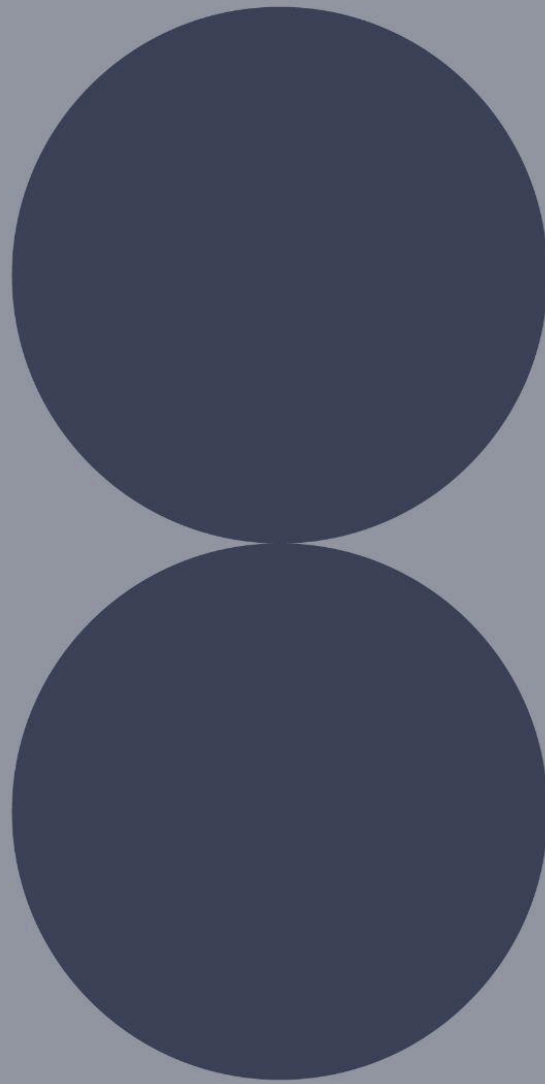
INDICATORS OF SELECTED COUNTRIES BY LEVEL OF VET SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This appendix contains a list of seven countries for the purpose of conducting case studies and examining international experience in supporting and developing the autonomy of VET institutions. The selected countries belong to the category of high-income countries, and in terms of annual GDP growth, these economies show mixed dynamics. At the same time, based on the indicators considered, the countries demonstrate a fairly high level of VET development. The best indicators are demonstrated by the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent by the Republic of Korea, where the share of VET students is 17%.

Table 16. Comparative table of indicators for selected countries by level of development of the VET system and current economic development

Part 1	Scale/average indicator among OECD countries	Estonia	Republic of Korea	Germany
Annual GDP growth (World Bank, 2023)	Average value – 1%	-3	1.4	-0.3
Decentralisation index (European Committee of the Regions)	from 0 (low level of decentralisation) to 3 (high level of decentralisation)	1.6	No data	2.5
Expenditure on initial VET, percentage of GDP (Cedefop, 2021)	Average value – 0.6%	0.4	No data	0.5
Expenditure on training for people facing difficulties in the labour market, as a percentage of GDP (Cedefop, 2023)	Average value – 0.12%	0.13	No data	0.15
Proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in VET institutions (all age groups) (OECD, 2021)	Average value – 43.6%	40	17	47
Employment rate (World Bank, 2024)	Average value – 58.4%	61.4	62.8	59.8

Part 2	Scale/average among OECD countries	Sweden	Israel	Czech	Netherlands
Annual GDP growth <u>(World Bank, 2023)</u>	Average value – 1%	-0.3	2.4	-0.1	0.1
Decentralisation index <u>(European Committee of the Regions)</u>	from 0 (low level of decentralisation) to 3 (high level of decentralisation)	2.4	No data	1.9	1.8
Expenditure on primary education, percentage of GDP <u>(Cedefop, 2021)</u>	Average value – 0.6%	0.6	No data	0.7	0.7
Expenditure on training for people facing difficulties in the labour market, as a percentage of GDP <u>(Cedefop, 2023)</u>	Average value – 0.12%	No data	No data	0	No data
Proportion of upper secondary school students enrolled in VET institutions (all age groups) <u>(OECD, 2021)</u>	Average value – 43.6%	35	41	69	69
Employment rate <u>(World Bank, 2024)</u>	Average value – 58.4%	61.8	62.6	58.6	No data



APPENDIX 2

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN EXPANDING THE AUTONOMY OF VET INSTITUTIONS: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

In the post-Soviet period, Estonia faced challenges in reforming its vocational education system that are relevant to Ukraine. After gaining independence, Estonia inherited the Soviet centralised system of vocational education and training (VET), which was closely linked to the planned model of industry. In addition, the situation was complicated by the comprehensive restructuring of VET during the privatisation process and reorientation towards Western markets.⁷⁷ Starting in the mid-1990s, the government began reforming the VET system, which led to its significant development based on a clear regulatory framework and broad autonomy for VET institutions. This made it possible to adapt the educational process to the current demands of the labour market and to build flexible cooperation with businesses.

Administrative autonomy is based on the provisions of the Vocational Educational Institutions Act, which stipulates that VET institution managers have the authority to independently conclude, amend or terminate employment relationships with teaching staff and lecturers, as well as to set salary levels. The absence of excessive regulatory control gives educational institutions and municipalities flexibility in setting their own rules adapted to local conditions.⁷⁸

However, this fairly broad local autonomy is balanced by greater government intervention in the employment of VET institution directors, as their appointment and dismissal is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science or local authorities, depending on the form of ownership of the institution.⁷⁹

⁸⁰ The Council has quite broad powers, and its main functions include:

- Approval of the general development plan of the institution;
- Approving the work schedule for the academic year, including the schedule for staff training;
- Approving the institution's budget, procurement plan and reporting on its implementation;
- Approval of educational programmes, etc.⁸¹

In addition, there are advisory councils whose main functions are to ensure communication between the educational institution and society, as well as to provide recommendations to the management of the educational institution when planning its development and organising educational, training and economic activities. The director of the institution forms an advisory body for a term of five years, which includes parents, representatives of the local community and other interested parties.⁸² The functions of such a body include:

