

A continuing professional development model for pedagogical and professional staff

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline



ID number 35295

Background

A model of in-service training and career paths set by the Act on pedagogical and professional staff (317/2009) was mainly based on attending accredited in-service training courses. Accumulation of credits made it possible to obtain bonuses to salary and career advancement (from a beginner to an independent teacher stage and then to teacher attestation at the first and second level). This model led teachers to credit hunting to get increased salary without necessarily improving their professional development and work quality. It also did not reward professional development based on activities outside the accredited courses. For this reason, this model was strongly criticised, although it allowed teachers to get a better salary. The 2016 Government Manifesto indicated the need for a substantial change and the need to introduce new legislation.

Objectives

The following are intentions of change:

- (a) a new approach regarding professional development of pedagogues and other professional staff;
- (b) the obligation to complete refresher training to the extent specified by the director of the school or school establishment in accordance with the needs of the respective institution;
- (c) a new categorisation of positions of pedagogues and other professional staff in education;
- (d) the right to protect pedagogues and other professional staff from manifestations of socio-pathological behaviour (mobbing, bossing, but also staffing);
- (e) a binding code of ethics.

Description

A new act was adopted on pedagogical staff and professional staff (138/2019) in 2019 complemented by two decrees (361/2019 on education for professional development and

1/2020 on qualification requirements). The act cancelled:

- (a) the original credit system, but retained the right to a salary supplement for certain types of in-service training (especially when obtaining new qualifications), thus significantly reducing the link between salary bonuses and completion of in-service training;
- (b) the Accreditation Council of the education ministry responsible for the accreditation of continuing training of pedagogical and professional staff.

The crucial change was the abolition of the credit-based in-service training system. To meet preconditions for career advancement, teachers should fulfil relevant professional standards after serving for a specific number of years. The change was most visible in the approach to attestations: removing the obligation to write and defend an attestation work and introducing an attestation portfolio. The portfolio is specified as a set of documents on the acquisition of professional competences required for career advancement. It can include certification of required level and type of education, a certificate from relevant in-service training, documents proving creative activity, and confirmation of the director on the use of relevant professional competences acquired by self-education or work activity.

Further, two issues are particularly interesting for VET: introducing the position of career counsellors and allowing modularisation of complementary pedagogical studies.

2019 Approved/Agreed

The new version of the act, introducing a new approach to continuing professional development was revised and adopted by the parliament, followed by a decree specifying some details concerning professional development.

2020 Implementation

Seminars organised by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre took place in the first quarter of 2020 to inform practitioners about the impact of the new legislation, focusing on the portfolio-based assessment. Portfolio-based attesting of continuing professional development of pedagogical staff has been in progress since then.

A national ESF project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS) started in 2020. It supports the professionalisation of staff, review current professional standards and develop professional standards for the newly introduced position of career counsellors. The project, with a budget of approximately EUR 7 million, is run by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre in cooperation with the National Institute for Education.

2021 Implementation

Two amendments of the Act on pedagogical staff and professional staff (138/2019) resulted in extensive changes of the law coming into force in 1 January 2022. This law focuses on simplification of many earlier over-regulations, such as moving between individual levels within career paths and between different career paths. Removing barriers can also support the transition of specialists working outside school into advanced teaching/training positions in schools. Induction processes for novice teachers are also simplified by the involvement of specialists working outside the respective schools.

The legislation clarifies the purpose of professional development, by emphasising developing professional competences. In connection with this, the importance of internships as a special form of training and professionalisation has been strengthened.

Practitioners, such as specialists from companies, are attracted to the final examination for participants and learners. At the request of employers, the legislation expands the range of providers of officially recognised in-service training. Unlike the previous regulation, non-State institutions, such as employer organisations, guilds or

chambers who are already involved in the assessment and verifying professional competence according to the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009), are eligible for the provision of training and examinations related to attestation at the first and second (advanced) level of qualification.

Professional development plans, which are currently important for securing funding for professional development, can now be changed more flexibly to reflect better the learning needs of school staff. Providers of in-service training are now obliged to collect the feedback and publish participants' assessment of completed training. Financing for professional development of staff is supported by enabling the education ministry to provide subsidies for professional development support in addition to the regular funding of operation of schools.

Within the national ESF project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS), an offer of in-service training programmes based on analysis of learning needs has been created. It also reflects challenges caused by the pandemic. A portal We teach remotely, created in April 2020 to support learning and communication in times of pandemic, has been reorganised and expanded, offering online counselling and digital learning objects. Revised professional standards are expected by the end of 2022.

