

# **5** **Strengthening leadership in vocational education and training**

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This chapter looks at institutional leaders in vocational education and training (VET), and discusses their often multi-dimensional roles. It analyses leaders' skills and training needs and provides avenues to foster skills development. This chapter also looks at the attractiveness of the VET leadership role and highlights how working conditions and support could be improved.

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## Key messages for strengthening strategic leadership in VET

VET institutions need well-prepared leaders. VET leaders have to understand both the VET sector and the labour market, and its changing needs, while at the same time have organisational and pedagogical leadership skills as they seek to improve teaching and learning.

To ensure that VET leaders can effectively carry out their complex and varied roles, countries should make sure all leaders are equipped with the right skills. A first step will be to clarify their roles and tasks to act as a key point of reference for those considering a leadership role, and for those organising their selection and training. Access to initial training and professional development opportunities is crucial if VET leaders are to develop the right skills and keep them up to date, and these opportunities need to be flexible and aligned with the expected requirements for their role. Initial training and professional development need to be part of a coherent skills development strategy for VET leaders.

It is also important to ensure that the VET leadership role is attractive. Many VET leaders struggle with the difficult workload and the diverse responsibilities their role brings. The creation of middle-management roles and leadership teams can assist leaders with their responsibilities. VET leaders should be able to access support measures, such as mentoring, induction and peer-learning opportunities, especially at the start of their careers.

### Policy pointers

- 4.1. Clarifying the roles and tasks of VET leaders
- 4.2. Equipping VET leaders with the right skills
- 4.3. Increasing the attractiveness of VET leadership roles

## The roles and tasks of VET leaders

### ***Leaders have a multidimensional role***

Institutional leaders in vocational education and training (VET) refer to those who are appointed or employed in a recognised leadership position to oversee VET programmes and institutions and who have responsibility for the goals set by the organisation that offers VET programmes. VET leaders manage “complex and knowledge-intensive organisations” – both in the short and long-term (Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Effenterre, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>). They set core values and a strategic vision for their institution, and support other staff members to deliver on the objectives. Depending on the country’ context, VET leaders might hire teachers; decide how they are remunerated, provide support and encouragement to their staff; determine the appropriateness of the institution’s core activities; ensure the retention and progression of students; and represent the institution in its contacts with education boards, the relevant ministries and agencies, social partners, and parents. VET leaders manage the central community position that their institution holds, and are linked with other education institutions, universities, employers and local authorities. They need to be aware of new guidance and regulations around the provision of VET programmes. Leaders are also responsible for all aspects of their institution’s performance, including its financial health, and may be accountable for achieving the institution’s goals and efficiently managing its resources (Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Effenterre, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>; Greatbatch and Tate, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>; Böhlmark, Grönqvist and Vlachos, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>).

VET leaders have different responsibilities in different countries and types of institutions. They could be leaders of a single- or multi-field vocational institution, or head a public or private VET institution providing

adult learning programmes. They might also be responsible for VET programmes within comprehensive education institutions (that may have also general education programmes). These institutions include upper secondary VET schools in Denmark and Germany; further education colleges, independent training providers and adult community centres in England (United Kingdom); vocational high schools, colleges of technology and specialised training colleges in Japan; or Career Tech Education programmes in high schools and community colleges in the United States. There may be more than one person in charge of a VET institution (Frimodt, Volmari and Helakorpi, 2009<sup>[4]</sup>). According to the OECD's *Education at a Glance*, upper secondary vocational leaders in ten OECD countries have to meet certain requirements regarding teaching hours, while in others it is voluntary (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>).

The management of VET institutions and the division of responsibilities vary greatly depending on the type and size of the institution. In Finland, for instance, a VET leader (principal) can be head of a single-field vocational school (e.g. the Finnish School of Watch Making with 70 students), a principal of a large multi-field vocational institution (e.g. Omnia, a VET institution with 3 000 students), or a director of an education and training consortium in a municipality (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>). The United States has about 1 100 community colleges, ranging in size from 500 students to over 30 000, and as a result, they have varying requirements for leaders (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017<sup>[7]</sup>). In England, the median number of learners is around 6 700 students per VET institution (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>). In the Netherlands, there are around 70 VET institutions with on average 7 704 students each, but some have as many as 20 000 students (Thomsen, Karsten and Oort, 2014<sup>[8]</sup>). VET institutions operate quite autonomously from the central government with a lot of decision-making delegated to the institution level.

It is generally acknowledged across OECD countries that institutional leadership is complex with multiple, and at times competing, pressures. This is particularly the case for institutions providing courses at multiple levels such as FE colleges in England or community colleges in the United States. Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Effenterre (2017<sup>[1]</sup>) put the management of FE colleges in England at the same level as managing large and complex public institutions such as universities and hospitals. In Australia, a survey of post-secondary VET leaders showed that strong leadership requires acknowledging the complexity of the relationships involved in simultaneous membership of different cultures (e.g. corporate, collegial, managerial and professional) (Mulcahy, 2004<sup>[9]</sup>). This complexity has required new skills and a different way of looking at the activities and functions leaders carry out. Complex tasks involve many challenges that require input from different perspectives and areas of expertise (Bouwman et al., 2017<sup>[10]</sup>).

In many countries and systems, some of these functions are distributed amongst different individuals and middle management roles are created, such as principals, deputies, team managers and heads of units and teachers (Frimodt, Volmari and Helakorpi, 2009<sup>[4]</sup>). For instance, due to their size, Dutch VET institutions usually have three management layers: supervisors or middle managers at the first level, who usually manage between one and four teams of teachers; a middle level of location directors or sector directors, who either manage one of the schools' locations or are responsible for one branch of VET; and the institution's director(s) at the top level (Thomsen, Karsten and Oort, 2014<sup>[8]</sup>).

As highlighted in previous chapters, VET is distinguished from the rest of the education sector by its strong connection to the world of work and the need to keep abreast of changes in the labour market. This means VET leaders have additional roles compared to their peers in general education, such as:

- Ensuring a strong connection to the labour market. This means leaders need to have a strong understanding of the local economy and business.
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, in particular social partners and employers.
- Managing sophisticated business operations, including innovating, adapting learning contents and dynamically changing staff composition in order to keep up with the pace of technological development and changing labour market needs.

- Handling a particular responsibility for social inclusion, with VET often having a large number of disadvantaged students struggling with learning and social difficulties, a high rate of students dropping out and a great diversity of students and training programmes (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>).

This means that VET institutions and their leaders play an essential role in supporting local and sectoral skills development, and the labour markets in which they feed in. They can engage with employers and trade unions, and other stakeholders, at these different levels, including the national one. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic this means that they can open up lines of communication to assess how each sector is affected by the pandemic, leading to greater stakeholder engagement in the future (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>).

Pedagogical leadership, and tasks such as preparation of learning support materials, can be more complex in VET than in general education (UNESCO, 2017<sup>[12]</sup>). VET institutions often offer more diverse courses than general education ones, and this has an impact on the leadership role. For example, the teaching staff in a VET institution come from more heterogeneous backgrounds than in a general education institution, which may pose particular challenges for human resource management – hiring them, supporting them in their induction, and ensuring relevant professional development opportunities exist. Quality assurance mechanisms might also need to be more sophisticated, since it has to take into account labour market outcomes (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>).

The global COVID-19 pandemic has forced countries to create and use alternative forms of learning, including digital platforms. However, vocational programmes, including apprenticeships, are often much more difficult to provide and assess at a distance. This has created additional roles and responsibilities for VET leaders, as leaders are crucial to adapt the operation of VET institutions to increasing use of online and virtual platforms, which allow the continuity of learning, and support teachers in their use. When online learning is not possible, training breaks or extension can also be steered by VET leaders (OECD, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>).

