

More perceptions: opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe

More perceptions: opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe

Please cite this publication as:

Cedefop (2021). *More perceptions: opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe. Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 119.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/55767>

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg:
Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

© Cedefop, 2021. Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes made are indicated. For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not owned by Cedefop, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

PRINT

ISBN: 978-92-896-3255-3

ISSN: 1608-7089

doi:10.2801/30182

TI-RF-21-001-EN-C

PDF

ISBN: 978-92-896-3256-0

ISSN: 2363-216X

doi:10.2801/55767

TI-RF-21-001-EN-N

The **European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training** (Cedefop) is the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training, skills and qualifications. We provide information, research, analyses and evidence on vocational education and training, skills and qualifications for policy-making in the EU Member States.

Cedefop was originally established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75. This decision was repealed in 2019 by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 establishing Cedefop as a Union Agency with a renewed mandate.

Europe 123, Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE
Postal address: Cedefop service post, 57001 Thermi, GREECE
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020
Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu
www.cedefop.europa.eu

Jürgen Siebel, *Executive Director*
Barbara Dorn, *Chair of the Management Board*

Foreword

In this second volume on the findings of its second opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET), Cedefop has analysed the views of more than 40,000 people aged over 25 in the European Union, Iceland and Norway. The aim is to see how different circumstances, such as age, level of education and occupation, influence views of adult learning and CVET.

The findings are important. The findings of both the first volume, which considered adults' perceptions in each Member State and across the European Union, and those in this second volume reflect the concern that adults do not participate in adult learning and CVET because they are not attractive learning options.

The survey clearly shows that, despite some differences of emphasis, adults individually, nationally and across the EU, irrespective of age, working or not, high- or low-skilled, strongly support and believe in the importance and benefits of adult learning and CVET.

The findings in this second volume highlight that personal characteristics and combinations of circumstances, which are unique to individuals, determine the types of labour market transitions that adults need to manage. This includes both transitions in work (new job, new tasks, promotion) and to work (from unemployment, inactivity or full-time education). In turn, personal circumstances and types of labour market transitions influence adults' decisions to participate, or not, in learning and CVET.

The implications for European vocational education and training (VET) policy are significant. VET's role is to equip adults with the skills to manage their labour market transitions; to enable them to shape their own futures and, in so doing, ensure Europe's successful transition to an equitable green and digital economy and society.

The unique characteristics and transitions suggest that VET policy should become less focused on groups, often affected by low skills and high unemployment, and instead concentrate on the needs of individuals who may require combinations of measures that respond to combinations of circumstances. Further examination of the opinions of different groups

in the survey could help target VET policy more effectively. With a more learner-centric approach delivered through closer links between initial and continuing VET, VET can serve both excellence and equality.

Jürgen Siebel
Executive Director

Antonio Ranieri
*Head of department for learning
and employability*

Acknowledgements

This publication was produced by Cedefop, Department for learning and employability, under the supervision of Antonio Ranieri. Daniel Scheuregger, in collaboration with Steve Bainbridge, Lidia Salvatore and Ernesto Villalba, was responsible for the publication and research conducted under the survey project.

The opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe was carried out by Kantar Public under Cedefop contract AO/DLE/DSCHEUR/OpinionSurveyonAL&CVET/001/18.

Contents

Foreword	4
Executive summary	14
1. About the survey	21
1.1. Policy background	21
1.2. Methodology	23
1.3. Report overview	23
2. More perceptions: importance	25
2.1. Value	26
2.2. Why adults learn	34
2.2.1. Changing needs: job-related skills	43
3. More perceptions: benefits	50
3.1. Career progression and reducing unemployment	50
3.1.1. Work-related training and career progression	61
3.2. Personal development and educational attainment	63
3.2.1. Personal development	63
3.2.2. Further educational attainment	66
3.3. Quality	77
4. More perceptions: access	80
4.1. Opportunities, information and guidance	81
4.2. Support	96
4.3. Measures to encourage participation	100
4.4. Encouraging participation in work-related learning and training	104

5. More perceptions: participation and non-participation	123
5.1. Importance	124
5.2. Benefits	126
5.2.1. Employment-related benefits	126
5.2.2. Personal development	128
5.3. Quality	128
5.4. Access	130
5.5. Participation in work-related learning and training	136
6. More perceptions: image	141
6.1. Importance	141
6.1.1. Sex, age and migration background	141
6.1.2. Education and employment	142
6.2. Benefits	143
6.2.1. Employment-related benefits	143
6.2.2. Personal development	145
6.2.3. Further educational attainment	145
6.2.4. Quality	146
6.3. Access	147
6.3.1. Opportunities, information and guidance	147
6.3.2. Support	148
6.3.3. Reasons for non-participation	149
6.3.4. Encouraging participation in work-related learning and training	149
6.3.5. Opinions of those who participated and those who did not	150
6.4. Image	151
6.4.1. A positive image	151
6.4.2. Image and participation: circumstances not categories	151
Acronyms	154
References	155
Annex	
1. Methodology	157

Figures

1. Importance: reasons for taking part in adult learning and CVET, % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	35
2. Access: guidance about learning; overall % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	92
3. Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	100
4. Access: measures to encourage participation in training; overall % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	105

Tables

1. Importance: learning throughout life is important; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	26
2. Importance: learning throughout life is important; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	27
3. Importance of learning in 10 years: sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	29
4. Importance of learning in 10 years: education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	30
5. Importance: governments should prioritise investment in adult learning and CVET; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	32
6. Importance: governments should prioritise investment in adult learning and CVET; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	33
7. Importance: reasons for taking part in organised training; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	37
8. Importance: reasons for taking part in organised training; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	38
9. Importance: reasons for taking part in informal training; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	41
10. Importance: reasons for taking part in informal training; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	42
11. Importance: job requirements – keeping skills up to date; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	44

12. Importance: job requirements – keeping skills up to date; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	45
13. Importance: lack of technical skills; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	46
14. Importance: lack of technical skills; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	47
15. Importance: lack of general skills; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	48
16. Importance: lack of general skills; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	49
17. Benefits: important to progress a career; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	51
18. Benefits: important to progress a career; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	52
19. Benefits: important to have a better income; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	54
20. Benefits: important to have a better income; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	54
21. Benefits: important when looking for a new job; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	56
22. Benefits: important when looking for a new job; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	57
23. Benefits: important to reduce unemployment; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	59
24. Benefits: important to reduce unemployment; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	59
25. Benefits: organised work-related training is important to develop skills for any job; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	61
26. Benefits: organised work-related training is important to develop skills for any job; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	62
27. Benefits: important for personal development; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	64
28. Benefits: important for personal development; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	65
29. Benefits: important as the education at school or university; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	67

30. Benefits: important for personal development; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	68
31. Benefits: a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	70
32. Benefits: a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	70
33. Benefits: primarily for adults without a degree; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	72
34. Benefits: primarily for adults without a degree; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	73
35. Benefits: can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	75
36. Benefits: can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	76
37. Benefits: perception of quality of learning; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	78
38. Benefits: perception of quality of learning; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	78
39. Access: available opportunities; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	82
40. Access: available opportunities; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	82
41. Access: looked for information in the past 12 months; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	84
42. Access: looked for information in the past 12 months; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	85
43. Access: ease of finding information; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	87
44. Access: ease of finding information; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	88
45. Access: well informed about organised work-related activities; sex, age, migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	90
46. Access: well informed about organised work-related activities; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	90
47. Access: guidance about learning; sex, age, migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	93

48. Access: guidance about learning; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	95
49. Access: support for participation; age, sex and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	97
50. Access: support for participation; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	98
51. Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	101
52. Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	102
53. Access: need for more information and guidance; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	106
54. Access: need for more information and guidance; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	106
55. Access: improve the quality of training; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	108
56. Access: improve the quality of training; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	109
57. Access: financial support; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	111
58. Access: financial support; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	111
59. Access: flexible working hours; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	113
60. Access: flexible working hours; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	114
61. Access: adapting learning to individual needs; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	116
62. Access: adapting learning to individual needs; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	116
63. Access: support with childcare; age, sex and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	118
64. Access: support with childcare; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	119
65. Access: learning certificates recognised by employers; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	121

66. Access: learning certificates recognised by employers; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	121
67. Importance of learning throughout life, increasing importance and an investment priority; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	124
68. Job requirements: keeping skills up to date, lack of technical and general skills; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	125
69. Benefits: employment related benefits; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	127
70. Important for personal development; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	128
71. Educational benefits; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	129
72. Perceptions of quality; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	130
73. Opportunities and information; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	130
74. Guidance about learning; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	132
75. Support for participation; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	133
76. Reasons for non-participation (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	134
77. Measures to encourage participation; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	134
78. Participation in adult learning; comparison of EU targets with findings of 2016 adult education survey and Cedefop survey	137
79. Comparison of participation in organised work-related learning with need to keep skills up to date and technical and general skills deficits; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	138
80. Comparison of participation in organised work-related learning with need to keep skills up to date and technical and general skills deficits; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)	139
81. Dates and number of interviews per country	158

Executive summary

Adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) are essential aspects of lifelong learning. They help adults acquire the knowledge, skills and competences they need to develop and manage changing jobs and lives; in the current context they also support the Covid-19 recovery and Europe's equitable transition to a green and digital economy and society.

Demographic trends are changing Europe's populations and labour force, while technological change is increasing pressure on adults to learn and adapt to changing job content and working conditions. For policy to be effective, it is important to understand:

- (a) how adults perceive adult learning and CVET;
- (b) how important they regard them to be;
- (c) the benefits they expect to obtain;
- (d) the factors that encourage or discourage adults to participate or not.

This all matters, as the European Union has consistently underperformed in reaching targets for participation in adult learning and CVET agreed by the European Commission, Member States and social partners. Only a handful of Member States met the EU's target, set in 2010, of 15% of adults participating in lifelong learning by 2020. The EU average in 2019 was 11.1% ⁽¹⁾, with big differences between countries.

About the survey

To find out how people perceive adult learning and CVET, Cedefop's second opinion survey comprised 40,466 telephone interviews (landline and mobile)

(¹) The indicator measures the share of people aged 25 to 64 who stated that they had received formal or non-formal education and training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator) and is based on the EU labour force survey (see Annex on data sources). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190517-1>

of adults, aged 25 and over, who live in the European Union, Iceland and Norway. The interviews were carried out between May and July 2019.

The survey defines adult learning and CVET as any learning activities undertaken by adults (whether employed or not) with the intention of improving knowledge or skills. The image is of adult learning and CVET, as measured in this report, consists of their perceived value in producing desired outcomes for individuals (such as personal, skill and career development and personal financial situation), society and the economy (such as lower unemployment) and benefits for countries (such as social cohesion). The questionnaire invited views in relation to adult learning and CVET delivering these outcomes. Based on these replies, the image of adult learning and CVET was constructed.

The survey findings are presented in two volumes. The first volume examines perceptions in Member States ⁽²⁾. This second volume provides a unique perspective, analysing the views of the European adult population. It considers the extent to which views on adult learning and CVET are influenced by demographic factors (sex, age and migration background) and socioeconomic criteria (education, economic status and occupation). For insights on migration background, the survey identified adults with both, one and neither parent born abroad.

A positive image

Overall, adult learning and CVET have a strong positive image. Men and women of all ages and education levels, unemployed or employed in all types of occupations, regard adult learning and CVET as important for work and life. Many expect adult learning and CVET to become more important in the future and believe that governments should prioritise investment in them. For adults, learning matters to find a job and to perform in one, irrespective of its skill level. It is also important to note the very positive opinions of adults aged 65 and above, who are the most convinced of the importance of adult learning and CVET; a significant proportion had looked for adult learning and CVET opportunities for themselves. This points to adult learning, CVET and lifelong learning having an important role beyond working life.

⁽²⁾ The term Member States in this publication includes the 28 EU Member States at the time of the survey and Iceland and Norway.

Some opinions of different groups of adults are discussed in the rest of the executive summary.

Sex, age and migration background

Women and men have similar positive views on the importance of adult learning and CVET and their employment-related benefits, and agree that there are many learning opportunities available. More men than women think that adult learning and CVET will be more important in 10 years, but more women think they should be a priority for government investment. Women are more likely to participate in organised adult learning and CVET for personal development, while men are more likely to do so to improve job skills. Although both strongly feel that, to do their job, they need constantly to keep their skills up to date, more men say they lack general skills. Women are more likely not to participate in training because of other commitments and finances. Men are more likely to say they do not need adult learning and CVET.

All age groups believe that adult learning and CVET are important, and are positive about the employment-related and personal benefits they bring. Opinions about their importance strengthen with age, not only in the working population (those aged between 25 and 64), but also among adults aged 65 and above. As people age, motivation to participate in learning shifts from job-related to personal reasons. However, expressions of a lack of technical and general skills are consistent across all age groups in the working population. The view that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities also increases steadily with age, even among those over 65 and no longer in the adult working population, which is positive from a lifelong learning perspective.

Adults with both parents born abroad are more positive about the importance of adult learning and CVET. This may reflect the extent to which adult learning and CVET can help with integration. Those with both parents born abroad are almost twice as likely to agree totally that they lack technical and general skills, but they are also more positive about the availability of adult learning and CVET opportunities and how easy it is to find information about them.

Education and employment

Adults with a high-level education believe more strongly that adult learning and CVET are important throughout life than those with a low-level

education. However, those with a low-level education believe more strongly in the growing importance of adult learning and CVET, and that they should be a priority for government investment. Those with a low-level education are also more positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET, especially in relation to better incomes and when looking for a new job. Adults with a low-level education are more than twice as likely as those with a high-level education to say that they lack technical and general skills to do their jobs. Those with a high level of education are more positive about the availability of adult learning and CVET opportunities, and look more often for such information.

Adult learning and CVET are important to those both inside and outside the labour market. The proportions of retired people who totally agree about the importance of adult learning and CVET are comparable with those in work. Along with unemployed adults looking for a job, retired people believe most strongly that adult learning and CVET should be investment priorities. The motivation for taking part in organised adult learning and CVET reflects economic status. Those in the labour market look to develop job-related skills; those outside focus on personal development.

Except for students, those outside the labour market are more positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET. The unemployed and those looking for a job are more likely than other labour market groups to have looked often for information on adult learning and CVET opportunities in the previous 12 months. The only group that seems to experience problems finding information is students, which probably reflects their different needs and high expectations about the quality of information.

Perceptions of adult learning and CVET by occupation are broadly aligned with education level. Those in more highly skilled occupations, like those with a high level of education, believe more strongly in the importance of adult learning and CVET; however, those in lesser-skilled jobs are more convinced of their importance in the future.

Those in more highly skilled jobs, such as professionals, are more motivated by personal than job-related reasons to participate in adult learning and CVET, even though they have a greater need to keep their skills updated. More than half of adults in less highly skilled jobs, such as service and sales workers, and craft and related trades workers, also totally agree that their jobs require them to keep their skills up to date. Those in lower-skilled jobs (elementary occupations for example) are also more likely to state that they lack technical and general skills.

All occupations are generally positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET. The importance of adult learning and CVET for career progression matters equally to those in elementary occupations as to technicians and associate professionals. Adults least likely to agree totally about the importance of adult learning and CVET to finding a job are at different ends of the skills spectrum; that is, managers and those in elementary occupations. Those in professional occupations are more likely to have looked often for information in the previous 12 months. Adults working in elementary occupations are more likely to give several reasons for not participating in organised training, including training being too expensive, lack of support and not having the right skills or qualifications.

Opinions of those who participated and those who did not

No significant differences are apparent in the opinions about adult learning and CVET of those who had participated in training in the 12 months prior to the survey and those who had not. Those who participated in adult learning and CVET believe more strongly that it is important to learn throughout life. However, those who did not participate are more persuaded of their growing importance and the need for governments to invest in them.

Those who had not participated did not look so often for information about adult learning and CVET; this does not appear to be due to any problems in finding information, or a belief that there are no learning opportunities for them. Further, those who had not participated also had lower levels of support from family and friends and relied a little more on government services. Both those who had participated and those who had not strongly support measures to encourage participation in training, but neither group cites any measure as especially important.

Not image, but circumstance

The survey clearly shows that lack of participation is not because people see adult learning and CVET negatively and unable to help them. However, the survey seems to support concerns that not enough adults take part in learning and CVET. It shows that significant proportions of the adult population, irrespective of sex, age, education level or occupation, totally agree that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date.

These findings underline how the change in job content is rapid and is not limited to certain generations or occupations.

The main reason adults do not participate in adult learning and CVET is because they see no need. This is particularly the case for men and older age groups. Women, younger adults and those in elementary occupations also say they have no need, but are more likely to report difficulties due to other commitments and that training is too expensive. However, of the reasons given, none is unique to, or especially prominent in, any group of adults.

Around half of adults support all the measures to encourage participation in adult learning and CVET. This includes those that make material conditions for learning easier (financial incentives, support with childcare and other caring responsibilities, flexible working hours) and those that improve the process (better information and guidance, better quality of training, certification of learning). There is some indication that those likely to be more financially secure – for example, those in higher-paying occupations or older age groups – give a little more emphasis to process-related measures. However, the survey establishes no clear correlation between measures and groups.

The first volume, which presented the survey results by Member States ⁽³⁾, indicated that insufficient participation in adult learning and CVET is not because they are unattractive learning options, but because of a lack of incentive, despite pressing needs to improve skills.

Incentive to participate depends on the likelihood of the desired benefits of adult learning and CVET being realised. However, realising the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET (promotion, a new job, better pay, higher qualifications) is not, generally, in the hands of participants or governments, but of employers and, in the case of qualifications, authorities that certify learning. Participation in adult learning and CVET is often about potential, not guaranteed, benefits.

Analysis of the survey data by adult population suggests that participation in adult learning and CVET is also contingent on individual circumstances and not on characteristics, such as sex and age.

Vocational education and training (VET) policy has often developed in response to the emerging needs of specific groups often affected by high levels of unemployment. However, it is likely conceivable that an adult of any sex, age and background, in work or looking for a job, or wanting to return to the labour market, could benefit from any combination of support measures

⁽³⁾ Cedefop, 2017.

(such as certified training) that is adapted to their needs, and in which they could participate if they had support with childcare.

Aligned with the European pillar of social rights ⁽⁴⁾, European VET policy, including adult learning and CVET, aims to help people manage labour market transitions. Transitions occur in work (such as new tasks or attitudes), career progression, and changes of location or employer. Labour market transitions also occur to and from work; for example, from learning to work, or from unemployment or inactivity to training.

Adult learning and CVET can be important in helping individuals manage labour market transitions that are particular to them. Encouraging participation in adult learning and CVET suggests developing a more learner-centric, age-neutral approach to VET that, through closer links between initial and continuing VET ⁽⁵⁾, addresses an individual's learning and circumstantial needs.

The question of the image and attractiveness of adult learning and CVET having been settled, further examination of correlations between variables in the survey to explore the opinions of more specific groups of adults, such as young low-educated men, or women in professional occupations, could help target VET policies more effectively.

⁽⁴⁾ European Commission, 2021.

⁽⁵⁾ Cedefop and ETF, 2020.

CHAPTER 1.

About the survey

This report provides a unique perspective by analysing the views of the European adult population. Chapter 1 outlines the policy background that provides the rationale for the survey; it summarises the survey's methodology and reviews the content of Chapters 2-6.

1.1. Policy background

Cedefop's first opinion survey gave insights into comparisons between general education and vocational education and training ⁽⁶⁾.

This second opinion survey specifically explores adults' views about adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). It examines to what extent people think that adult learning and CVET are important for life and work; if they believe that they bring tangible benefits; that there are opportunities for them to learn, and, if there are opportunities, what stops them from taking those opportunities.

Understanding such perceptions is important. Adult learning and CVET are essential aspects of lifelong learning ⁽⁷⁾. They help adults acquire the knowledge, skills and competences they need to manage changing jobs and lives. They also support employment, competitiveness and innovation as people, using their skills, shape their own futures and those of the economy and society. This is recognised in the European Commission's proposed Council recommendation ⁽⁸⁾ which seeks to ensure that vocational education and training (VET) equips the European workforce – young and old – with the skills to support the Covid-19 recovery and Europe's equitable transition to a green and digital economy and society. In its European skills agenda ⁽⁹⁾,

⁽⁶⁾ Cedefop, 2017.

⁽⁷⁾ See Cedefop's work on adult learning and CVET: www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/adult-learning

⁽⁸⁾ [Proposal for a Council recommendation on VET.](#)

⁽⁹⁾ European Commission, 2020.

the European Commission sets out 12 actions to support partnerships for skills, upskilling and reskilling, and empowering lifelong learning.

These actions reflect the growing importance of adult learning and CVET. Demographic trends are changing Europe's populations and labour force, while technological change is increasing pressure on adults to learn, adapt and acquire skills outside formal education and training systems. Recognising this, a decade ago, the Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning of 2011 ⁽¹⁰⁾ highlighted the need to increase significantly adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning to develop work skills and support active citizenship, personal development and fulfilment.

However, the EU has consistently underperformed in reaching targets for participation in adult learning and CVET agreed by the European Commission, Member States and social partners. Only a handful of Member States met the EU's target, set in 2010, of 15% of adults participating in lifelong learning by 2020. The EU average in 2019 was 11.1% ⁽¹¹⁾. The average masks big differences between countries.

To encourage participation, the Council recommendation on upskilling pathways of 2016 ⁽¹²⁾ called on Member States to improve access to quality learning opportunities for low-skilled adults through coordinated approaches, including skills assessment, offers of learning tailored to individual needs, and validation of skills acquired.

For policy to be effective, it is important to understand how adults in the EU see adult learning and CVET; how important people regard them to be; the benefits they expect to obtain, and which factors encourage or discourage them to participate or not. Knowing more about the image people have of adult learning and CVET can help identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of adult learning and CVET and inform strategies to improve them and make them more attractive as learning options.

The survey's findings are presented in two volumes. The first volume examines the image and perceptions of adult learning and CVET in Member

⁽¹⁰⁾ Council of the European Union, 2011.

⁽¹¹⁾ The indicator measures the share of people aged 25 to 64 who stated that they had received formal or non-formal education and training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator) and is based on the EU labour force survey (see Annex 1). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190517-1>

⁽¹²⁾ Council of the European Union, 2016.

States ⁽¹³⁾. This second volume considers the image and perceptions among European adults.

1.2. Methodology

Cedefop's second opinion survey comprised 40 466 telephone interviews (landline and mobile) of adults, aged 25 and over, who live in the EU Member States and Iceland and Norway. Interviews were carried out between May and July 2019. The Annex details the survey methodology, but it is helpful to note some key points about it.

First, the survey defines adult learning and CVET as any learning activities undertaken by adults (whether employed or not) with the intention of improving knowledge or skills.

Second, the concept of image refers to the perceived value of adult learning and CVET in producing desired outcomes for individuals (such as personal, skills and career development, and personal financial situation), society and the economy (such as lower unemployment) and benefits for countries (such as social cohesion).

Third, the core of the questionnaire asked about reasons for participating and not participating, work-organised training activities and the skills adults need for their current jobs. On this basis, the image of adult learning and CVET and its different aspects was constructed.

