



# Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

Portugal

2009/10 Edition

European Commission





# STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

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## PORTUGAL

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## INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

Portugal is the most western country of Europe. It is situated on the Iberian Peninsula and has Spain to the North and East, and the Atlantic Ocean to the South and West. The foundation of the nation goes back to 1143 and in 1910 the Republic was created. Portugal has been a Democratic Republic since April 1974 and in 1986 it joined the European Union. Catholicism is the main religion. However, Portugal is a secular State. Portuguese is the official language spoken throughout the country. It is still the official language of 7 other countries and is spoken by more than 200 million people.

Its sovereign bodies are: the President of the Republic, who assures national independence and the unity of the State; the Parliament, which has legislative power (these bodies are elected by universal suffrage); the Government, presided over by the Prime Minister; and the Courts, which exercise judicial power. The Azores and Madeira archipelagos are autonomous regions with Governments and Legislative Regional Assemblies with their own powers. The bodies of local power are made up of local authorities: municipalities and parishes.

Portugal has a total area of 92 152 km<sup>2</sup> and a resident population of approximately 10 627 250 (2008). Fertility rate in the country remains low, together with an increasing life expectancy and a decreasing migration balance. In 2007 Portugal recorded a negative natural growth rate, which had only occurred in 1918. The rhythm of population growth is very weak and immigration flows remain the main component of that growth.

According to the most recent census data (relating to 2001), Portugal has an economically active population of approximately 4 650 947 individuals, spread throughout the three sectors of economic activity: 231 646 individuals in the primary sector (which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing, stockbreeding, hunting and extractive industries), 1 632 638 in the secondary sector (which includes manufacturing activities, the building industry and energy production), and 2 786 663 in the tertiary sector (also known as the service sector or the service industry, including trade, tourism, transports and financial activities).

However, the unemployment rate has been increasing and the estimate for the second quarter of 2009 was 9.1%. This figure is 1.8% higher than that observed in the same period in 2008, and 0.2% higher than that observed in the previous quarter. The unemployed population was estimated at 507.7 thousand individuals, with an increase of 16.1% compared to the same quarter of the previous year, and of 13.3% compared to the previous quarter. The number of people employed decreased by 1.8% in comparison with the same quarter in 2008, and by 1.5% in comparison with the previous quarter (National Statistical Institute (INE) – Press Release – 15 May 2009 – Employment Statistics: 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2009).

The Portuguese Gross Domestic Product decreased by 1.8% in the last quarter of 2008 and recorded a zero growth rate throughout that year. In May 2009, the economic climate indicator increased in Portugal, reversing the strong descending movement initiated the previous year. Nevertheless, the economic activity indicator dropped again in April, extending the downward trend initiated in January 2008 (INE – Short-term Economic Survey – May 2009).

With regard to education, between 2004 and 2008 public expenditure with the so-called “Education Function”, which includes the entire public expenditure on all types of education, regardless of the entity which provides it, measured as a percentage of the GDP, diminished from 4.9% to 4.2%, and the percentage of total public expenditure dropped from 17.5% to 15.5%.

Concerning the education of the population aged between 25-64, and taking into account the most recent data provided by the OCDE – Education at a Glance 2008, until 2006, 57% of the Portuguese had completed pre-primary (level 0) and primary (level 1) education, 15% compulsory secondary

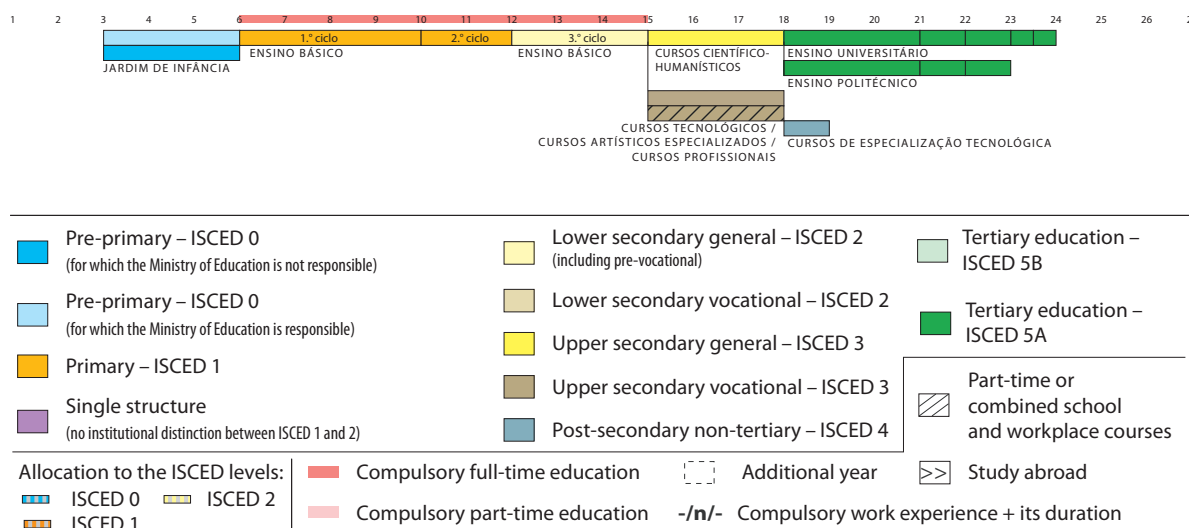
education (level 2), 13% secondary education (level 3), 1% post-secondary non-tertiary education (level 4), 13% tertiary education and 1% (level 5) had carried out advanced research programmes (level 6).