- Making proposals on the directions of development of the educational institution;
- Evaluating cooperation with government agencies and businesses;
- Evaluating the quality of student internships, etc.⁸³

The financial autonomy of VET institutions in Estonia is ensured by the possibility of funding from various sources, such as the state budget and local budgets, donations and funds received

⁷⁷ [SpringerOpen, 2016](#)

⁷⁸ [National Centre on Education and the Economy, 2023](#)

⁷⁹ [Riigi Teataja, 2013](#)

⁸⁰ [Riigi Teataja, 2013](#)

⁸¹ [Riigi Teataja, 2013](#)

⁸² [OECD, 2016](#)

⁸³ [Riigi Teataja, 2013](#)

from foundations, targeted and project grants, etc.,⁸⁴ as well as by obtaining additional resources from economic activities, for example, through the sale of goods and services during work placements, the provision of paid services related to the main activities of the institution.⁸⁵

For example, the Pärnu VET Centre provides beauty and care services (it has a hairdressing salon and beauty salon), catering services, etc., which allows it to attract additional financial resources.⁸⁶ According to the results of the 2023-2024 academic year, the funding of the educational institution was as follows: 83% of the budget was covered by state funding and 17% by the institution's own income. The structure of own revenues was as follows: income from advanced training courses (56%), income from the sale of products and provision of services (40%), and income from student fees for accommodation in dormitories (3%).⁸⁷

An important element of financial autonomy is that, despite being state-owned, most VET institutions have considerable freedom in allocating resources and choosing funding for their programmes.⁸⁸

Pedagogical autonomy allows for flexibility in developing curricula and teaching methods within the framework of the national curriculum. Curricula are developed in close cooperation with local businesses, ensuring that they meet the real needs of the labour market, and the teaching materials provided by the state today mainly serve as examples that teachers can adapt to their needs rather than use on a mandatory basis.⁸⁹

In addition to traditional forms of education, a **dual system** is widely used, combining classroom learning with workplace practice. One example of flexible educational opportunities is a special programme for young people who have not yet decided on a career path: 30% of the programme consists of basic career planning classes, and 70% consists of individually selected modules tailored to the interests of the students.⁹⁰ An additional advantage is the ability of VET institutions to engage company representatives as guest lecturers and establish other forms of cooperation with them in the context of student training.⁹¹ Such forms of cooperation may include the exchange of experience, providing opportunities for teaching staff to undergo internships at companies, etc.⁹²

Within **the autonomy of partnerships and services**, VET institutions in Estonia play an important role in the professional adaptation of the population. In cooperation with state structures and employers, they provide services for the training of the unemployed and the improvement of employee qualifications. Thanks to the voucher system provided by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, the unemployed have the opportunity to choose educational services themselves, which increases the flexibility and market orientation of the system. Voucher recipients can choose a course at a certified educational institution, public or private, that meets the voucher requirements.⁹³ In addition to voucher funding, the programme includes a scholarship and travel expense compensation, while maintaining unemployment benefits during

⁸⁴ [Eurydice, 2023](#)

⁸⁵ [OECD, 2019](#)

⁸⁶ [Pärnumaa Vocational Education Centre \(PKHK\), 2025](#)

⁸⁷ [Pärnumaa Vocational Education Centre \(PKHK\), 2025](#)

⁸⁸ [OECD, 2019](#)

⁸⁹ [National Centre on Education and the Economy, 2023](#)

⁹⁰ [Education Estonia, 2025](#)

⁹¹ [European Training Foundation, 2018](#)

⁹² [Civitta, 2020](#)

⁹³ [OECD, 2020](#)

training, as well as practical internships.⁹⁴ For example, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund offers up to €2,500 for training costs over three years for people who were previously employed and over two years for those who are currently unemployed. Vouchers can be used for a variety of courses, including language training, IT skills development and retraining, but they are not intended for basic education or general skills development.⁹⁵ In addition, educational institutions are involved in organising work placements: the employment service concludes relevant agreements providing for scholarships, travel allowances and the retention of unemployment benefits.⁹⁶

At the same time, VET institutions are expanding the range of educational services through programmes for adults, unskilled people, people aged 50+, and those who have lost their jobs due to health problems or economic changes. One example of the implementation of such solutions is the Rakvere Vocational School, which offers a wide range of training programmes for categories such as adults without vocational or secondary education or with outdated skills. The programmes cover digital skills, English language learning, and skills needed to work in car repair shops and factories.⁹⁷ The duration of the programmes depends on their intensity: courses with daily attendance last about two weeks, and courses with twice-weekly classes last up to a month and a half.⁹⁸

The increase in demand for such services is further stimulated by employers, in particular, compensation of 50-100% of the cost of training employees and grants for training personnel to work with new technologies or in positions where there is a shortage of personnel.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ [Cedefop, 2023](#)

⁹⁵ [Eurofound, 2017](#)

⁹⁶ [Cedefop, 2023](#)

⁹⁷ [Free training courses, 2025](#)

⁹⁸ [Rakvere Vocational School, 2025](#)

⁹⁹ [Cedefop, 2023](#)

In Israel, the VET system is overseen by two separate ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy. The Ministry of Education oversees approximately 1,700 educational institutions with approximately 570,000 students in three main areas: practical engineering (e.g., electronics, biotechnology), technology (architecture, industrial design) and vocational (mechanics, cosmetology). Approximately 37% of Israeli school graduates study at PSE institutions: 35% of them choose practical engineering, 43% choose technology, and 22% choose vocational studies.¹⁰⁰

Educational institutions under the Ministry of Economy account for approximately 4-5% of all vocational institutions (about 70 institutions). They operate autonomously and focus primarily on practical training: students attend school two days a week and work three days in paid positions at external companies, gaining practical experience without strict adherence to educational standards.¹⁰¹

