

# Reforming initial teacher education programmes

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BELGIUM-FL

## Timeline



ID number 28012

## Background

On 25 March 2016, the Flemish government adopted a concept note on the reform of initial teacher education. This document sets the framework for the reorganisation of all initial teacher education programmes, including those for VET teachers. Seven working groups were launched and were assigned the task to develop the concept note further and work towards its implementation. Each group consisted of representatives of teacher education institutions, teacher unions and school organisations. In January 2017, they reported to the minister. Based on the concept note and the reports of the working groups, a decree on the reform of initial teacher education had been prepared. In autumn 2017, it was commented on by stakeholders and negotiated with delegations of trade unions and employers.

## Objectives

To improve initial teacher training programmes.

## Description

Since the academic year 2017/18, all students enrolling in initial teacher education at bachelor level have to take a non-binding admission test on study skills and motivation and knowledge of Dutch. Students enrolling in initial teacher education programmes for primary education take additional tests on knowledge of mathematics and French. Taking the exam is compulsory, but admission to the programme is not linked to the results on the admission test. The admission test is meant to assist in identifying remediation needs.

On 4 May 2018, the decree on the reform of initial teacher education was adopted, with effect from 1 September 2019. The social partners (employer organisations and worker unions) had to agree on the proposed reforms, which were then set down by the Flemish Department of Education and Training and confirmed by the Flemish Government. The teacher education institutions are the bodies who carry out the reforms.

Following the decree, there are six teacher training programmes:

- (a) bachelor degree in education for teachers in pre-primary education;
- (b) bachelor degree in education for teachers in primary education;
- (c) associate degree in education, a specific 2-year programme for teachers in technical and vocational subjects in secondary education;
- (d) bachelor degree in education for teachers in secondary education;
- (e) master of science in teaching for teachers in secondary education;
- (f) master of arts in teaching for teaching arts.

The basic competences for the teaching profession were also reviewed (started in autumn 2017), with the aim of defining the final list of competences to be included in all teacher education programmes in Flanders. The new set of basic competences was implemented in September 2019.

From 2019 onwards, tracks for 'side-entrants' are offered in every teacher training programme. These tracks are adjusted to the needs of the target group, for example in terms of evening classes, distance learning, and geographic location.

<b>2016 Design</b>
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<b>2018 Approved/Agreed</b>
<p><b>2019 Implementation</b></p> <p>As of 1 September 2019, the decree on the reform of initial teacher education started to be implemented.</p>
<p><b>2020 Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2020, the reform was further implemented.</p>
<p><b>2021 Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2021, concerning the non-binding admission test, the government has approved a preliminary draft decree (legislative process) to make remediation compulsory in case of low test results as of the academic school year 2023/24.</p>
<p><b>2022 Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2022, new measures have been introduced to encourage side entrance.</p> <p>Staff members in schools for (pre)primary or secondary education who do not yet hold an educational qualification and, in addition to their (teaching) assignment, follow a teacher education programme, are entitled to a part-time educational leave, called 'teacher bonus', allowing them to a weekly reduction in their assignment by two or three hours, while keeping their full salary. Staff members who already hold an educational qualification and are following an additional teacher education programme leading to a certificate for teaching a bottleneck subject or post may also receive a teacher bonus.</p> <p>New teachers can have seniority validated in a bottleneck post or subject in a school of regular and special primary and secondary education. From 1 December 2021, the measure has been extended: on the one hand, a number of posts and subjects are added to the list of bottleneck posts. On the other hand, new staff members are now able to have seniority validated up to a maximum of 10 years (instead of 8).</p> <p>The decree to make remediation compulsory in case of low results on the non-binding admission test was approved on the 15 July 2022. The admission test is currently under reform.</p>
<p><b>2023 Implementation</b></p>

For the first time, the Dutch language test of the non-binding admission test was conducted under controlled conditions. The French and mathematics test items could still be taken independent of location and time.

In 2023, all educational master's programmes were accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), including the master's of arts in education for teaching arts.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, all associate degree's in education (a specific programme for teachers in technical and vocational subjects in secondary education) were accredited by the NVAO.

### **2025 Completed**

In 2025, the reform is operational and runs as regular practice.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Social partners (Employer organisations and worker unions)
- Flemish Department of Education and Training

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)  
Adult learners

### **Education professionals**

Teachers

## **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 lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

## **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

# Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[Decree on reforming initial teacher education](#)

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[Teacher training entry test](#)

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[Article II.188/1 of the Higher Education Codex](#)

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[Government of Flanders Order defining the list of bachelor programmes that require taking a non-binding admission test as an admission condition](#)

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[Circular 'Teacher bonus'](#)

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[Circular 'Financial validation of experience as an employee or self-employed person for bottleneck positions and subjects for lateral entrants'](#)

### “ ... ” Cite as

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