With regard to legislation, under the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (articles 43 and 73) and the Education Act (article 2, Law no. 49/05 of 30 August), access to education and culture is a legal right of the whole population. Equally enshrined in law is the duty of the State to promote the democratisation of education and of other conditions in the education offered by schools, to contribute to equal opportunities, to the reduction of economic, social and cultural inequalities, to the development of personality and the spirit of tolerance, mutual understanding, solidarity and responsibility, to social progress and the democratic involvement in public life. The freedom to teach and learn is also ensured. The State cannot plan education and culture according to any philosophical, aesthetic, political, ideological or religious dictates. State education is non-denominational.



# 1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

## 1.1 Organisation of the education and training system



The Portuguese education system is divided into six different levels, basically sequential. It begins with pre-primary education, an optional cycle for 3- to 6-year-olds. Compulsory education comes next, comprising 3 sequential cycles: the first of 4 years (6- to 10-year-olds); the second of 2 years (10- to 12-year-olds), corresponding to CITE 1; and a third cycle of 3 years (12- to 15-year-olds), corresponding to CITE 2. Secondary education is a 3-year cycle for 15- to 18-year-olds (corresponding to CITE 3) and includes four types of courses: scientific-humanistic, technological, specialist artistic and vocational. Technological, specialist artistic and vocational courses grant a level-3 professional qualification diploma. Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides specialised training in different technological areas, allowing for integration into the labour market or the continuation of studies at higher level, granting a Specialist Diploma in Technology and a level-4 qualification. Youth and adult education and training offer a second opportunity to individuals who dropped out of school or may wish to do so. The different modes of youth and adult education and training provide for a school certification and/or a professional qualification, as well as for the possibility to pursue studies at post-secondary non-tertiary or higher level. Higher education is aimed at students who successfully completed a secondary education course or gained a legally equivalent qualification, and grants a level-5 or -6 qualification. Higher education is taught at university and polytechnic institutions, which can be public, private or cooperative.

As from 2009/10, compulsory education finishes at the age of 18 for students who enrolled in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles (except for those in years 8 and 9).

## 1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Education policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, at national level, of the Regional Directorates for Education at regional level, and of the local authorities at local level. In the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, the administration of education is the responsibility of the regional governments, via the respective Regional Secretariats for Education, which adapt national education policy to a regional plan and manage human, material and financial resources.

The education policy of the Ministry of Education (ME) involves the management of resources and the design, planning, regulation, assessment and inspection of the education system from pre-primary education to compulsory and secondary education, including special education and extracurricular education, aiming to promote the development and modernisation of the education system, as well as the autonomy of school administration and management, in order to improve efficiency levels and effectiveness of established objectives, especially those regarding the quality of teaching and learning.

The ME has to guarantee compulsory schooling, to prevent early school leaving and promote the qualification of the population in general from an equal opportunities, lifelong learning and educational innovation perspective. It is also responsible for the definition, promotion and implementation of education and vocational training policies, and takes part in the coordination of education and vocational training policies with national policies in the field of the promotion and dissemination of the Portuguese language, family support, social inclusion, the promotion of citizenship, environmental protection and health promotion.

The ministry performs its responsibilities via direct administration services of the State (central and peripheral services), indirect administration, advisory bodies and other entities.

The central services of the Ministry of Education (Decree-Law no. 213/2006 of 27 October) are the following:

- *Gabinete de Estatística e Planeamento da Educação* – GEPE (Educational Statistics and Planning Office);
- *Inspecção-Geral da Educação* – IGE (Inspectorate-General for Education);
- *Secretaria-Geral* – SG (General-Secretariat);
- *Gabinete de Gestão Financeira* – GGF (Financial Management Office);
- *Direcção-Geral dos Recursos Humanos da Educação* – DGRHE (Directorate-General for Human Resources in Education);
- *Direcção-Geral de Inovação e de Desenvolvimento Curricular* – DGIDC (Directorate-General for Innovation and Curriculum Development);
- *Gabinete de Avaliação Educacional* – GAVE (Educational Assessment Office);

GEPE's mission is to ensure the production and analysis of educational statistics, the overall observation and assessment of the results of the education system and give support to international relations and cooperation in the sectors where the Ministry operates.

IGE's mission is to ensure the control, audit and inspection of the workings of the educational system at the levels of pre-primary, compulsory, secondary and extra-school education, as well as of the services and bodies of the ME, and to ensure the legal services related to the ME's operations.

The mission of the SG is to provide technical, administrative and logistic support to the different bodies and services of the Ministry of Education, in the areas of human resources, finance, materials, asset management, legal support and services of documentation, information, communication and public relations.

GGF's mission is to ensure the programme and financial management of the Ministry of Education via the correct identification of budget implementation and the reliable and sustained forecast of the State Budget's management for the Ministry of Education.

The mission of the DGRHE is to ensure the implementation of policies regarding human resources, teaching and non-teaching staff and schools, and to provide technical support to policy formation, without prejudice to the legal responsibilities of local authorities and school management and administration bodies.

DGIDC's mission is to ensure the implementation of pedagogic and didactic policies in pre-primary, compulsory, secondary and extracurricular education. It oversees exams, promotes scientific research in the field of curriculum development and innovation, teaching and assessment tools, educational support and complements. It also coordinates and proposes guidelines for school success, the prevention of early school leaving and the promotion of school sport.

The mission of GAVE is to plan, coordinate, create, validate, apply and control external learning assessment tools.

The regional services comprise the five Regional Directorates for Education (DRE). These are decentralized services which carry out at regional level the instructions of the Ministry of Education regarding schools' guidance, coordination and support, as well as the correct use of human, financial and material resources, promoting the development and consolidation of their autonomy.

The body of indirect administration is the National Agency for Qualification, P.I. – ANQ, IP, which comes under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity. It enjoys administrative, financial and pedagogical autonomy in the performance of its duties, namely, to coordinate and boost the provision of education and vocational training for young people and adults, to manage the network of recognition, validation and certification of skills, and to coordinate curriculum development and the methodologies and materials for specific interventions.