In the context **of managerial autonomy**, Israel's VET system faces some challenges. Unlike a number of the countries analysed, the practice of employing experts in specific fields in VET institutions is much less common in Israel. A key obstacle is the lack of favourable conditions for part-time employment, as the Ministry's qualification requirements for such teachers are no different from those for full-time teachers.¹⁰²

Financial autonomy. In the field of VET, which is subordinate to the Ministry of Education, the main sources of funding for institutions are the state budget, local budgets and networks of education providers.¹⁰³ According to the established formula, the Ministry distributes funds between communities and individual institutions at the district level.¹⁰⁴

Local authorities responsible for infrastructure and material and technical support may provide additional funding to VET institutions beyond the state allocations. In addition, educational networks (intermediaries between ministries and educational institutions through which state resources are distributed) have their own sources of funding and can directly support the VET institutions under their jurisdiction by providing funds, organising professional development for teaching staff, or implementing new educational initiatives, etc.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, the Ministry of Education has launched pilot projects for self-governing VET institutions, which have greater powers in managing financial resources compared to most institutions that were not selected to participate in the initiative. However, it should be noted that this phenomenon is not universal, and VET institutions operate within the framework of recommendations from the Ministry.¹⁰⁶

The pedagogical autonomy of VET institutions in Israel is quite limited, as the VET system has clearly defined elements of centralisation. In particular, this applies to national exams, teaching materials and programmes, over which VET institutions have very limited influence. However, 20% of the curricula are still at the discretion of VET institutions, which gives them some

¹⁰⁰ [Taylor & Francis, 2024](#)

¹⁰¹ [Taylor & Francis, 2024](#)

¹⁰² [OECD, 2014](#)

¹⁰³ In accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy, educational networks manage VET institutions, including day-to-day management, initiatives and development, professional development and funding. The largest educational networks are ORT and AMAL, which administer institutions where 40% of VET students study.

¹⁰⁴ [OECD, 2016](#)

¹⁰⁵ [OECD, 2016](#)

¹⁰⁶ [ETE 2014](#)

opportunity to adapt teaching approaches, cooperate with local businesses and introduce innovative teaching methods in line with the needs of the regional labour market.¹⁰⁷

One of the signs of **autonomy of partnerships and services** is the availability of a wide range of educational services for adults, which are provided by both public and private VET institutions. Israel has separate programmes aimed at the adult population, which lead to professional certificates issued by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Services (MLWSS). Some courses are organised and funded by the state, while others are offered by private providers and paid for by the students themselves, but all are geared towards obtaining official qualifications. In addition, training may also be provided by other ministries, reflecting a distributed model of governance and inter-agency cooperation.¹⁰⁸

Section 3 of the OECD report emphasises that the successful functioning of VET in Israel depends to a large extent on the active involvement of employers. At the same time, it stresses that effective partnership is only possible if the interests of all parties – the state, employers and participants in the learning process – are aligned.¹⁰⁹

The main programmes for adults include NPM, "Classroom at Work" and the pilot programme "New Beginner". All these initiatives are implemented in partnership between state institutions, employers and the learners themselves. The Workplace Classroom programme is implemented on a partnership basis directly with VET institutions: employers can organise specialised courses for groups of job seekers, combining theoretical training with practical experience in real production. Training modules can be conducted either by the enterprises themselves or in cooperation with accredited VET institutions, creating a flexible, modular structure of education.^{110,111}

In addition to programmes for adults, Israel is also developing hybrid apprenticeship models for young people. The New Beginner programme combines classroom learning and 6-9 months of work-based learning with the support of vocational training masters. Despite its shorter duration compared to traditional models, it provides full professional qualifications. The programme is currently in the pilot stage, but employers actively support it and the government plans to scale it up. Such experimental autonomy within ministerial structures allows for a quick response to labour market needs.^{112,113}

There is another important example of partnership cooperation: a short-term internship programme for technology students, administered by the Ministry of Education. Almost 9,000 students from more than 170 schools have participated in the programme in recent years. Although the internships are unpaid for students, employers receive financial incentives from the state, which strengthens their motivation to participate in the training of young people.^{114,115}

¹⁰⁷ [ETF, 2014](#)

¹⁰⁸ [OECD, 2014](#)

¹⁰⁹ [OECD, 2018](#)

¹¹⁰ [OECD, 2014](#)

¹¹¹ Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute at the request of the Ministry of Labour (Unpublished).

¹¹² [OECD, 2014](#)

¹¹³ [OECD, 2014](#)

¹¹⁴ [OECD, 2018](#)

¹¹⁵ Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute at the request of the Ministry of Labour (Unpublished)

In the early 1990s, there was virtually no unified VET system in the Netherlands as it exists today. Vocational education did not have its own regulatory framework, nor were there any general educational goals or defined quality standards, etc. Numerous small institutions offered a wide variety of training programmes, but this was not systematic. The situation began to change in the 1990s with the launch of large-scale reforms. One of the first changes was the reduction in the number of VET institutions and the formation of a fully-fledged VET sector. In the following years, a new phase of transformation began, focused on increasing the flexibility of learning. Modular learning and elective components were introduced, and cooperation with business was strengthened, all with the aim of better aligning education with the needs of the labour market.¹¹⁶

Administrative autonomy is implemented through the functioning of VET institution councils, which are responsible for managing institutions and implementing national education policy, and whose members include institution staff, parents of students and the students themselves.¹¹⁷ Vocational education and training institution councils have authority over one or more educational institutions. They are responsible for organising the work of educational institutions, including personnel and resource management, organisation of the educational process, internal audits and monitoring the quality of educational services.¹¹⁸

The boards of VET institutions are independently responsible for personnel policy, recruitment, development and evaluation of employees. Staff evaluation is based on two main tools used for planning and evaluating work: (1) a meeting to evaluate the work of a teacher based on the results of a specific period; (2) a meeting to discuss the professional development of teachers.¹¹⁹ The authority to make decisions on the appointment of directors of VET institutions in the Netherlands lies with the boards of the institutions, which characterises their autonomy in this process.¹²⁰