### ***The activities and skills of leaders have an impact on teachers and students***

The OECD has done extensive work in the past looking at institutional leadership mainly in general education. The OECD *Improving School Leadership* publications (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[14]</sup>) highlighted four core responsibilities of school leadership: 1) supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality, 2) goal-setting, assessment and accountability, 3) strategic financial and human resource management, and 4) collaborating with other schools. There are strong linkages between institutional leadership, and teachers' motivation<sup>1</sup>, students' well-being<sup>2</sup> and the quality of teaching and learning. Looking at leaders in FE colleges in England, Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Van Effenterre (2017<sup>[11]</sup>) found that principals matter for the educational performance of their students, but also that they differ in their ability to enable students to progress<sup>3</sup>. In general, the work of leaders often involved providing specific feedback and direction to individual teachers about their practice, as well as managing the resources to create conditions within the institution that support improved learning and teaching (Bush, 2018<sup>[15]</sup>).

Institutional leaders can drive organisational changes to build strong, effective and flexible VET programmes and institutions that can adapt to emerging challenges. Today's institutional leaders are not only expected to strategically plan and administer their institutions, but also to lead pedagogical innovation, build collaboration networks with multiple organisations, and keep abreast of new technological developments in industry (Coates et al., 2013<sup>[16]</sup>; Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>). As discussed in Chapter 4, fostering innovation in VET requires strong institutional leadership to develop organisational change and collaboration.

Long-standing research and policy discourse in general education have also stressed the importance of pedagogical leadership, i.e. creating the environments in which teachers continuously improve their ability to support student learning<sup>4</sup> (OECD, 2016<sup>[17]</sup>; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>; Robinson, Lloyd and

Rowe, 2008<sup>[18]</sup>; OECD, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>). Principals also play a critical role in attracting and retaining talented teachers. Teachers cite their principals' support as one of the most important factors in their decisions to stay in a particular education institution or in the profession (Espinoza and Cardichon, 2017<sup>[20]</sup>). Pedagogical leadership from institutional leaders is required to sustain changes and improvements in teaching practice over time (UNESCO, 2017<sup>[12]</sup>). Among different management tasks, the most important for quality are professional development of teachers and trainers, ensuring adequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning, and last but not least, efficient management of financial resources (Cedefop, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>).

In order to improve teaching and learning within their institutions, leaders in VET need to be actively involved in their teachers' professional development process. VET leaders provide teachers with structured autonomy and productive feedback on their career development so that teachers can identify and target their own professional needs and drive improvements (O'Leary et al., 2019<sup>[22]</sup>). A study of VET institutions<sup>5</sup> in the Netherlands found that teachers' engagement in learning activities (e.g. self-reflection, asking for feedback and sharing information) is influenced by their leaders' attitudes and perceived interdependence. The study also showed that leaders who provide individual support and intellectual stimulation to teachers contribute to their collaboration (Oude Groote Beverborg, Slegers and van Veen, 2015<sup>[23]</sup>). In Slovenia, principals receive training from the National School for Leadership to carry out teacher appraisal processes (OECD, 2016<sup>[24]</sup>). Teacher appraisal is especially important in a context in which teachers may not receive much professional development or where teachers are ageing and therefore may have issues keeping up with innovation (Radinger, 2014<sup>[25]</sup>).

### ***The role of VET leaders varies depending on the degree of institutional autonomy***

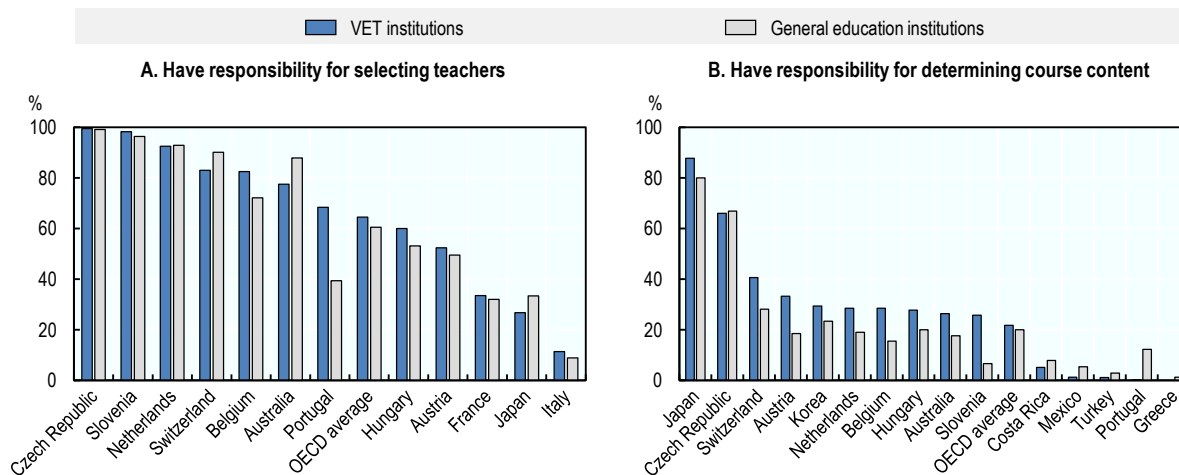
Leadership roles are contingent on local context, and therefore a multiplicity of possible leadership approaches are used by VET providers across OECD countries (see (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>) for England, (Aidla and Vadi, 2008<sup>[26]</sup>) for Estonia, (Brauckmann, Pashiardis and Ärlestig, 2020<sup>[27]</sup>) for Sweden). Concretely, this means that leaders need to adapt generic leadership practices (e.g. goal setting, or supporting teachers) to meet the needs and constraints of each institution's context. The governance of VET institutions, and how much autonomy and accountability VET leaders have, define their roles (Hallinger, 2016<sup>[28]</sup>). The argument to decentralise decision-making is that local actors at all levels, professors, teachers, parents, students, -if well prepared and supported-, are often best able to judge how to achieve learning goals in the light of local circumstances, and to align educational goals with different student and school needs. Many OECD countries are moving towards decentralisation and increased autonomy for education institutions coupled with greater accountability. In countries where institutions are held to account for their results through publication of achievement data, institutions that enjoy greater autonomy in management tend to do better than those with less autonomy; but in countries where there are no accountability arrangements, the reverse is true (Wossmann, 2003<sup>[29]</sup>; OECD, 2013<sup>[30]</sup>). It is therefore widely accepted that autonomy has to go together with accountability mechanisms, and even more importantly, with support structures that help institutional leaders to use newly devolved powers. Education systems should hold institutions for realising learning outcomes, and build leadership capacity and a strong culture of evaluation and transparency (OECD, 2018<sup>[31]</sup>).

Data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shed light on the responsibilities of upper-secondary institutions in two areas: (1) resource allocation; and (2) curriculum and instructional assessment within the institution. The first area includes elements such as the appointment and dismissal of teachers, the determination of teachers' salaries, and the formulation of budgets and their allocation within the institution. For example, PISA data show that in many countries, leaders of upper-secondary educational institutions are responsible for the hiring policies of their institutions, which means they need to have the human resources capacity to carry them out (Figure 5.1, Panel A). In most countries, the share of VET and general education leaders who report having these responsibilities is similar. When VET leaders have responsibilities for hiring policies, they need to have the human resources capacity to do so.

The second area includes the establishment of student-assessment policies, textbook choice and the decisions about which courses to offer and the content of those courses. PISA data show that the extent to which principals in upper secondary institutions have the responsibility for determining course content differs widely between countries (Figure 5.1, Panel B), but also that in many countries these responsibilities are more common in VET institutions than they are in general education ones.