The advisory bodies are:

- *Conselho Nacional de Educação* – CNE (National Education Board);
- *Conselho das Escolas* (Schools Council).

The National Education Board (CNE) is an advisory body independent from the Ministry of Education. Set up in 1982, it has autonomous administrative and financial powers. It is responsible, both on its own initiative or when requested, for issuing opinions, reports and recommendations on all matters related to education, under the terms of article 49 of the Education Act. It has 63 members who represent the different partners and interests of civil society and those empowered to decide on education policy measures. According to the Council of Ministers' Resolution no. 39/2006 of 21 April, it took on the powers of the former Coordinating Council for Private and Cooperative Education.

The Schools Council ensures the schools' representation with the ME, takes part in policy formulation, and gives opinions on draft legislation in the areas of pre-primary, compulsory and secondary education. It has the power to prepare draft legislation or regulations and must be heard in connection with any restructuring of the state education network.

The Information System Coordinating Office (MISI), whose mission is to create, maintain and ensure the effective running of the integrated information system, is a cross-departmental body that supports school management and administration.

At regional level, in the mainland, there are five Regional Directorates for Education (DRE), which include the peripheral services of direct administration by the State and enjoy administrative autonomy. These are the North Regional Directorate for Education (DREN), the Centre Regional Directorate for Education (DREC), the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Directorate for Education (DRELVT), the Alentejo Regional Directorate for Education (DREALE), and the Algarve Regional Directorate for Education (DREALG).

The following are the main duties of the DRE:

- To coordinate, monitor and support the organisation and functioning of schools and the management of their human and material resources, promoting the development and consolidation of their autonomy;
- To take part in the planning of the school network;
- To promote the gathering of necessary information for the formulation and implementation of education and training policies;
- To make available to schools the guidelines from the central services and relevant technical information;
- To cooperate with other services with a view to carrying out joint actions on education and vocational training, and to provide technical support to municipal initiatives involving school facilities;
- To monitor the procedures concerning teaching quality control.

Decree-Law no. 7/03 of 15 January, as amended by Law no. 41/03 of 22 August, regulates the powers, establishment and management of the municipal boards of education, as well as the preparation, approval and effects of the Education Chart, with the transfer of responsibilities to local authorities. The municipal board of education coordinates education policy at municipal level, coordinating the actions of education players and social partners, and proposes adequate measures to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the educational system.

At municipal level, the education chart is the instrument used for the planning and organisation of the education network, with the aim of improving education, teaching, training and culture, promoting school clusters in a context of administrative decentralization, reinforcement of the management models, and enhancement of the role of educational communities and schools' educational projects.

Decree-Law no. 75/2008 of 22 April approves the autonomy, administration and management of pre-primary, compulsory and secondary education in public education institutions. Mention should be made that autonomy is the power granted to schools by the educational authorities to take strategic, pedagogical, administrative, financial and organisational decisions within the scope of their educational project which, together with the internal school regulations and the annual plan of activities, constitute the process of school autonomy.

The same Decree-Law establishes the following school administration and management bodies:

- General Council: strategic senior management body, responsible for defining the guidelines of school activity and ensuring the involvement and representation of the educational community, according to and for the purposes of article 48 (4) of the Education Act;
- Headmaster: administration and management body of the school, or school cluster, in the educational, cultural, administrative, financial and patrimonial areas;
- Pedagogical Council: body responsible for pedagogical coordination and supervision, defining the pedagogical direction of the school, or school cluster, namely in the pedagogic/didactic and student guidance and monitoring fields, as well as in supervising the initial and continuing training of teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Administrative Council: body responsible for discussing and taking decisions on administrative and financial matters.

The educational project, which sets out the educational direction of the school, is drawn up and approved by the administration bodies for a period of three years and must define the principles, values, goals and strategies according to which the school proposes to fulfil its educational role.

The internal regulations define the system under which the school, or school cluster, will operate (together with its administration and management bodies), the school direction, the educational support services and structures, as well as the rights and duties of the school community members. The internal regulations also set out the procedure for election to these bodies. Within one year of their approval, these regulations may be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

Higher education policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) and aims at ensuring a solid scientific and technological training, as well as the development of the information society. This ministry fulfils its responsibilities through the following services:

Direct Administration:

- Planning, Strategy, Assessment and International Relations Office (GPEARl);
- Inspectorate-General (IG);
- General-Secretariat (SG);
- Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES).

The mission of GPEARl is to ensure technical support to policy formulation and strategic and operational planning, to cater for international relations, and to monitor and assess policy implementation in the fields of science, technology, higher education and the information society.

The mission of IG is to assess the legality and regularity of actions implemented, their management and outcomes, through technical, performance and financial auditing.

The mission of SG is to provide for specialist technical support to MCTES bodies and services, in the fields of internal resource management, technical and legal support, documentation and information, and communication and public relations.

The mission of DGES is to ensure the formulation, implementation and coordination of higher education policies, namely as regards network layout, admission, social intervention, international cooperation, and student mobility within Europe.

Indirect Administration:

- Foundation for Science and Technology, PI (FCT);
- Knowledge Society Agency, PI (UMIC);
- Macau Scientific and Cultural Centre, PI (CCCM);
- Tropical Sciences Research Institute, PI (IICT);
- Technology and Nuclear Institute, PI (ITN);
- Meteorological Institute, PI (IM).

The mission of FCT, IP is the development, funding and assessment of institutions, networks, infrastructures, programmes, projects and human resources in all fields of science and technology, as well as international scientific and technological cooperation.

The mission of UMIC, IP is to mobilise the information society through the promotion of dissemination, qualification and research activities.