In addition, the Netherlands has a widespread phenomenon of so-called hybrid teachers, i.e. teaching staff who are also directly involved in professional activities. Moreover, this format is encouraged by local authorities. For example, in the Brainport Eindhoven region (arguably the most technologically advanced region in the country), a pilot project has been launched in collaboration with VET institutions and businesses, in which technical specialists can try their hand at being a so-called hybrid teacher with a workload of 4-8 hours per week.¹²¹

The financial autonomy of VET institutions means that they receive funds from the state to cover their current expenses and have the right to dispose of them independently. Quite often, state funding accounts for the majority of VET institutions' financial income. For example, the distribution of income at Hornbek College, one of the leading institutions in the Netherlands, for the 2023 academic year was as follows: revenue from the state budget – 92%, other revenue

¹¹⁶ [Cedefop, 2021](#)

¹¹⁷ [Wetten Overheid, 2025](#)

¹¹⁸ [OECD, 2014](#)

¹¹⁹ [Erydice, 2023](#)

¹²⁰ [Cedefop, 2021](#)

¹²¹ [OECD, 2021](#)

and subsidies from state authorities – 1%, income from tuition fees, courses and exams – 2%, other types of income – 5%.¹²²

Although public funds predominate in terms of financial income, the preparation of reports by VET institutions in which they reflect their financial policy and inform the government about educational outcomes allows the government to supervise their functioning without exercising excessive control over it.¹²³ Instructions for preparing these annual reports are set out in the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This flexible approach allows institutions to adapt their policies and teaching methods to the needs of their students.¹²⁴

In addition to public funding, VET institutions in the Netherlands have the opportunity to attract additional resources from other sources. In particular, they can enter into contracts with legal entities and individuals for the production of goods or the provision of services, receive funding from local authorities for conducting civic integration courses for adults, and supplement the budget of the educational institution with tuition fees.¹²⁵ For example, the Regional Education Centre Twente (ROC van Twente), in addition to VET, also offers integration courses for adults that help them learn Dutch, master basic digital skills, and learn more about the country and employment opportunities there.¹²⁶

As part of the lifelong learning policy, the STAP (STimulerend ArbeidsmarktPositie – stimulating labour market position) programme was developed. It is a system of personal learning accounts or vouchers that can be used to pay for training. Thanks to this development budget, which was planned to be implemented in January 2022, adults can participate in a wide range of training programmes, including those offered by VET institutions. This programme is part of a broader initiative aimed at giving adults control over their own learning and development.¹²⁷

The pedagogical autonomy of VET institutions gives them the right to independently develop curricula and pedagogical approaches, as well as to agree on the organisation of workplace learning components. A number of training programmes have special mechanisms for combining theoretical learning with workplace practice. For example, in the field of healthcare, VET institutions have long-term partnerships with hospitals, where a significant number of students are sent each year for internships and work placements.¹²⁸

In recent years, there has been a clear trend in the Netherlands towards increasing the flexibility of the educational process. Educational institutions have been given the opportunity to independently determine the scope of the curriculum and adjust it according to the needs of students. In particular, the practice of independent learning is being introduced, and students who already have the necessary knowledge and skills can be exempted from certain classes or exams, as institutions can deviate from the established duration of programmes. Educational institutions can also offer courses designed specifically for groups of students with similar experience, such as employees who wish to retrain and change their field of activity.¹²⁹

¹²² [Foundation for Reformed Education in Amersfoort, 2023](#)

¹²³ [Eurydice, 2023](#)

¹²⁴ [Eurydice, 2023](#)

¹²⁵ [Cedefop, 2023](#)

¹²⁶ [ROC van Twente, 2025](#)

¹²⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Unpublished)

¹²⁸ [Cedefop, 2021](#)

¹²⁹ [Wij-Ieren, 2025](#)

However, deviating from the standard programme requires a number of conditions to be met, namely

- The educational programme must be of high quality and satisfy both students and potential employers.
- The educational institution must be able to explain the added value of the deviation;
- The board of the VET institution must give its explicit consent to the deviation and take this into account in its reporting documentation.¹³⁰

Autonomy of partnerships and services. The Vocational Education and Adult Education Act (WEB) brings vocational secondary education and adult education together under a common legal framework. Adult education in this context includes both training for formal qualifications and second chance programmes, language training and basic skills development. This change initiated the decentralisation of management and funding, which strengthened the autonomy of regional partnerships between VET institutions and external partners, where municipalities, other educational institutions, libraries, non-profit organisations and businesses are able to shape decisions according to the needs of their communities. As a result, VET institutions lost their monopoly on the independent provision of such services, but gained the opportunity for greater institutional flexibility and cooperation with new partners.¹³¹

The state is implementing initiatives to develop this multi-layered system. In particular, the interministerial programme "Lifelong Learning" emphasises the responsibility of students themselves, the active participation of employers, flexible approaches in VET, and improving the accessibility and quality of education for vulnerable groups (e.g. people with disabilities, low-income people, etc.). This policy also emphasises a regional approach and close cooperation between municipalities, employment services and educational institutions.¹³²⁽⁾¹³³ At the same time, new educational formats, such as the "third way of learning", enable VET institutions to provide qualifications without adhering to standard time frames, which greatly facilitates access to learning for adults. However, the private sector continues to play a leading role in providing post-vocational education, partly because the development of this market has taken place in parallel with institutional reforms in public education.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ [Wij-leren, 2025](#)

¹³¹ [Hungarian Educational Research Journal, 2022](#)

¹³² [Cedefop, 2021](#)

¹³³ [Kennispunt MBO lifelong development, 2020](#)

¹³⁴ [Kennispunt MBO lifelong development, 2020](#)

Germany is one of the European countries where VET is a traditional component of the education system. The vocational training programme (a dual system combining two places of study: 70% in a company and 30% in an educational institution) is the main pillar of VET. About half of secondary school graduates choose a vocational path, mainly through dual training.