**Figure 5.1. Leaders have a broad range of responsibilities**

Percentage of upper secondary principals, by type of institution and reporting item



Note: VET institutions are those where at least 50% of students are enrolled in upper secondary vocational programmes. Institutional leaders in VET refer to individuals who are appointed or employed in a recognised leadership position to oversee VET programmes and institutions and have responsibility for the goals set by an organisation that offers VET programmes.

Source: Elaboration based on OECD (2015<sup>[32]</sup>), PISA 2015 database, <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2015database/>.

### Clarifying the roles and tasks of leaders

In many countries, there is a lack of clarity about VET leaders' core tasks and responsibilities, which could contribute to reducing preparedness among VET leaders taking up the role. Improved and updated definitions of VET leadership responsibilities would constitute a key point of reference for those considering becoming a leader, and for those organising their selection and training (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>). In the French Community of Belgium, for example, a reform of VET leadership clarified the roles of institution leaders (Box 5.1). In Austria, the 2017 education reform gave VET institutions more autonomy and therefore also increased the competences and responsibilities of head teachers. These tasks included administrative tasks, staff management, selection of teachers, monitoring of the teaching process, development of an institutional profile, quality management, organisation of teaching processes and co-operation with the regional quality managers from the school boards in the nine Austrian provinces. Training programmes for VET leaders have been developed according to the roles determined by standards, and to link learning activities and candidate assessments to the set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge defined by the standards (BMBWF, 2020<sup>[33]</sup>).

### Box 5.1. A holistic approach to leader development in Belgium (French Community)

The French Community (Belgium), made a significant reform to leadership in all education institutions (up to the upper secondary level), including those delivering VET, in 2008 (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2020<sup>[34]</sup>), acknowledging that, although experience working in an educational institution remained essential, the leadership function was very different from teaching. The reform had several aspects:

1. enumeration of the principals' missions: clarifying their role (in relation to the students, the regulator, the network which the institution is part of, and external stakeholders in general)
2. implementation of initial training for principals, including pedagogical, educational, administrative, financial and stakeholder participation components
3. an induction period ("principal's internship"), designed to allow them to get familiar with their new role and to assess their aptitude to exercising it.

In 2018-19, more than 1 300 participants completed at least 75% of the modules of the training programme.

Source: ICF (2020<sup>[35]</sup>), Rapport d'évaluation des formations initiales des directions (volet commun à l'ensemble des réseaux) organisées en 2018-2019, [www.ifc.cfwb.be/documents/multi/rapportEval/DIR\\_Rapport\\_18.pdf](http://www.ifc.cfwb.be/documents/multi/rapportEval/DIR_Rapport_18.pdf).

Building on such a definition of leadership in VET, professional standards can provide a clear statement of the core elements of successful leadership. This can act as a first step towards a shared understanding of what counts as effective leadership, and be used for the appraisal of leaders. However, considering the importance of context for institution leadership, the appraisal of a core set of leadership practices needs to be balanced with flexibility to allow for local adaptation (Radinger, 2014<sup>[25]</sup>).

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of VET leaders could also help make the career more transparent to potential external candidates, who might have the right organisational and management skills without necessarily having a background in the education sector. In the changing world of work, VET leaders are having to increasingly focus on establishing relationships with employers and other stakeholders, and, to some extent, focus less on pedagogy. This may conflict with the background of VET leaders, who come mainly from the teaching profession (Savours and Keohane, 2019<sup>[36]</sup>). As discussed above, this argues for the need to support teachers to build a well-rounded set of skills as they develop into leaders. However, it also makes the case for creating other routes into these leadership roles, from a private sector business background or a public service career. Evidence from England on recruiting from outside the FE sector found that it has often brought a "more commercial edge" and stimulates new thinking (Savours and Keohane, 2019<sup>[36]</sup>). One interesting approach can be to attract outside candidates through alternative recruitment and initial training programmes at the local level, as is done in some part of the United States (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017<sup>[7]</sup>).

## The preparation and development of leaders

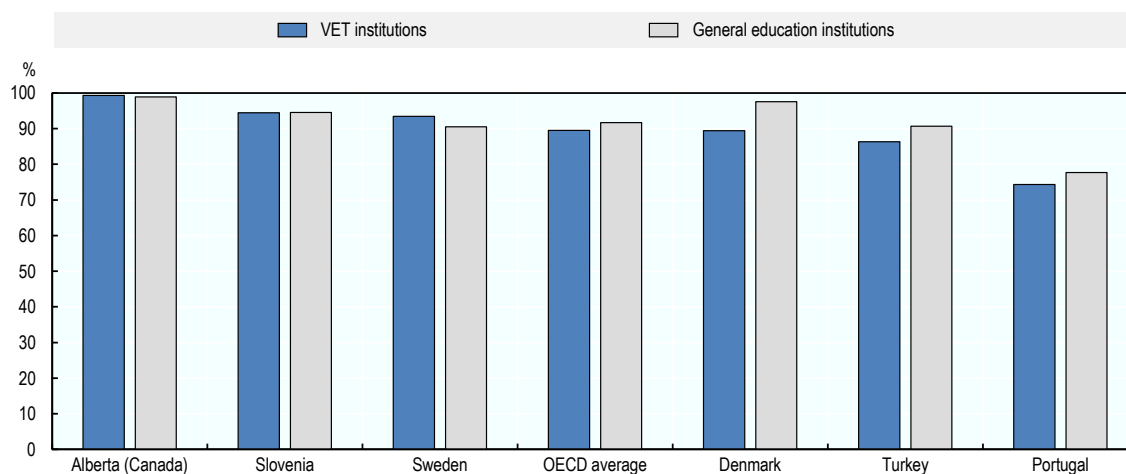
### ***VET leaders have not always undergone relevant training before they start in their role***

Traditionally, the career path to becoming an institutional VET leader is very clear, taking candidates from the teaching profession and selecting them into middle management and senior leadership roles. This means that they gradually spend less time on what they are trained for – teaching –, and more time on what they may not be prepared for – leadership (Bush, 2018<sup>[15]</sup>).

Analysis of data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) shows that VET principals commonly have a teaching background, as shown by the fact that they have received teacher training. Figure 5.2 shows that in Alberta (Canada), Slovenia and Sweden, more than 90% of principals in upper secondary VET institutions are trained as teachers, although in Portugal, this is the case for only around three quarters of principals. In England too, the predominant progression route into the role of FE institution leaders appears to be via teaching and middle-management leadership roles in FE. Around two thirds of FE leaders have a background in education and training (Savours and Keohane, 2019<sup>[36]</sup>).

**Figure 5.2. Many VET leaders have received teacher training**

Percentage of upper secondary principals who have received teacher training, by type of institution



Note: VET leaders are those who reported in TALIS that they work as principals in education institutions with vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 3). The reported average corresponds to the unweighted average for the six OECD countries/regions.

Source: Elaboration based on OECD (2019<sup>[37]</sup>), TALIS 2018 database, <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm>.

However, as mentioned above, VET institutions can be very sophisticated business operations which leaders need a complex set of skills to run, including competence in business and financial management. Therefore, leaders need to not just be teaching and learning specialists but also have a broad range of entrepreneurial and commercial skills. Some studies signal an emerging divergence between the teaching background of many VET leaders and the commercial aspects of the emerging leadership role (see Savours and Keohane (2019<sup>[36]</sup>) for an English example).

