

Teacher and school leadership education programme 2015-21

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 ESTONIA

Timeline



ID number 28178

Background

Teacher and school leadership education programme was one of the nine (eight since 2019) programmes implementing the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020.

Objectives

The aim of the programme was to align the assessment and development of teachers and school leaders with the contemporary learning approach, considering the needs of the learner and developing creativity and innovation. The programme aimed to establish a multilevel CPD (continuous professional development) scheme for teachers and school leaders.

Description

The programme was adopted in 2015 and addresses teachers and school leaders at all levels and types of education, including VET. It has devoted resources to teacher training, including digital competences and innovative approaches in VET. The following actions have been taken:

- (a) schools were supported to improve the integration of general and vocational learning and promote key competences;
- (b) the share of teachers with practical experience and labour market qualifications was increased;
- (c) VET teachers were supported to improve how they addressed adult learners' needs and developed their digital competences;
- (d) tuition in Estonian was provided to VET teachers with insufficient language skills.

Since 2015, a needs-based approach has been used for continuous professional development (CPD) in teacher training. The regulation of the teacher training framework requirements was amended accordingly. CPD is planned and enacted systematically, based on:

- (a) the competences defined in professional standards;
- (b) teacher self-assessment (instead of previous teacher attestation) and feedback on their work;
- (c) VET teachers' and providers' needs;
- (d) national priorities.

It is the task of school leaders to offer CPD and support individual development based on these criteria. There are State-commissioned CPD courses for VET teachers. Teachers' professional networks are centrally supported by the Innove Foundation to share information and best practice and the Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre supports the inclusion of SEN learners in VET.

The training of school teams focuses on innovative teaching and learning methods, inclusive education and education policy priorities. Involving local community members, universities, learning communities and other stakeholders is encouraged. Examples of planned measures include:

- (a) provision of methodological guidance and support by the teacher training competence centres of Tallinn and Tartu universities;
- (b) developing a self-reflection platform for teachers to test their skills in relation to the competences outlined in their professional standards;
- (c) setting up competence requirements and training programmes for VET school leaders.

National data indicate that 67% of teachers working in VET in 2018/19 had participated in CPD during the preceding 3 years. Less than 50% were engaged in CPD each year.

2015 Implementation

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

2020 Implementation

Alleviating teacher shortages, including in VET, has become a national priority. In autumn 2020, the Ministry of Education and Research convened a working group to draft a proposal, by 2021, for ensuring a sufficient supply of teachers. One of the challenges was a high rate of novice teachers quitting after the first year of work (about 30%).

In 2020, a new professional standard for vocational teachers came into force, establishing a partial professional qualification of internship supervisors (EQF level 5) and adding the professional standard for vocational teachers at EQF level 8. The development of partial qualification supported the training of internship supervisors and the description of competences at level 8 of the qualifications framework harmonised the career paths of general education and vocational teachers and enabled excellence to be recognised.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many training activities for vocational teachers were cancelled or postponed. Teachers' digital competences that were crucial during the distance learning period were supported through centralised webinars and sharing of best practices through vocational teachers' networks.

2021 Completed

Ensuring new generation of qualified teachers and heads of education institutions has remained a major challenge. The shortage and ageing of teachers and trainers were particularly acute in VET. Compared to previous years, the situation has not improved.

An action plan for ensuring a new generation of teachers has been drafted, to

introduce systematic approach and new measures. The plan outlined six pathways to tackle the challenge:

- (a) leadership quality and organisational culture;
- (b) initial and continuous training of teachers and support specialists;
- (c) career and development opportunities;
- (d) support across the career pathway, including the support of novice teachers;
- (e) organisation of work and pay and the inclusion of support staff;
- (f) attractiveness of the teaching profession.

In-service training of teachers and heads of education institutions, development of teacher training and didactics in universities and co-operation between education institutions (including networks of VET teachers) have continued. In cooperation with universities, the development of pre- and in-service teacher training were set to continue providing flexible forms of study and state-of-the-art learning solutions for different target groups, including working teachers.

In-service and teacher training activities under the current programme were extended for a year; at the end of 2021, preparations for the launch of a new European Social Fund in-service teacher training programme began.

For developments in training teachers, trainers and school principals as of 2022, see related policy developments.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research
- Innove Foundation (until 2020)
- Education and Youth Board

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders
Adult educators
Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

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

Supporting teachers and trainers for and through digital

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Teacher and school leadership education programme \(in Estonian\)](#)

Related policy developments

2024 **Implementation**

Developing competences of teachers, trainers and heads of schools

In order to develop the competences of teachers, trainers and heads of school, the following measures are foreseen:

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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