

VET responses to the COVID-19 crisis

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 ROMANIA

Timeline

2020 Implementation

2021 Implementation

2022 Completed

ID number 40079

Background

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the National Committee for Special Emergency Situations was established and decided on school closure starting from 11 March 2020, to protect students from any contamination risks during physical presence in schools. This crisis affected various sectors of the economy by imposing temporary closure, quarantine and other protective measures.

School closure boosted online teaching and learning as of March 2020, with a short face-to-face learning period in June 2020 for vocational education and training (VET) learners passing exams. As a general principle, online training replaced physical classes.

Objectives

To adapt teaching and learning to online activities, provide support for teachers and learners, and stop the spread of the virus.

Description

Rapid changes in teaching took place: using online methods and new applications to create and develop resources. The pandemic also created the opportunity to develop new types of learning communities by learning from peers or sharing good-practice experiences. New online platforms and support channels (phone lines) were created to support teachers, learners and parents.

2020 Implementation

Digital infrastructure

In 2020, the education ministry ran a short survey in schools to check the status of digital infrastructure supporting online learning, especially in rural areas. About 250 000 learners (9% of the total population of learners in State pre-university education) did not have devices and internet connection for online learning.

Mobile and internet providers, other private companies and NGOs engaged in a call to upgrade the infrastructure. School inspectorates and schools, in cooperation with local

authorities, also supported providing access to online learning for learners in need.

By 2020/21, a EUR 30 million national programme, School at home, supported the purchase of digital devices with internet connection, for schools to aid distance learning for disadvantaged students for around 250 000 learners (the programme was approved by Government Decision No 370/2020).

The National Law on Education was updated by Emergency Ordinance of the Government No 141/2020. This provided secondary legal provisions introducing the possibility to perform teaching activities through technological tools and internet as a form of organisation of the teaching process; it replaced face-to-face activities that involved physical presence of students in classrooms with individual learning and online activities.

Online teaching management

In 2020, new teaching guidelines for creating / strengthening online learning capacity were introduced: monitoring of participation in online teaching and learning; use of online resources, information for educators and managers (in the education database SIIIR); obligation for teachers to provide feedback to learners; online class conduct and, selection of online platforms.

Online resources

In 2020, the education ministry introduced a digital platform digital.educd.ro offering relevant, appropriate, validated and recommended e-learning platforms and online learning resources in one place. Learning and business communities organised free of charge webinars for teachers (including VET teachers and trainers) on the use of online work tools.

The education ministry, together with the National TV channel, also organised the *Teleschool* programme teaching lessons in several subjects (maths, Romanian language and literature, history), which attracted a lot of attention.

Evaluation/examinations

In 2020, all examinations took place as initially planned; small adjustments were made in terms of online registration for the examination/online oral eliminatory tests.

Methodological guidelines for teachers

In 2020, the education ministry initiated and supported the elaboration of *Methodological guidelines for teachers to support strengthening the acquisition of learning outcomes* which were not fully covered during the school closure. In summer 2020, several booklets were published, covering all levels of pre-university education programmes, including VET.

The National Centre for TVET Development coordinated the activity for the development of the *Methodological benchmarks for strengthening teaching and learning in initial VET*. It was made available online in September 2020 as a support guide for VET teachers in 2020/21.

The education and health ministries issued a joint order (5487/1494/2020), addressing the sanitary and protection measures that should be taken in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many teachers were facing challenges to adapt their teaching methods and tools. To support them, ad hoc teacher training activities for online activities were provided: in March-April by the National Centre for Policy and Evaluation in Education - for 100 teachers, and in August, the *Teleschool* programme organised by the education ministry and national television.

In 2020, physical participation in school competitions was suspended.

2021 Implementation

The second semester of 2020/21 took place mostly face-to-face in the interest of learners, including the possibility to take national exams. In September 2021, the education ministry encouraged face-to-face contact, while monitoring the COVID-19 rate, which increased at the end of October 2021. Given this situation, the school calendar was changed and a two-week holiday in VET (and all pre-university education) was introduced as of 25 October.

Schools were recommended to restart face-to-face courses, if at least 60% of teaching staff were vaccinated. The vaccination rate among teachers and learners was made public. Since mid-November 2021, schools took decisions on whether to run programmes online or face-to-face. The education ministry made a telephone line available for the public to have access to updated information on school issues and specific support during the pandemic.

In summer 2021, new methodological guidelines were published for 2021/22 to support teachers and learners to recover and strengthen their teaching and learning process throughout the pandemic.

The *Teleschool programme*, organised by the education ministry and national television, continued offering support on school subjects (maths, Romanian language, history, etc.) that were crucial for preparing for the national examinations.

2022 Completed

In 2022, the education ministry in cooperation with the health ministry allowed to open schools for physical attendance, including IVET.

The data on COVID-19 cases (hospitalisations) was updated weekly and integrated in a national platform. Based on increased hospitalisations in the area (country), school authorities could decide on closure and reopening of schools.

The *Teleschool* programme continued to be implemented.

Examinations took place with physical attendance complying with the general public health protection measures in place.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of National Education (until 2021)
- National Centre for TVET Development (CNDIPT)
- National Centre for Policy and Evaluation in Education (Unit for Research in Education)
- Ministry of Public Health

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers

School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Supporting teachers and trainers for and through digital

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Methodological guidelines as support for teachers to strengthen learning acquisition](#)

[Joint order of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Health MEC/MS No 5487/1494/2020 for organisation of learning and teaching activities in schools considering safety and prevention measures in the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Decision No 6/2020 of the National Committee for Special Emergency Situations for approval of additional measures for the new Coronavirus control](#)

[Joint order of Minister of Education and Research and Minister of Health for prevention and control of SARS-CoV-2 diseases](#)

[Government Decision No 370/7.05.2020 for the approval of the national programme School at home](#)

[Order OMEC No 4322 of 22 May 2020 on the certification exam for graduates of four-year technological programmes](#)

[A teacher support portal on using new technologies](#)

[Project relevant curriculum, open education for all \(CRED\) web page](#)

[Order of the Education Ministry No 5.490, 22 October 2022: Change in pre-university school calendar](#)

[Joint Order of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health No 3030/82 of January 2022](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Measures to prevent early leaving from education and training

The national strategy to reduce early school leaving in Romania was adopted in June 2015. It is based on prevention, intervention and compensation in thematic/policy areas and addresses the following directions of action/pillars:

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

Promoting entrepreneurship competence in VET

The National Centre for TVET Development registers new training firms and corresponding activities annually.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/40079>