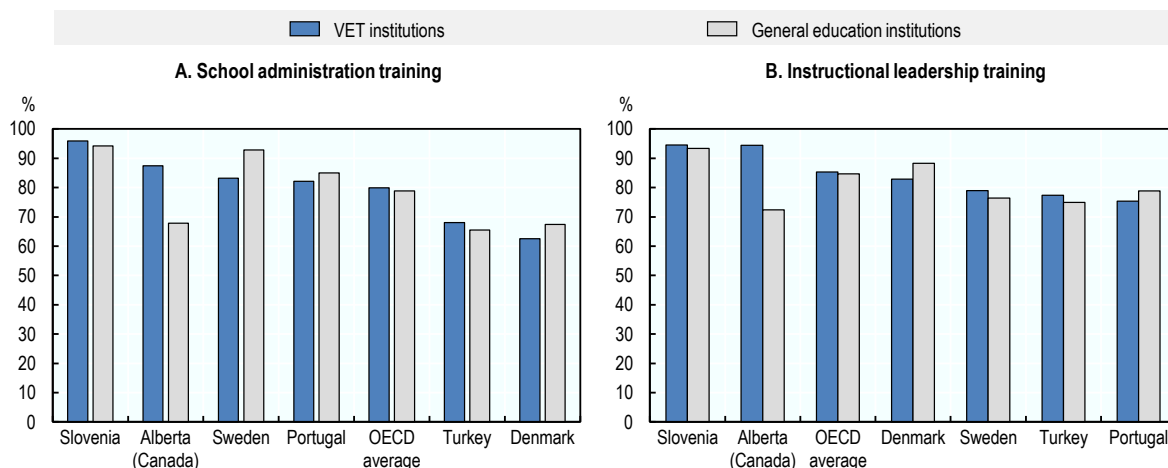
VET leaders often come into their roles with limited preparation. TALIS asks leaders of upper-secondary education institutions if they had received different types of training in order to take up their role. The results, which allow those leading VET institutions to be compared to those in general education, highlight some interesting differences between countries or regions and between types of institutions. In Denmark, for example, almost 40% of leaders in upper secondary VET institutions reported they had not participated in school administration training, compared to less than 5% in Slovenia. There is no clear pattern with regards to differences between VET and general institutions: in Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden principals in VET institutions are less likely than those in general education institutions to have participated in dedicated training programmes, whether at the start of their career or while in service, while the opposite holds in Alberta (Canada), Slovenia and Turkey (Figure 5.3, Panel A).

Similar patterns can be observed for pedagogical leadership training, although this type of training is more common in most countries. TALIS data show that 15% of VET leaders on average did not participate in instructional leadership training across the countries with available data (Figure 5.3, Panel B). This type of

training is common for VET leaders in Alberta (Canada) and Slovenia, where only around 5% of VET leaders report not having received such training. Moreover, VET leaders in Alberta (Canada) are much more likely to have participated in instructional leadership training than leader of general education institutions.

### Figure 5.3. Not all leaders have received formal training related to their position

Percentage of upper secondary principals reporting that they received training (either before, or after taking up a position as principal), by type of institution



Notes: VET leaders are those who reported in TALIS that they work as principals in education institutions with vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 3). The OECD average represents to the unweighted average of the six OECD countries/regions.

Source: OECD (2019<sup>[37]</sup>), TALIS 2018 database, <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm>.

While VET leaders require multiple competences in order to meet the demands discussed above, many of them are not well prepared before taking up their role, and might not receive the support they need throughout their career, such as mentoring and professional development. Ensuring that relevant training programmes are offered, aligned with the expected requirements for VET leaders, and that they are accessible to all prospective VET leaders is crucial. The countries with greater levels of autonomy for education institutions are the ones where leadership training programmes are the most developed, while those where education institutions have traditionally been given little autonomy have fewer programmes on leadership (Huber, 2004<sup>[38]</sup>). The differences between countries in access to preparatory leadership training is also linked to the fact that the formal requirements for being a principal vary between countries. Analysis of the country answers to the OECD questionnaire on VET teachers and leaders confirms that the preparation requirements for leaders of vocational institutions vary widely between countries, with formal requirements ranging from higher education degrees, such as a master's degree, to no specific qualification requirements (although typically teaching experience is required). There are no specific requirements in Japan and Finland at all. In addition, a study by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) looking at preparation for VET leaders found that only in a few cases were they required to have studied in a VET related field (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>).

In Spain, VET leaders are required<sup>6</sup> to have five years of teaching experience and have completed the training course for school leaders. This training course can be offered by the Ministry of Education and VET or by any of the regional education governments. The training has a minimum duration of 120 hours and needs to be updated after eight years. With a modular structure (comprising six different modules), it

is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. In Israel, leaders of VET institutions are required to have at least five years of teaching experience and hold a master's degree. In addition, leaders need to possess leadership skills and some educational providers require them to go through an external professional screening process. While this screening process is thorough, there are no specific training programmes to prepare leaders for their new role.

The lack of access to preparatory training may be more of a concern for VET institutions than for general education institutions, as VET leaders' roles are often more complex. In some cases, there may be a lack of suitable courses for prospective principals. A study on the requirements for institutional leaders in the United States showed that few states are offering coursework specific to VET programmes, and that the availability of such courses is on a continued decline over time. This is linked to that fact that fewer states are imposing specific requirements for training participation, and as a consequence, fewer colleges/universities are offering these training opportunities (Zirkle and Jeffery, 2017<sup>[39]</sup>). Moreover, there is evidence that training programmes in institutional leadership in the United States are falling short in a few key areas: budgeting and finance, and communication with teachers and administrative staff (Inside Higher Ed, 2013<sup>[40]</sup>).

### ***Leaders may not have access to sufficient professional development opportunities***

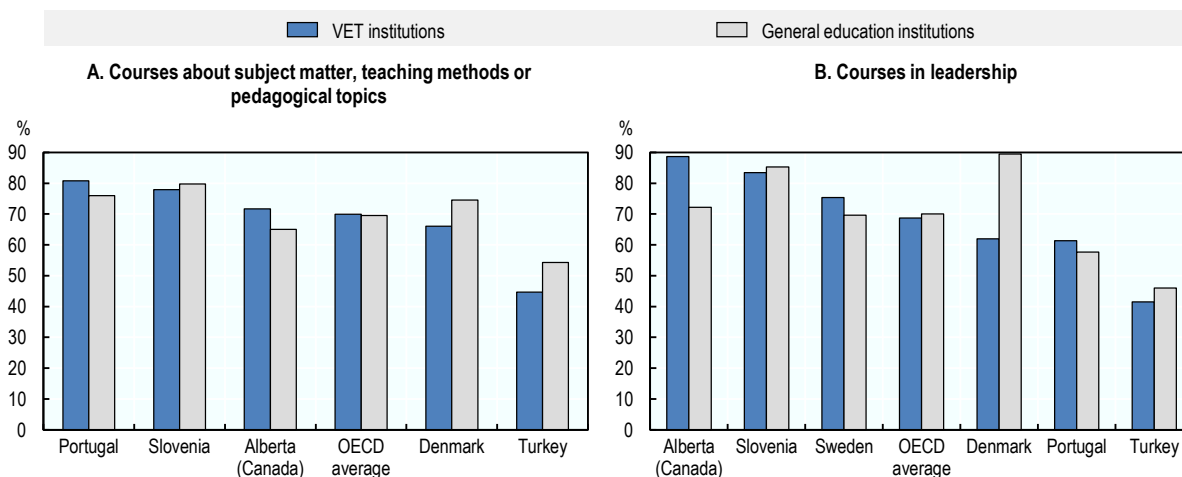
In response to their complex and changing roles, institutional leaders should have access to professional development, especially when they have taken up their role without initial preparation. However, TALIS data show that in the six OECD countries/regions with available data, leaders have limited access to professional development opportunities around developing institutional management and pedagogical leadership (Figure 5.4, Panel A). In Turkey, less than half of VET leaders report having had access to courses about subject matter, teaching matters or pedagogical topics as part of their professional development over the year prior to the survey – a lower share than their counter-part in general education institutions. Similarly, only around 40% of VET leaders report having participated in courses on leadership in Turkey, and around 60% of VET leaders in Portugal and Denmark (Figure 5.4, Panel B). The differences between VET and general education leaders were generally small, except in Denmark where leaders from VET institutions reported much lower access to management training than those from general education institutions, and in Alberta (Canada), where the opposite held.