1.3. Report overview

The report presents and analyses the views of the European adult population about adult learning and CVET.

It examines similarities and differences of opinion within and between Europe's adult population (those aged 25 and over), its adult working population (those aged between 25 and 64) and the labour force (those aged between 25 and 64, either employed or unemployed and looking for work).

It considers the extent to which views on adult learning and CVET are influenced by demographic factors (sex, age and migration background) and socioeconomic criteria (education, economic status and occupation). For

⁽¹³⁾ Cedefop, 2020.

insights on migration background, the survey identified adults with both, one and neither parent born abroad.

Chapter 2 of this report reviews the survey results about how important different groups of European adults perceive adult learning and CVET to be. It considers the importance that they attach to adult learning now and in the future and explores why adults of different ages and backgrounds want to learn.

Chapter 3 discusses the survey findings on the benefits adults expect to obtain from adult learning and CVET. It first looks at the employment-related benefits and goes on to consider the personal and further educational benefits that different groups of people expect from adult learning and how these may vary according to personal and professional circumstances. The chapter concludes with a review of how different groups in the European adult population perceive the quality of adult learning and CVET.

Chapter 4 looks at perceptions about access to adult learning and CVET. It considers how different groups see the extent of opportunities for adult learning and CVET, how well informed they feel about them, and their view of the quality of the guidance and support available to those wanting to participate. The chapter then looks at the various supports available to those who would like to participate, and which groups rely on what types of support. It goes on to examine the survey findings about why people do not participate in adult learning and CVET, and concludes by looking at adults' perceptions of the usefulness of various measures to encourage participation in adult learning and CVET.

Chapter 5 examines differences between the views of those who had participated in adult learning and CVET in the 12 months prior to the survey and those who had not. It looks at the extent to which participation makes different groups of people more or less positive about adult learning and CVET. The chapter concludes with a discussion of participation rates by different groups of the adult population compared to EU objectives and to skills needs and deficits.

Chapter 6 outlines observations on the opinions expressed by different European adults about the importance and benefits of, as well as the ease of access to, adult learning and continuing vocational education and training. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the image of adult learning and CVET, constructed through the opinions of European adults. It concludes that lack of participation in adult learning and CVET is not due to a negative image, but is contingent on individual circumstances. It recommends a more learner-centric, age-neutral approach to European vocational education and training policy.

CHAPTER 2.

More perceptions: importance

Chapter 2 reviews the survey results about how important different groups of European adults (grouped by sex, age and migrant background, and by education level and employment) perceive adult learning and continuing vocational education and training to be. It considers the importance the different groups attach to adult learning now and in the future and explores why adults of different ages and backgrounds want to participate in adult learning and CVET ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Overall, the survey shows that adults of all ages, in the labour force (either in work or unemployed and looking for a job) and across all types of occupations believe that it is important to learn throughout life. Adults across all groups also have a strong expectation that adult learning and CVET will become more important over the next 10 years, and many believe that government should invest more in learning for adults.

People take part in adult learning and CVET for personal development and to improve job skills, with different emphasis between men and women, younger and older adults and between those who are in the labour market and those who are not. Work-related reasons are stronger motivations for participation in work-related learning among men, younger adults, those in the labour market and those in less-skilled occupations.

All adults of all ages in all types of occupations, including those traditionally regarded as low-skilled, say that their jobs require them to keep their skills constantly up to date. Although the extent to which adults perceive that they lack technical and general skills varies across occupations, adults in all occupations believe that they lack necessary skills to do their jobs.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Section 4.3, in the context of access, considers why adults do not participate in adult learning and CVET and what measures may encourage them to do so.

2.1. Value

Overall, 78% of adults totally agree that continuing to learn throughout life is important (Table 1). Women (80%) are more likely than men (77%) to agree totally. Learning throughout life is important to all age groups. The range of those in the working population who totally agree ranges from 79% for 25- to 34-year-olds to 77% of 55- to 64-year-olds. The age group that agrees most strongly is the 75+ group, at 80%. Those with both parents born abroad (82%) are more likely to totally agree about the importance of learning throughout life than children of native-born parents (79%).

Table 1. **Importance: learning throughout life is important; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q0905/ Q9.5	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: Continuing to learn throughout life is an important value for you (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	78	18	2	1	1	96	3
Sex							
Men	77	19	2	1	1	96	3
Women	80	17	2	1	0	97	3
Age							
25-34	79	18	2	1	0	97	3
35-44	79	18	2	1	0	97	3
45-54	78	19	2	1	0	97	3
55-64	77	19	2	1	1	96	3
65-74	78	17	3	1	1	95	4
75+	80	16	2	1	1	96	3
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	82	15	2	1	0	97	3
Only one	79	16	2	2	1	95	4
None	78	18	2	1	1	96	3

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Total agreement about the importance of learning throughout life is higher among those with a high level of education (84%) than those with a low level (72%) (Table 2). Some 84% of students also totally agree, along with 79% of those in work and 75% of people who are unemployed (looking for a job or not). This indicates that large numbers of people expect to continue to learn throughout their lives and that learning not only matters to find a job, but is equally important when in one.

The survey finds that continuing to learn throughout life is important across all occupations and skill levels; total agreement ranges from 87% for professionals through 70% for elementary occupations and 68% for plant and machine operators.

Table 2. Importance: learning throughout life is important; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q0905/ Q9.5	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: Continuing to learn throughout life is an important value for you (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	72	22	3	2	1	94	5
Middle	75	21	3	1	0	96	4
High	84	14	1	1	0	98	2
Employment status							
Working	79	18	2	1	0	97	3
Retired	78	18	2	1	1	96	3
Students	84	16	0	0	0	100	0
Looking after the home	73	21	4	2	0	94	6
Unemployed and looking for a job	75	20	2	2	1	95	4
Unemployed and not looking for a job	75	18	2	4	1	93	6

Q0905/ Q9.5	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: Continuing to learn throughout life is an important value for you (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Current occupation							
Managers	79	19	2	0	0	98	2
Professionals	87	12	1	0	0	99	1
Technicians and associate professionals	82	16	2	0	0	98	2
Clerical support workers	77	20	2	1	0	97	3
Services and sales workers	76	21	3	0	0	97	3
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	75	21	3	1	0	96	4
Craft and related trades workers	72	23	3	1	1	95	4
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	68	26	5	1	0	94	6
Elementary occupations	70	25	3	2	0	95	5
Armed forces occupations	84	13	0	1	2	97	1
Other	73	24	3	0	0	97	3

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 84% of adults say that, in 10 years' time, adult learning and CVET will either definitely or probably become more important to career progress (Table 3). Men (41%) are more convinced than women (37%) that adult learning and CVET will definitely be more important in 10 years' time. Older people in the working population seem more persuaded about the growing importance of adult learning and CVET; 40% of 55- to 64-year-olds, compared to 35% of 25- to 34-year-olds, totally agree. Conviction about the

growing importance of learning is even stronger among older adults in the general population, as 40% of those aged 75+ totally agree. Those with both parents born abroad (45%) are also more likely than those with native-born parents (39%) to agree totally that adult learning and CVET will be more important for career progression in 10 years' time.

Table 3. **Importance of learning in 10 years: sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1500/ Q15	Do you think adult learning will be more important for enabling people to progress in their careers in 10 years' time? (% – EU)						
	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, not really	No, not at all	Don't know	Total yes	Total no
EU-28	39	45	10	3	3	84	13
Sex							
Men	41	43	10	3	3	84	1
Women	37	47	10	2	4	84	12
Age							
25-34	35	51	11	2	1	86	13
35-44	37	47	11	3	2	84	14
45-54	38	46	11	3	2	84	14
55-64	40	44	10	3	3	84	13
65-74	44	40	9	3	4	84	12
75+	45	39	6	2	8	84	8
Migration status (parents born abroad)							
Both	45	42	9	2	2	87	11
Only one	42	45	9	2	2	87	11
None	39	45	10	3	3	84	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Those with a low level of education (42%) are more convinced of the growing importance of adult learning and CVET (Table 4) than those with a high level (39%). However, only 27% of students are convinced. This appears to contradict the 84% of students who totally agreed about the important of learning throughout life, but this may reflect that younger students regard adult learning and CVET as being as important to career progression today

as it will be in the future. Unemployed people not looking for a job (43%) are most definite about the growing importance of adult learning and CVET.

Substantial proportions of adults from all occupations are convinced that adult learning and CVET will grow in importance in the coming decade, ranging from 47% for armed forces occupations to 30% for clerical support workers. To some extent, this may reflect jobs and working life becoming more complex. As technology takes over in more routine jobs, people must carry out tasks requiring combinations of technical and transversal skills. Routine clerical jobs are being increasingly automatised. Skilled agricultural workers (43%) and technicians and professionals (41%) are among those most likely to say that adult learning and CVET will definitely become more important. The growing importance of adult training and CVET is noted in jobs at all levels; the same proportion of managers (39%) and workers in elementary occupations (39%) are persuaded that adult learning and CVET will definitely be more important for career progression in 10 years' time.

Table 4. **Importance of learning in 10 years: education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1500/ Q15	Do you think adult learning will be more important for enabling people to progress in their careers in 10 years' time? (% – EU)						
	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, not really	No, not at all	Don't know	Total yes	Total no
Education level							
Low	42	41	9	4	4	83	13
Middle	38	45	11	3	3	83	14
High	39	47	10	2	2	86	12
Employment status							
Working	38	48	10	2	2		86
Retired	44	40	8	3	5		84
Students	27	56	15	1	1		83
Looking after the home	35	44	13	3	5		79
Unemployed and looking for a job	35	47	13	3	2		82
Unemployed and not looking for a job		40	10	5	2		83

Q1500/ Q15	Do you think adult learning will be more important for enabling people to progress in their careers in 10 years' time? (% – EU)						
	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, not really	No, not at all	Don't know	Total yes	Total no
Current occupation							
Managers	39	45	12	2	2	84	14
Professionals	38	49	10	1	2	87	11
Technicians and associate professionals	41	47	9	2	1	88	11
Clerical support workers	30	51	14	3	2	81	17
Services and sales workers	39	49	8	2	2	88	10
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	43	45	8	2	2	88	10
Craft and related trades workers	40	47	9	2	2	87	11
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	38	45	10	4	3	83	14
Elementary occupations	39	42	12	2	5	81	14
Armed forces occupations	47	28	11	12	2	75	23
Other	41	44	8	2	5	85	10

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 55% of adults totally agree that governments should prioritise investment in learning for adults (Table 5). Women (56%) are slightly more likely to totally agree than men (54%).

Among the working and general population, total agreement that adult learning and CVET should be a priority for public investment priority rises with age – from 48% of those aged between 25 and 34 to 57% of 55- to 64-year-olds and 61% of those aged 75+. This may reflect that training provision, even for adults, is geared for younger age groups. More than half of children of parents born abroad (59%) and of natives (55%) totally agree that adult learning and CVET should be investment priorities.

Table 5. Importance: governments should prioritise investment in adult learning and CVET; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q0907/ Q9.7	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: The (nationality) government should prioritise investment in learning and training for adults (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	55	34	7	2	2	89	9
Sex							
Men	54	34	8	2	2	88	10
Women	56	34	6	2	2	90	8
Age							
25-34	48	39	9	2	2	87	11
35-44	53	36	7	2	2	89	9
45-54	56	34	7	2	1	90	9
55-64	57	32	7	2	2	89	9
65-74	59	31	6	2	2	90	8
75+	61	28	5	2	4	89	7
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	59	30	6	2	3	89	8
Only one	58	32	7	2	1	90	9
None	55	34	7	2	2	89	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (60%) are more likely to agree totally than those with a high level (53%) that adult learning and CVET should be investment priorities (Table 6). Employed people and students (both 53%) are least likely to agree totally, compared to 56% of unemployed people looking for a job.

Opinion varies across occupations but does not appear to be related to skill levels. Services and sales workers (58%) and craft and related trades workers (57%) are most likely to express total agreement; managers (52%) and professionals (51%) are less likely to totally agree. Occupations as different as technical and associated professionals and elementary

occupations (both 54%) come in the middle range of those who totally agree that adult learning and CVET should be an investment priority.

Table 6. Importance: governments should prioritise investment in adult learning and CVET; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q0907/ Q9.7	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: The (nationality) government should prioritise investment in learning and training for adults (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	60	30	6	2	2	90	8
Middle	55	35	6	2	2	90	8
High	53	35	8	2	2	88	10
Other	60	30	6	2	2	90	8
Employment status							
Working	53	36	8	2	1	89	10
Retired	59	30	6	2	3	89	8
Students	53	39	6	2	0	92	8
Looking after the home	58	33	5	2	2	91	7
Unemployed and looking for a job	56	32	8	2	2	88	10
Unemployed and not looking for a job	59	29	7	3	2	88	10
Current occupation							
Managers	52	36	9	2	1	88	11
Professionals	51	37	9	1	2	88	10
Technicians and associate professionals	54	37	7	1	1	91	8
Clerical support workers	48	41	7	2	2	89	9
Services and sales workers	58	33	6	2	1	88	11

Q0907/ Q9.7	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: The (nationality) government should prioritise investment in learning and training for adults (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	51	37	7	3	2	88	10
Craft and related trades workers	57	34	6	2	1	91	8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	52	36	8	3	1	89	9
Elementary occupations	54	33	8	3	2	91	8
Armed forces occupations	44	44	8	4	0	88	10
Other	52	36	9	2	1	91	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

2.2. Why adults learn

Adults who had participated in learning and CVET in the 12 months prior to the survey were asked why they did so. Separate questions were asked of those who had taken part in organised learning (formal or non-formal learning) and those who learned on their own (informal learning).

They were able to give multiple answers. The two most common reasons given for participating in organised training were personal development (66%) and to improve job skills (64%) (Figure 1). Specific types of skills adults sought to acquire were basic skills (34%) and computer skills (20%). As well as improving job skills, adults mentioned other work-related reasons for participating in learning: for promotion or better pay (16%), to find a new or different job (14%) and to set up a business (6%). Some 22% of adults said they had taken part in organised training because it was mandatory.

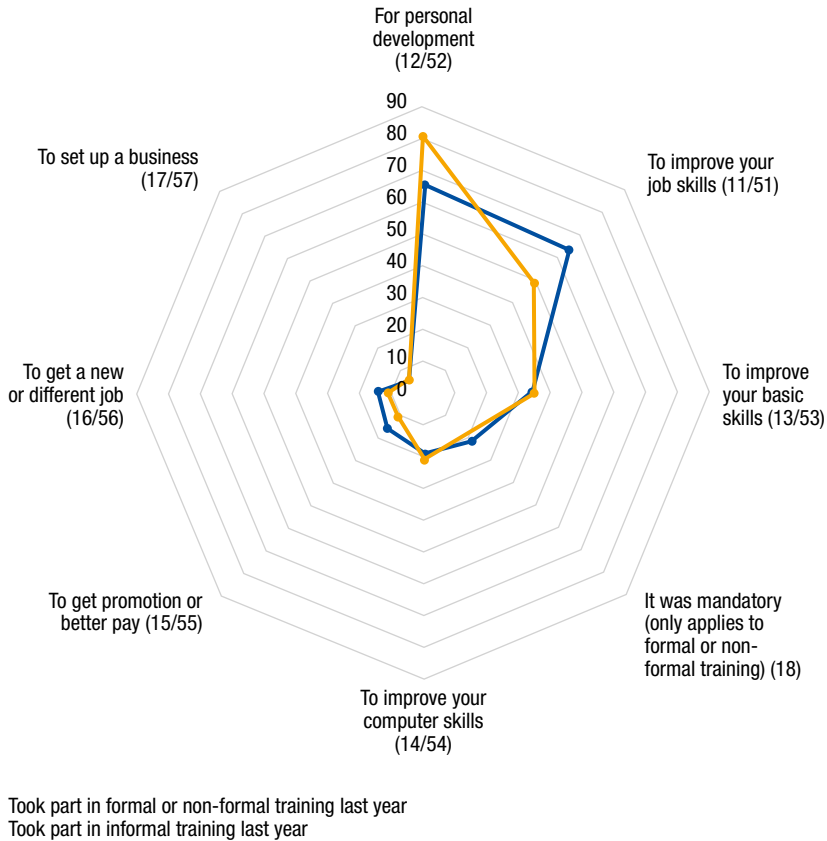
Figure 1 also shows that the most common reason adults gave for learning on their own was personal development (81%), followed by improving job skills (49%) and to acquire basic skills (35%) and computer skills (21%). Work-related reasons were cited less often, such as

promotion or better pay (11%), to find a new or different job (11%) or to set up a business (6%).

Figure 1. Importance: reasons for taking part in adult learning and CVET, % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q1811-Q1821&Q1851-Q1860/Q18.1a&Q18.1b.

You said you have taken part in an organised training activity/have been learning on your own within the last year. Was this for any of the following reasons? (Multiple answers possible) (%-EU-28)



Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Most adults participated in organised learning for personal development (66%), followed closely by to improve job skills (64%) (Table 7). Women (69%) are more likely than men (63%) to participate for personal development. Women are also more likely to participate to find a new or different job (women 15%; men 13%). Men (66%) are more likely than women (63%) to take part in the training to improve job skills. Men are also more likely to participate for job-related learning reasons, such as for promotion or better pay.

Younger adults, unsurprisingly, are more likely to participate in organised learning for work-related reasons; 25- to 34-year-olds are most likely to say they participated in training to improve their basic skills (37%), for promotion or better pay (23%), to find a new or different job (20%) or to set up a business (8%).

Older adults are more likely to participate in organised learning to improve their computer skills; 23% of the 55-to-64 age group, compared to 18% of 25- to 34-year-olds. A substantial proportion (31%) of 55- to 64-year-olds (31%) said they participated in organised learning to improve their basic skills. This may signal that job tasks are changing, or older people are returning to the labour market, or both.

The main differences between adults with both parents born abroad and those with native-born parents are in the proportions who participate in organised learning to find a new or better job (23% of those with parents born abroad compared to 13% of those whose parents are native-born) and to set up a business (10% for those with parents born abroad and 5% for those with native-born parents). These findings may reflect objectives of social mobility and networks of immigrant and minority business owners, including family businesses.

Unsurprisingly, compared to those with a high level of education (30%), more adults with a low level (43%) participated in organised learning, to improve basic skills (Table 8), as well as to improve computing skills (25% of those with a low-level education; 19% of those with a high level), for promotion or better pay (19% low; 15% high) and to find a new or different job (19% low; 12% high). The exception is in improving jobs skills, mentioned by 66% of adults with a high level of education, compared to 59% of those with a low level, which may reflect a rapid pace of change for those in jobs requiring highly qualified people.

As expected, those in the labour market are more likely to participate in organised training for work-related reasons, compared to those outside it. A large number of students, however, have an eye on the labour market; 54%

Table 7. **Importance: reasons for taking part in organised training; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1811-Q1821/ Q18.1a	You said you have taken part in an organised training activity within the last year. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)											
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	It was mandatory	To improve your computer skills	To get promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other	None	DK/NA	Total at least one reason
EU-28	66	64	34	21	20	16	14	6	2	1	0	98
Sex												
Men	63	66	34	22	21	17	13	6	2	1	0	98
Women	69	63	34	21	19	14	15	5	2	0	0	98
Age												
25-34	68	69	37	22	18	23	20	8	1	1	0	98
35-44	64	70	34	21	17	19	17	5	1	0	0	99
45-54	62	71	32	26	20	16	13	5	2	0	0	99
55-64	65	64	31	23	23	9	9	4	2	1	0	98
65-74	78	26	33	9	28	2	3	3	5	2	0	96
75+	79	19	35	9	27	3	1	4	4	3	2	93
Migrant background (parents born abroad)												
Both	66	67	37	23	21	22	23	10	2	1	0	98
Only one	68	65	32	19	24	14	17	6	1	1	0	98
None	66	64	34	22	20	15	13	5	2	1	0	98

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

of students say they had participated in organised learning to improve their job skills and 35% to find a better job. Improving basic skills (54%) and basic skills (38%) are particularly important for unemployed people looking for a job.

Table 8. Importance: reasons for taking part in organised training; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q1811-Q1821/ Q18.1a	You said you have taken part in an organised training activity within the last year. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible)											
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	It was mandatory	To improve your computer skills	To get promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other	None	DK/NA	Total at least one reason
Education level												
Low	67	59	43	24	25	19	19	7	2	2	0	97
Middle	62	63	36	24	20	16	15	6	2	1	0	98
High	68	66	30	20	19	15	12	5	2	1	0	98
Employment status												
Working	64	72	33	25	19	18	13	5	1	0	0	99
Retired	80	21	34	7	27	3	4	4	5	2	1	95
Students	68	54	35	22	15	9	35	12	1	0	0	99
Looking after the home	77	39	42	11	27	12	25	8	5	0	0	98
Unemployed and looking for a job	67	54	38	11	21	18	48	11	1	1	1	98
Unemployed and not looking for a job	75	31	37	7	24	12	31	4	4	1	2	93
Current occupation												
Managers	68	71	24	18	16	16	12	8	1	0	0	99
Professionals	68	75	33	23	19	16	10	5	1	0	0	99
Technicians and associate professionals	64	77	36	22	23	20	14	5	1	0	0	99
Clerical support workers	61	71	32	24	23	18	12	4	2	0	0	99

Q1811-Q1821/ Q18.1a	You said you have taken part in an organised training activity within the last year. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible)											
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	It was mandatory	To improve your computer skills	To get promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other	None	DK/NA	Total at least one reason
Services and sales workers	64	72	37	29	15	16	17	7	2	1	0	99
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	41	63	31	33	5	8	5	12	0	2	0	98
Craft and related trades workers	55	68	33	27	21	22	17	5	3	1	0	98
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	54	64	30	39	17	21	16	7	1	1	0	99
Elementary occupations	56	47	39	34	13	16	16	6	2	0	0	98
Armed forces occupations	34	75	18	5	4	26	6	1	1	0	0	100
Other	57	53	35	31	14	37	17	4	4	0	1	94

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Managers and professionals (both 68%) are most likely to take part in organised training for personal development. Those in professional (75%) and technical (77%) roles are most likely to do so to improve job skills. Improved basic skills are most frequently mentioned by services and sales workers (37%) and technicians and associate professionals (36%). Technicians and associate professionals are also the most likely to mention promotion or better pay (20%), as well as improved computing skills, along with clerical support workers (both 23%).

Participating in organised training to find a new or different job is mentioned most frequently by services and sales workers (17%), craft and related trades

workers (17%), plant and machine operators and assemblers (16%) and those in elementary occupations (16%). Plant and machine operators and assemblers (39%), those in elementary occupations (34%) and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (33%) are most likely to say the training was mandatory. Finally, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (12%) are the most likely to say that they did the training to set up a business.

Multiple answers could also be given for informal learning (learning on their own). Most adults said they had participated in informal learning for personal development (81%). Improving job skills comes a long way behind, at 49%, followed by basic skills (35%) and computer skills (21%) (Table 9).