The mission of CCCM, IP is to produce, promote and disseminate information about Macau and about Portugal's relations with Macau and China and those of Europe with the Asia-Pacific region.

The mission of IICT, IP, as a State laboratory, is to provide technical and scientific support to cooperation with countries from tropical regions.

The mission of ITN, IP, as a State laboratory, is the implementation of national science and technology policy, namely in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.

The mission of IM, IP, as a State laboratory, is the implementation of national policies on meteorology, climatology and geophysics.

Advisory Bodies:

- National Education Council (CNE);
- Science and Technology Coordinating Council (CCCT);
- Higher Education Coordinating Council (CCES).

The mission of CNE is to give opinions on education policy (see reference above, in ME advisory bodies).

The mission of CCCT is to advise the Government member responsible for science, technology and higher education on science and technology policy and the promotion of innovation.

The mission of CCES is to advise the Government member responsible for science, technology and higher education on higher education policy.

Other structures:

- Lisbon Science Academy (ACL)

The ACL is a scientific institution of public utility whose powers and procedures are set out in its statutes.

The higher education system comprises two sub-systems: the university system and the polytechnic system.

With regard to Public Higher Education, both Universities and Polytechnic Institutes have administrative, financial, academic and pedagogical autonomy. There is no single management model for universities.

The governing bodies of public universities are: the General Council, which elects its president and approves the strategic plans; the Chancellor, responsible for preparing strategic plan proposals and general guidelines, establishing university structures, and developing plans and budgets; and the Management Council, responsible for the administrative, patrimonial, financial and human resource management. The General Council is composed of 15 to 35 members representing the teaching staff, researchers, students, employees and external personalities of renowned merit. The Management Council is composed of 5 members, including the vice-chancellor, or vice-president, and the administrator. Universities also have councils of an advisory nature within their statutes, which provide an interface with the economic, social and cultural community.

The governing bodies of polytechnic institutes are: the General Council, which approves the plan of activities and reviews the annual implementation reports and the proposals for the creation, alteration

or closure of organisational unities; the Director or President, responsible for the preparation of strategic plan proposals and general guidelines, the creation of university structures, and plan and budget development; and the Management Council.

Higher education institutions enjoy financial autonomy and, as such, are free to manage the funds provided to them by the State, as well as to increase and manage their own funds.

Besides public higher education, there is private, cooperative and concordat higher education.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTSS) is responsible for defining and implementing policies relating to employment, vocational training and social security. Through the Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP), and in cooperation with the social partners, the Ministry is responsible for youth and adult education and training as well as for the employment and vocational training centres. Together with the Ministry of Education, it is also responsible for vocational schools, youth and adult education and training courses, S@bER+ (Know+) actions, the establishment of Centres for the Recognition and Validation of Skills, as well as for technological specialist courses.

Sector-based training courses are also provided in the following areas: tourism, agriculture and health. These courses are the joint responsibility of the corresponding ministries and the Ministry of Education.

As far as the apprenticeship system is concerned, the IEFP has the support of the National Apprenticeship Commission, made up of representatives from the several ministries and social partners.

### **1.3 Financing**

The Ministry of Education funds its central and regional services, non-higher public education institutions as well as social school activity through the State budget. It also provides grants to private and cooperative education and vocational schools.

Apart from the Ministry of Education, municipalities also take responsibility for the funding of education, including the construction, maintenance, supply and some operating expenses of pre-primary and 1st cycle institutions. They are also responsible for ensuring the funding of school transports, complementary educational activities and free-time activities.

The funding of public higher education is the responsibility of the State, through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, complemented by own funds and the payment of tuition fees by students.

The European Union also co-funds the education sector through the Human Potential Operational Programme (POPH), the main aim of which is to help reduce the qualifications deficit of the Portuguese population. The programme also seeks to encourage job creation and the quality of employment, supporting entrepreneurs as well as youngsters' progression into working life. It is based on 10 axes covering areas such as Initial Qualification, Lifelong Learning, Professional Management and Improvement, Advanced Training, Citizenship and Social Development.

### **1.4 Quality assurance**

School inspection is an autonomous activity, and the body responsible for assessing the quality of the education system is the Inspectorate-General for Education (IGE). At present, and as previously mentioned, the mission of IGE results from the powers conferred upon it by article 10 of Decree-Law no. 213/2006 of 17 October.



Within the scope of higher education, the Agency for Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation (A3ES) was created by the State in 2007 with the aim of promoting and ensuring the quality of higher education, particularly within the European area.



## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Law no. 5/73 of 25 July, which approved the reform of the educational system, considers pre-primary education as an integral part of the system, defining its goals and creating the public Training Colleges for Nursery School Teachers. The first public nursery schools were set up by the Ministry of Education in 1978, but it was only in 1986, with the publication of the Education Act (Law no. 46/1986 of 14 October), that pre-primary education became a permanent part of the education system, with its general goals defined in terms of the balanced training and development of children's potential, to be undertaken in close cooperation with the family.

In 1995, the Ministry of Education drew up a Plan to expand the network of pre-primary education institutions, in order to allow better access conditions for a larger number of children and to give national visibility to nursery education.

In 1996, in a partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Planning and Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Education launched the Programme for the Expansion and Development of Pre-primary Education, with the aim of developing proposals of pedagogical intervention at curriculum and teacher training level, as well as promoting and monitoring the launching of innovation, training and research programmes.

On 10 February 1997, in developing the principles contained in the Education Act, the Framework Law on Pre-primary Education was published (Law no. 5/97). This law established this level of education as a first stage in the process of lifelong learning – a stage of universal character but optional attendance, defining the participant role of families, as well as the strategic role of the State, the local authorities and private, cooperative and social initiatives.