Aside from the TALIS survey, which only covers VET institutions in a handful of countries, data on this topic are scarce. In England, for example, Greatbatch and Tate (2018<sup>[21]</sup>) note that there are few studies that systematically examine how leadership quality is assessed, improved and rewarded in further education (FE).

According to the TALIS data, VET leaders are more often lack support from their employers to engage in professional development than leaders of general education institutions (Figure 5.5, Panel A). This is the case for more than half of VET leaders in Portugal and Turkey but for less than 20% of those in Slovenia and Sweden. Other common barriers include a lack of incentives and a lack of relevant training opportunities, with 38% and 30% of VET leaders, respectively, reporting these as barriers to professional development across the six OECD countries/regions with available data (Figure 5.5, Panels B and C). These barriers are again highest for VET leaders in Portugal and Turkey, and generally more common than for leaders in general education institutions.

**Figure 5.4. Many VET leaders do not participate in professional development opportunities**

Percentage of upper secondary principals reporting having participated in professional development during the last 12 months, by type of institution

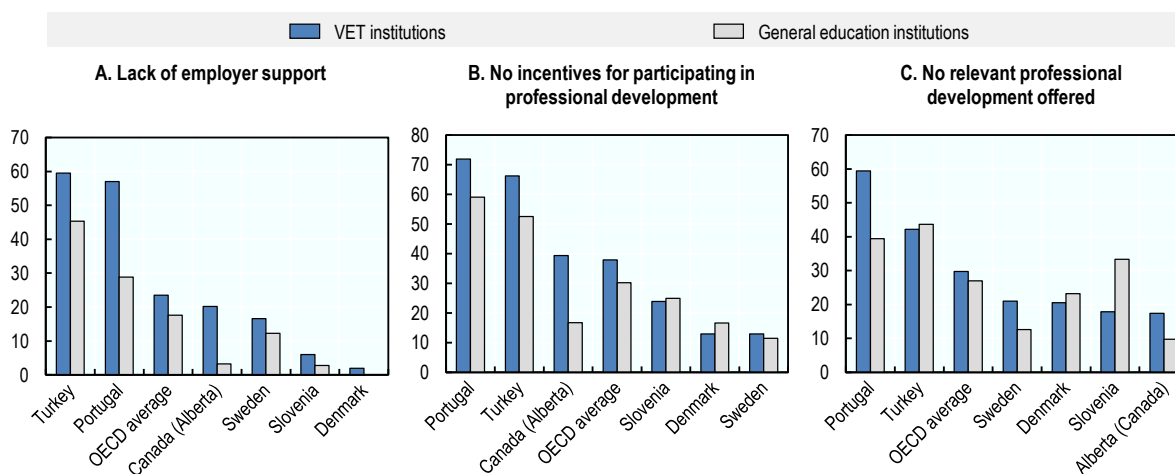


Notes: VET leaders are those who reported in TALIS that they work as principals in education institutions with vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 3). The OECD average corresponds to the unweighted average of the six OECD countries/regions.

Source: OECD (2019<sup>[37]</sup>), TALIS 2018 database, <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm>.

**Figure 5.5. Many leaders report insufficient institutional support to engage in professional development**

Percentage of upper secondary principals declaring a certain barrier to participation in professional development, by type of institution



Notes: VET leaders are those who reported in TALIS that they work as principals in education institutions with vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 3). The reported average corresponds to the unweighted average for the six OECD countries/regions.

Source: OECD (2019<sup>[37]</sup>), TALIS 2018 database, <http://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm>.

## **Equipping VET leaders with the right skills**

*Initial training and professional development for VET leaders is important*

Across education sectors, there is a consensus among practitioners and experts on the importance of training for leaders (Davis et al., 2005<sup>[41]</sup>), even if there are some methodological difficulties in assessing the impact of such programmes for leaders. Most of the empirical evidence for training programmes consists of candidates' self-reported perceptions and experiences (Levine, 2005<sup>[42]</sup>; Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>; Day et al., 2009<sup>[43]</sup>). A Swedish longitudinal study of 35 comprehensive schools measuring the effects of training for school leaders (Blossing and Ekholm, 2008<sup>[44]</sup>), found that it improved their skills, knowledge and dispositions.

The design of a skills development programme for institutional leaders can be understood as involving different elements: initial training, recruitment and selection, induction, mentoring, and professional development. In order to design an effective programme, initial training, recruitment and selection, induction, mentoring and professional development have to be thought of as a continuum (Bush, 2018<sup>[15]</sup>). It is crucial that any initial training programmes on offer are relevant, aligned with the expected requirements for VET leaders, the specific context and further opportunities for professional development, and that they are accessible to all prospective VET leaders.

### **Box 5.2 Leadership preparation as a continuum in Portugal**

A recent reform in Portugal, the National Programme for School Success Promotion (2015-17), aimed at transforming schools into learning organisations, involving all staff and students, parents and the external community. In Portugal, principals are accountable for every dimension of the school's management: administrative, financial and pedagogical. School leadership is understood as an extension of the professional responsibility of a teacher, rather than a separate profession: only teachers can become principals, after going through training in school administration and management. Candidates must also have at least a minimum experience of four years as a principal assistant, president or vice-president of the administrative council of the school, and present a project to the council, which elects the principals. The distribution of leadership was pivotal, through the following steps:

- defining broad guidelines by a task force at central government level;
- training for trainers;
- training for school leaders, including head teachers and others;
- identifying areas for priority action within the framework for the autonomy of each school/cluster of schools;
- design of strategic plans in association with the mission and purposes of each school/cluster of schools;
- implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and redesign of the strategic plans;
- external evaluation.

The programmes trained over 70 000 teachers. A recent evaluation of leadership training found that principals would like more training opportunities in pedagogical and distributed leadership practices.

Source: European Commission (2017<sup>[45]</sup>), *Teachers and School Leaders in Schools as Learning Organisations*, [www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs4-learning-organisations\\_en.pdf](http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs4-learning-organisations_en.pdf); Serrão Cunha (2020<sup>[46]</sup>). Portuguese Principals' Professional Development Needs and Preferred Learning Methods.

Since the mid-1990s, many OECD countries have introduced training and development for basic and general secondary education institution leaders, either as preparation for entry to the post or to further develop the skills of leaders already in place. The courses offered to actual or prospective leaders may vary from short certificate courses to post-graduate or even in some cases doctoral programmes (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>). Box 5.3 describes some characteristics of exemplary programmes for educational institution leadership training.