More women (83%) than men (79%) took part in informal learning for personal development. More men than women cite work-related reasons for taking part in informal learning; for example, to improve their job skills (52% men; 46% women), basic skills (37% men; 34% women) and computer skills (25% men; 18% women), as well as for promotion or better pay (12% men; 10% women) and to set up a business (men 7%; women 5%).

Participation in informal learning, whether for personal or job-related reasons, is highest among the youngest (25-to-34) and oldest (55-to-64) age groups. This, perhaps, reflects greater personal and professional time pressures for those aged 35 to 54. Those aged 25 to 34, the group closest to their formal education, are the most likely to say they took part in informal learning to improve their basic skills (40%).

Adults who had both parents born abroad were more likely than other adults to give work-related reasons for taking part in informal learning, such as improving job skills (55%), to get a promotion or better pay (17%), to get a new or different job (19%) and to set up a business (11%).

A higher proportion of adults with a low level of education, compared to those with a high level, take part in informal learning for reasons such as improving basic skills (40% low; 33% high), computing skills (25% low; 20% high) and to set up a business (7% low; 5% high). The exception is improving jobs skills, which is cited by 54% of adults with a high level of education, compared to 37% of those with a low level (Table 10).

Some 81% of students took part in informal learning for personal development but students, at 42%, are also the group most likely to say they took part to improve their basic skills. Unsurprisingly, those working (62%) are most likely to say the learning was to improve their job skills, while those in work (14%) and those unemployed and looking for work (13%) are most likely to say they participated for promotion or better pay.

Table 9. **Importance: reasons for taking part in informal training; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1851-Q1860/ Q18.1b	You said you have been learning on your own within the last year, for example via books, online courses or going to places like museums. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)										
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	To improve your computer skills	To get a promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other (do not read out)	None (do not read out)	DK/NA (do not read out)	Total at least one reason
EU-28	81	49	35	21	11	11	6	2	1	0	98
Sex											
Men	79	52	37	25	12	12	7	2	1	0	98
Women	83	46	34	18	10	11	5	2	1	0	98
Age											
25-34	81	60	40	20	17	19	10	1	0	0	99
35-44	78	61	36	20	15	16	7	1	0	0	99
45-54	79	59	35	21	12	13	6	2	1	0	98
55-64	83	46	34	22	6	5	4	2	1	0	98
65-74	88	18	31	24	2	2	2	3	1	0	97
75+	86	10	30	21	2	1	2	6	3	1	94
Migration background (parents born abroad)											
Both	80	55	40	25	17	19	11	2	1	0	98
Only one	85	48	41	25	13	13	6	1	1	0	98
None	81	48	34	20	10	10	5	2	1	0	98

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Professionals (69%) and those in technical occupations (65%) are most likely to participate in informal learning to improve job skills. Plant and machine operators and assemblers (25%) are most likely to say they did the learning to improve their computer skills. Taking up informal learning to find a new or different job is mentioned most frequently by those in elementary occupations (18%). Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers are the most likely to say that they did the training to set up a business (14%).

Table 10. **Importance: reasons for taking part in informal training; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1851-Q1860/ Q18.1b	You said you have been learning on your own within the last year, for example via books, online courses or going to places like museums. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)										
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	To improve your computer skills	To get a promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other (do not read out)	None (do not read out)	DK/NA (do not read out)	Total at least one reason
Education level											
Low	82	37	40	25	11	13	7	2	2	1	96
Middle	80	45	38	21	11	12	6	2	1	0	98
High	82	54	33	20	11	11	5	2	0	0	99
Employment status											
Working	79	62	36	21	14	12	6	1	0	0	99
Retired	88	13	32	22	2	2	2	4	1	1	96
Students	81	51	42	21	8	34	10	0	0	0	100
Looking after the home	85	24	37	22	6	14	10	2	2	0	97
Unemployed and looking for a job	79	47	39	25	13	33	13	2	2	0	97
Unemployed and not looking for a job	84	25	25	15	3	16	8	4	0	2	94

Q1851-Q1860/ Q18.1b	You said you have been learning on your own within the last year, for example via books, online courses or going to places like museums. Was this for any of the following reasons: (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)										
	For personal development	To improve your job skills	To improve your basic skills	To improve your computer skills	To get a promotion or better pay	To get a new or different job	To set up a business	Other (do not read out)	None (do not read out)	DK/NA (do not read out)	Total at least one reason
Current occupation											
Managers	80	61	31	21	12	9	8	1	0	0	99
Professionals	80	69	36	20	13	10	5	1	0	0	99
Technicians and associate professionals	79	65	38	22	16	14	5	1	0	0	99
Clerical support workers	81	57	36	22	15	15	6	1	0	0	99
Services and sales workers	80	58	39	19	13	14	9	1	0	0	99
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	69	64	36	13	18	10	14	2	0	0	99
Craft and related trades workers	74	54	39	22	16	13	6	2	1	0	98
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	73	55	39	25	18	15	7	2	0	0	98
Elementary occupations	79	34	36	18	10	18	10	2	1	0	98
Armed forces occupations	72	40	12	12	14	8	1	2	0	0	100
Other	78	57	33	18	18	7	3	0	0	0	100

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

2.2.1. Changing needs: job-related skills

The survey also gives insights into the importance of job-related learning to keep skills up to date (Table 11). Overall, 63% of adults (64% of women and 62% of men) say their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date. This need applies across all age groups in the working population (those aged 25 to 64), where at least 62% totally agree. Migration background does not influence the need to keep skills up to date.

Table 11. Importance: job requirements – keeping skills up to date; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q2201/ Q22.1	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	63	25	7	4	1	88	11
Sex							
Men	62	26	7	4	1	88	11
Women	64	23	8	4	1	87	12
Age							
25-34	63	25	7	4	1	88	11
35-44	63	26	8	3	0	89	11
45-54	62	25	8	4	1	87	12
55-64	65	24	6	4	1	89	10
65-74	68	20	4	6	2	88	10
75+	56	24	8	7	5	80	15
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	64	24	6	5	1	88	11
Only one	63	25	7	4	1	88	11
None	63	25	7	4	1	88	11

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a high level of education are more likely to agree totally that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date (68%), compared to those with a low education level (55%) (Table 12). Those in the armed forces (81%), professionals (74%) and technicians (71%) are most likely to agree totally that their job requires them to keep their skills up to date. Total agreement falls to 37% among those working in elementary occupations.

Table 12. **Importance: job requirements – keeping skills up to date; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2201/ Q22.1	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	55	23	12	8	2	78	20
Middle	58	27	9	5	1	85	14
High	68	24	6	2	0	92	8
Current occupation							
Managers	64	27	7	2	0	91	9
Professionals	74	20	4	1	1	94	5
Technicians and associate professionals	71	22	5	1	1	93	6
Clerical support workers	55	31	9	5	0	86	14
Services and sales workers	57	26	10	6	1	83	16
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	55	29	10	5	1	84	15
Craft and related trades workers	56	28	8	7	1	84	15
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	52	26	12	10	0	78	22
Elementary occupations	37	27	19	14	3	64	33
Armed forces occupations	81	6	12	1	0	87	13
Other	68	20	8	2	2	88	10

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Across the EU, 28% of employees (28% women; 29% men) agree that they lack some technical skills to carry out their job at the required level; this includes 9% (8% women; 10% men) who totally agree (Table 13). Findings are similar across all age groups. Agreement that they lack some technical skills is higher among adults with both parents born abroad (15%), compared to those whose parents are native-born (8%).

Table 13. **Importance: lack of technical skills; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2203/ Q22.3	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some technical skills to carry out your job at the required level (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	9	19	29	42	1	28	71
Sex							
Men	10	19	30	40	1	29	70
Women	8	20	28	43	1	28	71
Age							
25-34	9	19	32	39	1	28	71
35-44	9	20	29	42	0	29	71
45-54	9	20	29	41	1	29	70
55-64	9	18	28	44	1	27	72
65-74	10	19	19	48	4	29	67
75+	12	23	12	48	5	35	60
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	15	22	25	36	2	37	61
Only one	10	19	32	37	2	29	69
None	8	19	29	43	1	27	72

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (35%) are more likely to agree that they lack some technical skills compared to those with a high level (28%) (Table 14). Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers are most likely to agree that they lack some technical skills to carry out their job at the required level (38%), while agreement is lowest among armed forces occupations (6%).

Table 14. **Importance: lack of technical skills; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2203/ Q22.3	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some technical skills to carry out your job at the required level						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	14	21	24	39	2	35	63
Middle	9	19	27	44	1	28	71
High	8	20	31	40	1	28	71
Current occupation							
Managers	8	22	28	42	0	30	70
Professionals	8	18	31	42	1	26	73
Technicians and associate professionals	7	20	32	40	1	27	72
Clerical support workers	7	19	31	43	0	26	74
Services and sales workers	11	20	27	40	2	31	67
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	14	24	26	34	2	38	60
Craft and related trades workers	14	19	26	39	2	33	65
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	10	17	24	48	1	27	72
Elementary occupations	13	18	25	42	2	31	67
Armed forces occupations	4	2	12	82	0	6	94
Other	15	21	18	43	3	36	61

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Men (25%) are more likely than women (22%) to agree that they lack some general skills to carry out their job at the required level (Table 15). Agreement over lacking some general skills increases with age. Some 25% of adults in the 55-to-64 age group agree, compared to 22% of 25- to 34-year-olds.

Table 15. **Importance: lack of general skills; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2204/ Q22.4		Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some general skills (such as communication or teamwork) to carry out your job at the required level (% – EU)					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	8	15	29	47	1	23	76
Sex							
Men	9	16	31	43	1	25	74
Women	7	15	27	50	1	22	77
Age							
25-34	8	14	31	46	1	22	77
35-44	8	16	29	46	1	24	75
45-54	8	16	28	47	1	24	75
55-64	9	15	28	47	1	24	75
65-74	10	17	22	48	3	27	70
75+	9	18	24	41	8	27	65
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	14	19	28	38	1	33	66
Only one	8	16	28	47	1	24	75
None	8	15	29	47	1	23	76

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (32%) are more likely to agree that they lack some general skills compared to those with a high education level (20%) (Table 16). Some 23% of employed people agree that they lack some general skills to carry out their job at the required level, including 8% who totally agree. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (36%) and those in elementary occupations (33%) are most likely to agree that they lack some general skills to carry out their job at the required level. This could reflect that these occupations are becoming more complex, or that they are unappealing, or both.

Table 16. **Importance: lack of general skills; education and current occupation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2204/ Q22.4	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some general skills (such as communication or teamwork) to carry out your job at the required level						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	14	18	25	41	2	32	66
Middle	9	16	26	48	1	25	74
High	6	14	32	47	1	20	79
Current occupation							
Managers	8	14	30	47	1	22	77
Professionals	5	15	30	49	1	20	79
Technicians and associate professionals	7	16	32	44	1	23	76
Clerical support workers	6	14	29	50	1	20	79
Services and sales workers	10	16	27	46	1	26	73
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	11	25	21	42	1	36	63
Craft and related trades workers	13	16	26	43	2	29	69
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	10	16	27	46	1	26	73
Elementary occupations	15	20	23	40	2	35	63
Armed forces occupations	7	10	10	67	6	17	77
Other	20	14	23	41	2	34	64

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

CHAPTER 3.

More perceptions: benefits

Chapter 3 discusses the survey findings on the benefits that different groups of European adults (grouped by sex, age and migrant background, and by education level and employment) expect to obtain from adult learning and continuing vocational education and training. It first looks at the employment-related benefits and goes on to consider the personal and further educational benefits that different groups of people expect from adult learning and how these vary according to personal and professional circumstances. The chapter concludes with a review of how different groups in the European adult population perceive the quality of adult learning and CVET.

Overall, the survey shows that adults of all ages, in the labour force (either in work or unemployed and looking for a job) and across all types of occupations strongly associate adult learning and CVET with clear employment-related, and personal and educational benefits. Adult learning and CVET is seen as important in supporting different aspects of career progression, including finding a new job and better incomes and, more generally, reducing unemployment.

Adults are even more positive about the benefits of adult education and CVET for personal development and further educational attainment. Views differ on the equivalence of adult learning and CVET compared to formal education at school or university education, or as a route to obtain a traditional university or college degree. Older and less qualified people are more persuaded of the educational benefits and equivalence of adult learning and education compared to formal education.

Generally, European adults regard the quality of adult learning and CVET as good, with those in work being the most positive.

3.1. Career progression and reducing unemployment

Some 55% of adults (women 56%; men 54%) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important for career progression (Table 17). This opinion holds

across all age groups in the working population, ranging from 55% of 25- to 34-year-olds, to 53% of those aged 55 to 64, and rises to 61% among those aged 75+. Total agreement is higher among adults with both parents born abroad (59%) compared to those with native-born parents (55%).

Table 17. **Benefits: important to progress a career; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1404/ Q14.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to progress in a career						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	55	36	6	2	1	91	8
Sex							
Men	54	36	6	3	1	90	9
Women	56	36	6	1	1	92	7
Age							
25-34	55	38	6	1	0	93	7
35-44	53	38	6	2	1	91	8
45-54	54	37	6	2	1	91	8
55-64	53	38	6	2	1	91	8
65-74	59	31	5	3	2	90	8
75+	61	29	5	2	3	90	7
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	59	32	6	2	1	91	8
Only one	57	35	5	2	1	92	7
None	55	36	6	2	1	91	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Those with lower-level education (59%) agree more strongly than those with a high level (53%) that adult learning and CVET are important for career progression (Table 18). This may reflect expectations of those with higher education to enter the labour market at a higher level.

Those outside the labour market who are looking after the home (58%), or unemployed people not looking for work (55%) are more likely to agree totally that adult learning and CVET are important for career progression than those in work (53%), unemployed people looking for a job (52%) and students (48%).

Adults working in crafts and related trades (59%) are most likely to agree totally about the importance of adult learning and CVET for career progression. Those in elementary occupations are just as likely to agree totally as technicians and associate professionals (both 55%). Clerical support workers (46%) are among those least likely to agree totally.

Table 18. **Benefits: important to progress a career; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1404/Q14.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to progress in a career						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	59	31	5	3	2	90	8
Middle	56	35	6	2	1	91	8
High	53	39	6	1	1	92	7
Employment status							
Working	53	39	6	1	1	92	7
Retired	59	32	5	2	2	91	7
Students	48	41	9	1	1	89	10
Looking after the home	58	31	6	3	2	89	9
Unemployed and looking for a job	52	34	10	3	1	86	13
Unemployed and not looking for a job	55	32	7	4	2	87	11
Current occupation							
Managers	53	40	6	1	0	93	7
Professionals	52	41	5	1	1	93	6
Technicians and associate professionals	55	38	6	1	0	93	7
Clerical support workers	46	43	9	2	0	89	11
Services and sales workers	56	36	6	1	1	92	7

Q1404/Q14.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to progress in a career						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	57	36	4	1	2	93	5
Craft and related trades workers	59	33	5	2	1	92	7
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	56	35	5	4	0	91	9
Elementary occupations	55	36	7	1	1	91	8
Armed forces occupations	41	33	20	6	0	74	26
Other	60	31	8	0	1	91	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Overall, 49% of adults (48% women and 49% men) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important to have a better income (Table 19). This view is again relatively consistent across all age groups in the working population. Older age groups (47% of those aged between 45 and 64) are more likely to agree totally than younger adults (45% of 25- to 44-year-olds). Total agreement is higher among adults with both parents born abroad (53%) compared to those with native-born parents (49%).

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET are important to have a better income (Table 20) is significantly higher among those with a low level of education (58%) compared to those with a high level (43%). This, again, may reflect expectations of those more highly educated to enter the labour market. Those outside the labour market, looking after the home (52%) and unemployed people not looking for work (51%) are more likely to agree totally that adult learning and CVET are important for a better income than those in work (46%), unemployed people looking for a job (46%) and, notably, students (36%).

Reflecting the difference by education level, total agreement on the importance of adult learning and CVET for better pay is higher among those in less skilled or advanced occupations, with the lowest proportion among managers and professionals (both 42%).

Table 19. **Benefits: important to have a better income; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1405/ Q14.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to have a better income						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	49	37	10	3	1	86	13
Sex							
Men	49	37	10	3	1	86	13
Women	48	37	10	3	2	85	13
Age							
25-34	45	40	12	3	0	85	15
35-44	45	38	12	4	1	83	16
45-54	47	39	10	3	1	86	13
55-64	47	38	10	3	2	85	13
65-74	55	33	7	3	2	88	10
75+	60	29	6	2	3	89	8
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	53	36	7	3	1	89	10
Only one	49	38	9	3	1	87	12
None	49	37	10	3	1	86	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 20. **Benefits: important to have a better income; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1405/Q14.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to have a better income						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	58	29	8	3	2	87	11
Middle	51	36	9	3	1	87	12
High	43	42	11	3	1	85	14

Q1405/Q14.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to have a better income						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Employment status							
Working	46	40	11	2	1	86	13
Retired	56	32	7	3	2	88	10
Students	36	43	16	4	1	79	20
Looking after the home	52	33	9	5	1	85	14
Unemployed and looking for a job	45	35	13	6	1	80	19
Unemployed and not looking for a job	51	36	8	3	2	87	11
Current occupation							
Managers	42	43	12	2	1	85	14
Professionals	42	44	11	2	1	86	13
Technicians and associate professionals	44	44	9	2	1	88	11
Clerical support workers	43	40	13	3	1	83	16
Services and sales workers	50	37	10	2	1	87	12
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	52	34	10	3	1	86	13
Craft and related trades workers	54	33	9	3	1	87	12
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	52	31	12	5	0	83	17
Elementary occupations	52	33	11	2	2	85	13
Armed forces occupations	36	44	14	6	0	80	20
Other	53	35	6	3	3	88	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Across the EU, 55% of adults (56% of women and 54% of men) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important when looking for a new job (Table 21). Within the working population, total agreement is higher among older adults (56% of those aged 55 to 64, compared to 51% of those aged 25 to 34). Total agreement on the importance of adult learning and CVET when looking for a job is also higher among those with both parents born abroad (58%).

Table 21. **Benefits: important when looking for a new job; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1403/ Q14.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important when looking for a new job						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	55	36	5	2	2	91	7
Sex							
Men	54	36	6	2	2	90	8
Women	56	36	5	1	2	92	6
Age							
25-34	51	40	7	1	1	91	8
35-44	51	40	6	2	1	91	8
45-54	55	37	6	1	1	92	7
55-64	56	36	5	2	1	92	7
65-74	61	31	4	2	2	92	6
75+	62	28	3	2	5	90	5
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	58	33	5	2	2	91	7
Only one	56	37	4	2	1	93	6
None	55	36	6	2	1	91	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (61%) are more likely to agree totally that adult learning and CVET are important when looking for a new job (Table 22) than those with a high level (53%). Those in work are less likely than other adults to agree totally (53%) than those who are unemployed and looking for a job (57%). Those in the armed forces (61%) and adults

working in crafts and related trades (59%) are most likely to agree totally about the importance of adult learning and CVET to finding a job. Those least likely to agree totally are at different ends of the occupational scale, i.e. managers and those in elementary occupations (both 49%).

Table 22. **Benefits: important when looking for a new job; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1403/Q14.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important when looking for a new job						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	61	31	4	2	2	92	6
Middle	56	36	5	2	1	92	7
High	53	38	7	1	1	91	8
Employment status							
Working	53	39	6	1	1	92	7
Retired	61	30	4	2	3	91	6
Students	46	45	7	2	0	91	9
Looking after the home	57	33	5	2	3	90	7
Unemployed and looking for a job	55	34	8	2	1	89	10
Unemployed and not looking for a job	57	30	7	4	2	87	11
Current occupation							
Managers	49	42	8	1	0	91	9
Professionals	51	41	6	1	1	92	7
Technicians and associate professionals	55	38	5	1	1	93	6
Clerical support workers	50	41	7	1	1	91	8
Services and sales workers	54	39	5	1	1	93	6
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	53	42	3	1	1	95	4

Q1403/Q14.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important when looking for a new job						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Craft and related trades workers	58	33	6	2	1	91	8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	57	34	6	3	0	91	9
Elementary occupations	49	38	7	3	3	87	10
Armed forces occupations	61	28	11	0	0	89	11
Other	52	45	1	1	1	97	2

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 51% of adults (women 52% and men 51%) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important to reduce unemployment (Table 23). In the working population, middle-range age groups (51% of 35- to 54-year-olds) are more likely to totally agree than the younger (25- to 34-year-olds) and older age groups (55- to 64-year-olds), both 49%. Adults with both parents born abroad (56%) are more convinced that adult learning and CVET can reduce unemployment than those whose parents are native-born (51%).

Adults with a low education level (54%) are more likely to agree totally about the positive role of adult learning and CVET in reducing unemployment (Table 24) than those with a high level of education (50%); students (48%) are more sceptical. Understandably, more of those in work (51%) totally agree that adult learning and CVET help reduce unemployment, compared to those who most need to persuade employers of the relevance of their skills, the unemployed looking for work (47%). Total agreement is highest among services and sales workers and those working in craft and related trades (both 55%) and lowest among managers (46%), clerical and support workers and those in the armed forces (both 45%).

Table 23. **Benefits: important to reduce unemployment; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1408/ Q14.8	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to reduce unemployment						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	51	33	10	4	2	84	14
Sex							
Men	51	33	10	4	2	84	14
Women	52	33	9	4	2	85	13
Age							
25-34	49	35	11	4	1	84	15
35-44	51	34	10	4	1	85	14
45-54	51	33	11	4	1	84	15
55-64	49	34	10	5	2	83	15
65-74	54	30	8	5	3	84	13
75+	58	27	8	3	4	85	11
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	56	28	10	4	2	84	14
Only one	51	34	9	4	2	85	13
None	51	33	10	4	2	84	14

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 24. **Benefits: important to reduce unemployment; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1408/Q14.8	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to reduce unemployment						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	54	29	9	6	2	83	15
Middle	52	32	10	5	1	84	15
High	50	35	11	3	1	85	14

Q1408/Q14.8	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important to reduce unemployment						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Employment status							
Working	51	35	10	3	1	86	13
Retired	55	30	8	4	3	85	12
Students	48	37	12	3	0	85	15
Looking after the home	49	30	11	8	2	79	19
Unemployed and looking for a job	47	33	11	8	1	80	19
Unemployed and not looking for a job	49	33	11	6	1	82	17
Current occupation							
Managers	46	38	11	4	1	84	15
Professionals	51	36	10	2	1	87	12
Technicians and associate professionals	52	34	10	3	1	86	13
Clerical support workers	45	38	13	3	1	83	16
Services and sales workers	55	30	10	4	1	85	14
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	50	35	11	3	1	85	14
Craft and related trades workers	55	30	9	5	1	85	14
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	50	37	7	5	1	87	12
Elementary occupations	50	31	11	6	2	81	17
Armed forces occupations	45	20	25	10	0	65	35
Other	57	27	10	4	2	84	14

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

3.1.1. Work-related training and career progression

Some 44% of all adults (43% of women and 44% of men) totally agree that organised work-related activities are important to develop skills for any job (Table 25). Among those in the working population, total agreement is highest, at 43%, among 55- to 64-year-olds, compared to 40% of those aged between 35 and 44.