According to the Education Act and the Framework Law on Pre-primary Education, the aims of pre-primary education are:

- To stimulate the abilities of each child and favour their training;
- To contribute to their emotional, social and intellectual stability and motor development;
- To instil hygiene and health habits;
- To identify inadequacies or impairments and promote the best guidance for the child.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, there is a public and a private network of pre-primary education institutions, which are complementary. Responsibility for their coordination, monitoring and support lies with the Regional Directorates for Education. In institutions belonging to the public network, the educational component is entirely provided for by the State.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTSS) also supervises a network of pre-primary education institutions, managed by the Regional Social Security Centres and made up of private social solidarity institutions (IPSS) and public institutions set up under the initiative of the MTSS.

Private institutions are also supported by other bodies, such as local authorities and cooperatives. Most of these institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, both public and private, also have crèches for children aged between 3 months and 3 years. The two types of services (nursery schools and crèches) may operate in the same building or separately.

In the private solidarity or non-profit network, the State co-funds the institutions' operation, paying the full costs of the educational component and a share of the costs of socio-educational animation activities and family support. In the private network, made up of private and cooperative institutions,

funding is provided by the families, and the institutions can request financial support for needy families.

## **2.1 Admission**

Pre-primary education is aimed at 3- to 5-year-olds. In 2009, the XVII Constitutional Government established the universality of pre-primary education for children over 5 years old (Law no. 85/2009 of 27 August). Nevertheless, in the public system it is not possible to ensure pre-primary education for all 3- to 4-year olds. Therefore, priority is given to 5-year-olds, i.e. children who are about to begin primary education and whose parents, or guardians, live or work in the school parish. In private social solidarity institutions, the social criterion is applied, according to families' needs.

## **2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

Public pre-primary education can be provided in proper institutions, named nursery schools, or in facilities where one or several levels of compulsory education are taught.

Groups are formed on the basis of pedagogical criteria and depend on the methods and principles defined by the pedagogical council of the school. Whenever the structure of the schools permits, the classes must be organised according to age. At nursery schools run by the Ministry of Education, each pre-primary classroom, assigned to a teacher, must have a minimum attendance of 20 children and a maximum attendance of 25.

Order no. 12591/2006 of 16 June establishes that the opening hours of public pre-school institutions should be a minimum of 8 hours daily and that this information should be transmitted to parents and guardians at the beginning of the school year. Schools under the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity are open 10 to 12 hours a day, five days a week.

At the beginning of each academic year, the adoption of the school calendar is the responsibility of the pedagogical administration of pre-primary schools, in consultation with local authorities and parents or guardians.

## **2.3 Curriculum**

Curriculum development is the responsibility of the nursery school teacher and must take into account the general goals of pre-primary education as laid down in the Framework Law on Pre-primary Education: the organisation of the educational environment as the support of curriculum work and its intent; content areas – Personal and Social Education, Expression/Communication, Knowledge of the World; and educational continuity and intent.

The Curriculum Guidelines (defined by Order no. 5220/97 of 4 August) are the common reference framework for all teachers from the national network. Their goal is to provide children with a real learning opportunity, regardless of the teaching model used by the pre-primary education institution.

## **2.4 Assessment**

Assessment in Pre-primary Education takes on a markedly formative dimension, in the sense that it is a continuing and interpretative process, more interested in the processes than in the results, and seeking to make the child the protagonist of his/her learning. At the end of the school year, the teacher draws up a final assessment report on the pedagogical project developed, which must be available for consultation at the teaching institution.

## 2.5 Nursery school teachers

The training of teaching staff, which includes nursery school teachers, comprises initial training, specialist training and in-service training, as set out in the Education Act. Decree-Law no. 43/2007 of 22 February established that teachers must hold a master's degree.

Career admission and progression, performance evaluation, as well as the rights and duties of teaching staff, are set out in the Career Statute for Nursery School and Compulsory and Secondary Education Teachers (Decree-Law no. 15/07 of 19 January). This statute is currently under debate, so teaching career conditions might be changed soon. Public education teachers are considered civil servants.

Teachers are expected to work thirty-five weekly hours, spread over five days a week. The teaching component in pre-primary education and in the 1st cycle of secondary education is of twenty-five hours weekly.

The ratio between learning support staff and class is of one element for one or two classes. Learning support staff must hold the minimum qualification of compulsory education.

## 2.6 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Children enrolled in pre-primary education, according to type of institution and age.

School Year 2007/2008 – Mainland			
	Total	Public Education	Private Education
<b>Total</b>	250 629	131 502	119 127
<b>3-year-olds</b>	64 773	27 794	36 979
<b>4-year-olds</b>	85 534	44 514	41 020
<b>5-year-olds</b>	98 154	57 609	40 545
<b>6-year-olds</b>	2 168	1 585	583

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education

**Figure 2:** Pre-primary attendance rate according to age.

School Year 2007/2008 – Mainland		
	Enrolled Children	Pre-primary Attendance Rate (%)
<b>Total</b>	250 629	78.8
<b>3-year-olds</b>	64 773	63.1
<b>4-year-olds</b>	85 534	81.1
<b>5-year-olds</b>	98 154	91.6
<b>6-year-olds</b>	2 168	2.0

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education

### 3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

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According to the Education Act – Law no. 46/86 of 14 October – compulsory education is universal, mandatory and free of charge, and lasts for nine years. Compulsory attendance applies to 6- to 15-year-olds and can be complied with at public, private or cooperative schools.