Skills can be acquired through various regulated VET programmes offered after secondary school and, increasingly, at higher education level. The VET system in Germany is based on cooperation between the state (the Federation and 16 federal states), enterprises and social partners, who together set national standards and training rules. This ensures high-quality professional qualifications, which facilitates the transition to the labour market and contributes to low youth unemployment.¹³⁵

The administrative autonomy of VET institutions in Germany may vary depending on the federal state, but usually the powers of directors cover personnel and budget management, external relations, evaluation of teaching staff, etc. Quite often, directors of VET institutions in Germany perform teaching duties, and their salaries depend on the size of the institution.¹³⁶

For example, the responsibilities of directors of VET institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia include human resources management, preparing the institution for the academic year, preparing the annual report and presenting it to the institution's conference, as well as, in some cases, resolving personnel issues, provided that such powers have been delegated to them.¹³⁷

Although in recent years the directors of VET institutions in Germany have gained more autonomy in matters relating to the budget and personnel decisions, there are still some restrictions. First and foremost, these relate to the employment of teaching staff, as unlike in many European countries, German VET institutions cannot independently determine their staffing levels. With the exception of certain regional peculiarities, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture of the respective federal state are primarily responsible for the selection process, receiving applications from candidates and making the final decisions.¹³⁸

In addition to the powers and responsibilities of directors, another important component of managerial autonomy is the functioning of collegial bodies. As in other European countries, Germany has analogues of VET institution councils – conferences (Schulkonferenz). However, their composition and powers may vary depending on the federal state. For example, in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, conferences of VET institutions resolve the following issues:

- Approval of curricula and class schedules;
- Approval of the budget of the vocational school;
- Interaction with local authorities;
- Providing recommendations on the selection of teaching materials;
- Making proposals on inclusive education, etc.¹³⁹

The financial autonomy of VET institutions in Germany means that budgeting issues, i.e. the overall allocation of the budget (current financial resources and staff funding), are increasingly

¹³⁵ [UNESCO](#)

¹³⁶ [OECD, 2021](#)

¹³⁷ [Ministry of Education and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia, 2025](#)

¹³⁸ [OECD, 2021](#)

¹³⁹ [Ministry of Education and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia, 2025](#)

becoming the responsibility of educational institutions. However, this process is being implemented with varying degrees of intensity in individual federal states, which is due not only to the priorities of the administration of educational institutions and policies regarding VET in different states, but also to regional characteristics and requirements for VET institutions.¹⁴⁰

For example, in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, VET institutions use resources in accordance with the rules established by the institution's founder (usually the municipality). At the same time, the founder may authorise the director of the institution to enter into legal agreements that are binding on the school administration and to assume obligations on its behalf within the limits of the financial resources available to the VET institution. The example of the Vocational Education Centre in Mölln illustrates the approximate ratio of funding sources in VET institutions. The 2024 financial plan states that approximately 92% of revenues come from state appropriations, 2% from income from services provided, and another 6% from reimbursements that may come from state or local authorities or enterprises.¹⁴¹

At the same time, unlike a number of European countries, VET institutions in Germany face restrictions in terms of finding additional sources of financial resources.¹⁴² Although educational institutions also have the opportunity to attract grants from their founders, provided that the provision of additional funds does not create privileges for the recipient of additional resources, as well as to accept donations from third parties and advertise their activities and services, such decisions are approved by the founders of the institutions. In addition, such activities must have significant educational benefits and serve educational purposes, otherwise they are prohibited.¹⁴³

The pedagogical autonomy of VET institutions in Germany allows them to freely implement teaching methods, form learning groups and use teaching materials at their own discretion. At the same time, VET institutions have less autonomy in the context of curriculum development, as these are developed at the federal state level (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training – see 'Autonomy of partnerships and services' for more details). One third of the curriculum consists of general subjects, and two thirds of specialised subjects related to the chosen profession. Exams are supervised by chambers of commerce and industry, which are responsible for conducting them.¹⁴⁴

Autonomy of partnerships and services. In Germany, social partners – associations of employers and trade unions – play an extremely important role. They are actively involved at various levels: from planning the content of training programmes to determining the forms of initial and continuing education. At the national level, social partners are represented on the board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, where they participate in the work of specialised committees. At the regional level, chambers of commerce and industry play an important role, in particular by organising examinations. Initiatives to update or create new occupational standards usually come from the social partners.¹⁴⁵

Opinions are divided among experts regarding partnerships in the field of vocational education for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). About a third of them believe that such

¹⁴⁰ [Cedefop, 2007](#)

¹⁴¹ [Vocational Training Centre Mölln, 2024](#)

¹⁴² [ETF, 2018](#)

¹⁴³ [Ministry of Education and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia, 2025](#)

¹⁴⁴ [Dutch Foundation of Innovation](#)

¹⁴⁵ [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(BIBB\), 2017](#)

partnerships are indispensable for ensuring high-quality training. Another third consider them recommended but not mandatory. The rest of the experts believe that a high level of training can be achieved even without partnerships. The situation is slightly different when it comes to the attractiveness of VET for young people in SMEs. About a third of experts are confident that bringing together several companies significantly increases its attractiveness, another third see moderate growth, and the rest are sceptical about the effectiveness of such partnerships in attracting young people.¹⁴⁶

An important part of the training system is the inter-company training centres (überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten, ÜBS). They complement the practical training provided directly in the companies and are organised by VET institutions with the support of industry organisations. Small and medium-sized craft enterprises in particular are often unable to provide the full range of training due to increased division of labour, growing specialisation, technical progress or financial difficulties. This is why additional training measures in inter-company centres or joint training structures are necessary.¹⁴⁷

Inter-company training centres are usually run by municipalities, chambers of commerce and industry or guilds, as well as non-profit private structures (industry associations). The financing of these centres is mixed and comes from various sources: the Federal Employment Agency, the German government, federal state budgets and the resources of the founding organisations. In addition, funding is provided for modernisation and structural restructuring in order to meet the challenges of digitalisation and changes in education policy.¹⁴⁸

Traditionally, for many German companies, participation in the dual education system is not only an obligation but also an important investment in future skilled personnel. They bear the main financial burden of training students. However, over the last decade, small businesses have become less willing to provide in-company training. This trend has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, making state support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the field of VET even more relevant.¹⁴⁹