Table 25. **Benefits: organised work-related training is important to develop skills for any job; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2004/ Q20.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They are important to develop skills that can be used in any job						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	44	40	9	4	3	84	13
Sex							
Men	44	40	9	4	3	84	13
Women	43	40	9	4	4	83	13
Age							
25-34	41	44	11	3	1	85	14
35-44	40	45	10	3	2	85	13
45-54	41	42	11	4	2	83	15
55-64	43	40	10	4	3	83	14
65-74	49	35	7	3	6	84	10
75+	52	28	6	4	10	80	10
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	45	39	9	4	3	84	13
Only one	44	40	9	5	2	84	14
None	43	40	10	3	4	83	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

More adults with a low level of education (46%) totally agree that organised work-related activities are important to develop skills for any job (Table 26) compared to those with a high level (42%). Those in work (41%) are also more likely to agree than unemployed people who are looking for a job (37%).

It might be expected that occupations associated with more transferable skills would be more likely to agree that adult learning and CVET are important to develop skills that can be used in any job, but the picture is mixed. Managers (46%) are most likely to agree totally and those in the armed forces (34%) and skilled agricultural workers (39%) are least likely to agree totally. However, 41% of both professionals and of service and sales workers totally agree.

Table 26. **Benefits: organised work-related training is important to develop skills for any job; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2004/Q20.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They are important to develop skills that can be used in any job						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	46	36	7	4	7	82	11
Middle	44	41	9	3	3	85	12
High	42	42	11	3	2	84	14
Employment status							
Working	41	43	11	3	2	84	14
Retired	50	34	7	3	6	84	10
Students	35	49	10	2	4	84	12
Looking after the home	41	39	8	5	7	80	13
Unemployed and looking for a job	37	43	12	5	3	80	17
Unemployed and not looking for a job	41	41	8	6	4	82	14
Current occupation							
Managers	46	40	10	3	1	86	13
Professionals	41	42	13	3	1	83	16
Technicians and associate professionals	43	43	10	3	1	86	13

Q2004/Q20.4		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They are important to develop skills that can be used in any job					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Clerical support workers	37	46	11	4	2	83	15
Services and sales workers	41	43	11	4	1	84	15
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	39	49	8	3	1	88	11
Craft and related trades workers	44	42	7	4	3	86	11
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	43	38	12	5	2	81	17
Elementary occupations	39	44	10	4	3	83	14
Armed forces occupations	34	61	4	1	0	95	5
Other	46	45	5	4	0	91	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

3.2. Personal development and educational attainment

3.2.1. Personal development

Adults' views on the personal benefits of adult learning and CVET differ compared to how they see employment-related benefits. Some 70% of European adults (72% of women and 68% of men) agree totally that adult learning and CVET are important for personal development – the highest level of agreement in the survey (Table 27). Total agreement on the importance of adult learning and CVET for personal development is a consistent 69% across all age groups in the working population, but rises sharply among older age groups, with total agreement reaching 75% among those aged 75 and over.

Table 27. **Benefits: important for personal development; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1406/ Q14.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important for personal development						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	70	26	2	1	1	96	3
Sex							
Men	68	27	3	1	1	95	4
Women	72	24	2	1	1	96	3
Age							
25-34	69	27	3	1	0	96	4
35-44	69	27	2	1	1	96	3
45-54	69	27	3	1	0	96	4
55-64	69	27	2	1	1	96	3
65-74	74	22	2	1	1	96	3
75+	75	21	1	1	2	96	2
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	71	25	2	1	1	96	3
Only one	69	27	3	1	0	96	4
None	70	26	2	1	1	96	3

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET are important for personal development (Table 28) is higher among those with a high level of education (73%) than those with a low level (66%). Total agreement is also higher among those in more skilled or advanced occupations – for example, professionals (73%) – compared to those in less advanced occupations, such as plant and machine operators (63%). This may reflect that higher-skilled workers may have less material needs, and more space to focus their attention on their personal needs.

Table 28. **Benefits: important for personal development; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1406/Q14.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important for personal development						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	66	28	3	2	1	94	5
Middle	69	27	3	1	0	96	4
High	73	24	2	1	0	97	3
Employment status							
Working	70	27	2	1	0	97	3
Retired	73	23	2	1	1	96	3
Students	69	28	3	0	0	97	3
Looking after the home	67	27	3	2	1	94	5
Unemployed and looking for a job	68	26	3	2	1	94	5
Unemployed and not looking for a job	64	30	2	2	2	94	4
Current occupation							
Managers	71	25	3	1	0	96	4
Professionals	73	25	2	0	0	98	2
Technicians and associate professionals	72	25	2	1	0	97	3
Clerical support workers	66	30	3	1	0	96	4
Services and sales workers	69	28	2	1	0	97	3
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	65	29	5	1	0	94	6
Craft and related trades workers	69	27	3	1	0	96	4
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	63	31	4	2	0	94	6

Q1406/Q14.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important for personal development						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Elementary occupations	64	30	4	1	1	94	5
Armed forces occupations	80	20	0	0	0	100	
Other	74	22	3	1	0	96	4

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

3.2.2. Further educational attainment

Adult learning and CVET (informal, non-formal training or formal learning) are alternative educational pathways to initial and formal education. However, formal education is the reference for labour market requirements. The survey examined perceptions of the value of adult learning and CVET compared to formal education.

Across the EU, 46% of adults (46% women; 45% men) agree totally that adult learning and CVET are as important as school or university education (Table 29). Within the working population, total agreement rises with age (and possibly experience), ranging from 41% of those aged 25 to 34 to 47% for 55- to 64-year-olds. Those in the older age groups, which contain larger proportions of adults who did not go to university, are more strongly persuaded of the equivalence of adult learning and CVET with formal education, with 52% total agreement among those aged 75+.

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET is as important as school or university education is also higher among those with both parents born abroad (50%) compared to those whose parents are native-born (46%). This may reflect that formal education for those with both parents born abroad is more likely to have been in a different country than where they live when surveyed.

Table 29. **Benefits: important as the education at school or university; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1401/ Q14.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are as important as the education you receive at school or university						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	46	37	12	3	2	83	15
Sex							
Men	45	36	13	4	2	81	17
Women	46	38	11	3	2	84	14
Age							
25-34	41	39	15	3	2	80	18
35-44	42	38	14	4	2	80	18
45-54	46	38	11	3	2	84	14
55-64	47	37	11	3	2	84	14
65-74	50	35	9	3	3	85	12
75+	52	31	8	2	7	83	10
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	50	35	11	3	1	85	14
Only one	45	37	13	3	2	82	16
None	46	37	12	3	2	83	15

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET is as important as school or university education (Table 30) is higher among adults with a low level of education (52%) than those with a high level (42%). More unemployed people who are looking for work (48%) also totally agree, compared to those in work (44%). The proportion of students (37%) who totally agree about the equivalence of adult learning and CVET and school or university is relatively low. This again may reflect younger age groups, less work experience and personal choice.

People in different occupations have different views about adult learning and CVET being as important as school or university education. The highest proportion that totally agrees is in the armed services (49%), where

specialised training is regular and programmed. The lowest proportions that totally agree are found at the opposite ends of the skill spectrum: professionals and elementary occupations (both 41%).

Table 30. **Benefits: important for personal development; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1401/Q14.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are as important as the education you receive at school or university						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	52	33	8	3	4	85	11
Middle	47	38	10	3	2	85	13
High	42	38	15	3	2	80	18
Employment status							
Working	44	39	13	3	1	83	16
Retired	50	34	9	3	4	84	12
Students	37	41	16	4	2	78	20
Looking after the home	47	36	9	4	4	83	13
Unemployed and looking for a job	45	33	14	5	3	78	19
Unemployed and not looking for a job	48	36	9	4	3	84	13
Current occupation							
Managers	42	41	13	3	1	83	16
Professionals	42	39	15	3	1	81	18
Technicians and associate professionals	44	40	13	2	1	84	15
Clerical support workers	41	40	16	2	1	81	18
Services and sales workers	48	37	12	2	1	85	14
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	45	42	10	2	1	87	12

Q1401/Q14.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are as important as the education you receive at school or university						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Craft and related trades workers	49	35	10	5	1	84	15
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	49	36	10	4	1	85	14
Elementary occupations	41	39	11	7	2	80	18
Armed forces occupations	49	29	11	7	4	78	18
Other	48	41	8	3	0	89	11

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

The proportions of people who see adult learning and CVET as being as important as school or university education are generally higher than those who see in adult learning and CVET a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree. Some 32% (both women and men) of European adults totally agree that adult learning and CVET are the equivalent of a degree; this is the lowest level of total agreement in the survey (Table 31). Within the working population, total agreement increases with age – 29% of those aged 25 to 44, compared with 33% of those aged 55 to 64 – and is also higher among those with both parents born abroad (34%) compared to those with native-born parents (32%).

Adults with a low level of education (39%) are more likely to agree totally that adult learning and CVET are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree (Table 32), compared to those with a high level of education (28%). Adults who are unemployed and not looking for work are more likely to agree totally (39%) than those in other employment status groups, particularly students (25%).

In terms of occupation, total agreement is highest among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers (both 36%) and lowest among those in the armed forces (23%) and clerical support workers (27%).

Table 31. **Benefits: a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1402/ Q14.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	32	41	16	6	5	73	22
Sex							
Men	32	41	16	7	4	73	23
Women	32	41	16	6	5	73	22
Age							
25-34	29	42	20	6	3	71	26
35-44	29	43	18	7	3	72	25
45-54	32	41	17	6	4	73	23
55-64	33	40	16	6	5	73	22
65-74	35	40	13	5	7	75	18
75+	39	36	10	5	10	75	15
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	34	42	15	4	5	76	19
Only one	35	41	15	4	5	76	19
None	32	40	17	6	5	72	23

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 32. **Benefits: a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1402/Q14.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	39	38	11	5	7	77	16
Middle	33	42	15	5	5	75	20

Q1402/Q14.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
High	28	41	20	7	4	69	27
Employment status							
Working	30	43	18	6	3	73	24
Retired	36	39	13	5	7	75	18
Students	25	42	25	5	3	67	30
Looking after the home	34	40	14	7	5	74	21
Unemployed and looking for a job	29	34	20	12	5	63	32
Unemployed and not looking for a job	39	36	12	5	8	75	17
Current occupation							
Managers	28	45	19	6	2	73	25
Professionals	28	42	21	6	3	70	27
Technicians and associate professionals	32	44	17	4	3	76	21
Clerical support workers	27	41	21	7	4	68	28
Services and sales workers	33	44	14	6	3	77	20
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	36	42	12	4	6	78	16
Craft and related trades workers	36	40	14	6	4	76	20
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	30	42	16	8	4	72	24
Elementary occupations	33	41	15	5	6	74	20
Armed forces occupations	23	33	33	11	0	56	44
Other	46	37	11	3	3	83	14

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 44% of European adults (46% women and 44% men) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree (Table 33). Within the working population, total agreement again rises steadily with age, from 39% for those aged between 25 and 34, rising to 43% for 55- to 64-year-olds. Those with both parents born abroad (46%) are also more likely than those with native-born parents (44%) to agree totally that adult learning and CVET are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree.

Table 33. **Benefits: primarily for adults without a degree; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1407/ Q14.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	44	32	15	7	2	76	22
Sex							
Men	43	33	15	7	2	76	22
Women	45	31	15	7	2	76	22
Age							
25-34	39	35	18	7	1	74	25
35-44	40	33	18	8	1	73	26
45-54	41	31	17	9	2	72	26
55-64	43	32	16	7	2	75	23
65-74	50	31	11	5	3	81	16
75+	55	27	9	4	5	82	13
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	46	31	15	7	1	77	22
Only one	43	29	18	8	2	72	26
None	44	32	15	7	2	76	22

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

The largest differences in total agreement that adult learning and CVET matter most for adults without a degree are found by level of education

(Table 34). Some 51% of those with a low level of education totally agree, compared to 40% of those with a high level.

Those in work (40%) are less likely to agree totally about the importance of adult learning and CVET for adults without a degree, compared with unemployed people looking for work (49%) and those looking after the home (51%). Reflecting the difference by level of education, total agreement is lower among those in more skilled or advanced occupations – for example, managers (35%) – compared to those in elementary occupations (45%).

Table 34. **Benefits: primarily for adults without a degree; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1407/Q14.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	51	30	10	6	3	81	16
Middle	45	33	14	6	2	78	20
High	40	32	19	8	1	72	27
Employment status							
Working	40	33	18	8	1	73	26
Retired	51	30	11	5	3	81	16
Students	28	34	30	8	0	62	38
Looking after the home	51	30	11	6	2	81	17
Unemployed and looking for a job	49	32	11	7	1	81	18
Unemployed and not looking for a job	46	33	11	7	3	79	18
Current occupation							
Managers	35	34	22	9	0	69	31
Professionals	36	30	23	10	1	66	33
Technicians and associate professionals	36	33	20	10	1	69	30
Clerical support workers	38	35	19	7	1	73	26

Q1407/Q14.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Services and sales workers	46	32	13	7	2	78	20
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	48	38	9	4	1	86	13
Craft and related trades workers	46	36	13	4	1	82	17
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	45	36	13	5	1	81	18
Elementary occupations	45	37	11	6	1	82	17
Armed forces occupations	52	30	4	14	0	82	18
Other	52	28	11	8	1	80	19

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 32% of European adults (31% women and 33% men) totally agree that organised work-related training activities can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State (Table 35). In the working population, total agreement varies slightly between age groups, ranging from 31% of those aged between 55 and 64, to 28% of 35- to 44-year-olds. Unusually, the proportion of people who totally agree is highest among those with one parent born abroad (34%), compared to those with both (30%) or neither parent born abroad (32%).

Table 35. **Benefits: can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2003/ Q20.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	32	41	14	7	6	73	21
Sex							
Men	33	41	14	7	5	74	21
Women	31	41	14	7	7	72	21
Age							
25-34	30	46	14	6	4	76	20
35-44	28	45	17	7	3	73	24
45-54	30	43	15	8	4	73	23
55-64	31	40	15	8	6	71	23
65-74	37	35	13	6	9	72	19
75+	38	33	9	6	14	71	15
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	30	44	13	7	6	74	20
Only one	34	39	16	6	5	73	22
None	32	41	14	7	6	73	21

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (35%) are more likely than those with a high level (30%) to agree totally that organised work-related training activities can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State (Table 36).

Total agreement that organised work-related training activities can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State is highest among people unemployed but not looking for work (35%) and lowest among those unemployed and looking for a job (28%). Among occupations, total agreement, at 33% for both, is highest among craft and related trades workers, and clerical support workers, falling to 28% among professionals and managers and 26% for those in the armed forces.

Table 36. Benefits: can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q2003/Q20.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	35	37	10	8	10	72	18
Middle	32	42	14	6	6	74	20
High	30	42	17	7	4	72	24
Employment status							
Working	29	43	16	8	4	72	24
Retired	37	35	12	6	10	72	18
Students	29	46	14	4	7	75	18
Looking after the home	30	44	10	7	9	74	17
Unemployed and looking for a job	28	46	14	6	6	74	20
Unemployed and not looking for a job	35	40	11	6	8	75	17
Current occupation							
Managers	28	45	16	7	4	73	23
Professionals	28	43	18	7	4	71	25
Technicians and associate professionals	29	43	18	7	3	72	25
Clerical support workers	26	44	19	8	3	70	27
Services and sales workers	31	45	13	8	3	76	21
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	32	46	11	7	4	78	18
Craft and related trades workers	33	40	14	7	6	73	21
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	33	43	11	8	5	76	19

Q2003/Q20.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Elementary occupations	31	41	14	8	6	72	22
Armed forces occupations	26	52	14	8	0	78	22
Other	44	39	9	4	4	83	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

3.3. Quality

Overall, 69% of European adults (women 71% and men 67%) perceive the quality of adult learning and CVET in their country as at least good. Among women, 11% think it is very good and 60% that it is fairly good; 11% of men think it is very good and 56% that it is fairly good (Table 37). Some 24% (22% women and 26% men) of adults think the quality is bad.

Among age groups, perceptions of quality decline slightly, ranging from 71% among 25- to 34-year-olds to 68% among those aged 55 to 64, which may reflect experience and changing expectations. Adults aged 65 and above, who are outside the working population, are slightly more positive. Those with both parents born abroad (73%) are also more positive about the quality of adult learning and CVET than those whose parents are native-born (68%).

Those with a low level of education (68%) are slightly less positive about the quality of adult learning and CVET (Table 38) than those with a high level (70%). People in work are the most positive about the quality of adult learning and CVET, (some 71% say it is good), while unemployed people looking for a job are the least positive (63%). Among those in work, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers are the most positive; 75% say it is good. Least positive are those in the armed forces, where 60% say it is good.

Table 37. **Benefits: perception of quality of learning; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1300/ Q13	Overall, do you think the quality of adult learning and continuing training in (our country) is generally regarded as good or bad?						
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad	Don't know	Total good	Total bad
EU-28	11	58	19	5	7	69	24
Sex							
Men	11	56	21	5	7	67	26
Women	11	60	18	4	7	71	22
Age							
25-34	10	61	20	4	5	71	24
35-44	10	60	19	4	7	70	23
45-54	12	57	20	5	6	69	25
55-64	10	58	20	4	8	68	24
65-74	11	55	20	5	9	66	25
75+	13	57	15	5	10	70	20
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	17	56	15	4	8	73	19
Only one	12	60	19	4	5	72	23
None	10	58	20	5	7	68	25

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 38. **Benefits: perception of quality of learning; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1300/Q13	Overall, do you think the quality of adult learning and continuing training in (our country) is generally regarded as good or bad?						
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad	Don't know	Total good	Total bad
Education level							
Low	13	55	17	6	9	68	23
Middle	11	58	19	5	7	69	24
High	10	60	20	3	7	70	23
Employment status							
Working	10	61	19	4	6	71	23

Q1300/Q13	Overall, do you think the quality of adult learning and continuing training in (our country) is generally regarded as good or bad?						
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad	Don't know	Total good	Total bad
Retired	11	57	19	4	9	68	23
Students	12	56	23	2	7	68	25
Looking after the home	12	49	22	8	9	61	30
Unemployed and looking for a job	11	52	21	8	8	63	29
Unemployed and not looking for a job	17	48	20	5	10	65	25
Current occupation							
Managers	9	58	21	5	7	67	26
Professionals	9	62	19	4	6	71	23
Technicians and associate professionals	9	64	20	2	5	73	22
Clerical support workers	9	59	20	4	8	68	24
Services and sales workers	11	62	17	4	6	73	21
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	13	62	15	3	7	75	18
Craft and related trades workers	12	57	18	6	7	69	24
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	13	54	18	9	6	67	27
Elementary occupations	13	53	20	7	7	66	27
Armed forces occupations	6	54	38	2	0	60	40
Other	16	62	15	4	3	78	19

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

CHAPTER 4.

More perceptions: access

Chapter 4 looks at the perceptions of European adults (grouped by sex, age and migrant background, and by education level and employment) about access to adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). It considers how different groups see the extent of opportunities for adult learning and CVET, how well informed they feel about them, and their views about how good the information and guidance about those opportunities is. The chapter then looks at the supports available to those who would like to participate and which groups rely on what types of support. It goes on to examine the survey findings about why people do not participate in adult learning and CVET ⁽¹⁵⁾ and concludes by looking at adults' perceptions about the usefulness of various measures to encourage participation in adult learning and CVET.

The survey shows that adults believe that there are opportunities for them to participate in adult learning and CVET, a view which strengthens with age and extends to older adults who are no longer in the working population. Adults generally regard information provision about adult learning and CVET opportunities to be good. Many adults, across all age groups, had looked for information about adult learning and CVET opportunities in the 12 months prior to the survey, whether they were in the labour market (in work or employed and looking for a job) or not. For the most part, information seems easy to find through many different sources, which people combine to various degrees; the internet is the most popular source of information.

For most adults, the principal source of support for adults who want to participate in adult learning and CVET is family and friends. Reasons why adults do not participate vary. Although there are differences – for example, between men and women – the reasons why people do not participate appear less linked with any particular characteristic, such as age, occupation or level of education, than with combinations of characteristics that define the circumstances of individuals. For example, caring responsibilities or

⁽¹⁵⁾ Section 2.2, in the context of importance, considers why adults participate in adult learning and CVET.

financial difficulties that may prevent someone from participating in adult learning or CVET cut across both sexes, all age groups and, to some extent, occupations. This is reflected in the overall strong support for measures to encourage participation in adult learning and CVET, but lack of overwhelming support linking any one specific measure with any group of adults.

4.1. Opportunities, information and guidance

Some 31% of European adults (women 31% and men 31%) totally agree that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities in their country (Table 39). Total agreement in the working population increases steadily with age, rising from 26% of those aged 25 to 44 compared with 31% of those aged 55 to 64. However, older adults no longer in the labour force also believe that they have many opportunities to learn. More adults with both parents born abroad (33%) also totally agree that learning opportunities are available, compared to those with native-born parents (30%).

Those with a low level of education (33%) are more likely to agree totally that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities available in their country (Table 40) than those with a high education level (30%). Adults in work (29%) are also more likely to agree totally compared to unemployed people who are looking for work and those who are not (both 26%). In terms of occupation, total agreement is high across many diverse occupations, including managers, professionals, technicians, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, and those in the armed forces (all 30%). It is lowest among plant and machine operators and assemblers (23%).

Table 39. **Access: available opportunities; sex, age and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1001/ Q10.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: There are many adult learning and continuing training opportunities available in our country						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	31	41	17	5	6	72	22
Sex							
Men	31	42	17	5	5	73	22
Women	31	40	18	5	6	71	23
Age							
25-34	26	47	19	4	4	73	23
35-44	27	45	19	4	5	72	23
45-54	28	42	18	6	6	70	24
55-64	31	40	18	5	6	71	23
65-74	36	37	16	4	7	73	20
75+	41	34	12	3	10	75	15
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	33	40	16	5	6	73	21
Only one	32	41	17	5	5	73	22
None	30	41	18	5	6	71	23

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 40. **Access: available opportunities; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1001/Q10.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: There are many adult learning and continuing training opportunities available in (our country)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	33	38	16	6	7	71	22
Middle	31	41	18	5	5	72	23
High	30	43	18	4	5	73	22

Q1001/Q10.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: There are many adult learning and continuing training opportunities available in (our country)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Employment status							
Working	29	44	18	4	5	73	22
Retired	37	37	15	4	7	74	19
Students	24	48	19	5	4	72	24
Looking after the home	27	36	21	9	7	63	30
Unemployed and looking for a job	26	37	24	9	4	63	33
Unemployed and not looking for a job	26	39	19	7	9	65	26
Current occupation							
Managers	30	46	14	4	6	76	18
Professionals	30	46	16	3	5	76	19
Technicians and associate professionals	30	43	19	3	5	73	22
Clerical support workers	26	45	20	4	5	71	24
Services and sales workers	28	42	18	5	7	70	23
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	30	42	20	3	5	72	23
Craft and related trades workers	29	39	19	6	7	68	25
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	23	49	18	7	3	72	25
Elementary occupations	29	40	19	5	7	69	24
Armed forces occupations	30	33	25	6	6	63	31
Other	37	45	10	3	5	82	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 55% of adults had looked for information on adult learning and CVET opportunities in the last 12 months, including 19% who had looked often and 15% who had looked rarely (Table 41). Some 56% of women had looked for information in the last 12 months, compared to 54% of men. Overall, those in the working population had looked more often for information. Younger age groups were more likely to have looked often than older ones: 27% of 25- to 34-year-olds, falling to 15% of those aged between 55 and 64. Adults with both parents born abroad (23%) were more likely to have often looked for information in the last 12 months than those with native-born parents (18%).

