

# Teacher continuous professional development (CPD) framework

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BULGARIA

## Timeline



**ID number 28070**

## Description

The 2016 pre-school and school education Law regulates the career development of teaching staff, identifies continuous professional development (CPD) as a significant factor for career advancement, and introduces a qualification-credits approach that may lead to certified CPD.

Ordinance No 12 of 27 September 2016 on the status and professional development of teachers, directors and other pedagogical specialists introduced obligatory continuous professional development and teacher appraisal procedures. It requires that teachers' continuing training is provided by specialised units, universities and scientific organisations and/or training providers offering training programmes that have been approved by the education minister. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) created a register of higher education institutions and training institutions that offer training programmes approved by the education ministry. Planning, coordination, governance and monitoring of teacher training activities are carried out at national level by the education ministry, at regional level by the regional education management units (REMU), at local level by the municipality administration, and at school level by the school principal. School-level qualification could be provided internally or by a subcontracted training provider/university.

Teachers are required to undertake at least 48 academic hours of CPD in any appraisal period (4 years) to upgrade their qualifications, and 16 academic hours annually within school-level training. One qualification credit is awarded for 16 academic hours of CPD: at least eight of these are carried out in the classroom. This credit system guarantees opportunities for the accumulation, recognition and transfer of credits. The 2016 regulation sets the conditions for continuing teacher qualification on the basis of credit points.

It is important to distinguish the funding for CPD programmes provided by the universities from State subsidies for the acquisition of the teaching certificate, which relate to the provision of initial teacher training. If the universities deliver training under CPD, they receive funding outside the framework of these State subsidies and have to be registered in the teacher training programmes information system of the education ministry.

This CPD framework relates only to teachers and other pedagogical staff in pre-school and school education and does not apply to trainers in continuing vocational education and training (CVET).

## 2016 Approved/Agreed

Ordinance No 12/ 27 September 2016 was approved.

## 2019 Implementation

In 2019, an updated education standard for the status and professional development of teachers, school principals and pedagogical specialists was introduced. It replaced Ordinance No 12 of 27 September 2016 with Ordinance No. 15 of 22 July 2019 on the status and professional development of teachers, school principals and other pedagogical specialists. However, the overall framework regulating teacher CPD remained unchanged. According to Ordinance 15, the education ministry defines the annual priority areas for CPD, and the Regional Education Management Units, (REMU) (or otherwise known as Regional Educational Directorates (REDs)- are the regional structures under the auspice of the education ministry, managing the regional school system and providing methodological support to local schools. They are also responsible for the organisation of CPD for teachers at local level together with school principals) and school principals should organise the annual CPD according to these priority areas. An electronic version of the register of approved CPD programmes was introduced. The updated standard also introduced an electronic format of the teacher portfolio and other documents that are used in the appraisal procedure, thus reducing its administrative burden.

With the amendments to the collective labour agreement, school principals were required to invest a minimum of half of the annual funding of teachers' CPD in specific training activities, including seminars, lectures, discussion forums, open lessons, presentations, and other forms of mutual learning.

## 2020 Implementation

Ordinance 15 of 22 July 2019 for the statute educational standard for the statute and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists was amended to regulate the provision of remote synchronous online teacher training in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the end of 2018, Bulgaria launched an EU-funded project BG05M2OP001-2.010-0001 Qualification for professional development of pedagogical specialists. Up to 30 June 2020, this project provided CPD training for 5 347 pedagogical specialists up to 34 years of age, 24 563 pedagogical specialists between the ages of 35 and 54, and 4 895 pedagogical specialists were involved in training for application of modern evaluation methods. In 2020, 4 882 additional teachers received training in application of competence approaches under the national programme Qualification for professional development of pedagogical specialists.

## 2021 Implementation

In 2021, the education ministry launched targeted measures to support the CPD of VET teachers under the framework of the EU-funded project: BG05M2OP001 2.014 *Support of the dual training system*, and in the annual national programmes for the development of education. This is the first time in recent years that CPD was specially designed to meet the needs of teachers in VET-specific subjects. In previous years neither national qualification programmes nor the EU-funded project: Qualification for the professional development of pedagogical specialists, had set specific targets for VET teachers. Under the above-mentioned programmes, VET teachers were provided with CPD opportunities similar to those of general school teachers.