Practical forms of cooperation between enterprises in VET can be very diverse. Sometimes enterprises join forces with VET institutions to jointly cover all components of the training process, as they cannot provide the full scope of content on their own. In other cases, only basic training is provided by one of the partner enterprises, while other enterprises prepare students for exams. There are also examples where programmes are developed jointly with VET institutions or where one of the partners organises exam preparation for students from several enterprises.¹⁵⁰

At the same time, there are also some tricky issues. There's often a lack of coordination between the production partner and the VET institution when it comes to things like checking learning outcomes. There's also an imbalance between official exam requirements and additional learning content, and sometimes conflicts of interest regarding the duration, format

¹⁴⁶ [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(BIBB\), 2017](#)

¹⁴⁷ [Cedefop, 2025](#)

¹⁴⁸ [Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(BIBB\), 2017](#)

¹⁴⁹ [Cedefop, 2025](#)

¹⁵⁰ Some companies offer their own specialised courses for students from other enterprises and also organise mutual internships and work placements, which provide an opportunity to learn about different technologies and production processes. Survey participants rate this experience positively, particularly noting the enthusiasm of students when encountering new environments. Source: [Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung \(BIBB\), 2017](#)

and content of joint learning. A separate problem is the risk of VET institutions losing students to partners, as well as the overly short trial period for new initiatives, which leads to their termination even if they are promising.¹⁵¹

SOUTH KOREA

During the period of rapid growth in investment inflows into the country's economy in the 1980s, the Republic of Korea faced a shortage of skilled workers, which created obstacles to rapid economic development.¹⁵² The situation was caused by negative demographic trends and increased demand for higher education. The expansion of the VET system was a response to labour market challenges and a way to reduce the burden on universities.

Over time, the VET system has changed, adapting to new realities, in particular the ageing population. The curriculum was reformed: now vocational training is combined with academic subjects, and in some institutions up to 75% of the course is common for both vocational and general education students. The emphasis is on developing employability skills, critical thinking and digital literacy. In 2010, a new type of VET institution (meister schools) was created, focusing on high-demand industries such as robotics, electronics, AI, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing. Thanks to close cooperation with industrial enterprises, many students receive job offers before they even finish their studies.¹⁵³

The managerial autonomy of VET institutions in South Korea has grown in recent years, which has increased the prestige of VET. As a result, the procedure for selecting VET institution directors is more decentralised. The selection of the director of an institution is carried out through an open competition, and experienced CEOs of Korean companies and industry experts can become directors or teachers at VET institutions.^{154,155} The education administration selects and appoints the directors of VET institutions.¹⁵⁶

In addition, PSE institutions may jointly provide vocational (technical and vocational) training and education or share teaching staff, premises, equipment and information to improve the quality of education for students.¹⁵⁷

The financial autonomy of VET institutions in South Korea is limited. Institutions are funded through a mixed model that includes government funding and employer contributions. Formal VET programmes are mainly funded by the Ministry of Education. Informal programmes are funded by a training levy collected by the Ministry of Employment and Labour. Employers are required to pay this fee to compensate for the cost of training their employees. Although these mechanisms provide the necessary resources, the allocation and use of funds are often subject to centralised control and supervision by the state and local authorities, which limits the autonomy of individual institutions.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ [Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung \(BIBB\), 2017](#)

¹⁵² [UNESCO](#)

¹⁵³ [Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training \(KRIVET\)](#)

¹⁵⁴ [Korea Taylor & Francis, 2023](#)

¹⁵⁵ [Law Viewer](#)

¹⁵⁶ [UNESCO, 2024](#)

¹⁵⁷ [UNESCO, 2014](#)

¹⁵⁸ [Law Viewer](#)

The pedagogical autonomy of VET institutions in South Korea is broader than their financial autonomy. The content of education is generally determined by the national curriculum. It regulates the distribution of 204 credit units, of which 65 credits are allocated to general education subjects (Korean language, English, mathematics, natural sciences, etc.) and 86 to vocational training. In addition, 29 credit units are allocated to courses determined independently by the institution, and another 24 credits are allocated to creative experimental educational activities. At the same time, the national curriculum allows cities and provinces to adjust some of the credits according to local needs.¹⁵⁹

In addition, the Vocational Education and Training Promotion Act provides additional opportunities for adaptation to educational needs. This concerns the possibility for the director of a VET institution to delegate part of their institution's curriculum to another VET institution or enterprise.¹⁶⁰

The first year of study focuses on basic theoretical training within the VET institution. In the second and third years, students choose a specialisation and study in a more practice-oriented environment, which includes teaching by industry experts, internships and practical work in enterprises.¹⁶¹

The autonomy of partnerships and services has been strengthened by close cooperation between VET institutions and industry. It encompasses various forms of interaction that integrate VET with the real needs of the market. In particular, municipalities are actively involved in implementing educational initiatives for the adult population, including retraining and professional development programmes for vulnerable groups. Students have the opportunity to get to know the production environment first-hand, undergo internships, receive advice from relevant specialists, and teaching staff can update their professional knowledge through practice at relevant industry enterprises. Constant contact with modern technologies and practices allows teaching staff to keep their knowledge and teaching methods up to date. This, in turn, plays an important role in preparing students for the labour market.¹⁶² This approach is recognised both internationally, particularly in OECD reports, and in European educational recommendations.¹⁶³

To better prepare students, a format of specialised vocational education institutions (meister schools) has been introduced, where training is more intensive and the institutions themselves work more closely with industrial companies. Curricula are developed autonomously, in collaboration with business representatives, and adapted to the needs of local industries.