Table 41. **Access: looked for information in the past 12 months; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1600/ Q16	In the last 12 months, how often have you looked for information on adult learning and training opportunities for yourself?						
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Total sometimes or often	Total rarely or never
EU-28	19	21	15	45	0	40	60
Sex							
Men	17	21	16	46	0	38	62
Women	20	22	14	43	1	42	57
Age							
25-34	27	27	17	29	0	54	46
35-44	26	27	16	31	0	53	47
45-54	21	25	16	37	1	46	53
55-64	15	21	15	49	0	36	64
65-74	10	14	11	64	1	24	75
75+	7	8	10	74	1	15	84
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	23	22	15	39	1	45	54
Only one	20	21	15	44	0	41	59
None	18	21	15	45	1	39	60

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a high level of education (23%) are more likely to say they have often looked for information (Table 42) compared to those with a low education level (11%). Understandably, those unemployed and looking for a job (33%) are more likely to have looked often for information on adult learning and CVET opportunities in the previous 12 months, followed by those in work (23%) and students (22%).

Perhaps reflecting a need to keep up with changes in their jobs, those in professional occupations (30%) are more likely to have looked often for information in the previous 12 months. The lowest proportions are among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (11%), plant and machine operators and assemblers and those in elementary occupations (both 13%).

Table 42. **Access: looked for information in the past 12 months; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1600/Q16	In the last 12 months, how often have you looked for information on adult learning and training opportunities for yourself?						
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Total sometimes or often	Total rarely or never
Education level							
Low	11	15	13	60	1	26	73
Middle	17	21	16	46	0	38	62
High	23	25	15	36	1	48	51
Employment status							
Working	23	26	17	34	0	49	51
Retired	9	12	12	66	1	21	78
Students	22	19	19	39	1	41	58
Looking after the home	14	20	15	51	0	34	66
Unemployed and looking for a job	33	26	14	26	1	59	40
Unemployed and not looking for a job	16	21	11	52	0	37	63
Current occupation							
Managers	25	25	15	35	0	50	50
Professionals	30	29	14	27	0	59	41

Q1600/Q16	In the last 12 months, how often have you looked for information on adult learning and training opportunities for yourself?						
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Total sometimes or often	Total rarely or never
Technicians and associate professionals	25	29	17	29	0	54	46
Clerical support workers	19	26	19	36	0	45	55
Services and sales workers	22	23	19	36	0	45	55
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	11	17	19	53	0	28	72
Craft and related trades workers	15	20	18	47	0	35	65
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	13	22	17	48	0	35	65
Elementary occupations	13	21	19	47	0	34	66
Armed forces occupations	39	13	16	32	0	52	48
Other	24	20	15	41	0	44	56

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 66% of adults agree (including 26% who totally agree) that it is easy to find information on adult learning and CVET opportunities (Table 43). Some 67% of women say that it is easy to find information on adult learning and CVET opportunities, compared to 66% of men. Ease of finding information is consistent across all age groups, but older age groups are more likely to totally agree; 26% of those aged between 55 and 64 compared to 21% of 25- to 34-year-olds. This may reflect that older adults have more specific learning needs in mind when searching, as more older adults outside the working population totally agree that it is easy to find information. Adults with both parents born abroad (28%) are also more likely to agree totally that it is easy to find information on adult learning and CVET opportunities than those with native-born parents (26%).

Table 43. **Access: ease of finding information; sex, age and migration status % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1002/ Q10.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: It is easy to find information on adult learning and continuing training opportunities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	26	40	22	6	6	66	28
Sex							
Men	27	39	22	6	6	66	28
Women	26	41	22	5	6	67	27
Age							
25-34	23	43	26	5	3	66	31
35-44	25	41	24	6	4	66	30
45-54	25	41	23	6	5	66	29
55-64	26	41	22	5	6	67	27
65-74	30	37	20	5	8	67	25
75+	33	35	15	5	12	68	20
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	28	38	21	6	7	66	27
Only one	30	37	22	6	5	67	28
None	26	41	22	5	6	67	27

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Overall, those with low- and high-level education (both 66%) agree that it is easy to find information on adult learning and CVET opportunities (Table 44). However, those with a low level (28%) are more likely to agree totally than those with a high level (24%). While 25% of people in work and 21% of unemployed people looking for a job agree totally that it is easy to find information on adult learning and CVET opportunities, only 13% of students totally agree. In terms of occupations, total agreement about the ease of finding information is highest among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (30%) and lowest among clerical support workers (23%)

Table 44. **Access: ease of finding information; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1002/Q10.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: It is easy to find information on adult learning and continuing training opportunities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	28	38	19	7	8	66	26
Middle	28	40	22	5	5	68	27
High	24	42	24	5	5	66	29
Employment status							
Working	25	42	23	5	5	67	28
Retired	31	36	19	5	9	67	24
Students	13	44	34	8	1	57	42
Looking after the home	24	40	22	9	5	64	31
Unemployed and looking for a job	21	35	30	11	3	56	41
Unemployed and not looking for a job	24	37	22	9	8	61	31
Current occupation							
Managers	26	41	22	5	6	67	27
Professionals	24	43	24	4	5	67	28
Technicians and associate professionals	24	43	26	4	3	67	30
Clerical support workers	23	43	25	4	5	66	29
Services and sales workers	24	45	21	6	4	69	27
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	30	46	15	3	6	76	18
Craft and related trades workers	28	40	20	6	6	68	26
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	25	40	21	8	6	65	29

Q1002/Q10.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: It is easy to find information on adult learning and continuing training opportunities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Elementary occupations	27	40	23	6	4	67	29
Armed forces occupations	22	39	31	5	3	61	36
Other	27	50	14	4	5	77	18

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Perceptions are mixed about information on and accessibility to organised work-related adult learning and CVET activities (Table 45). Overall, 24% of adults (22% of women and 25% of men) agree totally that they are well informed about such activities. The proportions of adults who agree totally are consistent across all age groups in the working population, ranging from 22% of 25- to 34-year-olds to 25% of 45- to 54-year-olds. Adults with both parents born abroad (25%) are also more likely to agree totally that they are well informed about organised work-related training activities than those with native-born parents (23%).

There is little difference between those with high-level education (24%) and those with a low level (23%) about how well they feel informed about organised work-related training activities (Table 46). Those in work (26%) are most likely to agree totally that they feel well informed about such activities. However, total agreement is lower among students (10%) and unemployed adults looking for work (17%).

Concerning occupations, total agreement about feeling well informed about such activities is highest among those in the armed forces (30%) and professionals (28%). It is lowest among plant and machine operators and assemblers (21%), technicians, and craft and related trades workers (both 23%).

Table 45. **Access: well informed about organised work-related activities; sex, age, migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2001/ Q20.1	Part A: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: You feel well-informed about them (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	24	37	23	11	5	61	34
Sex							
Men	25	38	23	10	4	63	33
Women	22	37	23	11	7	59	34
Age							
25-34	22	41	27	8	2	63	35
35-44	23	41	25	9	2	64	34
45-54	25	39	24	9	3	64	33
55-64	24	39	22	10	5	63	32
65-74	24	31	21	14	10	55	35
75+	24	27	17	16	16	51	33
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	25	36	23	11	5	61	34
Only one	27	34	24	11	4	61	35
None	23	38	23	10	6	61	33

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 46. **Access: well informed about organised work-related activities; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2001/Q20.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: You feel well-informed about them						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	23	30	22	16	9	53	38
Middle	23	37	25	10	5	60	35

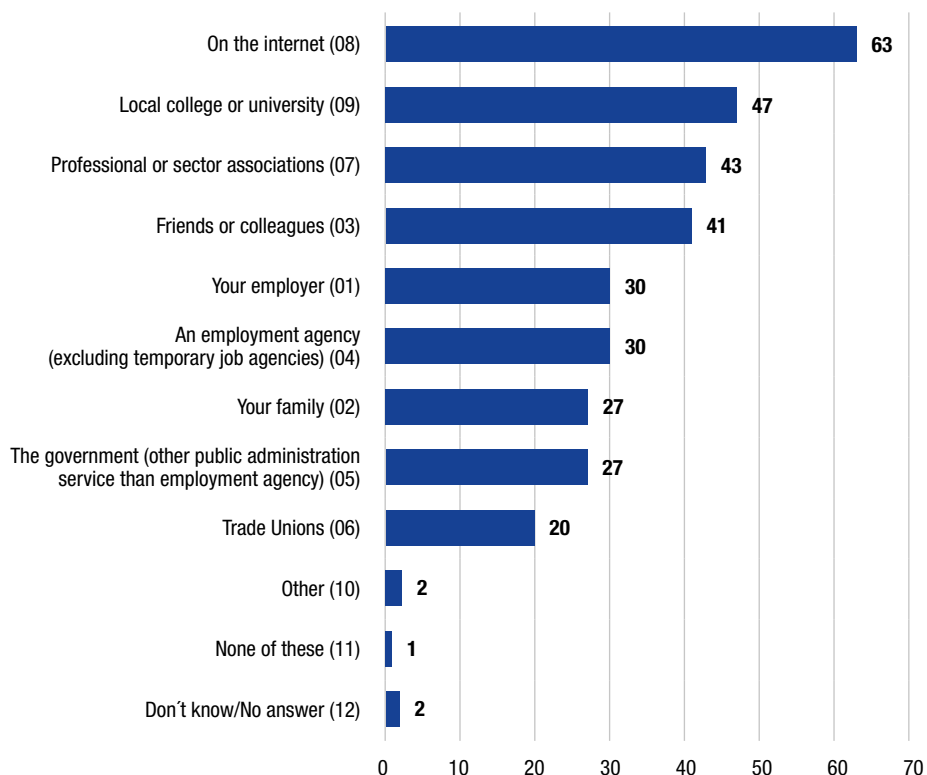
Q2001/Q20.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: You feel well-informed about them						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
High	24	41	23	8	4	65	31
Employment status							
Working	26	41	24	7	2	67	31
Retired	23	31	21	14	11	54	35
Students	10	38	39	9	4	48	48
Looking after the home	18	31	23	18	10	49	41
Unemployed and looking for a job	17	36	30	14	3	53	44
Unemployed and not looking for a job	17	34	23	19	7	51	42
Current occupation							
Managers	25	42	22	8	3	67	30
Professionals	28	44	21	5	2	72	26
Technicians and associate professionals	23	45	24	6	2	68	30
Clerical support workers	25	41	26	7	1	66	33
Services and sales workers	26	38	23	11	2	64	34
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	25	38	24	7	6	63	31
Craft and related trades workers	23	39	25	10	3	62	35
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	21	36	29	11	3	57	40
Elementary occupations	26	31	26	13	4	57	39
Armed forces occupations	30	39	25	6	0	69	31
Other	37	38	18	4	3	75	22

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Able to give multiple answers, 63% of adults said the internet was the best source of advice about adult learning and CVET, followed by local colleges or universities (47%) and professional or sector associations (43%). Employers were mentioned by 30% of adults (Figure 2).

Figure 2. **Access: guidance about learning; overall % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1101-Q1112/Q11 If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (OUR COUNTRY), where would you get the best advice? (Multiple answers possible) (%-EU-28)



Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Findings are similar between men and women, although women are more likely to mention several sources compared to men, such as an employment agency (women 32%; men 29%) and family (women 28%; men 25%) (Table 47).

Younger adults are more likely to mention several sources of advice, including the internet (74% of 25- to 34-year-olds, falling to 62% of those aged 55 to 64) and friends and colleagues (47% of 25- to 34-year-olds, compared to 36% of those aged 55 to 64). In addition, 25- to 34-year-olds are the most likely to say that an employment agency would give them the best advice (35%).

Table 47. **Access: guidance about learning; sex, age, migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1101-Q1112/ Q11	If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (our country), where would you get the best advice? (multiple answers possible)								
	On the internet	Local college or university	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Your employer	Your family	Government (other than employment agency)	Trade unions
EU-28	63	47	43	41	30	30	27	27	20
Sex									
Men	63	46	43	40	29	31	25	26	21
Women	64	48	42	42	32	30	28	28	20
Age									
25-34	74	51	40	47	35	35	30	27	23
35-44	72	49	44	44	32	33	24	25	21
45-54	67	46	45	42	32	34	24	27	21
55-64	62	46	45	38	30	29	26	29	20
65-74	52	46	41	36	25	23	29	26	19
75+	43	47	39	35	26	24	31	28	17

Q1101-Q1112/ Q11		If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (our country), where would you get the best advice? (multiple answers possible)							
	On the internet	Local college or university	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Your employer	Your family	Government (other than employment agency)	Trade unions
Migration background (parents born abroad)									
Both	69	53	47	49	35	36	30	35	25
Only one	67	49	49	45	33	33	28	30	19
None	62	47	42	40	29	30	26	26	20

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Several sources are chosen more frequently (Table 48) by adults with a high level of education (72%), most notably the internet, compared to those with a low education level (49%). The exception is family, which is mentioned more frequently by those with a low level of education (31%) than by those with a high level (24%). Patterns by employment status are in line with expectations. For example, people in work are most likely to mention their employer, while students mention a local college or university.

Several sources are mentioned more frequently by people in more highly skilled occupations. For example, the internet is mentioned by 78% of managers, but only 56% of those in elementary occupations. The same pattern applies to professional or sector associations and local colleges and universities. Both are mentioned more frequently by people in more skilled or advanced occupations. Employment agencies are mentioned most frequently by services and sales workers (36%), skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (35%) and those in elementary occupations (35%). The respondent's employer is seen as giving the best advice by around a third of those in most occupations, but this is lower among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (17%) and those in armed forces occupations (12%).

Table 48. **Access: guidance about learning; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1101-Q1112/Q11	If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (our country), where would you get the best advice? (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)								
	On the internet	Local college or university	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Your employer	Your family	Government (other than employment agency)	Trade unions
Education level									
Low	49	38	40	36	32	29	31	28	21
Middle	61	43	40	39	30	28	27	25	19
High	72	54	47	45	30	33	24	28	20
Employment status									
Working	71	50	46	44	31	36	25	27	22
Retired	50	45	39	35	26	24	29	27	19
Students	77	60	36	47	36	18	27	21	18
Looking after the home	57	36	31	34	33	17	30	24	15
Unemployed and looking for a job	57	36	36	37	44	18	24	27	20
Unemployed and not looking for a job	62	48	42	44	33	27	31	31	19
Current occupation									
Managers	78	50	46	45	23	38	22	26	17
Professionals	75	56	49	49	29	38	23	27	23
Technicians and associate professionals	75	54	51	46	32	37	27	30	21
Clerical support workers	71	49	47	41	31	36	23	27	21
Services and sales workers	69	50	47	44	36	38	31	29	23
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	65	33	37	45	35	17	26	22	18

Q1101-Q1112/Q11	If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (our country), where would you get the best advice? (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)								
	On the internet	Local college or university	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Your employer	Your family	Government (other than employment agency)	Trade unions
Craft and related trades workers	59	39	41	37	31	34	26	23	23
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	59	36	40	43	30	29	27	26	23
Elementary occupations	56	40	35	41	35	31	29	29	23
Armed forces occupations	67	23	18	11	4	12	6	5	12
Other	60	54	43	43	32	44	22	28	22

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

4.2. Support

Some 52% of adults see family as the best form of financial or practical support if they want to take part in training, followed by an employer (39%), government (31%), professional or sector associations (29%), friends or colleagues (27%), employment agencies (23%) and trade unions (15%) (Table 49).

Women (55%) are more likely to mention family than men (49%). Men (41%) are more likely than women (36%) to say their employer would offer the most support. Findings are broadly consistent by age group, although in the working population younger adults are slightly more likely to give several of the responses; 25- to 34-year-olds mention family (61%), employers (47%) and friends or colleagues (32%) more frequently than other age groups. Adults with both parents born abroad are more likely to mention most of the various sources; for example, the government (42%) and trade unions (21%).

Table 49. **Access: support for participation; age, sex and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1201-Q1210/ Q12	If you wanted to take part in training, who do you think would offer the most support? (by support we mean financial and practical support)									
	Your family	Your employer	The government (other than employment agency)	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Trade unions	Other	None of these	DK/NA
EU-28	52	39	31	29	27	23	15	2	4	4
Sex										
Men	49	41	32	30	27	23	16	2	4	4
Women	55	36	30	29	28	23	14	2	4	5
Age										
25-34	61	47	33	28	33	25	17	2	2	2
35-44	58	42	31	27	29	24	14	2	3	2
45-54	51	43	32	31	26	24	14	2	4	3
55-64	48	38	30	31	24	23	15	2	4	4
65-74	47	29	30	31	26	21	15	2	6	6
75+	45	25	31	31	25	21	14	2	6	11
Migration background (parents born abroad)										
Both	51	44	42	34	31	30	21	2	4	4
Only one	52	43	35	35	29	27	16	3	4	3
None	52	38	30	29	27	22	14	2	4	4

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Findings are broadly similar by education level (Table 50), except that those with a high education level are more likely than those with a low level to mention their employer (high education 44%; low education 32%) and their family (high education 55%; low education 47%). Those with a low level of education are more likely (28%) to say that an employment agency would offer the most support than those with a high education level (21%).

Family is the most common source of support for participating in adult learning and CVET, particularly for students (63%) and people in work (55%). Second sources of support, however, vary. For people in work (47%) it is their employer; for students (32%) and unemployed people not looking for work (36%) it is government services.

The main differences by current occupation are that services and sales workers are most likely to say that support would be offered by friends or colleagues (33%) and by professional or sector associations (32%), while those in elementary occupations are most likely to mention an employment agency (29%). Technicians and associate professionals (53%) and managers (52%) are most likely to say that their employer would offer the most support, with skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery the least likely to say this (26%).

Table 50. **Access: support for participation; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1201-Q1210/Q12	If you wanted to take part in training, who do you think would offer the most support? (by support we mean financial and practical support)									
	Your family	Your employer	The government (other than employment agency)	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Trade unions	Other	None of these	DK/NA
Education level										
Low	47	32	31	29	27	28	17	2	5	6
Middle	52	36	29	29	26	22	14	2	4	4
High	55	44	32	30	27	21	14	2	4	3

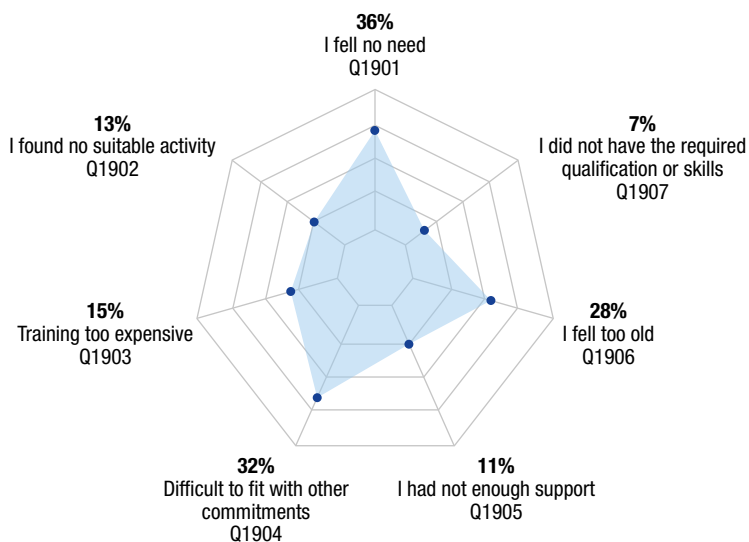
Q1201-Q1210/Q12	If you wanted to take part in training, who do you think would offer the most support? (by support we mean financial and practical support)									
	Your family	Your employer	The government (other than employment agency)	Professional or sector associations	Friends or colleagues	An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	Trade unions	Other	None of these	DK/NA
Employment status										
Working	55	47	32	30	29	22	15	2	3	2
Retired	47	28	30	31	25	22	15	2	5	7
Students	63	31	32	25	29	25	12	2	1	5
Looking after the home	52	23	24	23	22	27	13	3	5	6
Unemployed and looking for a job	48	22	32	27	22	33	12	2	4	3
Unemployed and not looking for a job	49	25	36	29	28	28	17	3	8	5
Current occupation										
Managers	52	52	30	31	29	19	10	2	3	2
Professionals	56	50	32	30	29	19	14	2	3	2
Technicians and associate professionals	59	53	35	29	29	23	15	2	2	2
Clerical support workers	55	48	32	28	25	23	14	2	3	2
Services and sales workers	57	44	35	32	33	26	18	2	4	2
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	53	26	33	25	27	27	10	4	5	4
Craft and related trades workers	53	39	25	28	27	22	19	1	4	3
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	53	40	24	30	27	23	17	2	3	4
Elementary occupations	51	36	31	26	28	29	18	2	5	3
Armed forces occupations	33	34	20	28	15	0	12	3	2	0
Other	54	51	38	26	36	24	14	1	1	1

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

4.3. Measures to encourage participation

The three most common reasons adults give for not participating in any organised training in the past year (Figure 3) are that they do not need any training (36%), it is difficult to fit in with other commitments (32%) and that they feel too old (28%). Less frequent responses are that training is too expensive (15%), a lack of suitable opportunities (13%), insufficient support (11%) and lacking the right skills or qualifications (7%).

Figure 3. **Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**



Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Women (34%) are more likely than men (30%) to say that it is difficult to fit in with other commitments (Table 51) and that it is too expensive (women 16%; men 13%). However, men (39%) are more likely than women (33%) to say they do not need adult learning and CVET.

Older adults are more likely to say they don't need to take part in organised training (39% of 55- to 64-year-olds, compared to 29% of 25- to 34-year-olds). However, younger adults (48% of 25- to 34-year-olds) seem to have more difficulties combining adult learning and CVET with other commitments.

Younger age groups also face more problems with the cost of adult learning and CVET, while middle age ranges (35 to 54 years of age) are the most likely to say there is not enough support. Those with both parents born abroad (37%) are most likely to cite other commitments as preventing participation in adult learning and CVET, while those with native-born parents are most likely to say they do not need to participate.

