

# Professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVAKIA

## Timeline



ID number 28583

## Background

Setting professional standards has been under debate for almost 20 years. The Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff (317/2009) made elaboration of standards for respective positions and career levels inevitable. Although the development of professional standards started, jointly financed by the ESF, in 2004, they were not fully accepted by practitioners as appropriately and exhaustively describing relevant knowledge, skills and competences.

## Description

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. Implementation of the standards was a long-lasting and controversial process. The education ministry even hesitated to publish these standards. After some revisions these standards were finally published in 2017 despite doubts about their applicability. EUR 20 000 were earmarked in the National programme for the development of education (NPDE) for adjusting the standards in 2020 and 2021.

Further revision of professional standards is considered inevitable to make their fulfilment an obligatory precondition for accreditation of initial training and promotion.

### 2016 Design

### 2017 Implementation

### 2018 Implementation

### 2019 Implementation

A new Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff (138/2019) has abolished the credit system; instead of credits, payment bonuses were introduced for specific cases of in-service training. In 2019, a series of seminars for pedagogues was organised by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre nationwide to inform about making use of professional standards in the context of continuing professional development as

stipulated by the new Act. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning March 2020, these seminars have taken the form of online webinars.

### **2020 Implementation**

The national ESF project Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS) was launched in November 2020. The Methodological-Pedagogical Centre runs this project in cooperation with the National Institute for Education. The main aim is to revise professional standards and develop standards for the newly introduced position of career counsellors (Act 138/2019). The project also promotes the transfer of innovations and best practice examples through networking, and responds to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic via maintaining an online platform offering one-stop-shop services to schools, pedagogues and civic society actors. The budget is approximately EUR 7 million.

### **2021 Implementation**

A group of experts from the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre with external experts continued the revision of the professional standards supported by working groups of practitioners. Revision should be completed by the end of 2022. Two amendments to the Act on pedagogical staff and professional staff (138/2019), adopted in October 2021, affect pedagogical standards and qualifications. VET trainer competences must be expanded to cover additional components of VET curricula, such as practical classes earlier taught exclusively by teachers. The newly introduced school digital coordinators should offer training and counselling on the use of IT, digital methodologies and digital educational content. They should also support the administration of national online examinations.

### **2022 Implementation**

In October and November 2022, updated professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts were discussed with stakeholders (the education ministry, State School Inspectorate, subsidiaries of the education ministry, and trade unions). During the final conference of the national ESF project, Professional development of teachers (TEACHERS), held on 29-30 November 2022, 29 innovative professional standards were presented and discussed with practitioners.

Some standards refer specifically to VET, such as 'trainer', some are related to VET, such as 'career counsellor', and some are related to both general and VET streams. Standards that apply to specialists who support inclusive education such as school special pedagogues, or pedagogical assistants are important for the fulfilment of the National recovery and resilience plan (RRP).

### **2023 Implementation**

Professional standards created by the National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM) were used to assess progress in professional development, from beginner to independent teacher stages and then to teacher attestation at the first and second levels. These standards also supported accreditation processes for institutions involved in the continuing professional development of teachers and other staff.

In January 2023, NIVAM published revised standards featuring a reduced number of standards (positions) from originally 45 to 29. The simplified structure and revised indicators make the assessment of the fulfilment of standards easier and more unambiguous.

### **2024 Implementation**

Increasing concerns from VET schools regarding the ageing of staff and the insufficient supply of teachers of vocational subjects and trainers in schools have led to questioning the effectiveness of professional standards. Critics argue that these

standards may create barriers to career advancement rather than fostering professional development or lowering initial qualification standards. A new Act on adult education (292/2024) created the possibility of acquiring the so-called professional qualification 'Master' based on the assessment of fulfilment of learning outcomes. This so-called 'professional qualification' is expected to facilitate access to the role of in-company trainer (instructor of dual VET). It may also represent the first step toward bypassing current formal qualification requirements and career advancement requirements for trainers in VET schools.

## 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

## 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

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

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

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

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[ESF project Professional development of teachers \(TEACHERS\) website](#)

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

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[Professional standards for pedagogical and professional staff](#)

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[Proposal for a Council implementing decision on the approval of the assessment of the National recovery and resilience plan for Slovakia](#)

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[The National recovery and resilience plan summary of reforms and investments](#)

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[Act No 292/2024 on adult education](#)

## Related policy developments

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2024 **Approved/Agreed**

### Act on adult education (292/2024)

The education ministry initiated new legislation instead of the originally proposed law on lifelong learning, which was previously recommended by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 and approved by the government.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

CVET

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2024 **Implementation**

### A continuing professional development model for pedagogical and professional staff

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:

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

CVET

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2024 **Implementation**

### Digital transformation strategy

In the short term, three priority areas have been identified by the strategy, forming a basis for the 2019-22 action plan:

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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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.

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### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2024 **Implementation**

## National programme for the development of education

On 27 June 2018, the government approved the National programme for the development of education (NPDE). The NPDE was adopted, with 106 measures to be fulfilled until 2027. Some measures related to regional schooling and higher education are relevant also to VET.

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### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

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IVET CVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28583>