The objectives of compulsory education, as set out in the Education Act, are the following:

- To provide a general, common-basis education for all students;
- To ensure that theoretical and practical knowledge, schooling and everyday life are interrelated;
- To provide physical and motor development;
- To encourage manual activities and promote art education;
- To teach a first foreign language and start a second; to provide the basic knowledge that will enable students to pursue their studies or be admitted into vocational training courses;
- To develop knowledge and appreciation of the specific values of Portuguese identity, language, history and culture; to develop autonomous attitudes;
- To provide children with special educational needs with suitable conditions for their development;
- To create conditions that will promote the school and educational success of all students.

Compulsory education lasts for nine years and comprises three consecutive cycles:

- 1st Cycle, which lasts for four years (6- to 10-year-olds). This cycle is comprehensive and is the responsibility of a single teacher who can be assisted in specific areas.
- 2nd Cycle, which lasts for two years (10- to 12-year-olds). This cycle is organised into interdisciplinary areas of basic education and (usually) has one teacher per area.
- 3rd Cycle, which lasts for three years (12- to 15-year-olds). This cycle is organised according to a unified curriculum plan, including diverse vocational areas, and has one teacher per subject or group of subjects.

As connection between the three cycles is sequential, each cycle should complement and expand on the previous one, within one single global perspective.

Compulsory education, as mentioned above, is free of charge, covering all costs related to enrolment, attendance and certification. Students can also use books and school materials for free, and may be entitled to meals and accommodation, depending on the family's socio-economic conditions. School transport is free of charge for students who live more than 3km away from the school. Expenses with family support schemes in private or cooperative schools may be borne by the State.

#### 3.1 Admission

Enrolment in the 1st year of compulsory education is mandatory for children who complete their sixth birthday until 15 September. However, parents or guardians of children who complete their sixth birthday between 16 September and 31 December can request the school management body for enrolment to be allowed. Enrolment is subject to the existence of a free place.

Admission to the 2nd and 3rd cycles depends on the completion of the preceding cycle, i.e. students who completed the 1st cycle will be admitted to the 2nd cycle, and students who completed the 2nd cycle will be admitted to the 3rd cycle.

## 3.2 Curriculum

In the academic year of 2001/02, the Ministry of Education implemented the Curriculum Reorganisation of Compulsory Education, consolidated by Decree-Laws no. 6/2001 of 18 January and no. 209/2002 of 17 October. These legal acts define and establish the guiding principles for the organisation, curriculum management and assessment of compulsory education learning, as follows:

- Consistency and sequential connection between the three cycles of compulsory education and interaction between these and secondary education;
- Integration of curriculum and of assessment, ensuring that the latter regulates learning;
- Cross-curricular integration of citizenship and ICT;
- Within the scope of education for citizenship, approaching issues such as sustainable development, environmental education, road safety and Human Rights;
- Enhancement of experimental learning and research activities in the different subjects;
- Recognition of school autonomy, in the sense of defining a curriculum development project suited to the characteristics of its educational community and integrated into the School Educational Project;
- Boosting the curriculum in the fields of mother tongue and mathematics;
- Diversity of educational provision so that all students may develop basic and structuring skills, as defined for each cycle and for the end of compulsory education.

In accordance with the principles laid down in Decree-Law no. 6/2001, the Ministry of Education also defined a set of basic structuring skills within the context of national curriculum development, the specific skills for each subject area and subject in the group of three cycles and in each one of them, as well as a set of learning and educational experiences to be provided to all students.

Interpretation and implementation of the national curriculum are effected through the development of school and class curriculum projects. Their implementation is a flexible process, seeking varied and adequate answers to the different needs and characteristics of each student, class, school, community and region.

With a view to allowing the integration into the Portuguese education system of compulsory education students for whom Portuguese is not their mother tongue, Implementing Order no. 7/2006 of 6 February established that schools should provide specific curriculum activities for the learning of Portuguese as a second language. These activities must be organised according to the needs of the students at whom they are directed, they are of compulsory attendance, have a weekly duration of ninety minutes and are included within the non-subject-based curriculum area of Accompanied Study.

### 3.2.1 First cycle

The 1st cycle lasts four years and is taught in mixed classes at 1st cycle basic schools (EB1) or integrated basic schools (EBI) which can be public, private or cooperative.

As previously mentioned, teaching is comprehensive and is the responsibility of a single teacher who may be assisted by other teachers in specialist areas, namely: Music, Foreign Language and Physical Education.

The specific goals of each cycle are integrated in the general goals of compulsory education, according to the corresponding age development. The Education Act defines as main goals for the 1st cycle: the development of oral language and the introduction and gradual command of reading and writing, essential notions of arithmetic and calculation, of the physical and social environment, as well as of artistic, dramatic, musical and motor expression.

Classes must have a maximum of 25 students and the same teacher must follow the group of students throughout the 4 years of the 1st cycle. Teaching time is managed by the teacher, taking into account the characteristics of the group and the school timetable and breaks, agreed upon by the teaching board.

School opening hours correspond to a minimum of eight hours daily and schools are usually open from 9am to 5.30pm. Teaching activities include 25 weekly hours and must be organised over the morning and afternoon; exceptionally, in case of facilities shortage, only morning or afternoon classes can be adopted.

Order no. 19575/2006 of 25 September defines the minimum weekly times to be devoted to the main areas of the 1st cycle syllabus: eight hours for Portuguese Language, including one daily hour for reading; seven hours for Mathematics; five hours for Environmental Studies, half of which should be spent on experimental science teaching; five hours for the area of expressions and remaining curriculum areas.

From a full-time school perspective, based on Order no. 12591/2006 (2nd series) of 16 June, schools develop curriculum enhancement activities which include: study support and the teaching of English to students from years 3 and 4, on a compulsory basis; physical and sport activity; teaching of music and other artistic expressions; teaching of English or other foreign languages from year 1.

Study support has a weekly duration of at least ninety minutes and focuses on homework and learning consolidation. English lessons in years 3 and 4 are taught in three daily periods of forty-five minutes, totalling one hundred and thirty-five minutes a week.