Table 51. **Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1901-Q1910/ Q19	You said you have not taken part in any organised training in the last year. What were the main reasons for this? (multiple answers possible) (% – EU)									
	You feel you do not need it	It is difficult to fit in with other commitments	You feel you are too old	It is too expensive	You cannot find suitable activities	Not enough support	You did not have the right skills or qualifications	Other	None	DK/NA
EU-28	36	32	28	15	13	11	7	13	4	1
Sex										
Men	39	30	26	13	14	10	7	11	5	1
Women	33	34	29	16	13	11	8	14	3	1
Age										
25-34	29	48	2	22	16	13	8	11	4	1
35-44	29	49	6	23	17	17	8	11	5	1
45-54	30	41	13	21	18	16	10	14	4	1
55-64	39	31	26	14	12	11	7	17	4	2
65-74	44	20	40	9	11	7	6	13	4	1
75+	39	18	61	7	9	6	7	11	3	2
Migration background (parents born abroad)										
Both	30	37	24	22	16	18	9	14	4	2
Only one	36	33	25	20	13	13	7	14	4	3
None	37	31	28	14	13	10	7	13	4	1

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Those with a low level of education (14%) are more likely to say there is not enough support (Table 52) than those with a high level (9%) and that they do not have the right skills or qualifications (low-level education 12%; high level 4%).

Adults who are unemployed and seeking work are more likely to give several reasons: training being too expensive (33%), not finding suitable activities (25%), lack of support (23%) and not having the right skills or qualifications (17%). Those in work (46%) and adults looking after the home (43%) are the most likely to say it's difficult to fit in with other commitments.

Adults working in elementary occupations are more likely to give several reasons, including training being too expensive (24%), lack of support (18%) and not having the right skills or qualifications (14%).

Table 52. **Access: reasons for not participating in training in the previous 12 months; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1901-Q1910/Q19	You said you have not taken part in any organised training in the last year. What were the main reasons for this? (multiple answers possible)									
	You feel you do not need it	It is difficult to fit in with other commitments	You feel you are too old	It is too expensive	You cannot find suitable activities	Not enough support	You did not have the right skills or qualifications	Other	None	DK/NA
Education level										
Low	35	30	35	16	14	14	12	14	4	2
Middle	36	33	26	15	12	10	6	13	4	1
High	38	33	22	13	14	9	4	12	5	1
Employment status										
Working	34	46	12	18	15	13	6	10	4	1
Retired	42	19	45	9	10	7	6	14	4	2
Students	32	39	1	10	10	7	1	17	5	5
Looking after the home	30	43	20	20	15	15	12	13	4	1

Q1901-Q1910/Q19		You said you have not taken part in any organised training in the last year. What were the main reasons for this? (multiple answers possible)								
	You feel you do not need it	It is difficult to fit in with other commitments	You feel you are too old	It is too expensive	You cannot find suitable activities	Not enough support	You did not have the right skills or qualifications	Other	None	DK/NA
Unemployed and looking for a job	20	37	15	33	25	23	17	15	3	1
Unemployed and not looking for a job	29	29	22	22	17	17	13	22	3	1
Current occupation										
Managers	37	48	8	13	16	12	3	10	3	1
Professionals	32	45	8	15	15	11	4	10	6	0
Technicians and associate professionals	32	48	10	17	16	13	4	8	6	0
Clerical support workers	34	50	12	21	15	10	5	11	4	0
Services and sales workers	34	45	15	20	14	16	8	8	5	1
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	37	51	15	14	16	9	8	15	4	1
Craft and related trades workers	36	45	12	16	15	12	6	12	3	2
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	38	42	12	18	18	15	11	11	3	3
Elementary occupations	31	38	19	24	17	18	14	14	1	1
Armed forces occupations	40	53	2	1	6	0	0	1	0	0
Other	32	47	14	16	10	14	2	6	11	0

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

4.4. Encouraging participation in work-related learning and training

Adults were positive about measures to encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training (Figure 4). Some 58% totally agree that flexible working hours or time off work to learn would encourage people to participate; 56% that people would be encouraged by financial incentives or support, 54% by certification of learning and training recognised by employers, and 54% through support with childcare and other caring responsibilities.

Just under half of adults totally agree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: more information and guidance (49%), being able to adapt the learning to individual needs (49%) and better-quality training (48%).

For all items covered in this question, the vast majority agree that the measures would encourage greater participation (either totally or tend to agree). No more than 10% of adults disagree that any of the items would encourage greater participation.

Women (51%) are more likely than men (47%) to agree totally that more information and guidance would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training (Table 53). Total agreement across age groups in the working population ranges from 50% for those aged between 25 and 34 to 47% for those aged 55 to 64 and 51% of older adults, no longer in the working population. Some 50% of those with native-born parents and those with both parents born abroad totally agree that more information and guidance would encourage participation in adult learning and CVET.

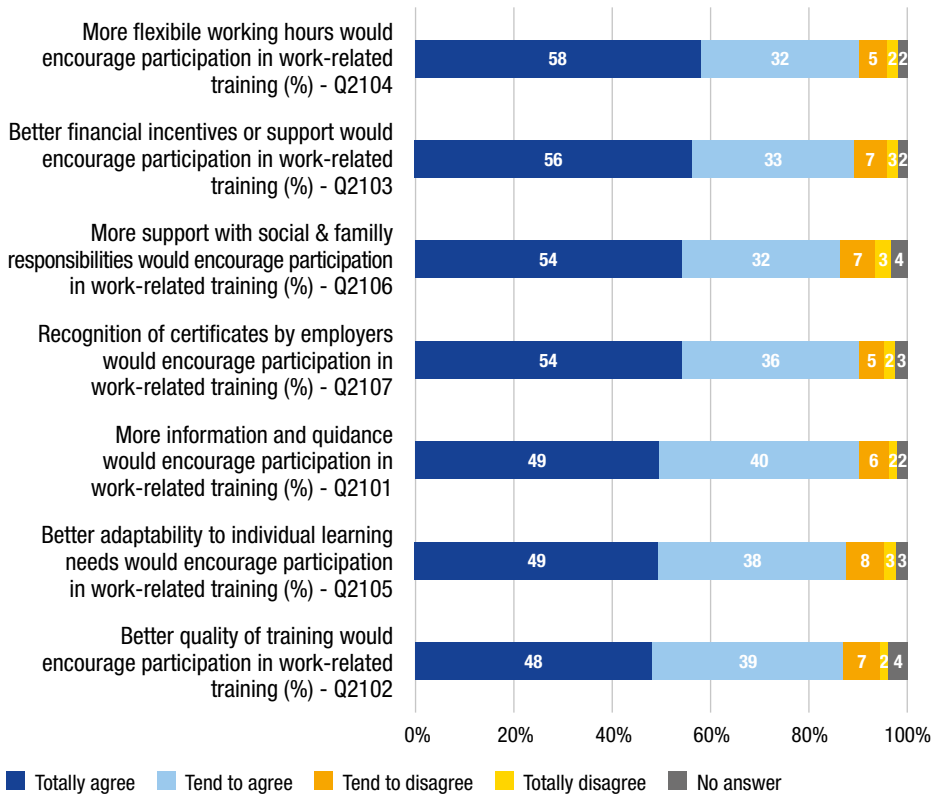
Adults with a low level of education (53%) are more likely to express total agreement that better information and guidance would encourage participation in adult learning and CVET (Table 54), compared with those with a high education level (47%). Total agreement is also higher among those looking after the home (56%) and unemployed adults looking for work (55%) or not looking for work (54%).

Those in armed forces (60%) and elementary occupations (55%) are most likely to agree totally that more information and guidance would encourage greater participation.

Better-quality training would also encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training (Table 55). More women (49%) totally agree than men (47%). Total agreement that better training would encourage

Figure 4. Access: measures to encourage participation in training; overall % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q21 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding work-related learning and training participation (EU-28)



Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

more participation ranges between 46% and 47% across the 25- to 64-year-olds in the working population, and is higher among adults with both parents born abroad (51%) compared to those with native-born parents (48%).

Table 53. **Access: need for more information and guidance; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2101/ Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	50	40	6	2	2	90	8
Sex							
Men	47	42	7	2	2	89	9
Women	51	39	6	1	3	90	7
Age							
25-34	50	42	6	1	1	92	7
35-44	49	41	7	2	1	90	9
45-54	49	42	7	1	1	91	8
55-64	47	42	7	2	2	89	9
65-74	51	38	5	2	4	89	7
75+	51	35	5	2	7	86	7
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	50	39	6	2	3	89	8
Only one	46	43	6	2	3	89	8
None	50	40	6	2	2	90	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 54. **Access: need for more information and guidance; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	53	35	6	2	4	88	8
Middle	50	40	6	2	2	90	8
High	47	43	7	1	2	90	8

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Employment status							
Working	48	43	7	1	1	91	8
Retired	51	38	5	2	4	89	7
Students	48	46	6	0	0	94	6
Looking after the home	56	34	4	3	3	90	7
Unemployed and looking for a job	55	35	7	2	1	90	9
Unemployed and not looking for a job	54	34	5	2	5	88	7
Current occupation							
Managers	44	45	7	2	2	89	9
Professionals	46	44	8	1	1	90	9
Technicians and associate professionals	45	45	7	2	1	90	9
Clerical support workers	45	45	8	1	1	90	9
Services and sales workers	52	40	6	1	1	92	7
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	49	44	5	1	1	93	6
Craft and related trades workers	52	38	6	2	2	90	8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	50	42	6	1	1	92	7
Elementary occupations	55	37	5	2	1	92	7
Armed forces occupations	60	40	0	0	0	100	0
Other	46	45	6	0	3	91	6

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 55. **Access: improve the quality of training; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2102/ Q21.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Better quality of training						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	48	39	7	2	4	87	9
Sex							
Men	47	39	8	2	4	86	10
Women	49	38	7	1	5	87	8
Age							
25-34	46	44	8	1	1	90	9
35-44	46	41	9	2	2	87	11
45-54	47	39	9	2	3	86	11
55-64	47	39	7	2	5	86	9
65-74	52	35	5	2	6	87	7
75+	52	30	5	2	11	82	7
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	51	36	6	2	5	87	8
Only one	46	39	8	2	5	85	10
None	48	39	7	2	4	87	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a low level of education (49%) are slightly more likely to agree totally about improving the quality of adult learning and CVET (Table 56) than those with a high level (47%).

Total agreement that improved training would encourage participation is lower among adults who are in work (45%) than those unemployed and looking for a job (50%). Those in armed forces occupations (63%) and craft and related trades workers (51%) are the most likely to agree totally.

Table 56. **Access: improve the quality of training; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	53	35	6	2	4	88	8
Middle	50	40	6	2	2	90	8
High	47	43	7	1	2	90	8
Employment status							
Working	48	43	7	1	1	91	8
Retired	51	38	5	2	4	89	7
Students	48	46	6	0	0	94	6
Looking after the home	56	34	4	3	3	90	7
Unemployed and looking for a job	55	35	7	2	1	90	9
Unemployed and not looking for a job	54	34	5	2	5	88	7
Current occupation							
Managers	44	45	7	2	2	89	9
Professionals	46	44	8	1	1	90	9
Technicians and associate professionals	45	45	7	2	1	90	9
Clerical support workers	45	45	8	1	1	90	9
Services and sales workers	52	40	6	1	1	92	7
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	49	44	5	1	1	93	6
Craft and related trades workers	52	38	6	2	2	90	8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	50	42	6	1	1	92	7

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Elementary occupations	55	37	5	2	1	92	7
Armed forces occupations	60	40	0	0	0	100	0
Other	46	45	6	0	3	91	6

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Overall, 56% of adults totally agree that financial incentives or support would encourage greater participation in work-related learning and training (Table 57).

Women (58%) are more likely than men (54%) to agree totally that financial incentives or support would encourage greater participation. Younger adults are more likely than older adults to express total agreement (60% of 25- to 34-year-olds compared to 54% of those aged between 55 and 64). Adults with native-born parents (56%) are also more likely to agree totally than those with both parents born abroad (54%).

A larger proportion of people with middle-level qualifications (58%) totally agree that financial support would incentivise more people to participate in adult learning and CVET (Table 58), compared to those with a high (55%) or low level (56%) of education. Total agreement is highest among unemployed people looking for a job (62%) and lowest for those in work (56%). Analysis of current occupation shows that total agreement is lowest among managers (48%) and highest among those in armed forces occupations (73%), plant and machine operators and assemblers (62%) and craft and related trades workers (61%).

Table 57. **Access: financial support; age, sex and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2103/ Q21.3	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Financial incentives or support						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	56	33	7	2	2	89	9
Sex							
Men	54	34	7	3	2	88	10
Women	58	32	6	2	2	90	8
Age							
25-34	60	30	7	2	1	90	9
35-44	59	31	6	3	1	90	9
45-54	55	35	7	2	1	90	9
55-64	54	35	7	2	2	89	9
65-74	54	34	6	3	3	88	9
75+	52	31	7	4	6	83	11
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	54	32	9	3	2	86	12
Only one	57	32	7	2	2	89	9
None	56	33	6	3	2	89	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 58. **Access: financial support; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Financial incentives or support						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	56	31	6	3	4	87	9
Middle	58	31	6	3	2	89	9
High	55	35	7	2	1	90	9

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Financial incentives or support						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Employment status							
Working	56	34	7	2	1	90	9
Retired	54	32	7	3	4	86	10
Students	60	29	8	1	2	89	9
Looking after the home	60	29	5	3	3	89	8
Unemployed and looking for a job	62	27	6	3	2	89	9
Unemployed and not looking for a job	57	33	4	3	3	90	7
Current occupation							
Managers	48	40	8	3	1	88	11
Professionals	57	34	7	1	1	91	8
Technicians and associate professionals	56	33	7	3	1	89	10
Clerical support workers	53	37	9	1	0	90	10
Services and sales workers	58	32	6	3	1	90	9
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	58	34	5	2	1	92	7
Craft and related trades workers	61	28	6	3	2	89	9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	62	29	6	3	0	91	9
Elementary occupations	58	34	5	1	2	92	6
Armed forces occupations	73	20	1	6	0	93	7
Other	61	29	4	4	2	90	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 58% of adults totally agree that flexible working hours or time off work to learn would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training; this is the highest proportion of any of the items included in the survey (Table 59).

Women (61%) are more likely than men (55%) to agree totally that flexible working hours or time off work to learn would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training. Total agreement is slightly higher among younger adults (61% among 25- to 34-year-olds, falling to 56% among those aged between 55 and 64). Adults whose parents are native-born (58%) are more likely than other adults to agree totally.

Table 59. **Access: flexible working hours; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2104/ Q21.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Flexible working hours or time off work to learn (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	58	32	5	3	2	90	8
Sex							
Men	55	34	6	3	2	89	9
Women	61	30	5	2	2	91	7
Age							
25-34	61	31	6	1	1	92	7
35-44	60	31	6	2	1	91	8
45-54	58	33	5	3	1	91	8
55-64	56	34	6	2	2	90	8
65-74	55	34	5	3	3	89	8
75+	54	32	5	3	6	86	8
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	57	30	7	3	3	87	10
Only one	54	35	6	3	2	89	9
None	58	33	5	2	2	91	7

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Adults with a high level of education (60%) are more likely to agree totally that flexible working hours would increase participation (Table 60) than those with a low education level (55%). Those looking after the home (60%) and adults in work (59%) are also most likely to totally agree. Total agreement is also highest among armed forces occupations (72%) and professionals (62%) and is lowest among those in skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery occupations (45%).

Table 60. **Access: flexible working hours; education and employment**
% (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q2104/Q21.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Flexible working hours or time off work to learn						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	55	32	5	4	4	87	9
Middle	57	33	6	2	2	90	8
High	60	32	5	2	1	92	7
Employment status							
Working	59	32	6	2	1	91	8
Retired	55	33	5	3	4	88	8
Students	63	32	3	2	0	95	5
Looking after the home	60	29	5	3	3	89	8
Unemployed and looking for a job	57	34	5	3	1	91	8
Unemployed and not looking for a job	53	38	4	2	3	91	6
Current occupation							
Managers	55	35	8	2	0	90	10
Professionals	62	30	5	2	1	92	7
Technicians and associate professionals	59	30	6	3	2	89	9
Clerical support workers	60	32	5	2	1	92	7

Q2104/Q21.4	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Flexible working hours or time off work to learn						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Services and sales workers	57	33	6	3	1	90	9
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	45	43	8	2	2	88	10
Craft and related trades workers	59	31	5	4	1	90	9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	53	35	8	3	1	88	11
Elementary occupations	54	33	8	3	2	87	11
Armed forces occupations	72	18	8	2	0	90	10
Other	61	26	8	3	2	87	11

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 49% of adults totally agree that being able to adapt learning to individual needs would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training (Table 61). Women (51%) are more likely than men (47%) to express total agreement. Across age groups in the working population, 51% to 49% totally agree – the same difference between those with both parents born abroad (51%) and those whose parents are native-born (49%).

Total agreement that adapting training to individual needs would increase participation (Table 62) is 50% among those with a high-level education and 48% among those with a low level. Total agreement is also highest among adults who are looking after the home (54%) and those people who are unemployed and looking for work (53%), and lowest among those in work (49%). Total agreement on adapting training to individual needs is found across all levels of occupation, being highest among professionals, and services and sales workers (both 51%).

Table 61. **Access: adapting learning to individual needs; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2105/ Q21.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Being able to adapt the learning to individual needs (for example, doing it at your own pace or online)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	49	38	8	2	3	87	10
Sex							
Men	47	40	8	3	2	87	11
Women	51	36	7	3	3	87	10
Age							
25-34	51	38	8	2	1	89	10
35-44	49	40	8	2	1	89	10
45-54	50	38	8	3	1	88	11
55-64	49	37	8	3	3	86	11
65-74	49	37	7	3	4	86	10
75+	47	35	7	3	8	82	10
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	51	33	9	4	3	84	13
Only one	48	38	8	4	2	86	12
None	49	38	8	2	3	87	10

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 62. **Access: adapting learning to individual needs; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2105/Q21.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Being able to adapt the learning to individual needs (for example, doing it at your own pace or online) (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	48	35	8	4	5	83	12

Q2105/Q21.5	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Being able to adapt the learning to individual needs (for example, doing it at your own pace or online) (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Middle	48	39	8	3	2	87	11
High	50	39	7	2	2	89	9
Employment status							
Working	49	39	8	2	2	88	10
Retired	48	37	7	3	5	85	10
Students	51	40	8	1	0	91	9
Looking after the home	54	31	8	4	3	85	12
Unemployed and looking for a job	53	35	8	3	1	88	11
Unemployed and not looking for a job	52	35	6	4	3	87	10
Current occupation							
Managers	49	40	8	2	1	89	10
Professionals	51	38	8	2	1	89	10
Technicians and associate professionals	48	40	9	1	2	88	10
Clerical support workers	47	43	7	2	1	90	9
Services and sales workers	51	39	7	2	1	90	9
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	44	44	7	3	2	88	10
Craft and related trades workers	50	37	8	3	2	87	11
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	43	43	10	3	1	86	13
Elementary occupations	50	37	8	3	2	87	11
Armed forces occupations	43	41	6	10	0	84	16
Other	52	32	10	2	4	84	12

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Some 54% of adults totally agree that participation in work-related learning and training would be encouraged by support with childcare and other caring responsibilities (Table 63).

Women (58%) are more likely than men (49%) to agree totally that participation in work-related learning and training would be encouraged by support with childcare and other caring responsibilities. Total agreement is also, understandably, higher among younger age groups (55% for those aged between 25 and 44).

Table 63. **Access: support with childcare; age, sex and migration background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2106/ Q21.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Support with childcare and other caring responsibilities (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	54	32	7	3	4	86	10
Sex							
Men	49	34	9	3	5	83	12
Women	58	30	6	3	3	88	9
Age							
25-34	55	32	8	2	3	87	10
35-44	55	31	8	4	2	86	12
45-54	51	34	9	3	3	85	12
55-64	52	34	7	3	4	86	10
65-74	56	31	5	3	5	87	8
75+	58	26	5	3	8	84	8
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	57	26	8	4	5	83	12
Only one	53	34	7	2	4	87	9
None	54	32	7	3	4	86	10

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Total agreement that support for childcare would increase participation (Table 64) is notably higher among those with a low-level education (58%) than those with a high level (52%).

Total agreement is particularly high among adults who are looking after the home (63%) and among students (60%) compared to those in work (51%). Total agreement is high across all occupations, including those relatively lowly paid: services and sales workers (56%), craft and related trades workers (56%), elementary occupations (55%) and professionals (53%).

Table 64. **Access: support with childcare; education and employment**
% (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

Q2106/Q21.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Support with childcare and other caring responsibilities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	58	28	6	3	5	86	9
Middle	55	31	7	3	4	86	10
High	52	34	8	3	3	86	11
Employment status							
Working	51	34	9	3	3	85	12
Retired	56	30	6	2	6	86	8
Students	60	30	4	4	2	90	8
Looking after the home	63	26	5	3	3	89	8
Unemployed and looking for a job	58	28	7	3	4	86	10
Unemployed and not looking for a job	56	32	5	5	2	88	10
Current occupation							
Managers	48	36	11	3	2	84	14
Professionals	53	34	8	2	3	87	10
Technicians and associate professionals	47	35	11	4	3	82	15
Clerical support workers	48	36	10	3	3	84	13

Q2106/Q21.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Support with childcare and other caring responsibilities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Services and sales workers	56	32	7	3	2	88	10
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	49	39	7	1	4	88	8
Craft and related trades workers	56	29	9	3	3	85	12
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	50	32	10	4	4	82	14
Elementary occupations	55	30	7	4	4	85	11
Armed forces occupations	56	35	6	3	0	91	9
Other	50	35	10	1	4	85	11

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Women (56%) are more likely than men (52%) to agree totally that employer-recognised certification of learning and training would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training (Table 65). Total agreement is consistent at 54% across all age groups in the working population. It is 54% for those with both parents born abroad and 53% for those with native-born parents.

Interestingly, 54% of those with a high-level education totally agree that certification would encourage more people to learn (Table 66), compared to 52% of those with a low level. Total agreement is highest among students (58%) and people looking after the home (both 58%). These findings may reflect that both those who have certificated learning and those outside the labour market recognise its importance. More than half of adults in all the occupation types totally agree that certification of learning would encourage more participation in adult learning and CVET; the only exception is skilled agricultural workers (48%).

Table 65. **Access: learning certificates recognised by employers; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2107/ Q21.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Certification of the learning and training recognised by employers						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	54	36	5	2	3	90	7
Sex							
Men	52	37	6	2	3	89	8
Women	56	35	4	2	3	91	6
Age							
25-34	54	39	5	1	1	93	6
35-44	54	37	6	2	1	91	8
45-54	54	37	6	2	1	91	8
55-64	54	36	5	2	3	90	7
65-74	54	34	5	3	4	88	8
75+	52	32	4	3	9	84	7
Migration background (parents born abroad)							
Both	53	35	5	3	4	88	8
Only one	55	36	5	2	2	91	7
None	54	36	5	2	3	90	7

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 66. **Access: learning certificates recognised by employers; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2107/Q21.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Certification of the learning and training recognised by employers (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
Education level							
Low	52	34	6	3	5	86	9
Middle	54	36	5	2	3	90	7

Q2107/Q21.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Certification of the learning and training recognised by employers (% – EU)						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
High	54	37	5	2	2	91	7
Employment status							
Working	53	38	6	2	1	91	8
Retired	54	33	5	2	6	87	7
Students	58	35	4	2	1	93	6
Looking after the home	58	33	4	1	4	91	5
Unemployed and looking for a job	56	33	5	3	3	89	8
Unemployed and not looking for a job	56	34	4	2	4	90	6
Current occupation							
Managers	52	38	8	1	1	90	9
Professionals	55	37	5	1	2	92	6
Technicians and associate professionals	52	39	6	1	2	91	7
Clerical support workers	49	42	6	2	1	91	8
Services and sales workers	56	36	5	2	1	92	7
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	48	42	6	2	2	90	8
Craft and related trades workers	54	36	5	2	3	90	7
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	53	36	7	3	1	89	10
Elementary occupations	53	34	6	3	4	87	9
Armed forces occupations	58	38	4	0	0	96	4
Other	61	31	6	2	0	92	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

CHAPTER 5.