In order to improve the quality of lifelong learning, the Ministry of Education has implemented a number of strategic measures based on the integration of the continuing education system into the formal education structure. The creation of lifelong learning centres based on VET institutions has been encouraged, offering a variety of courses that allow students to earn credits within this educational pathway. In addition, private VET institutions cover a wide range of programmes for adults aimed at improving professional qualifications or obtaining permits to

¹⁵⁹ [ETH, 2017](#)

¹⁶⁰ [Law Viewer](#)

¹⁶¹ [ETH, 2017](#)

¹⁶² [Cologne Institute for Economic Research, 2017](#)

¹⁶³ [OECD, 2012](#)

carry out auxiliary activities, such as caring for the elderly, nursing, driving heavy goods vehicles, cooking, etc.¹⁶⁴

At the local level, both public and private secondary schools specialising in specific fields such as manufacturing, technology or agriculture play an important role in the development of VET. They pay particular attention to practical training closely linked to the needs of employers. A separate niche is occupied by a new type of VET institution (meister schools), modelled on the German model, which train highly qualified technical specialists for specific industries. These schools operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, and their day-to-day management is the responsibility of local or regional educational structures.¹⁶⁵

CZECH REPUBLIC

Following the political and economic transformation of 1989, the VET system in the Czech Republic underwent significant reforms. These included the introduction of new curricula, greater autonomy for VET institutions, a shift to funding based on the number of students in the institution, and the emergence of private educational institutions. The Phare programme, together with OECD recommendations, played a key role in guiding these reforms, in particular through the implementation of pilot projects in 19 institutions. VET has evolved from a static system to one that is capable of responding to changes in the labour market, with secondary education becoming its most dynamic segment. The changes included the expansion and integration of curricula, a decline in young people's interest in blue-collar professions, and the need to optimise the network of institutions due to negative demographic changes.¹⁶⁶

Administrative autonomy means that VET institutions in the Czech Republic are quite flexible in managing their teaching staff. Directors of VET institutions have the following powers:

- Hiring and dismissing teaching staff;
- To set the basic salary of teaching staff;
- To set the amount of salary increases.

In addition, directors are responsible for organising the professional development of teaching staff, implementing training programmes that take into account labour market requirements and the specific needs of students, and making decisions on disciplinary policy for students.¹⁶⁷

The autonomy of directors of VET institutions is balanced by the powers that remain with regional authorities. This applies to the procedure for appointing directors of institutions, approving plans for the provision of educational services and the distribution of funding among educational institutions.¹⁶⁸

Another element of the administrative autonomy of VET institutions is the functioning of councils as advisory bodies to educational institutions. They are composed of representatives of the institution's administration, teaching staff, parents/legal representatives of students, and

¹⁶⁴ [Collection Information Search, 2024](#)

¹⁶⁵ [OECD, 2012](#)

¹⁶⁶ [The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2005](#)

¹⁶⁷ [OECD, 2010](#)

¹⁶⁸ [OECD, 2010](#)

sometimes the students themselves, provided they have reached the age of majority. The council is formed as follows: one-third of its members are appointed by the governing body (which, depending on the form of ownership, is subordinate to central, regional or local authorities), one-third are elected by the teaching staff, and another one-third are elected by students or their parents/legal representatives. The council's term of office is three years. The director cannot be a member of the council, but is obliged to attend meetings if invited by the chair of the council, as well as to provide all documents necessary for discussion. The council of the VET institution meets at least twice a year, and its powers include:

- Approving the annual report on the institution's activities;
- Discussing the budget and making proposals for improving financial management;
- Monitoring the implementation of educational programmes;
- Participating in the development of strategic goals for the development of the VET institution;
- Making proposals regarding the dismissal of the director of the institution and announcing a competition to fill the vacant position, etc.¹⁶⁹

Financial autonomy. The autonomy of VET institutions is relatively high in all areas of operation, from the organisation of the educational process to personnel management. The exception is resource management, where the level of autonomy of institutions corresponds to the average level of OECD member countries.¹⁷⁰

VET institutions may only acquire property necessary to achieve their operational goals, in particular through donation, succession or other means. The founder (most often the municipality) exercises control over the financial management of the VET institution, which has the authority to independently resolve financial operational issues.¹⁷¹ In addition to state funding, institutions can attract funds from employers, who often support POV institutions through sponsorship and investment in infrastructure and equipment. POV institutions can also receive certain funding through economic activities and participation in international support programmes.¹⁷² The income structure of POV institutions in the Czech Republic is quite similar. For example, the revenue structure of the Academy of Commerce, Hotel School and Secondary Vocational School in Turnov in 2024 was as follows: 90% – state revenue, 8% – revenue from the provision of services and sale of goods, 2% – other revenue.¹⁷³

The director of the VET institution independently approves key decisions in the field of financial management. The councils of VET institutions participate in budget discussions, express their opinions on economic results and propose measures for their improvement, thus performing a public control function.

Pedagogical autonomy creates opportunities for VET institutions in the Czech Republic to adjust the content of individual programmes, decide on the location of practical training (in a workshop or at an enterprise) and establish admission procedures within the framework of established national recommendations. At the same time, this process must take place within

¹⁶⁹ [Eurydice, 2025](#)

¹⁷⁰ [OECD, 2016](#)

¹⁷¹ [Eurydice, 2025](#)

¹⁷² [Cedefop, 2022](#)

¹⁷³ [Hotel School and Secondary Vocational School, Turnov, 2024](#)

the framework of strategic goals set by regional authorities, taking into account demographic changes, labour market trends, etc.¹⁷⁴

A number of EU-funded projects also contribute to the development of cooperation with business. In particular, this includes the project "Modernisation of vocational education through cooperation with industry". The project aims to improve the quality of VET in institutions by organising exchanges between educational institutions and industrial enterprises. The ultimate goal is to increase students' motivation to study in technical fields. In total, as of 2020, more than 1,150 training modules and 47 cooperation plans between VET institutions and employers have been developed.¹⁷⁵

The autonomy of partnerships and services in the Czech Republic allows VET institutions to offer programmes aimed primarily at employed candidates, where face-to-face learning, mainly on weekends, is combined with consultations and various distance learning methods, such as self-study and online courses.¹⁷⁶

In accordance with the amendments to the Education Act adopted in 2017, VET institutions are required to provide part of the practical training directly in the workplace, as well as to cooperate with employers in the development of training programmes, practical training, final assessment and professional development of teaching staff.

