

Securing attractiveness of vocational education and training – the example of Switzerland

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In Switzerland, upper-secondary vocational education and training is the preferred choice for further education after compulsory education, as approximately two-thirds of young people in the same age group choose to enrol in a VET programme. This high proportion is indicative of the appeal of Swiss VET programmes, which have remained popular since 1995 despite an increase in the graduation rate for upper-secondary general education.

Generally speaking, the Swiss education system is based on the principle of “no dead-end qualifications” and is characterized by formally defined permeability between the different educational tracks. Furthermore, opportunities for transition from VET to higher education (ISCED 5A) – via a qualification known as the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate, introduced in 1994 – or professional education and training (ISCED 5B), introduced in 2004 are legally established. However, analysis of political discourse in 2013 in Switzerland (e.g. encouraging more academically minded young people to pursue VET pathways; consolidating the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate; promoting and consolidating professional education and training) shows that the actual realization of appealing career prospects for VET graduates still remains open to discussion. Besides the depiction of legally defined and actually realized transitions, the talk will also focus on planned policy initiatives aimed at securing the attractiveness of VET in Switzerland.