In 2021, 1 344 employees of basic and secondary schools who entered training aimed at receiving or expanding qualification were eligible for reimbursement of training costs of EUR 400. Up to 40% of VET schools applied for repayment of training costs of their employees within a newly introduced financial scheme from the education ministry. The scheme aimed at mitigating a lack of qualified professionals willing to enter teaching and training positions.

2022 Implementation

The final conference of the national ESF project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS) took place on 29-30 November 2022. The results of the project as of 31 December 2022 were as follows:

- (a) 29 revised or new professional standards backed by a methodological guide for the revision and innovation of professional standards;
- (b) 8 916 pedagogical and professional staff involved in innovative training activities, of which 7 682 completed training;
- (c) 60 innovative in-service training programmes were offered with each programme requiring the development of specific professional competences;
- (d) 189 examples of documented best practice;
- (e) 1 605 participants in teachers forums.

To support the exchange of experience between practitioners, a database of best practices was being developed. The results of the first six rounds were already published. Although a dominant share of best practices relates to general education, there were also examples from VET schools. Piloting the dissemination of best practices and supporting the networking of teachers through teacher forums confirmed the potential of these instruments in enhancing professionalisation of staff.

2023 Implementation

2023 was the first operational year of the National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM), a consolidated institution established newly through the merger of several organisations, previously managed directly by the education ministry. The catalogue of professional activities and educational programmes for the 2023/24 school year contains the services offered by NIVAM's organisational components, which formerly operated as independent organisations.

This was also the first year when European funding for the national project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS) was no longer available, while the conditions for drawing from the Programme Slovakia 2021-27 were not yet created. A key priority was to support the class-level implementation of the ongoing curricular reform, which began to be piloted in 2023 in the first year of primary school. Neither capacities nor

resources were available to support content-related innovations at VET schools but NIVAM facilitated continuing professional development of VET staff through training on creating individual professional competence portfolios, a crucial instrument for recognising opportunities for career growth and improving remuneration.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, tasks related to the National recovery and resilience plan (RRP) remained dominant, especially curricular changes in elementary education and inclusive education, which also impacted VET. The introduction of a catalogue of support measures for schools and school facilities required retraining of staff to enhance their capacities to support SEN learners. This included the understanding of the use of support measures and clarifying the responsibilities of regular teachers and trainers, inclusion specialists in schools and counsellors in counselling facilities. Since October, online retraining of school staff bound to investments in digital equipment and infrastructure funded by the National RRP was launched.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)
- Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (until 2022)

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Act No 317/2009 on pedagogical staff and professional staff \[Zákon c. 317/2009 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch\]](#)

[Act No 138/2019 on pedagogical staff and professional staff \[Zákon c. 138/2019 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch\]](#)

[Decree of the education ministry No 361/2019 on education for professional development](#)

[Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky c. 361/2019 Z. z. o vzdelávaní v profesijnom rozvoji]

Decree of the education ministry No 1/2020 on qualification requirements [Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky c. 1/2020 Z. z. o kvalifikačných predpokladoch pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov]

ESF project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS) website

Act No 138/2019 on pedagogical staff and professional staff, in force from 1 January 2022 [Zákon c. 138/2019 Z. z. o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch]

We teach remotely website

The call of the education ministry aimed at mitigating a lack of qualified professionals

The offer of in-service training programme within the TEACHERS project

Programme Slovakia 2021-27

Decree of the education ministry No 173/2023 on qualification requirements [Vyhláška Ministerstva školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu Slovenskej republiky c. 173/2023 Z. z. o kvalifikačných predpokladoch pedagogických zamestnancov a odborných zamestnancov]

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Creation of centres of excellence in VET

The creation of CoVEs is determined by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 adopted by the government on 24 November 2021.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

National recovery and resilience plan

The National recovery and resilience plan sets out a package of reforms and public investments to be implemented by 2026.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action plan

Subsystem

2024 Implementation**Professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts**

The 2016 government manifesto also aimed at further changing the system of career development. It envisaged certification in line with professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts employed by regional schools.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2019 Discontinued**CPD credit system and teaching career opportunities**

The steps taken until 2018 focused on amending legislation and policy commitments for further continuing professional development (CPD) improvements. The newest and the most visible of such improvements is the abolition of the limited validity (seven years) of credits received within CPD.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation**Easing access to the teaching profession**

The 2015 legislation amending the 2009 Pedagogical Staff Act made qualification requirements more flexible to attract (more) business and industry professionals to teaching and to facilitate changes of position or subject areas.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/35295>