Vocational training institutions in the Czech Republic are also involved in retraining the unemployed and other important population groups, such as people aged 50 and over, women on maternity leave, etc. Regional branches of the Employment Centre develop a project tailored to the needs of the target group registered with them and conclude a contract with the relevant education providers, which are VET institutions.¹⁷⁷

In addition, there are VET programmes specifically designed for people with special educational needs, covering one-year, two-year and three-year full-time programmes with lower requirements than other VET programmes. These programmes are available to students with basic secondary education (both young people and adults). The admission process does not involve any stages other than an interview.¹⁷⁸

SWEDEN

Since the late 1960s, VET in Sweden has been part of the national upper secondary school system. VET programmes last three years: 85% of the training takes place in an educational institution and includes a 15-week work placement. There is also the option of completing the programme in the form of an internship, although the number of such cases remains insignificant. Following the decentralisation reforms of the 1990s, municipalities are responsible for implementing specific VET policies.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ [OECD, 2010](#)

¹⁷⁵ [OECD, 2020](#)

¹⁷⁶ [Cedefop, 2022](#)

¹⁷⁷ [Cedefop, 2022](#)

¹⁷⁸ [Cedefop, 2022](#)

¹⁷⁹ [Sage Journals, 2019](#)

In general, the VET system in Sweden has undergone two key reforms – in 1991 and 2011. The 1991 reform provided for preparation for both employment and admission to higher education institutions through a combination of general education and vocational components. The 2011 reform strengthened the orientation of educational institutions towards the needs of the labour market, clearly dividing programmes into academic and vocational tracks. Accordingly, VET institutions gained more autonomy in the context of their activities.¹⁸⁰

Managerial autonomy. Directors of VET institutions do not face significant restrictions in the context of performing their functions. Directors of VET institutions also have a high degree of autonomy in the context of control by municipal authorities. Municipalities set certain strategic goals for all subordinate VET institutions, but these goals are quite general, which leaves ample room for action to achieve them. As long as an educational institution demonstrates good performance and provides a satisfactory level of services, its autonomy will remain high.¹⁸¹

VET institutions also enjoy broad autonomy in terms of internal organisational processes. This includes issues such as setting timetables for each study programme, distributing tasks among teaching staff, allocating courses and forming working groups. At the same time, deep decentralisation, which creates significant differences in the work of different municipalities, and increased attention in some of them (especially to financial issues) creates conditions where some educational institutions face greater control from local authorities.¹⁸²

Financial autonomy. Education providers in Sweden bear primary financial responsibility and independently manage the resources they receive from municipalities. Each municipality decides independently how to allocate resources among educational institutions, but to a large extent it is the VET institution that is responsible for using resources most effectively to meet the needs of students.¹⁸³

For example, the issue of setting salaries for teaching staff is usually decided at the level of individual VET institutions, in cooperation with the trade union. At the same time, the approach to the use of funds for capital expenditures, such as the construction of premises, is less uniform. Some municipalities give VET institutions autonomy in managing such expenditures, while others retain responsibility for the use of these resources. In addition, some municipalities may make their own decisions on capital expenditures within other structures, for example through their own planning and construction administration.¹⁸⁴

In the context of **pedagogical autonomy**, Sweden has a decentralised system. The country has a National Curriculum developed by the government and the National Agency for Education, but VET institutions are free to interpret and implement this curriculum.¹⁸⁵ This is particularly true of the actual teaching process, where teaching staff independently determine the format for delivering the curriculum to students.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ [Sage Journals, 2019](#)

¹⁸¹ [Taylor & Francis, 2023](#)

¹⁸² [Taylor & Francis, 2023](#)

¹⁸³ [OECD, 2017](#)

¹⁸⁴ [Eurydice, 2025](#)

¹⁸⁵ [MDPI, 2020](#)

¹⁸⁶ [Taylor & Francis, 2018](#)

VET institutions have no significant restrictions on the organisation of the professional development of teaching staff. VET institutions are free to determine the content of teacher training, as this issue is not regulated at the national level.¹⁸⁷

Autonomy of partnerships and services. The Swedish VET system is characterised by a high level of decentralisation and ample opportunities for the development of local partnerships. In order to expand the range of vocational education courses for adults, the Swedish government launched an initiative in 2016 to provide grants to municipalities that cooperate in planning educational services for adults. To receive such support, at least three municipalities must participate, and various organisations that provide services to the adult population, such as VET institutions and public employment services, must be involved in the process.¹⁸⁸

In Sweden, work-based learning is widely practised and is an integral part of many VET programmes. This training is implemented through participation in practical work under the supervision of an employer and is accompanied by a structured combination of practical and theoretical learning. In most programmes, work-based learning is compulsory, with the exception of adult courses, where it is optional, probably due to the fact that adult learners already have professional experience.^{189,190}

The Swedish model is characterised by a high degree of autonomy for educational institutions. It is the VET institutions that are responsible for organising and managing the learning process, including the implementation of work-based learning in both school and apprenticeship programmes. They have the freedom to adapt the work placement schedule to the needs of learners (students) and local employers. For example, practical training can be organised for several days a week, every other week or in a block at the end of the course.³ In apprenticeship programmes, the division of training content between the VET institution and the workplace is clearly defined by signing a tripartite agreement between the VET institution, the employer and the apprentice.^{191,192}

A financial support system is in place to encourage employers to participate in training. VET institutions can receive up to SEK 5,000 per apprentice per year for the development of apprenticeship programmes, and employers can receive up to SEK 32,500 per apprentice per year. Additional funding is provided if the mentor has undergone special training (10,000 kronor) and if the student is officially employed and receives a salary (500 kronor per year).¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ [OECD, 2021](#)

¹⁸⁸ [Cedefop, 2023](#)

¹⁸⁹ [Skolverket, 2020](#)

¹⁹⁰ [OECD, 2019](#)

¹⁹¹ [Skolverket, 2020](#)

¹⁹² [OECD, 2019](#)

¹⁹³ [OECD, 2019](#)