### Box 5.3. Characteristics of exemplary programmes for training leaders

A study by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute examined eight exemplary initial education and professional development programmes for leaders in the United States. The programmes were chosen because they provided evidence of strong outcomes in preparing leaders and also because, in combination, they represent a variety of approaches with respect to their design, policy context, and the nature of partnerships between universities and local authorities. All of the exemplary initial training programmes share the following characteristics:

- A comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, which emphasise instructional leadership.
- A philosophy and curriculum emphasising instructional leadership and school improvement.
- Active, student-centred instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection. Instructional strategies include problem-based learning; action research; field-based projects; journal writing; and portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty, and the candidates themselves.
- Faculty who are knowledgeable in their subject areas, including both university professors and practitioners experienced in school administration.
- Social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalised mentoring and advice from expert principals.
- Vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential.
- Well-designed and supervised administrative internships that allow candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time under the tutelage of expert veterans.

Source: Darling-Hammond, L. et al. (2007<sup>[47]</sup>), *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs*, <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/preparing-school-leaders.aspx>.

For all types of training programmes, the content has to be strongly connected to the characteristics of the institutions and their environment (Levine, 2005<sup>[42]</sup>; Kelly and Hess, 2007<sup>[48]</sup>). In Denmark, there are no specific general requirements for institutional leaders in VET, but the boards of VET institutions decide what specific standards they want for the selection of leaders. There are some optional courses available, such as a six-month applied course for management staff in VET, specifically designed to strengthen their skills and knowledge in three aspects: management, education and industry 4.0, and learning data (Center for IT Undervisningen, 2020<sup>[49]</sup>).

The inclusion of practical field experience in initial training allows trainees to establish linkages between the theoretical content learned during the course, and the practical problems they will face in their education institutions. It gives prospective leaders the opportunity to apply the curriculum's content in real settings (Davis et al., 2005<sup>[41]</sup>; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007<sup>[47]</sup>).

Online distance education is becoming an increasingly popular way to provide access to training programmes and courses to leaders and future leaders, including in remote rural areas. In

the United States, such programmes may be the only viable means of attaining institutional leader certification for many teachers working in such areas (Perrone et al., 2020<sup>[50]</sup>).

*Professional development for VET leaders can be linked to different training and practice elements*

Once they have begun their leadership role, leaders need to have access to professional development opportunities to keep their skills up to date. Research on professional development for VET leaders shows that it works better when it is local, generated from within the institution and its immediate network. The emphasis on flexibility and diversity is noteworthy (European Commission, 2017<sup>[45]</sup>). Access to professional development opportunities could arise, linked to the appraisal process, but also based on voluntary approaches, focusing on the areas in which leaders feel less prepared. A survey across 15 European countries showed that professional development is compulsory for VET leaders in only about half of the countries surveyed (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>). This resonates with the findings from TALIS (presented above) that show that many VET leaders did not participate in professional development opportunities in the year prior to the survey.

Professional development may be closely linked to career progression, in order to motivate participants to attend. It is considered a success factor for the implementation of VET reforms in Europe, ensuring the relevance of VET provision for the labour market (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>). In England, the Strategic Leadership Programme funded by the Department for Education provides FE college leaders with a deeper understanding of their role as change agents. The programme supports them in the critical part they have to play in delivering the ambitious plans for the FE sector, raising its capability and prestige. The programme applies thinking about leadership in the context of themselves as individuals, their organisation and the sector as a whole. Six cohorts of over 147 leaders have gone through the programme since it was launched in 2017 (Education and Training Foundation, 2020<sup>[51]</sup>) (see Box 5.2 for an example from Portugal).

Professional development for VET leaders needs to cover all aspects of the leadership role. For example, the Danish Evaluation Institute found in a 2014 survey of VET leaders (EVA, 2014<sup>[52]</sup>) that because the focus of their professional development was on financial management, leaders felt less prepared for pedagogical leadership. Teachers also indicated that they would like to receive more support from leaders in that area. This area of expertise is seen as becoming increasingly important, as a result of increased heterogeneity among students, posing significant challenges to teaching. One increasingly important area for professional development is to ensure that VET leaders are aware of innovative pedagogical approaches and new technological developments in the industry for different occupations (UNESCO, 2017<sup>[12]</sup>) as discussed in Chapter 4. Being up to speed with innovative technologies can also help leaders administer human and financial resources to foster teaching quality and innovation. In England, for example, the Education Training Foundation offers an online training programme in digital technology for leaders and teachers in the FE sector to maximise learning outcomes (Education Training Foundation, 2018<sup>[53]</sup>).

## The attractiveness of leadership

### **Leaders' salaries are often relatively generous**

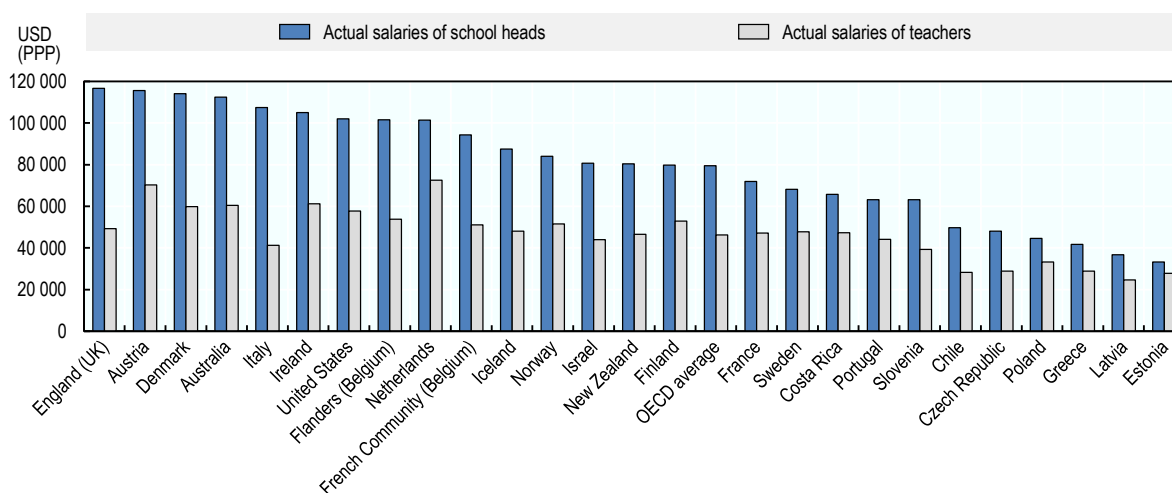
The salaries of teachers and leaders represent the largest single cost in formal education. These salaries have a direct impact on the attractiveness of becoming both a teacher and a leader (see Chapter 2).

Leaders of secondary and post-secondary education and training institutions enjoy a higher salary than teachers. Consequently a leadership role is considered an attractive position. Data from OECD Education at a Glance show that the actual salaries of education institution leaders are higher than those of teachers,

and the premium increases with the level of education taught. On average across OECD countries and economies, leaders' actual salaries in 2019 were 60% higher than those of teachers at upper secondary level (Figure 5.6), but the gap varies widely between countries. High salaries for leadership positions provide an incentive for teachers to apply for these roles. The career prospects of institutional leaders and their relative salaries are a signal of the career progression available to teachers and the compensation they can expect in the longer term (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>). Comparative data distinguishing between VET and other institutions are not readily available.

**Figure 5.6. Leaders typically earn more than teachers in upper secondary education**

Annual average salaries in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) for private consumption



Note: Year of reference differs from 2019 for Chile, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. Comparative data distinguishing VET institutions are not available.

Source: OECD (2020<sup>[5]</sup>), *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/69096873-en>.

