

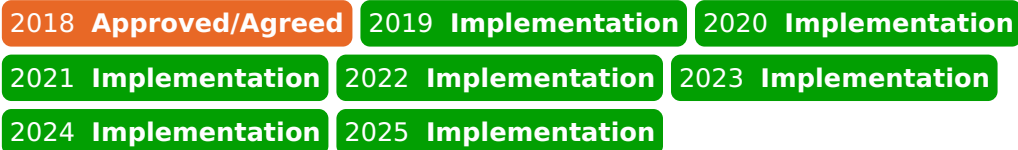
Curriculum update

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BULGARIA

Timeline



ID number 28064

Background

The Pre-school and School Education Act (PESA, 2015) provides for the development of new curricula for all school subjects. The new curricula introduce a competence-oriented approach that completely changes the philosophy and goals of education in Bulgaria.

Objectives

The updated curricula aim to shift the learning process to a more practical orientation: more time for understanding, reflection and practice with respect to what has been learned.

Description

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. A strong focus on the development of political culture seeks to support young people in taking self-dependent and responsible decisions. The implementation of the new curricula starts in school year 2020/21 for grade 11 students and in school year 2021/22 for grade 12.

The policy of continuing professional development (CPD) of pedagogical specialists is closely related to the changes in education legislation, including the pre-PESA and the adoption of the new curriculum.

National programmes *Qualification 2019* and *Qualification 2020* declare that the development of teaching skills for the implementation of the State education standards (SES) and curricula are a priority. The competence-oriented approach in teaching is defined as the main domain for activities related to the teaching qualification.

2018 Approved/Agreed

2019 Implementation

In 2019, a total of 159 VET curricula, 836 VET syllabi and 44 VET national examination programmes were developed by VET schools in cooperation with universities and employers. and were approved by the education minister.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, 94 updated VET curricula, 647 VET syllabi and 120 national examination programmes were developed.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, 22 VET curricula, 196 VET syllabi and 133 national examination programmes were developed and approved.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the national programme *Education 2021–27* was officially approved. Priority 3 – Relevance of education with the labour market –explicitly defined the improvement of quality, inclusiveness, effectiveness, and labour market relevance of the VET system as a specific objective. This included development and implementation of a List of professions for vocational education and training (LPVET), State education standards, curricula and programmes, national examination programmes, etc.

In 2022, at a session of the Consultative Council on VET, the Ministry of Education and Science conducted a stakeholder discussion on conceptual improvements of the teachers' qualification after the optimisation of the LPVET (to ensue from the legislative amendments in the VET Act which is planned to take place till the third quarter of 2023, according to the Bulgarian National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the VET Recommendation and Osnabrück Declaration.

In 2022, VET curricula for specialties in 25 professional fields from the LPVET (which contains qualifications organised around 48 professional fields in accordance with ISCED F classification) and 19 SES for professional qualifications were adopted and implemented.

In 2022, the education ministry reviewed the curricula for general education subjects for grades 1 - 10. Information and data collected from various sources led to the development of recommendations for improving the curricula in relation to specific disciplines (e.g., mathematics and geography).

2023 Implementation

In 2023, changes were made to the content of Ordinance 5/2015 on general education preparation. In particular, the levels of proficiency in foreign languages by educational level were specified in accordance with the Common European Framework of reference for Language Skills (CEFR). Also, changes were made in the definition of areas of competence, the expected learning outcomes in the subjects of geography and economics, as well as in the learning outcomes requirements in physical education and sports.

In 2023, a new Ordinance on the terms and conditions for organising, conducting and ensuring the training of Bulgarian citizens for defence of the country was issued. This Ordinance regulates the introduction of special training for the 10th and 11th grades so that students acquire knowledge and skills related to the defence of the country, know how to survive in military crises, are able to provide assistance to the civil population during military crises, combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal arms trafficking and terrorism, etc. and they develop attitudes of patriotism, dignity, honour and responsibility towards their country. All these should be taught in minimum 10 study hours divided between the two grades.

In 2023, new syllabi for physical education and sports for all grades (1th - 12th) were adopted.

As part of the national programme (NP) *Vocational education and training* in 2023, 10 national examination programmes, 10 curricula, and 21 educational programmes were developed.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the next annual national programme (NP) *Vocational education and training* was adopted. The second module of the programme, *Modernising curricula and examination content*, aims to enhance the connection between education and the labour market and to modernise educational content and teaching methods. In May 2024, rules were approved for the conditions and procedures for developing and updating standard curricula and national examination programmes for vocational education and training (VET). In June 2024, an order from education minister was issued for the development of curricula, educational, and examination programmes in 16 professional fields.

In 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science approved a new List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training (LPVET).

2025 Implementation

The *National programme (NP) for vocational education and training* continued in 2025. One of the goals of this programme is to modernise the educational and examination content for vocational education and training as part of the implementation of Module 2 'Modernising the educational and examination content'. In July 2025, an order from the Minister of Education was issued for the development of curricula, educational, and examination programmes in 6 professional fields.

In 2025, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) adopted projects for State educational standards (SES) and national examination programs for 24 professions, developed as part of the 'Modernising vocational education and training' project.

In 2025, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) introduced a new national programme *Skills in focus*, which emphasises acquiring a set of competences for the future successful professional and personal development of students. The programme supports education in Bulgarian language, mathematics, natural sciences, technology, and entrepreneurship. It includes four modules, each aimed at developing practical skills for achievements, financial literacy, reading literacy, and fostering positive attitudes. The total budget for the program is EUR 209 075 (BGN 410 000).

A reform of the curricula started in 2025 as part of the broader reform associated with the 2025-2027 Action plan for the 2021-2030 strategic framework. The reform aims to modernise the curricula, including the development of new SES and national examination programmes (NEP). In the context of the planned changes, the curricula are considered a key element in achieving the goals for quality, key competencies, digital skills, and inclusive education. The reform includes restructuring the instructional time with an emphasis on increasing the number of hours for mathematics and natural sciences. In this regard, on 23 May 2025, the education ministry published a *Draft amendment to the preschool and school education Act (PSEA)*. The proposals include introducing language support for students who do not have sufficient proficiency in the Bulgarian language. Emphasis is placed on integration, desegregation, and preventing segregation between schools, kindergartens, and groups from vulnerable communities. The development of students' social-emotional and socio-behavioural skills is also planned. The introduction of a subject called 'Virtues and religions' for students of all age groups and a broader set of measures to regulate student discipline and behaviour in schools have raised the most serious criticism. A change in assessment is also proposed, with a focus on formative assessment, evaluating skills and competencies, and their practical application. Some of the proposed changes are planned to come into effect

starting in the 2026-27 school year, while others may take effect earlier, following their publication and depending on the legislative process.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Young people (15-29 years old)

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses
Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation
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

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

European Education and Training Area and international VET

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Reports and plans of MES activities](#)

[Report on the objectives of MES for 2020](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Analysis and proposals for optimising the List of professions for vocational education and training (LPVET)

In June 2019, the Consultative Council for VET, an advisory body to the education minister, assigned the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) to prepare an analysis for the optimisation of the List of professions for vocational education and training (LPVET).

 BULGARIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Teacher continuous professional development (CPD) framework

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.

 BULGARIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2025 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.

 BULGARIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

ECVET

The 2016 amendments of the VET Act regulate the structure of the State education standards for the acquisition of qualifications. The structuring of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes is the main principle of ECVET, providing flexible learning pathways.

 BULGARIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Framework VET programmes

VET programmes are designed based on framework programmes approved by the education minister. New framework programmes were adopted in March 2017, including:

 BULGARIA

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/28064>