More perceptions: participation and non-participation

Adults who had participated in learning and CVET in the 12 months prior to the survey were asked why they did so. Chapter 5 examines differences between the views of participants and non-participants, including on the importance and benefits of, as well as access to, adult learning and CVET. The chapter also discusses participation rates by different groups of the adult population compared to EU objectives and to skill needs and deficits.

Overall, the survey finds no substantial differences in the opinions of those who had participated in the 12 months prior to the survey and those who had not. Those who did not participate seem to be in less demanding jobs, but still lack technical and general skills to a greater degree than those who participated.

Views about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET are similar between those who participated and those who did not. Those who did not participate tend to be more positive about their educational benefits.

Unsurprisingly, those who did not participate did not look so often for information about adult learning and CVET, but this does not appear to be due to any problems in finding information, or any perception that there are not opportunities to learn. Those who did not participate also had lower levels of support from family and friends and relied a little more on government services. Reasons that people give for not participating in the last 12 months are in line with the general reasons. While there is strong support for measures to encourage participation in training, there are no measures cited as especially important. This suggests that support measures are contingent on circumstances and not specific characteristics.

The survey results also support attempts by the EU to increase participation in adult learning, especially taking into account the survey's findings in relation to skill needs and skill deficits.

5.1. Importance

Among those who did not participate (69%) in adult learning and CVET in the previous 12 months, total agreement that learning throughout life is important (Table 67) is much lower compared to those who did participate (89%). This may indicate a poor image of the importance of adult learning and CVET, which might be why some do not participate. However, Table 67 also shows there is a much smaller difference in total agreement between those who did not participate (38%) and those who did (40%) over the growing importance of adult CVET. Further, there is little difference in terms of total agreement about making adult learning and CVET an investment priority between those who did not participate (56%) and those who did (55%).

Table 67. **Importance of learning throughout life, increasing importance and an investment priority; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q0905/Q9.5		Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: Continuing to learn throughout life is an important value for you					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	78	18	2	1	1	96	3
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	83	15	2	0	0	98	2
Did not participate	69	24	4	2	1	93	6
Q1500/Q15		Do you think adult learning will be more important for enabling people to progress in their careers in 10 years' time?					
	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	No, not really	No, not at all	Don't know	Total yes	Total no
EU-28 overall	39	45	10	3	3	84	13
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	40	46	10	2	2	86	12
Did not participate	38	43	11	4	4	81	15

Q0907/Q9.7	Thinking about learning and training, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: The (nationality) government should prioritise investment in learning and training for adults						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28 overall	55	34	7	2	2	89	9
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	55	34	7	2	2	55	34
Did not participate	56	33	6	3	2	89	9

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Far fewer of those who did not participate (48%) totally agree that their job requires them to keep their skills up to date compared to those who did participate (67%), but more of those who did not participate totally agree that they lack technical skills (did not participate 10%; participated 9%) and general skills (did not participate 11%; participated 7%) (Table 68).

Table 68. **Job requirements: keeping skills up to date, lack of technical and general skills; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2201/Q22.1	Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28 overall	63	25	7	4	1	88	11
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	67	24	6	3	0	91	9
Did not participate	48	29	13	8	2	77	21

Q2203/Q22.3		Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some technical skills to carry out your job at the required level					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28 overall	9	19	29	42	1	28	71
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	9	19	30	41	1	28	71
Did not participate	10	20	26	42	2	30	68
Q2203/Q22.3		Thinking about your current job, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: You feel you lack some general skills to carry out your job at the required level					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	8	15	29	47	1	23	76
By participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	7	15	30	47	1	22	77
Did not participate	11	18	26	43	2	29	69

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

5.2. Benefits

5.2.1. Employment-related benefits

Those who did not participate (55%) in adult learning and CVET are as convinced of their importance to career progression as those who did participate (55%). They also have similar views on adult learning and CVET's role in reducing unemployment; 52% of those who did not participate totally agree, compared to 51% of those who participated. However, more of those who did not participate (53%) totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important to have a better income compared to those who did participate (47%). Further, 57% of those who did not participate totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important when looking for a new job, compared to 54% of those who participated (Table 69).

Table 69. **Benefits: employment related benefits; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2203/Q22.3		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important to progress in a career					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	55	36	6	2	1	91	8
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	55	35	7	2	1	90	9
Did not participate	55	35	6	2	2	90	8
Q1405/Q14.5		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important to have a better income					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	49	37	10	3	1	86	13
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	47	39	10	3	1	86	13
Did not participate	53	33	9	4	1	86	13
Q1403/Q14.3		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important when looking for a new job					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	55	36	5	2	2	91	7
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	54	38	6	1	1	92	7
Did not participate	57	33	5	3	2	90	8
Q1408/Q14.8		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important to reduce unemployment					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	51	33	10	4	2	84	14
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	51	34	10	4	1	85	14
Did not participate	52	31	9	6	2	83	15

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

5.2.2. Personal development

Those who participated in the 12 months prior to the survey are more likely (73%) to totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important for personal development (Table 70) than those who did not participate (65%).

Table 70. **Important for personal development; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1406/Q14.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important for personal development						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	70	26	2	1	1	96	3
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	73	24	2	1	0	97	3
Did not participate	65	29	3	2	1	94	5

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Again, as with perceptions of the employment benefits, this may indicate an image problem for adult learning and CVET. However, views differ over the educational benefits of adult learning and CVET (Table 71). More of those who did not participate totally agree that adult learning and CVET are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional degree (did not participate 34%; participated 31%), and that they are mainly for adults without a degree (did not participate 49%; participated 41%). Further, 46% of both those who did not participate and those who did totally agree that adult learning and CVET are as important as school or university education.

5.3. Quality

Perceptions of the quality of adult learning and CVET (Table 72) as very good are more positive among respondents who participated in the last year (12%), compared to those who did not (10%). However, those who participated are more likely (74%) to see the quality of adult learning and CVET as good than those who did not participate (67%).

Table 71. **Educational benefits; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1401/Q14.1		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are as important as the education you receive at school or university					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	46	37	12	3	2	83	15
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	46	37	13	3	1	83	16
Did not participate	46	37	10	4	3	83	14
Q1402/Q14.2		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are a way to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	32	41	16	6	5	73	22
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	31	41	18	6	4	72	24
Did not participate	34	40	13	7	6	74	20
Q1407/Q14.7		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Adult learning and continuing training ... are important primarily for adults that do not already have a degree					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	44	32	15	7	2	76	22
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	41	32	18	8	1	73	26
Did not participate	49	33	11	5	2	82	16
Q2003/Q20.3		To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: They can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	32	41	14	7	6	73	21
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	31	42	16	7	4	73	23
Did not participate	34	39	11	7	9	73	18

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Table 72. **Perceptions of quality; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1300/Q13	Continuing to learn throughout life is an important value for you. Overall, do you think the quality of adult learning and CVET in (our country) is generally regarded as good or bad?						
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad	Don't know	Total good	Total bad
EU-28	11	58	19	5	7	69	24
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	10	60	19	4	7	70	23
Did not participate	12	55	19	6	8	67	25

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

5.4. Access

More people who did not participate (34%) think there are many opportunities for adult learning and CVET in their country (Table 73) than do those who participated (31%). Unsurprisingly, far fewer people who did not participate (6%) looked often for adult learning and CVET opportunities compared to those who participated (25%). This implies that finding information is not a problem. Correspondingly, those who did not participate used available information sources less than those who did participate. The only exception is employment agencies, where the usage rate is the same. Those who did not participate feel less well-informed (19%) about the availability of organised work-related training activities compared to those who participated (28%).

Table 73. **Opportunities and information; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1001/Q10.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: There are many adult learning and continuing training opportunities available in our country						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	31	41	17	5	6	72	22

Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	31	41	18	6	4	72	24
Did not participate	34	40	13	7	6	74	20
Q1600/Q16	In the last 12 months, how often have you looked for information on adult learning and training opportunities for yourself?						
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Total sometimes or often	Total rarely or never
EU-28	19	21	15	45	0	40	60
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	25	26	15	33	1	51	48
Did not participate	6	12	15	67	0	18	82
Q1002/Q10.2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: It is easy to find information on adult learning and continuing training opportunities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	26	40	22	6	6	66	28
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	25	41	24	5	5	66	29
Did not participate	28	38	19	7	8	66	26
Q2001/Q20.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organised work-related training activities: You feel well-informed about them						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	24	37	23	11	5	61	34
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	28	44	21	5	2	72	26
Did not participate	19	32	26	15	8	51	41

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Various sources of guidance about learning (Table 74) are used less by those who did not participate, except for employment agencies, which may suggest that a significant proportion of those who do not participate are unemployed.

Table 74. **Guidance about learning; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1101-Q1112/Q11	If you wanted guidance about adult learning and continuing training for adults in (our country), where would you get the best advice? (multiple answers possible)		
	EU-28	Participated in the previous 12 months	Did not participate in the previous 12 months
On the internet	63	69	51
Local college or university	47	51	39
Professional or sector associations	43	46	36
Friends or colleagues	41	45	34
An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	30	30	30
Your employer	30	33	25
Your family	27	27	26
The government (other public administration services than employment agency)	27	28	25
Trade unions	20	21	18
Other	2	2	2
None of these	1	1	2

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Similarly, the degree of various sources of support (Table 75) for taking part in adult learning and CVET is rated lower by those who did not participate than by those who did. Support from family and employers is rated noticeably lower. Those who did not participate only cite employment agencies as a source of support more often than those who did participate.

Table 75. **Support for participation; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1201-Q1210/Q12	If you wanted to take part in training, who do you think would offer the most support? By support we mean financial and practical support (multiple answers possible)		
	EU-28	Participated in the previous 12 months	Did not participate in the previous 12 months
Your family	52	55	47
Your employer	39	43	29
The government (other public administration services than employment agency)	31	33	28
Professional or sector associations	29	31	27
Friends or colleagues	27	29	24
An employment agency (excluding temporary job agencies)	23	22	24
Trade unions	15	15	12
Other	2	2	2
None of these	4	4	5

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

The main reasons that people give for not participating in adult learning and CVET in the year prior to the survey (Table 76) are because they saw no need, they felt too old, and they had other commitments. These are in line with the general reasons adults give for not participating.

Table 76. **Reasons for non-participation (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q1901-Q1910/Q19 You said you have not taken part in any organised training in the last year. What were the main reasons for this? (multiple answers possible)		
	Non-participants	EU-28
It's difficult to fit in with other commitments	31	32
You feel you are too old	32	28
It is too expensive	14	15
You cannot find suitable activities	12	13
Not enough support	11	11
You did not have the right skills or qualifications	8	7
Other	13	13

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Those who did not participate in adult learning and training in the previous year strongly support all the measures proposed to encourage participation, and to a similar extent as those who did participate. There is no single measure that seems particularly important or persuasive that would prompt those who did not participate to take part in adult learning and VET. This may imply that measures should be reinforcing. An adult could conceivably benefit from greater guidance and training adapted to their needs that is certificated and could take advantage of such an opportunity if they had support with childcare (Table 77).

Table 77. **Measures to encourage participation; participation and non-participation % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

Q2101/Q21.1	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: More information and guidance						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	50	40	6	2	2	90	8
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	49	42	7	1	1	91	8
Did not participate	50	38	6	2	4	88	8

Q2102/Q21.2		To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Better quality of training					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	48	39	7	2	4	87	9
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	48	40	8	1	3	88	9
Did not participate	48	38	6	2	6	86	8
Q2103/Q21.3		To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Financial incentives or support					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	56	33	7	2	2	89	9
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	56	33	7	2	2	89	9
Did not participate	56	32	6	3	3	88	9
Q2104/Q21.4		To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Flexible working hours or time off work to learn					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	58	32	5	3	2	90	8
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	59	32	5	2	2	91	7
Did not participate	55	33	6	3	3	88	9
Q2105/Q21.5		To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Being able to adapt the learning to individual needs (for example, doing it at your own pace or online)					
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	49	38	8	2	3	87	10
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	50	38	8	2	2	88	10
Did not participate	47	37	8	4	4	84	12

Q2106/Q21.6	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Support with childcare and other caring responsibilities						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	54	32	7	3	4	86	10
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	54	32	8	3	3	86	11
Did not participate	54	32	7	3	4	86	10
Q2107/Q21.7	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training: Certification of the learning and training recognised by employers						
	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total agree	Total disagree
EU-28	54	36	5	2	3	90	7
Participation in adult learning within the last year							
Participated	54	37	5	2	2	91	7
Did not participate	53	35	5	3	4	88	8

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

5.5. Participation in work-related learning and training

The European skills agenda has defined indicators for adult participation in learning and CVET and objectives to be reached by 2025.

The indicators measure participation by adults in the previous 12 months in defined learning activities. Cedefop's survey also measured participation in organised work-related learning in the previous 12 months. Although the datasets are not directly comparable ⁽¹⁶⁾, findings in Cedefop's survey confirm patterns observed in the 2016 adult education survey (AES). A look at the EU objectives alongside the findings of the 2016 AES and the Cedefop survey indicates that adult participation in learning is below the desired range (Table 78).

⁽¹⁶⁾ See Annex.

Table 78. Participation in adult learning; comparison of EU targets with findings of 2016 adult education survey and Cedefop survey

	Objectives for 2025	Current level (latest year available AES)	Cedefop opinion survey
	Participation in formal and non-formal learning aged 25-64	Participation in formal and non-formal learning aged 25-64	Participation in organised work-related learning aged 25+
Participation of adults in learning over a period of 12 months	50%	38% (2016)	38% (2019)
Participation of low-qualified adults in learning over a period of 12 months	30%	18% (2016)	17% (2019)

NB: AES and Cedefop survey findings are not directly comparable. Definitions of adult learning and the countries covered are different in the two surveys.
 Source: Cedefop.

A more detailed look at the survey findings also supports the case for raising adult participation in learning. According to Cedefop’s survey, more than a third of respondents (38%) have taken part in an organised work-related training activity in the past year, including 16% who were participating when surveyed (Table 79).

Participation in organised work-related learning is higher among younger age groups in the working population, ranging from 57% of 25- to 34-year-olds, who were either participating when surveyed or had done so in the previous 12 months, to 33% for those aged between 55 and 64. Participation is higher for those with both parents born abroad (42%) than those with native-born parents (37%).

In addition, 63% of adults (64% of women and 62% of men) and at least 62% of the working population (those aged 25 to 64) totally agree that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date.

The lack of technical and general skills is consistent across all age groups in the working population.

Table 79. Comparison of participation in organised work-related learning with need to keep skills up to date and technical and general skills deficits; sex, age and migrant background % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)

	Q1703/Q17.3 Participation in organised work-related training activity		Q2201/Q22.1 Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date	To carry out your job at the required level do you lack	
	Yes, when surveyed	Within the last year	Total agree	Q2203/Q22.3 Technical skills Total agree	Q2204/Q22.4 General skills Total agree
EU-28	16	22	88	28	23
Sex					
Men	16	23	88	29	25
Women	15	21	87	28	22
Age					
25-34	25	32	88	28	22
35-44	21	33	89	29	24
45-54	21	28	87	29	24
55-64	13	20	89	27	24
65-74	5	5	88	29	27
75+	2	2	80	35	27
Migration background (parents born abroad)					
Both	18	24	88	37	33
Only one	15	21	88	29	24
None	15	22	88	27	23

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

Participation in organised work-related learning (Table 80) is much higher among those with a high-level education (52%) than those with a low level (17%). People in work participate at a much higher rate (58%) than unemployed people looking for a job (25%). There are large differences in participation by occupation, ranging from 72% for professionals to 27% for those in elementary occupations.

In addition, 68% of those with a high-level education, 55% of those with a low-level education, 74% of professionals and 37% of those working in

elementary occupations totally agree that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date.

These findings underline that changing job content is rapid and not limited to certain age groups or occupations. Further, they show that adults least likely to participate in adult learning and CVET (those with a low-level education, those in elementary occupations and older adults) are among the most likely to agree that they lack some general and technical skills to carry out their job at the required level.

Table 80. **Comparison of participation in organised work-related learning with need to keep skills up to date and technical and general skills deficits; education and employment % (EU-28, Iceland and Norway)**

	Q1703/Q17.3 Participation in organised work- related training activity		Q2201/Q22.1 Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date	To carry out your job at the required level do you lack	
	Yes, when surveyed	Within the last year		Q2203/ Q22.3 Technical skills	Q2204/ Q22.4 General skills
			Total agree	Total agree	Total agree
EU-28	16	22	88	28	23
Education level					
Low	6	11	78	35	32
Middle	13	19	85	28	25
High	23	29	92	28	20
Employment status					
Working	24	34	88	28	23
Retired	3	4	Only adults in work were asked these questions		
Students	18	21			
Looking after the home	5	6			
Unemployed and looking for a job	12	13			
Unemployed and not looking for a job	5	4			

	Q1703/Q17.3 Participation in organised work- related training activity		Q2201/Q22.1 Your job requires you to keep your skills constantly up to date	To carry out your job at the required level do you lack	
	Yes, when surveyed	Within the last year	Total agree	Q2203/ Q22.3 Technical skills Total agree	Q2204/ Q22.4 General skills Total agree
Current occupation					
Managers	25	34	91	30	22
Professionals	31	41	94	26	20
Technicians and associate professionals	26	38	93	27	23
Clerical support workers	24	34	86	26	20
Services and sales workers	21	31	83	31	26
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery	10	30	84	38	36
Craft and related trades workers	16	23	84	33	29
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	13	26	78	27	26
Elementary occupations	10	17	64	31	35
Armed forces occupations	30	43	87	6	17
Other	22	36	88	36	34

Source: Cedefop opinion survey on adult learning and CVET.

CHAPTER 6.

More perceptions: image

Chapter 6 outlines observations of the opinions expressed by different groups of European adults (grouped by sex, age and migrant background, and by education level and employment) about the importance and benefits of, as well as the ease of access to, adult learning and CVET. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the image of adult learning and CVET, constructed through the opinions of European adults.

6.1. Importance

6.1.1. Sex, age and migration background

Women and men have similar views on the importance of adult learning and CVET. More men than women think that adult learning and CVET will be more important in 10 years, but more women want them to be a priority for government investment. Motivation for participation differs. Women are more likely to participate in organised adult learning and CVET for personal development, while men are more likely to take part in training to improve job skills. Although both strongly feel that, to do their job, they need constantly to keep their skills up to date, more men say they lack general skills.

All age groups believe that adult learning and CVET are important. Opinions about their importance strengthen with age, not only in the working population (those aged between 25 and 64), but also among older people (65+). Older age groups are also most persuaded that adult learning and CVET should be investment priorities.

Unsurprisingly, as people age, motivation to participate in learning shifts from job-related to personal reasons. However, expressions of a lack of technical and general skills is consistent across all age groups in the working population, highlighting that change in job content is not a generational issue.

For insights on migration background, the survey identified adults with both, one and neither parent born abroad. Overall, adults with both parents born abroad are more positive about the importance of adult learning and

CVET. This may reflect that adult learning and CVET can help some people with a migrant background to integrate; for example, those whose formal education was in a country different to the one in which they were surveyed. Those with both parents born abroad also believe more strongly in adult learning and CVET's growing importance. Migrant background seems to have little impact on why adults participate in adult learning and CVET; however, those with both parents born abroad are almost twice as likely to agree totally that they lack technical and general skills.

6.1.2. Education and employment

Adults with a high-level education believe more strongly that adult learning and CVET are important throughout life than those with a low-level education. This attitude and the fact that substantially more people with a high-level education say their job requires them to keep their skills up to date gives some insights into why highly educated people are more likely to participate in adult learning and CVET compared to people with a low level of education.

However, those with a low-level education still have learning needs. The survey finds that those with a low-level education, who are among those least likely to participate in adult learning and CVET, are more than twice as likely as people with a high-level education to say they lack technical and general skills to do their jobs. This may reflect not so much an image of importance of adult learning and CVET as of expectation. Those with a high-level education have a greater expectation of entering jobs that will require further learning. Those with a low-level education in less demanding jobs may have lower expectations of further adult education and CVET despite their job needs.

Adult learning and CVET are important to those inside and outside the labour market. The proportions of retired people who totally agree about the importance of adult learning and CVET are comparable to those among people in work, which signals the value of adult learning and CVET after working life. Retired people believe most strongly in the growing importance of adult learning and CVET. Along with unemployed adults looking for a job, retired people believe most strongly that adult learning and CVET should be investment priorities. Motivation for taking part in organised adult learning and CVET reflects economic status. Those in the labour market look to develop job-related skills; those outside focus on personal development.

Perceptions of adult learning and CVET by occupation are broadly aligned with education level. Those in more highly skilled occupations, like those with a high level of education, believe more strongly in the importance of adult learning and CVET. However, those in lesser skilled jobs are more convinced of their importance in the future. Higher proportions of lower-skilled workers, such as sales workers, also totally agree that adult learning and CVET should be an investment priority compared to, for example, professionals. Those in more highly skilled jobs, such as professionals, are more motivated by personal than job-related reasons to participate in adult learning and CVET compared to those in lower-skilled occupations. This may reflect financial and material circumstances but also, in some independent professions, a merging of professional and personal interests.

Those in more highly skilled jobs have a greater need to keep their skills updated. However, more than half of adults in less highly skilled jobs, such as service and sales workers, and craft and related trades workers also totally agree that their jobs require them to keep their skills up to date. Views on lack of technical and general skills again reflects the skill level of the job. Those in lower-skilled jobs – for example, elementary occupations – are least likely to participate in adult learning and CVET. However, they are most likely to say they lack technical and general skills.

6.2. Benefits

6.2.1. Employment-related benefits

6.2.1.1. *Sex, age and migrant background*

Women and men have similar views about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET. More than half of men and of women totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important for career progression, finding a new job and reducing unemployment. Slightly lower proportions of women and of men totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important to have a better income and that organised work-related activities are important to develop skills for any job.

Views about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET are consistent across age groups. More than half of all age groups totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important for career progression and finding a new job. Significant proportions of all age groups are also convinced

of their important role in having a better income and reducing unemployment. Relatively small variations between age groups seem to reflect various career stages of working life. For example, those aged between 35 and 44, who are most likely to combine qualifications with work experience, are more positive about adult learning and CVET's role in reducing unemployment; younger (25- to 34-year-olds) and older (55- to 64-year-olds) adults, who may sometimes find it more difficult to find a job, are less positive about adult learning and CVET's role in reducing unemployment.

