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Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act, VPETA)

of 13 December 2002 (Status as of 1 April 2022)

*The Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation,
based on Art. 63 of the Federal Constitution¹,
having considered the Federal Council Dispatch of 6 September 2000²,
decrees:*

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Art. 1 Principles

¹ Responsibility for upper-secondary level vocational education and training (VET) and tertiary-level professional education shall be shared by the Confederation, the Cantons and professional organisations (social partners, trade associations as well as other organisations and education and training providers within the VPET system). They shall strive to ensure that there is an adequate number of training options within the VPET system, particularly in promising occupational and professional fields.

² The measures taken by the Confederation shall be designed to provide the Cantons and professional organisations with financial and other resources to encourage initiatives to the greatest extent possible.

³ In order to fulfil the purpose of this Act:

- a. the Confederation, the Cantons and professional organisations shall coordinate their activities;
- b. the Cantons and professional organisations shall also coordinate their activities.

AS 2003 4557

¹ SR 101

² BBl 2000 5686

Art. 2 Object and scope

¹ This Act applies to all occupational and professional fields except those covered by the higher education sector:

- a. upper-secondary level vocational education and training (VET), including subjects taught in the preparatory course for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB) Examination;
- b. tertiary-level professional education;
- c. job-related continuing education and training;
- d. qualification procedures, qualifications and titles;
- e. training provided to VPET professionals;
- f. responsibilities and principles associated with vocational, educational and career guidance;
- g. federal funding to help cover the costs of the VPET system.

² This Act does not apply to education and training governed by other Federal Acts.

³ The Federal Council may, in agreement with the Cantons, exclude individual occupational or professional fields from the scope of this Act if doing so is required for the efficient allocation of tasks between the Confederation and the Cantons.

Art. 3 Objectives

This Act shall foster and develop:

- a. a Vocational and professional education and training (VPET) system that enables individuals to develop on an occupational, professional and personal level, to become integrated into society, and particularly into working life, that provides them with the skills they need, the willingness to work in a flexible manner and the ability to succeed in working life;
- b. a VPET system that enables companies to become more competitive;
- c.³ a balancing of education and training opportunities in social and regional terms, true gender equality, the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities as well as equal opportunities and integration for foreign nationals;
- d. the ability of learners to transfer from one course of study and/or educational approach to another within the VET and professional education sectors as well as between the VET and professional education sectors and other sectors of the education system (permeability);
- e. greater transparency of the VPET system.

³ Amended by Annex No 2 of the FA of 16 Dec. 2016 (Integration), in force since 1 Jan. 2019 (AS **2017** 6521, **2018** 3171; BBl **2013** 2397, **2016** 2821).

Art. 4 Development of the VPET system

¹ In order to develop the VPET system, the Confederation shall lend support to studies, pilot projects, VPET research and the creation of viable structures in new VPET areas.

² The Confederation shall also become involved in such activities whenever this is needed to further the development of the VPET system.

³ If necessary, and following consultation with the Cantons and professional organisations concerned, the Federal Council may temporarily deviate from the provisions of this Act for pilot projects.

⁴ The quality and independence of VPET research must be guaranteed by qualified research institutes.

Art. 5 Information, documentation and teaching materials

The Confederation shall promote:

- a. the provision of information and documentation of interest to Switzerland as a whole or to individual linguistic regions within Switzerland;
- b. the creation of teaching materials intended for linguistic minorities.

Art. 6 Understanding and exchange between linguistic communities

¹ The Confederation may promote VPET initiatives that favour greater understanding and exchange between linguistic communities.

² Specifically, it may promote:

- a. individual multilingualism, in particular by establishing requirements as far as the language of instruction and language training of teachers are concerned;
- b. initiatives taken by the Cantons, professional organisations and companies to send teachers and learners to other linguistic regions.

Art. 7 Promoting disadvantaged regions and groups

The Confederation may promote VPET initiatives intended to help disadvantaged regions and groups.

Art. 8 Improving quality

¹ Education and training providers within the VPET system shall be responsible for ensuring the constant improvement of quality.

² The Confederation shall promote quality improvement, establish quality standards and monitor compliance.

Art. 9 Encouraging permeability within the education system

¹ Regulations on the VET and professional education sectors shall ensure the greatest possible permeability both within the VET and professional education sectors as well as between the VET and professional education sectors and other sectors of the education system.

² The professional or non-professional experience or technical or general skills gained outside usual formal education and training pathways shall also be recognised and/or validated where appropriate.

Art. 10 Rights of learners to be consulted

Host companies and VET schools shall ensure that the rights of learners to be consulted are respected.

Art. 11 Private providers

¹ The measures contained in this Act must not create unfair distortions of competition affecting private providers on the education market.

² Public providers competing with unsubsidised private providers must charge market prices for their job-related CET courses.

Chapter 2 Vocational Education and Training**Section 1 General Provisions****Art. 12** Preparation for VET

The Cantons shall take measures to prepare learners for upper-secondary level VET programmes if these learners have not reached the required level of academic achievement on completion of compulsory education.

Art. 13 Imbalances in the apprenticeship market

If there are indications of a future or current imbalance on the apprenticeship market, the Federal Council may take suitable action for a limited period of time and use available funding to restore balance.

Art. 14 Apprenticeship contract

¹ Learners and host companies shall enter into an apprenticeship contract. Unless this Act provides otherwise, the apprenticeship contract is governed by the provisions of the Code of Obligations⁴ on apprenticeship contracts (Art. 344–346a).

² The apprenticeship contract shall be entered into for the full duration of the VET programme. If work-based training involves apprenticeships in various companies,

⁴ SR 220

then several apprenticeship contracts may be entered into to cover the duration of each successive apprenticeship.

³ The apprenticeship contract must be approved by the local cantonal authority. No fees may be charged for such approval.

⁴ If the apprenticeship contract is terminated, the host company providing work-based training must notify the local cantonal authority and, if applicable, the VET school without delay.

⁵ If a host company ceases its activities or no longer provides work-based training in accordance with statutory provisions, the Cantons shall ensure that learners are able to complete their VET programme in the proper manner.

⁶ The provisions of this Act apply even if an apprenticeship contract is not signed, is not submitted for approval or is submitted late for approval.

Section 2 Structure

Art. 15 Subject matter

¹ VET programmes are intended to ensure the transfer and acquisition of upper secondary-level skills, knowledge and know-how (hereinafter referred to as competences) needed to carry out the tasks associated with an occupation, occupational field or field of activity (the latter two terms hereinafter referred to jointly as «occupational activity»).

² In particular, VET programmes include the transfer and acquisition of:

- a. specific competences that learners require in order to carry out an occupational activity in a competent and confident manner;
- b. basic competences in language, communication and society (LCS) that learners require in order to gain access to working life, remain economically active and become part of society;
- c. economic, environmental, social and cultural knowledge and skills that learners need to contribute to sustainable development;
- d. ability and willingness to pursue lifelong learning, exercise critical judgement and reach decisions.

³ VET begins after a learner completes compulsory education or obtains an equivalent qualification. The Federal Council shall establish the criteria whereby a minimum age for commencement of VET may be set.

⁴ The mandatory teaching of a second language is governed by VET ordinances.

⁵ The teaching of physical education is governed by the Sport Promotion Act of 17 June 2011^{5,6}

⁵ SR 415.0

⁶ Amended by Art. 34 No 3 of the Sport Promotion Act of 17 June 2011, in force since 1 Oct. 2012 (AS 2012 3953; BBl 2009 8189).