According to the education ministry's working programme for 2021, the supported CPD activities for VET teachers shall include:

- (a) targeted VET teacher training in business and the real working environment;
- (b) targeted qualification activities aiming at the motivation and encouragement of VET teachers and updating their knowledge, skills and competences.

578 VET teachers received training for the application of the new VET qualification exams under the national qualification programme in 2021.

## 2022 Implementation

Support and development of pedagogical staff remained an important policy objective in 2022. This involved implementation of policies to encourage the acquisition of teacher qualifications by other sector professionals and their integration into the education system; implementation of policies to bring back into the education system professionals with teaching qualifications who were not currently working as teachers and to support teachers who had started their service to successfully start their career in school education,

In 2022, Bulgaria introduced the National programme Motivated teachers and qualifications aiming at improving the quality of school education through attracting new teachers, improving and enriching the key competences of the pedagogical specialists and implementing a system for monitoring the impact of training on professional development of teachers.

The programme's activities are organized in 4 modules, involving:

- (a) provision of training in higher education institutions for the acquisition of the professional qualifications of 'teacher' in a subject and of resource teachers (resource teachers are teachers that provide instruction for students with special needs, including remedial services to students with language/visual/sensory impairments and learning disabilities); mentoring for newly appointed teachers new to the programme without professional experience;
- (b) provision of training of pedagogical specialists for the acquisition of additional professional qualification 'teacher of...', 'teacher of religion' and 'resource teacher';
- (c) provision of advanced training of specialists with higher education who have a teacher qualification but don't have previous professional experience as teachers to appoint them teachers in schools with concentration of students from vulnerable groups;
- (d) provision of CPD for teachers aiming at developing their competences for the implementation of the competency-based approach, teamwork competences, project-based teaching, maintaining of an educational environment that support improved outcomes for children and students, improving educational management skills, etc. This module also supports the international cooperation for teacher CPD. None of the supported CPD activities are specifically tailored for VET teachers and trainers, but they are eligible to be involved.

## 2023 Implementation

In 2023, the Bulgarian government adopted the National programme (NP) *Qualifications of pedagogical specialists* aligned with Priority Area 3, *Motivated and creative teachers*, of the *Strategic framework for the development of education, training and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021-30)*. The programme *Qualifications of pedagogical specialists* addresses the professional development needs of both newly appointed teachers and experienced educators who need to update their skills and acquire new competencies in response to the evolving educational landscape.

The programme's primary goals are to ensure that schools, particularly those with fewer classes, have qualified teachers in all subjects and to enhance the key competencies of pedagogical specialists. Continuous professional development is a key focus, providing training to improve the competencies of teachers, school principals, and other educational professionals.

The programme is structured in three main modules:

- (a) the first module focuses on supporting newly appointed teachers and principals through mentoring and professional development. This includes updating

curricula, developing learning assessment skills, and introducing modern teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' logical, creative, and critical thinking skills. It also covers financial and economic literacy, project-based learning, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence;

- (b) the second module is dedicated to improving educational leadership and management skills. It includes strategic planning, implementing competency-based approaches, developing leadership and conflict resolution skills, and managing educational institutions during crises. Practical training for new directors and tracking the progress of graduates are also part of this module;
- (c) the third module addresses values and inclusion, focusing on creating inclusive environments in early education and providing support for students with language difficulties and those from vulnerable groups, including Roma, refugees, and migrants. It also emphasizes building effective teaching teams within schools.

In 2023, within the framework of the project BG05M2OP001-2.014-0001 *Support for the dual training system*, 4 400 training sessions were conducted to enhance the qualifications of 735 VET teachers.