To assess the overall attractiveness of educational institution leaders' salaries, it is interesting to look at their salary relative to the earning of other similarly educated professionals. The data show that on average in OECD countries education, leaders of educational institutions typically earn more than similarly educated workers, which is generally not the case for teachers. The difference between leaders and similarly educated workers in other occupations tends to increase with the level of education taught at the leader's institution. Among the 18 OECD countries and economies with available data, only upper-secondary education institution leaders in the United States have actual salaries that are at least 5% lower than the earnings of similarly educated workers on average (no information is collected regarding post-secondary institutions, nor specifically on vocational institutions). In contrast, leaders' salaries are at least 40% higher than similarly educated workers in England (United Kingdom), the Flemish Community of Belgium and New Zealand (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>).

While salaries can be important in attracting qualified leaders to the profession, higher salaries are not always associated with better performance. An empirical study of leaders in FE colleges in England found no significant correlations between principals' characteristics, including salaries, and their effectiveness (based on students' educational outcomes) (Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Effenterre, 2017<sup>[11]</sup>). This evidence suggests that leaders' performance might be driven by other characteristics that are not observable and are most likely to be related to their skills and other quality aspects. It also highlights that: (1) given the impact of individual leaders' on student performance, it is important to invest time and

resources in finding ways to improve the effectiveness of leadership amongst FE principals; and (2) it is essential to attract and retain high quality principals to FE colleges. Whereas the recruitment of a new high-performing teacher can affect a few classes, the recruitment (or the training) of a high-performing principal directly impacts thousands of students in a college (Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Effenterre, 2017<sup>[11]</sup>).

### ***Difficult working conditions contribute to high attrition rates***

Different studies show that newly appointed leaders in VET institutions face many challenges. For example, Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012<sup>[54]</sup>), found that the most commonly mentioned challenges for novice leaders were workload and task management, conflicts with teachers and students, and curriculum and instruction issues. In a Turkish study (Sincar, 2013<sup>[55]</sup>), beginner principals identified bureaucracy, insufficient resources, resistance to innovation and lack of professional development as major challenges. Looking at high school leaders in the United States, Beam, Claxton and Smith (2016<sup>[56]</sup>) found that novice leaders (during their first three years) expressed difficulties in managing interactions with school boards, other teachers, and parents, and gaining a sense of credibility.

Difficult working conditions in the early years could lead to high attrition among education institution leaders which in turn could contribute to shortages of VET leaders. In England, one-third of leaders in FE colleges (33%) said they were likely to leave FE in the next 12 months (DfE, 2018<sup>[57]</sup>) but this falls to just one-quarter among senior leaders (Savours and Keohane, 2019<sup>[36]</sup>). This comes on top of other factors that can create shortages, such as an ageing workforce. A report from the United States found that more than 40% of current community college presidents would retire within the next five years (Inside Higher Ed, 2013<sup>[40]</sup>). In FE colleges in England, one-third of FE college principals are aged 55 and over (Savours and Keohane, 2019<sup>[36]</sup>).

Evidence shows that the turnover rate for leaders in VET institutions is higher than in general education institutions. In the United States, a study in California highlighted that community college presidential tenures averaged 3.5 years compared to 7 years for leaders of comparable general education institutions. The reasons mentioned for this higher turnover include a harsh working environment, declining finances and the increased complexity of managing and leading these institutions. Intensifying pressures due to increasing accountability measures combined with decreases in funding make leading these institutions and maintaining their missions both challenging and rewarding (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017<sup>[7]</sup>). VET leaders in Lithuania mentioned similar reasons for leaving the profession: the number of “restrictive” regulations, instructions and orders that stifle the initiative of leaders (Cedefop, 2011<sup>[6]</sup>).

Attrition rates also depend on the specific context of the institution. Evidence from the United States shows that leaders of rural education institutions have a higher turnover rate than those of non-rural ones (Fuller, Pendola and Young, 2018<sup>[58]</sup>), and that rural education institutions experience difficulties recruiting and retaining new principals (Browne-Ferrigno and Maynard, 2018<sup>[59]</sup>).

Research shows that it is important to reduce attrition rates, as committed and effective leaders who remain in their education institutions are associated with improved institution-wide student achievement. Greater leader turnover is associated with lower gains in student achievement. Leader turnover has a more significantly negative effect in high-poverty, low-achieving education institutions – the very institutions in which students most rely on their education for future success. The negative effect of high turnover in leaders suggests that they need time to make meaningful improvements in their institutions (OECD, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>). One study on VET institutions found that it takes, on average, five years after a new leader for the institution’s performance to rebound to the pre-turnover level (Espinoza and Cardichon, 2017<sup>[20]</sup>).

## ***Increasing the attractiveness of VET leadership roles and positions***

As discussed above, managing and leading VET institutions is challenging and requires a complex set of skills for their leaders. Different policy levers can be used to ensure that VET leadership is an attractive profession with high-quality working conditions.

### *Middle management positions help share the burden of VET leadership*

In order to make the VET leader role less complex and demanding, countries promote the role of middle leaders, especially within large institutions such as FE colleges in England (Greatbatch and Tate, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>) or community colleges in the United States. The literature on distributed leadership argues that formal leaders cannot single-handedly lead others when demands are high, because complex tasks involve many challenges that require input from different perspectives and areas of expertise (Bouwman et al., 2017<sup>[10]</sup>) VET institutions can promote distributed leadership in different ways. Leaders can introduce new members with specific expertise and resources in teams to fulfil specific leadership tasks. Formal leaders can also increase the responsibilities of teachers as they demonstrate their ability to lead, and show willingness to take on more responsibilities (Bouwman et al., 2017<sup>[10]</sup>). Distributed leadership can help to improve the communication between teachers, team leaders and middle managers as shown in a study on VET institutions in the Netherlands (Bouwman et al., 2017<sup>[10]</sup>). Middle management positions also provide teachers with opportunities for career progression into leadership roles, which can contribute to making the teaching profession more attractive for potential teachers (as discussed in Chapter 2). In Norway, a new function, “teacher specialist” was created – for teachers who have in-depth knowledge about a discipline or subject area and who contribute to the collective professional development at a school (see Box 5.4). In England, several further education institutions have introduced the status of “advanced practitioner”, which is associated with career progression and some level of salary increase (Tyler et al., 2017<sup>[60]</sup>).

These positions are typically used as conveyor belts to allow teachers to enter leadership roles, and consequently pursue other training opportunities to become VET leaders. In the United States, Maryland launched the Promising Principal’s Academy in 2014 to widen access to additional candidates and expand support for assistant principals who are often overlooked for professional development. Superintendents from every school district nominate two promising assistant principals to the programme, who are then prepared to take over as principals. The Academy, reflecting evidence-based practices around effective programme structure, makes use of cohorts and networks to support assistant principal learning (Eddy and Garza Mitchell, 2017<sup>[7]</sup>).

### **Box 5.4. Senior teaching positions**

#### **Norway: Teacher specialists, a new professional career path for teachers**

In 2015, Norway piloted a new professional career path for teachers which aims to offer them new challenges and professional development. It provides teachers with opportunities for academic development to increase their motivation for teaching and help strengthen the professional community. Teacher specialists’ main function is teaching, but they can carry out other tasks related to their field of specialisation depending on their school’s needs and decisions and local initiatives, such as co-operating with universities and university colleges in development projects. Initially, the initiative was aimed at Norwegian language and mathematics teachers. Since 2019, the scheme has been expanded to include teachers in VET. The schools’ owners (counties or municipalities) cover one third of the costs (prior to that, half of the costs were covered). They are responsible for developing suitable plans for the assignments of teacher specialists and clarifying their roles and responsibilities. In 2020/21 there are 102 teacher specialists in VET.

There is also a specific continuing education programme to qualify as a teacher specialist. The courses last two years and give 60 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits at master's level. The school owners receive grants to provide substitute teachers, so that teachers can attend these specialist courses.