Overall, adults with both parents born abroad are more positive about all the employment-related benefits associated with adult learning and CVET.

6.2.1.2. *Education and employment*

Those with a low-level education are generally more positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET. The biggest divergence in views is over their importance to having a better income and when looking for a new job; people with a low-level education are more positive than those with a high-level education. These differences may reflect the expectations of those more highly educated to enter the labour market at a relatively high salary level, and the higher education levels needed for entry into some professions and highly skilled occupations.

Except for students, those outside the labour market (those looking after the home, unemployed people not looking for work, and retired people) are also generally more positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET for career progression, a better income and finding a job than those in the labour market, either working or unemployed and looking for a job. The positive views of those outside the labour market about adult learning and CVET may reflect the importance adults attach to them as a means of returning to work.

Although all occupations are generally positive about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET, there is no clear pattern on the issue of the importance of adult learning and CVET for better pay. For example, those with a low-level education are more positive about their impact on pay.

The importance of adult learning and CVET for career progression matters equally to those in elementary occupations as to technicians and associate professionals. Similarly, those least likely to agree totally about the importance of adult learning and CVET to finding a job are at different ends of the skills spectrum: managers and those in elementary occupations.

6.2.2. Personal development

More women than men totally agree that adult learning and CVET are important for personal development. While total agreement on this is consistent across all age groups, it is slightly stronger among those with a high level of education and those in more skilled or advanced occupations, for example professionals. This may reflect that higher-skilled workers have less material needs and more scope for personal development.

6.2.3. Further educational attainment

6.2.3.1. *Sex, age and migrant background*

Women and men have similar views about adult learning and CVET as alternative educational pathways to initial and formal education. Similar proportions totally agree that adult learning and CVET are as important as school or university education. Fewer but, again, similar proportions of men and women also totally agree that adult learning and CVET are ways to obtain the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree and are equivalent to a traditional degree.

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET are as important as school or university education and are equivalent to a traditional degree rises steadily with age. The strength of opinion that adult learning and CVET are important primarily for adults without a degree and that organised work-related training activities can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State also increases with age. It is worth noting that those in older age groups are less likely to have attended university than younger adults and may have been more likely to progress in their career through experience and to have had less need for certified learning.

Those with both parents born abroad are also more positive about the equivalence of adult learning and CVET to formal school and university education. This may reflect that formal education for those with both parents born abroad is more likely to have been in a different country than where they lived when surveyed.

6.2.3.2. *Education and employment*

Unsurprisingly, those with a high level of education are less convinced that adult learning and CVET are as important as, or a way to obtain, the equivalent of a traditional college or university degree. They are also more likely to agree totally that adult learning and CVET matter most for adults without a degree

than those with a low-level education. More unemployed people who are looking for work also totally agree about the equivalence of adult learning and CVET and school or university, compared to those in work.

The views of people in different occupations that adult learning and CVET are as important as school or university education do not appear to follow any specific pattern. The lowest proportions that totally agree are found among professionals and elementary occupations, at the opposite ends of the skills spectrum.

Total agreement that adult learning and CVET can offer a route to obtain the equivalent of a university degree is highest among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers. Both occupations are usually reached through specialist vocational rather than general education. In contrast, clerical workers, many of whom are likely to have followed general education, are among those least likely to totally agree that adult learning and CVET can offer a route to obtain the equivalent of a university degree.

Total agreement that organised work-related training activities can be used to obtain qualifications recognised by the State is highest among people unemployed but not looking for work and lowest among those unemployed and looking for a job. This may indicate differences between the perceptions of those not looking for a job and the reality of those looking for one.

6.2.4. Quality

Among age groups, perceptions of quality decline with age, which may reflect experience and changing expectations. Those with both parents born abroad are more positive about the quality of adult learning and CVET, as are those with a high-level education. People in work are the most positive about the quality of adult learning and CVET, while unemployed people looking for a job are the least positive, which may reflect their experiences in trying to find a job.

6.3. Access

6.3.1. Opportunities, information and guidance

6.3.1.1. *Sex, age and migrant background*

Women and men agree that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities in their country. There are no substantial differences between how often women and men look for information about adult learning and CVET, or how easy it is for them to find it; both also use various information sources.

Total agreement that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities increases steadily with age, which is positive from a lifelong learning perspective. Younger age groups are more likely to have looked often than older ones, which may reflect career progression. In an increasingly electronic age, older age groups are more likely to totally agree that it is easy to find information. Rather than abilities to use information sources, this may reflect that the information needs of younger adults are more complex, or numerous and varied, so that they consult more sources. In effect, younger age groups are more likely to combine several sources of advice on adult learning and CVET, including the internet, friends and colleagues, and employment agencies.

Those with both parents born abroad are more positive about the availability of adult learning and CVET opportunities and how easy it is to find and use information about them than those with native-born parents. They are also more likely to search for information more often.

6.3.1.2. *Education and employment*

Those with a low level of education are more likely to agree totally that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities available in their country than those with a high level. However, those with a high level of education look more often for such information. Those with a low-level education find it easier to find information, but this may reflect more complex needs among those with a high-level education rather than problems with using information sources. Those with a high-level education appear to use the internet much more than those with a low-level education. However, this may have more to do with access to the internet than ability to use it.

Understandably, those unemployed and looking for a job are more likely to have looked often for information on adult learning and CVET opportunities in the previous 12 months than other labour market groups. The only group

that seems to experience problems finding information is students, but this again may be due to complex information needs.

In terms of occupation, total agreement that there are many adult learning and CVET opportunities in their country is highest among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, and craft and related trades workers, and lowest among those in the armed forces and clerical support workers. Perhaps reflecting a need to keep up with changes in their jobs, those in professional occupations are more likely to have looked often for information in the previous 12 months. The lowest proportions are among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and those in elementary occupations.

Several information sources are mentioned more frequently by people in more highly skilled occupations. For example, the internet is mentioned by most managers, but just over half of those in elementary occupations. The same pattern applies to professional or sector associations and local colleges and universities, both mentioned more frequently by people in more skilled or advanced occupations. Employment agencies are mentioned frequently by services and sales workers and those in elementary occupations. The employer is seen as giving the best advice by around a third of those in most occupations.

6.3.2. Support

Family is the best form of financial or practical support to take part in training for all groups. The only exception is those with both parents born abroad, many of whom may be some distance from family and are more likely to mention official sources such as government and trade unions.

Secondary sources vary; men are more likely than women to say that their employer would offer the most support, while younger age groups mention family, employers and friends or colleagues more frequently than other age groups.

For those with high-level education and those working in higher-skilled jobs, employers are the second most frequent source of support. For unemployed people looking for a job, students, those with low-level education and those working in clerical or elementary occupations, government services such as employment agencies are important sources of support.

6.3.3. Reasons for non-participation

Women are more likely than men not to participate in training because it is difficult to fit in with other commitments or is too expensive. Men are more likely than women to say they don't need adult learning and CVET. There is a similar split between older adults, who are more likely to say they do not need training, and younger adults, who cite difficulties combining learning with other commitments.

For those with a low level of education and those working in elementary occupations, a lack of the right skills or qualifications is another barrier to participating in adult learning and CVET. Unemployed adults seeking work express concerns over training being too expensive or unsuitable, while those in work face problems of time. Adults working in elementary occupations are more likely to give several reasons, including training being too expensive, lack of support and not having the right skills or qualifications.

6.3.4. Encouraging participation in work-related learning and training

6.3.4.1. Sex, age and migrant background

There is widespread support for measures to encourage more adults to participate in work-related learning and training, including:

- (a) more information and guidance;
- (b) adapting learning to individual needs;
- (c) better-quality training;
- (d) flexible working hours or time off work to learn;
- (e) financial incentives or support;
- (f) certification of the learning and training recognised by employers;
- (g) support with childcare and other caring responsibilities.

Broadly speaking, those with the strongest support for these measures are women, younger adults, those with both parents born abroad, those with low-level education and those not working (including those looking for a job).

There are some exceptions and differences of emphasis. Total agreement that better-quality training would encourage more participation is consistent, but increases slightly with age; adults with native-born parents are more likely to agree totally that financial incentives would encourage participation than those with both parents born abroad.

6.3.4.2. *Education and employment*

Those with a high level of education favour more strongly than those with a low level measures, such as flexible working hours, adapting training to individual needs and certification, while those with middle-level qualifications are most in favour of financial support.

Support for measures across occupations varies and does not follow any pattern related, for example, to skill levels or income. For example, total agreement on adapting training to individual needs is found across all levels of occupation, being highest among professionals, and services and sales workers. More than half of adults in all occupation types (except skilled agricultural workers where the proportion is just below half) totally agree that certification of learning would encourage more participation. Further, total agreement on childcare encouraging participation in training is high across all occupations.

This suggests that the need for support depends less on occupation than on the personal family and financial circumstances of the individual.

6.3.5. **Opinions of those who participated and those who did not**

There appear to be no differences in the opinions of those who participated in adult learning and CVET in the 12 months prior to the survey and those who did not. Those who participated believe more strongly that it is important to learn throughout life. However, those who did not participate are more persuaded of their growing importance and the need for governments to invest in them. Those who did not participate seem to be in less demanding jobs, but still lack technical and general skills to a greater degree than those who participated.

Views about the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET are also similar between those who participated and those who did not. However, the more positive views of those who did not participate about the educational benefits of adult learning and CVET reflect opinions of older age groups and those with a low level of education.

Those who did not participate did not look so often for information about adult learning and CVET, but this does not appear to be due to any problems in finding information, or a belief that there are no learning opportunities for them. Those who did not participate had less support from family and friends and relied a little more on government services. Both those who participated and those who did not strongly support measures to encourage participation in training, but neither group cites any measure as especially important. This

suggests that support measures are contingent on circumstances rather than specific characteristics.

6.4. Image

6.4.1. A positive image

Adult learning and CVET have a strong positive image. Men and women of all ages and education levels, unemployed, or employed in all types of occupations regard adult learning and CVET as important for work and life. Many expect adult learning and CVET to become more important in the future and believe that governments should prioritise investment in them.

For adults, learning matters for finding a job and performing in one, irrespective of its skill level. Adults, overwhelmingly, see adult learning and CVET as important to career progression and finding a new job; obtaining a better income; reducing unemployment; and personal development.

These very positive views seem deeply held, especially when it is noted that the main differences in the survey are between those who totally agree and those who simply agree.

It is also important to note the very positive opinions of adults aged 65 and above who are no longer, according to the definition, part of the working population. They are the most convinced of the importance of adult learning and CVET. Whether this arises from their own positive experiences or because is unclear from the survey. However, the survey does show that 24% of those aged between 65 and 74 and 15% of those aged 75+ had often or sometimes looked for information on adult learning and CVET opportunities for themselves in the 12 months prior to the survey. This points to adult learning and CVET having an important role beyond working life.

6.4.2. Image and participation: circumstances not categories

The survey clearly shows that lack of participation is not because people see adult learning and CVET negatively and unable to help them. However, despite the positive image, concerns remain that not enough adults take part in learning and CVET. The survey seems to support these concerns. It shows that substantial proportions of adults across the working population, irrespective of sex, age, education level or occupation totally agree that their job requires them to keep their skills constantly up to date. These findings

underline that changing job content is rapid and not limited to certain generations or occupations.

The main reason adults do not participate in adult learning and CVET is because they see no need. Men and older age groups are more likely to say they have no need; women, younger adults and those in elementary occupations also say they have no need, but are more likely to report difficulties with other commitments and the costs, but no reason is unique to, or especially prominent in, any group of adults.

Around half of adults support all the measures to encourage participation in adult learning and CVET. This includes those that make material conditions for learning easier (financial incentives, support with childcare and other caring responsibilities, flexible working hours) and those that improve the process (better information and guidance, better quality of training, certification of learning).

While there is some indication that those likely to be more financially secure – for example, those in higher-paying occupations or older age groups – put a little more emphasis on process-related measures, the survey establishes no clear correlation between measures and groups.

The first volume, which presented the survey results by Member States⁽¹⁷⁾, argued that insufficient participation in adult learning and CVET is not because they are unattractive learning options, but because of a lack of incentive, despite pressing needs to improve skills.

Incentive to participate depends on the likelihood of the desired benefits being realised. However, realising the employment-related benefits of adult learning and CVET (promotion, a new job, better pay, higher qualifications) is not generally in the hands of participants but of employers and, in the case of qualifications, authorities that certify learning. Participation in adult learning and CVET is often about potential, not guaranteed, benefits.

Analysis of the survey data by adult population suggests that participation in adult learning and CVET is also contingent on individual circumstances and not on characteristics, such as sex and age.

Vocational education and training policy has often developed in response to the emerging needs of specific groups often affected by high levels of unemployment. However, it is readily conceivable that an individual adult of any sex, age and background, in work or looking for a job, or wanting to return to the labour market could benefit from combined support measures,

⁽¹⁷⁾ Cedefop, 2017.

such as certified training adapted to their needs, with participation made possible by support with childcare.

Aligned with the European pillar of social rights ⁽¹⁸⁾, European VET policy, including adult learning and CVET, aims to help people manage labour market transitions, which occur both to and from work.

Therefore, policy measures to increase participation would be particularly effective in helping individuals to manage labour market transitions that are unique to them, if adult learning and CVET address the particular circumstances of individuals that impede learning activities by taking a more learner-centric and age-neutral approach through closer links between initial and continuing VET ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Having settled the question of the image and attractiveness of adult learning and CVET, the survey can also provide insights about how to develop such an approach. Further examination of correlations between variables in the survey to explore the opinions of more specific groups of adults – young low-educated men and professional women – could help to target VET policies more effectively and develop a learner-centred age-neutral approach.

⁽¹⁸⁾ European Commission, 2021.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Cedefop and ETF, 2020.

Acronyms

AES	adult education survey
AL	adult learning
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DK/NA	don't know/no answer
EU	European Union
EU-LFS	European Union labour force survey
LAU	local administrative units
NUTS	nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
RDD	random digit dialling
VET	vocational education and training

References

[URLs accessed 26.4.2021]

- Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5562>
- Cedefop (2020). *Perceptions on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 117. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3086_en.pdf
- Cedefop; ETF (2020). *The importance of being vocational*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4186_en.pdf
- Council of the European Union (2011). Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 1-6. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011G1220\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011G1220(01)&from=EN)
- Council of the European Union (2016). Council recommendation on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 484, 24.12.2016, pp. 1-6. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224(01)&from=EN)
- European Commission (2020). *European skills agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22832&langId=en>
- European Commission (2021). *The European pillar of social rights action plan*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/qanda_21_821/QANDA_21_821_EN.pdf

Websites

Cedefop project page on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/adult-learning-empowering-adults-through-upskilling-and-re-skilling>

ANNEX 1.

Methodology

Kantar conducted a survey of the public about adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in the 28 European Member States, Iceland and Norway on behalf of Cedefop. A total of 40,466 telephone interviews were conducted among people aged 25 years old and above.

This large-scale survey covered the following topics associated with adult learning and CVET:

- (a) respondent's working situation;
- (b) general attitudes to learning;
- (c) participation in and experience of adult learning and CVET;
- (d) perception of adult learning and CVET in the respondent's country.

Fieldwork took place between 20 May and 16 July 2019; dates and number of interviews per country are shown in Table 81.

A1.1. Sampling

The target population comprised the adult population (aged 25 and over) living in a private residence in one of the 28 Member States, Iceland or Norway.

A person's usual residence was defined as the place where they normally sleep. In addition, they should have lived in the country for the six months prior to the survey, speak the national language(s) well enough to respond to the questionnaire and not live in an institution (such as prison, military barracks, hospital, nursing home). Only one person per household was selected for interview. For each country/territory, samples were representative of the covered universe. The survey used only random procedures.

An overlapping dual phone approach (mobile and landline) was used in all countries, except in Finland, Iceland and Norway. In these countries, their respective population registers, which offer comprehensive coverage of their populations using all phone numbers (landline and mobile), were used as frames.

Table 81. Dates and number of interviews per country

Country	Target N of interviews	Interviews achieved	Country	Target N of interviews	Interviews achieved
AT	1 000	1 000	IT	1 700	1 701
BE	1 200	12 002	IS	500	500
BG	2 000	2 005	LT	1 700	1 700
CY	1 000	1 006	LU	500	500
CZ	1 300	13 002	LV	1 700	1 706
DE	1 700	1 700	MT	700	7 03
DK	1 000	1 008	NL	1 000	1 010
EE	1 000	1 000	NO	1 000	1 000
EL	1 700	1 701	PL	2 000	2 000
ES	1 700	1 701	PT	1 300	1 302
FI	1 000	1 000	RO	2 000	2 001
FR	1 700	1 701	SE	1 000	1 004
HR	2 000	2 001	SI	1 300	1 302
HU	1 700	1 704	SK	2 000	2 001
IE	1 000	1 002	UK	1 000	1 001
		Target N of interviews			Interviews achieved
Total		40 400			40 466

In all countries, dual random digit dialling (RDD) frames were used. The sampling frame for selecting landline and mobile phone numbers was a Kantar database of so-called seed numbers (or source numbers). These numbers are obtained either from existing telephone databases which are stratified geographically at nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) 2 level or equivalent, or collected during representative face-to-face interviews carried out as part of the overall quality-control procedures. Since these numbers are collected from nationally representative samples, stratified at NUTS 2 level or equivalent, they become in turn a representative sample of numbers.

Seed numbers were not used as such and so there were no personal data protection issues. They were used only to develop a perfectly random sampling strategy, known as random digit dialling +3 (RDD+3). This procedure consists simply of changing the last three digits of a source number by

adding three units to it. Sampling using an RDD+3 method is a tried and tested system for selecting phone numbers not listed in directories. This enables us to cover potentially all the public and not only those who have agreed to provide their phone number(s).

The level of stratification affects the importance of the sampling bias in the survey. In a multi-country survey, it is essential to ensure consistency at every stage of the process. Accordingly, fixed and mobile frames were stratified by region and urbanisation before an equal probability sample was drawn from each stratum, to approximate a geographically representative sample. The fixed line sample was stratified by NUTS 1 regions in Germany, Italy and the UK, NUTS 3 regions in Ireland, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia, and NUTS 2 regions in all other countries. In the smallest countries (Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta) the sample was stratified by local administrative units (LAU) 1.

A1.2. Fieldwork monitoring and quality controls

Fieldwork was centrally managed and supervised by the Kantar lead team in Brussels. All aspects of sampling, CAPI programming, questionnaire translation, fieldwork monitoring (quality and progress) and final data analysis were handled by the central team. Local national institutes were responsible solely for implementation (enumeration, interviewing and coding) and field quality checks.

Fieldwork was monitored in real time and data uploaded daily to the central server. The central coordination team closely monitored fieldwork progress to highlight immediately any potential issues. Centralised monitoring was also used to monitor response rate, and ensured that any corrective measures were taken in a timely manner.

Local agencies were responsible for ensuring the quality of data collected under the strict supervision of the central project management team. A minimum of 10% of interviews were validated by local teams through live listen-ins or recordings. Some interviews for each interviewer working on the project were also validated.

A combination of randomly selected interviews/interviewers and targeted interviewers/interviews, prioritised as high risk, were used to identify which respondents to recontact.

A1.3. Contact procedures

To select respondents, the following steps were followed once contact had been established:

- (a) landline sample: a household member aged 25 or over was randomly selected for interview. In households with more than one person, the last-birthday rule was applied, meaning that the selected member of the household was to be the one who had her/his birthday most recently;
- (b) mobile sample: the person who answered was directly interviewed once it had been established that the phone number belonged to her/him.

The respondent selection procedure was built into the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) script. All interviewers were briefed and instructed to follow selection procedures and how to fill in answers to minimise risk of errors in the selection phase. Selection was always made among all adults aged 25 or over who lived in the household and not just those present at the time of the call.

If selected household members were not at home, appointments were made to ensure a balanced sample. Once selection had taken place, it could not be changed.

A1.4. Data sources on participation in adult learning and CVET

Data sources referenced in the report are the [European Union labour force survey \(EU-LFS\)](#) and the [adult education survey \(AES\)](#).

The EU-LFS is the source of the indicator of adult participation in lifelong learning. It is a rotating random sample survey of around 1.5 million people covering the population in private households in 33 European countries and all types of industries and occupations. It provides comparable data on employed, unemployed and inactive persons of working age (15 years and above) in European countries.

The AES covers adult participation in education and training (formal, non-formal and informal learning). The most recent survey was in 2016, across 35 countries, comprising a total net sample of 240 000 adults aged between 25 and 64 years old.

A1.4.1. Comparison of Cedefop survey data with the adult education survey

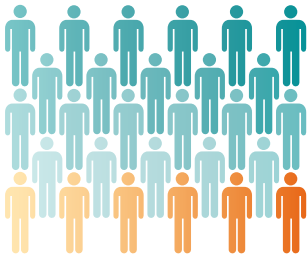
Section A1.4.1 compares results of Cedefop's 2019 opinion survey data on participation in adult learning with data from the [2016 AES](#).

The AES and the Cedefop survey are based on interviews with respondents aged 25 or above. However, the Cedefop survey has no upper age limit, while AES respondents are aged 25 to 64 years old.

Questionnaire responses from both surveys can be grouped in a similar manner, but some differences between the 2016 AES and the Cedefop questionnaires are important. The two questionnaires diverge in questions about non-formal and informal adult learning. The 2016 AES questionnaire gives four examples of non-formal and seven informal learning activities and asks about participation in each. The Cedefop questionnaire asks respondents if they have ever participated in work or non-work-related organised training activities (which the Cedefop survey defines as non-formal learning activities) and if they have learned on their own with the intention of improving their knowledge or skills (which the Cedefop survey defines as informal learning activities).

Noting the differences, it is possible to compare the 2016 AES and Cedefop 2019 survey results.

At EU level, Cedefop respondents are more likely to say they have participated in formal and non-formal adult learning activities. Cedefop respondents are twice as likely to say they have participated in formal activities (16% compared to 6%), and 13 percentage points more likely to have taken part in non-formal activities (56% Cedefop; 43% AES). However, results for participation in informal adult learning activities (61%) are the same in both surveys.



More perceptions: opinion survey on adult learning and continuing vocational education and training in Europe

Volume 2: Views of adults in Europe

Based on a survey comprising more than 40 000 interviews of people aged over 25 in the European Union, Iceland and Norway, this second volume of adults' perceptions about adult learning and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) examines the views of different groups in the European adult working population.

It shows that adults strongly support adult learning and CVET and have a firm belief in the benefits they bring. However, participation in adult learning and CVET is not determined so much by the positive image and attractiveness, but by the unique circumstances that individuals face in their working lives. To help people better, aspects of vocational education and training policy need a rethink.



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

Europe 123, Thessaloniki (Pylea), GREECE

Postal address: Cedefop service post, 57001 Thermi, GREECE

Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020, Email: info@cedefop.europa.eu

visit our portal www.cedefop.europa.eu



Publications Office
of the European Union

3088 EN – TI-RF-21-001-EN-N – 10.2801/55767

ISBN 978-92-896-3256-0



9 789289 632560