Curriculum enhancement activities can be promoted by local authorities, parents and guardians associations, and private social solidarity institutions (IPSS) or school clusters. The Ministry of Education provides financial support to those bodies involved, paying them a sum estimated according to the criterion of annual cost per pupil.

The academic year is annually fixed by the Ministry of Education. After the summer holidays (approximately 10 weeks), schools reopen during the second half of September and the school year usually finishes by the end of June.

The 1st cycle syllabus includes subject-based curriculum areas (Portuguese, maths, environmental studies, artistic and physical-motor expressions), non-subject-based curriculum areas (project area, accompanied study and civics) and the optional subject-based curriculum area, i.e. religious and moral education and curriculum enhancement activities.

The work done by students should involve experimental and research activities suited to the nature of the different areas.

The non-subject-based curriculum areas should be developed in connection with each other and with the subject areas, including a component of student work with information and communication technologies. They must still be an explicit part of the class curriculum project.

### 3.2.2 Second cycle

The 2nd cycle of compulsory education lasts for two years and is taught in mixed classes at public, private and cooperative schools. There are different types of public schools: basic school – 1st and 2nd cycles (EB1, 2), basic school – 2nd and 3rd cycles (EB2, 3) and basic integrated school (EBI).

In accordance with the Education Act, the specific goals of the 2nd cycle of compulsory education focus on humanistic, artistic, physical and sport, scientific and technological training, as well as on moral and civic education, aiming to prepare students to assimilate and critically and creatively interpret information. By so doing, students can acquire working methods, tools and knowledge that will allow them to pursue their education, with a view to developing active and conscious attitudes towards the community.

The 2nd cycle of compulsory education is multi-teacher and is organised into multidisciplinary areas of study, having one or two teachers per area as a desirable number.

The number of students per class varies between the preferred 24 and a maximum of 28. Classes with students with special educational needs cannot exceed 20 students.

The weekly timetable corresponds to 17 teaching periods in each year, organised in 90-minute classes. Whenever necessary, the school may rearrange the students' weekly timetable, provided it respects the totals per cycle and per school year. The school timetable is organised between Monday and Friday.

The study plan of the 2nd cycle includes the following curriculum subject areas: Languages and Social Studies (Portuguese Language, Foreign Language (French, German or English), History and Geography of Portugal); Mathematics and Sciences (Maths, Natural Sciences); Artistic and Technological Education (Visual and Technological Education, Music, Physical Education), Personal and Social Education (Religious and Moral Education (optional)). The non-subject-based curriculum areas are Project Area, Accompanied Study and Civics. Education for Citizenship is cross-curricular.

The compulsory learning of a curriculum foreign language begins in this cycle and continues in the 3rd cycle, in order to give students command of the language in a structured and sequential way. According to the currently existing provision, students can choose between French, English and German.

Under the terms of Implementing Order no. 7/2006 of 6 February, schools must provide specific curriculum activities on the learning of Portuguese as second language for students for whom Portuguese is not their mother tongue.

The non-subject-based curriculum areas must be developed in connection with each other and with the subject areas, including a component of student work with information and communication technologies. They must also be an explicit part of the class curriculum project. The Project Area and Accompanied Study are taught by teams of two class teachers, ideally from different scientific areas.

The work done by the pupils should involve experimental and research activities suited to the nature of the different areas or subjects, namely in the case of science teaching.

The school must also offer recreational or cultural enhancement activities, of optional attendance, focused on the educational and creative use of students' free time. School sport is included in these activities.

In the academic year of 2005/06, the full occupation of school time became mandatory in all compulsory education schools. In accordance with Order no. 13599/2006 of 28 June, schools must occupy free periods resulting from teacher absence with varied educational activities.



### 3.2.3 Third cycle

The 3rd cycle of compulsory education comprises three academic years, the final year being the end of the nine-year compulsory education. It can be taught at integrated basic schools, 2nd and 3rd cycle basic schools or secondary schools with the 3rd cycle.

In accordance with the Education Act, the specific aims of this cycle are: the systematic and differentiated acquisition of modern culture in its humanistic, literary, artistic, physical and sport, scientific and technological dimensions, essential for the entry into working life or the continuation of studies; school and vocational guidance that will allow to opt for further studies or integration into working life, with due respect for the autonomous self-achievement of the individual.

In this cycle, teaching is organised according to subjects, or groups of subjects, taught by several teachers, with one teacher per subject or non-subject-based curriculum area. Classes are mixed.

The curriculum includes the following curriculum subject areas: Portuguese Language, Foreign Language, Human and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Physical and Natural Sciences, Visual Education, another subject (Music, Theatre or Dance), Technological Education, Physical Education, Introduction to ICT (year 9), Personal and Social Education, Religious and Moral Education (optional). The non-subject-based curriculum areas are Project Area, Accompanied Study and Civics.

Learning of a second foreign language is compulsory in the 3rd cycle. Students can choose between French, English, German and Spanish.

School time is organised into 90-minute periods, like in the 2nd cycle.

The subject of Introduction to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is only taught in year 9, but the use of ICT in years 7 and 8 is desirable, particularly in the non-subject-based curriculum areas.

Project Area and Accompanied Study are each taught by one teacher. The school can also organise recreational and cultural enhancement activities, of optional character, integrated within the school educational project.

The work done by the pupils should involve experimental and research activities suited to the nature of the different areas or subjects, namely in the case of science teaching.

