**Estonia: higher levels of education and better skills pay off**

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**A recent**[**study**](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/labour_market_success_of_graduates-summary.pdf)**on the labour market success of vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) graduates confirms that the higher the level of education and skills, the better the labour market prospects.**

Educational attainment in Estonia has risen in recent years. Since 2012, the share of people aged 25 and older that have completed only basic or general upper secondary education has decreased, while the share of those with a professional qualification has increased. In 2005-16, employment rate for vocational education graduates was as high as 74%, and for higher education graduates 80%. Men are employed more than women – 81% versus 76%.

VET, including higher professional education qualifications, boosts salary to 5-20% compared to general education. Earnings are higher in the security, fishery, forestry and technology sectors, and lower in the personal services and welfare sectors.

The[**study**](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/labour_market_success_of_graduates-summary.pdf) also focused on the correspondence between the field of study and employment of recent graduates. VET graduates in security services, ICT, health and education are most often employed in jobs corresponding to their field of study. In 2017, 54% and 58% of health and welfare graduates respectively were employed in the fields of health and social welfare. Some 78% of security services graduates worked in public administration and national defence. The link between field of study and subsequent employment is weaker in hospitality and catering – for 2005-16 VET graduates, only one third worked in the same field, with one sixth in retail sales in 2017.

Labour market success has been monitored by the Ministry of Education and Research since 2015 using an extensive database. Annual reports give an overview of the labour market status and income levels for VET and HE graduates, depending on the type and level of study, speciality, gender and other factors. The 2019 analysis focuses on three topics: income and employment status of graduates in 2017, post-graduate activity of foreign students, and correspondence between field of study and employment of VET and HE graduates.

See a [**summary of the study**](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/labour_market_success_of_graduates-summary.pdf)