#### **Sweden: Lead teachers and senior subject teachers**

In Sweden, first/lead teacher “lektor” or “senior subject teacher” (licentiate or doctorate degree) can be obtained after at least four years of service, for those demonstrating excellent quality of teaching. Teachers receive a pay raise. It is the institution that appoints the position.

Source: Cedefop (2019<sup>[61]</sup>), Norway: Teacher specialist: A new career path for teachers, <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/norway-teacher-specialist-new-career-path-teachers>, Sweden's response to the OECD questionnaire.

### *VET leaders need to be supported in their roles, especially at the start of their careers*

Evidence on leader preparation programmes in general education shows that efforts should concentrate on supporting institutional leaders early in their careers, and an induction period with intensive coaching for newly appointed leaders should be implemented (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008<sup>[13]</sup>). Induction, and leadership coaching, allows novice leaders to ask questions, share concerns, or seek advice with an experienced practitioner, in a confidential and trusting relationship (Lochmiller, 2013<sup>[62]</sup>). Effective induction programme need to take into account the nature of the governance process and institutions. If induction is provided by a local administrator, often the leader's immediate superior within a hierarchy, it is likely to be confined to administrative procedures and reporting processes. A more effective approach is for induction to be provided by a professional mentor, for example an experienced and successful institution leader (Bush, 2018<sup>[15]</sup>).

Given the difficulties that leaders might face in their role, support mechanisms that allow for peer-learning, including mentoring, can be valuable. In Chile, the Education Quality Agency has a mentoring programme for management teams, which usually take place through institution visits, but done remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Agency conducts three video calls with participants. The first is to identify the main needs in areas such as learning assessment, socio-emotional support, or adapting pedagogical resources. Based on this, the second call covers specific tools and guidance. Finally, the third call is used to share experiences and analyse results. After the first two months of the implementation of the remote-version of the programme, the Education Quality Agency had conducted more than 700 distance mentoring sessions in establishments across the country (Education Quality Agency of Chile (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación), 2020<sup>[63]</sup>). In England, the Department for Education launched the National Leaders of Further Education programme in 2017, to recruit a team of high-performing leaders, with a track record of delivering improvement both in their own colleges and in working with others, to provide specialist support to struggling FE colleges (based on their most recent official inspection report). Leaders in these institutions are mentored and supported to develop their skills by leaders recruited by the programme. More recently, in 2020, the Department also launched the College Collaboration Fund, which supports colleges to work together to share their knowledge, expertise and best practice, with an approach based on peer-to-peer support – where stronger colleges help weaker ones improve (European Commission, 2020<sup>[64]</sup>).

## **Conclusion and policy recommendations**

Leaders of VET institutions have a multidimensional role and juggle a wide range of responsibilities. Depending on their country's context, they determine the institution's core activities and ensure the retention and progression of students. They need to have a strong understanding of the local labour market and work closely with relevant stakeholders, including education boards, relevant ministries and agencies, other education institutions, and social partners. VET leaders also often have to manage a greater diversity

of students and training programmes than in general education, and have to recruit and support teachers who come from heterogeneous backgrounds. Many countries struggle with a lack of clarity about VET leaders' core tasks and responsibilities, which can make it hard to recruit and train effective leaders. Clear definitions of VET leadership responsibilities can constitute a key point of reference for the selection and initial education and professional development of prospective leaders, and for their appraisal.

Traditionally, the career path to becoming a VET leader is very clear, taking candidates from the teaching profession and selecting them into middle management and senior leadership roles. Many countries have screening processes to select teachers, but no specific education or training programmes to prepare them for their new post of leaders. TALIS data show that VET leaders sometimes come into their roles with limited preparation in leadership, especially in entrepreneurial and commercial skills. Providing relevant training opportunities to VET leaders is therefore of crucial importance, and the content of training has to be tightly linked with the context of the VET institution.

The VET leadership role is generally considered an attractive position, but newly appointed leaders often face challenges, including heavy workload and difficult interactions with teachers and other stakeholders. Difficult working conditions in the first years may lead to high attrition among leaders, which could contribute to shortages. In order to make the VET leadership role more manageable, countries can promote middle management roles, especially within large institutions, and provide induction, and leadership coaching, for novice leaders.

## Policy pointers for strengthening leadership in VET

### 4.1. Clarifying the roles and tasks of leaders

- **Clarifying the roles and tasks of VET leaders**, to act as a key point of reference for those considering a leadership role, and for those organising their selection and training.
- **Opening pathways into VET leadership for those outside the teaching profession**, who might bring in relevant organisational and management skills even if they do not have a pedagogical background. Clarity about the roles and responsibilities of VET leaders can help attract more external candidates.

### 4.2. Developing VET leaders' skills

- **Ensuring that relevant initial training programmes are available, and that the content of these programmes is aligned with the expected requirements for VET leaders.** Work-based learning in initial training can help future VET leaders establish linkages between the theoretical content learned in their courses and the practical problems they will be faced with in educational institutions.
- **Providing professional development opportunities that allow VET leaders to further develop their skills and knowledge needed for the different aspects of the leadership role.** Such training opportunities need to be part of a coherent skills development strategy for VET leaders.

### 4.3. Increasing the attractiveness of VET leadership roles

- **Creating middle-management positions to make the leadership roles more manageable** while at the same time offering career progression opportunities for teachers and other staff in VET institutions.
- **Supporting VET leaders in handling the many responsibilities in the leadership role, especially at the start of their career.** This can be done by providing induction, mentoring and peer-learning opportunities.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Evidence shows that motivated school leaders are more passionate about their work and highly committed emotionally, and their high energy levels are likely to be motivational to others (Leithwood et al., 2006<sub>[66]</sub>; Day et al., 2009<sub>[43]</sub>). Research from Finland showed that teacher enthusiasm has an influence on the quality of teaching as well as students' performance and motivation, and that in VET institutions, leaders have an impact on VET teachers' enthusiasm (Wenström, Uusiautti and Määttä, 2019<sub>[65]</sub>).

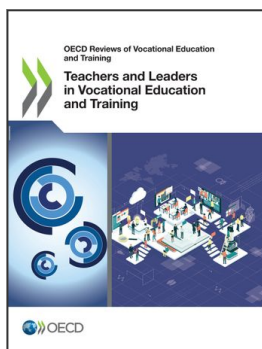
<sup>2</sup> A study of school leaders in Estonia, looking at the link between teachers' attitudes and national examination results found that prioritising the wellbeing of both students and teachers, rather than focusing on academic performance, had a positive effect on national examination results (Aidla and Vadi, 2008<sub>[26]</sub>).

<sup>3</sup> Ruiz-Valenzuela, Terrier and Van Effenterre (2017<sub>[1]</sub>) used a panel dataset of principals in FE institutions in England over the period 2003-15 to look at whether principals make a difference to students' educational performance. The findings are that principals do matter for the educational performance of their students: switching from a principal who is in the bottom 25th percentile to one who is in the top 25th percentile significantly increases students' probability of achieving a higher-level qualification. But there was no correlation between principals' age, gender, teacher qualification status or and salary and educational outcomes, which means that the characteristics which explain such differences are not observable in the study.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008<sub>[18]</sub>) examined the findings from 27 studies into the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes. They highlight very strong effects on student performance for leadership responsibilities involving promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and more moderate effects for the dimensions concerning school management (goal setting and planning and co-ordinating).

<sup>5</sup> The study looked at 447 VET teachers working in 66 teams.

<sup>6</sup> Another requirement is drafting a management project including objectives, guidelines and assessment.



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