In addition, the ESF-funded project BG05SFPR001-3.001, *Modernisation of vocational education and training (VET)*, also launched in 2023, aims to enhance the continuous professional development of VET teachers by:

- (a) developing detailed competency profiles for VET teachers, specifying the necessary skills and knowledge required for effective teaching in line with updated VET curricula.
- (b) providing VET teachers with real-world insights and practical skills to better prepare students for the labour market by integrating practical training sessions led by experts from business, science, and other sectors.
- (c) short-term modular courses designed to help VET teachers acquire sector-specific skills and improve their teaching effectiveness. These courses will be conducted in small groups and focus on competencies outlined in the competency profiles.
- (d) providing VET teachers with specialised training to enhance their digital skills and adapt to technological developments in digital and green economies, Industry 5.0, etc.

## 2024 Implementation

In 2024, the Government adopted a new version of the National programme *Qualifications of pedagogical specialists* which builds on measures introduced by previous national programmes for teacher CPD and is structured into three modules:

- (a) module 1: continuous professional development (CPD) is designed to support newly appointed teachers and principals through training and mentoring, providing them with the skills and support needed to thrive in their roles. It includes activities such as mentoring programmes to ensure a smooth transition into their roles and developing key professional competencies, masterclasses focusing on key pedagogical skills like formative assessment, literacy, and teaching strategies that foster student achievement. Finally the module includes crisis management training for school psychologists and counsellors;
- (b) module 2: additional professional qualifications are aimed at teachers working in schools where they must teach subjects outside their specialty field. This module provides opportunities for these teachers to gain new qualifications, focusing on subjects where there is a shortage of qualified teachers, such as mathematics, biology, Bulgarian language and literature, history, physical education, and religion. The programme prioritises small and schools in rural areas to ensure these institutions have access to fully qualified teachers across all subjects taught;
- (c) module 3: international cooperation and training, is focusing on enabling Bulgarian teachers to participate in international educational programmes and exchanges. It includes partnerships under international agreements, providing opportunities for teachers to learn from global best practices, enhance their skills, and bring innovative approaches back to their classrooms.

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## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science

## 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

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Register of teacher training programmes](#)

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[Objectives of the administration of the Ministry of Education and Science and annual reports](#)

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[Project BG05M2OP001 2.014: Support of the dual training system](#)

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[National programmes for the development of education](#)

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[National programme Motivated teachers and qualifications](#)

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[Project BG05SFPR001-3.001, Modernisation of vocational education and training\(VET\) 2021-27](#)

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[National programme \(NP\) Qualifications of pedagogical specialists for 2023](#)

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[National programme \(NP\) Qualifications of pedagogical specialists for 2024](#)

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[Administrative objectives of the Ministry of Education and Science for 2024 and report for 2023](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2024 Implementation**

**The modernisation of vocational education and training project, European Social Fund (ESF)**

The Modernisation of vocational education and training (VET) (hereinafter Modernisation of VET) project is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the operational programme *Education 2021 -27* with direct beneficiary the education ministry.

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## **Training programme for mentors in the dual training system**

The education minister approved a training programme for acquiring basic pedagogical and psychological knowledge and skills aimed at mentors involved in on-the-job training (dual training system). The changes in Art.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## **State subsidies to acquire teaching certificate**

Acquisition of a teaching certificate is funded, as a priority, by the State budget through subsidies to State universities. These subsidies cover teachers' initial training, but do not include their continuing professional development (CPD) which is funded under a separate framework.

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## **State standards for teaching qualification**

In November 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the ordinance for State education standards (SES) for obtaining a professional teaching qualification. The ordinance increases

the number of learning hours for teacher initial training by 30% to 50%.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## Curriculum update

In 2018, updated curricula were adopted for upper secondary education (grades 11 and 12). The learning objectives are set for both general education and VET learners, including a learning module on 'civil education' aimed at the acquisition of social and civic competences.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2024 Implementation**

## Key competences framework for active citizenship and for the labour market (2015 Pre-school and School Education Act)

The 2015 Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA) emphasises the important role of key competences for active citizenship and for successful integration into the labour market.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2020 Completed**

## The 2015-20 VET development strategy

The 2015-20 VET development strategy addressed the acquisition of key competences in secondary VET for personal and professional needs.

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

**Amendments to the VET Act**

The VET Act of 1999 was amended in August 2016 (entered into force in August 2017), confirming that apprenticeships should offer the possibility to acquire professional qualifications through practical training, organised in cooperation with enterprises.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28070>