## 3.3 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The overall organisation of the education system, as defined in the Education Act, entailed a review of the criteria and regulations governing the management of the school network, as well as the typology of school buildings. Implementing Order no. 33/ME/91 of 26 March established the following types of teaching establishments:

- 1st cycle basic school (6- to 10-year-olds);
- 1st cycle school with nursery school (3- to 10-year-olds);
- 2nd and 3rd cycle basic school (10- to 15-year-olds);
- Basic integrated school – 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles (6- to 15-year-olds);
- Basic integrated school with nursery school (3- to 15-year-olds);
- Secondary school with the 3rd cycle (12- to 18-year-olds).



In 2000, based on Regulating Decree no. 12/2000 of 29 August, a process of reorganisation of the educational network began. Grouping pre-primary and basic public schools together, it led to the creation of school clusters, based on local association dynamics and aimed at putting an end to the isolation and dispersion of small schools, ensuring, at the same time, consistency and continuity between the different cycles of compulsory education.

A school cluster represents an organisational unity equipped with its own bodies, able to integrate pre-primary schools and schools with one or more cycles of compulsory education. These can be vertically or horizontally linked (usually they are vertically linked; horizontal linkage hardly exists any more), are geographically close and have common and interacting pedagogical projects.

More recently, in 2007, it became necessary to introduce new wording which the educational communities would identify and which would facilitate the definition and planning of the school network, the drawing up of education charts and the statistical analysis of a variety of information on the education system. Thus, the rules applying to the designation of public, non-higher education institutions were redefined. Compulsory education comprises the following typologies:

Levels, cycles and types of education or teaching	Designation
Compulsory education	Basic school
Compulsory and pre-primary education	Basic school
3rd cycle of compulsory education and secondary education	Secondary school
Compulsory education and secondary education	Basic and secondary school

The school calendar is defined through an order published annually by the Ministry of Education. The school year usually starts during the first half of September and ends in the latter half of June. School breaks happen during Christmas, Carnival and Easter holidays, besides the breaks corresponding to national and municipal holidays.

### 3.4 Assessment, progression and certification

As an integral part of the teaching and learning process, assessment allows to check that the curriculum is being fully taught, check for gaps and problems at learning level and (re)direct the educational process.

Assessment of compulsory education students is regulated by Implementing Order no. 1/2005 of 5 January, as amended by Implementing Order no. 18/2006 of 14 March, and focuses on the learning targets and skills defined in the national curriculum for the several areas and subjects of each cycle, expressed in the school and class curriculum projects, by school year. As a regulating element of the educational practice, assessment is systematic and continuous.

Besides the management bodies of schools or school clusters, the educational administration, teachers, students and guardians, other actors in the assessment process include specialised educational support services and other services organised by the school, according to the terms defined in the internal regulations.

The assessment process involves diagnostic assessment, formative assessment and summative (internal and external) assessment.

Diagnostic assessment is the responsibility of each teacher and leads to the adoption of different pedagogical strategies, suited to the characteristics of students and to the learning targets and skills to be developed, contributing to the drawing up, adjustment and reformulation of the class curriculum project.

Formative assessment is the main assessment tool used in compulsory education. It is continuous and systematic and provides the teacher, the student, the parent/guardian and other players with information on the learning development, so as to allow for review and improvement of work processes.

Summative assessment, using the information gathered from formative assessment, formulates an overall judgement regarding the student's development in terms of the learning and skills defined for each subject and curriculum area. It includes internal and external summative assessment, carried out in year 9.

Internal summative assessment takes place at the end of each school term, year and cycle. In the 1st cycle, it is the responsibility of the class teacher, together with the corresponding teaching board. In the 2nd and 3rd cycles, it is the responsibility of the teachers who make up the class council, in dialogue with the students and, whenever necessary, with the specialised services of educational support and parents/guardians.

In the 1st cycle, information resulting from the summative assessment is descriptive in all curriculum areas; in the 2nd and 3rd cycles, it is expressed on a scale from 1 to 5 in all subjects, and in a descriptor of Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory and Very Satisfactory in the non-subject-based curriculum areas. In year 9, internal summative assessment also includes a global test or a final piece of work in each subject or subject area, except for Portuguese and Mathematics, where students have to take national exams.

Summative assessment leads to a decision on student progression or retention, expressed through the corresponding descriptors of Move or Not Move at the end of each year, and Pass or Fail at the end of each cycle. In year 1 there is no place for retention, unless the student has exceeded the limit of unjustified absences.

Regarding internal summative assessment, Implementing Order no. 50/2005 of 20 October defines the principles and guidelines for the implementation, monitoring and assessment of recovery, monitoring and development plans as an intervention strategy aimed at the educational success of compulsory education students.

The activities involved in recovery and monitoring plans should fit the needs of individual students, or group of students, and are compulsory.

The recovery plan is planned, implemented and assessed, if necessary, in liaison with other education professionals, involving parents or guardians and students. It applies to students who have learning difficulties in any subject, subject-based or non-subject-based curriculum area. It may take the following forms, among others: differentiated pedagogy in the classroom; tutoring programmes to support study, guidance and counselling strategies for students; compensation activities at any time of the school year or at the beginning of a new cycle; recovery classes; and specific teaching activities for Portuguese language for foreign students.

The monitoring plan is applicable to students who did not move up to the next year due to their final summative assessment. It consists of a number of curriculum and curriculum enhancement activities, developed at the school or under school guidance, focusing predominantly on subjects or subject areas in which the student has not acquired the basic skills. It is drawn up by the class council and approved by the pedagogical council to be applied the following school year. The school or school

cluster executive management determines the monitoring and assessment forms. The plan is drawn, implemented and assessed, if necessary, in liaison with other education professionals, involving parents or guardians and students.

When, following a final summative assessment, it is concluded that a student, who has already been retained in any school year, does not have the necessary conditions for his/her progression, he/she must be submitted to an extraordinary assessment that will ponder the educational advantages of a new retention.

In the 2nd and 3rd cycles, both in final and non-final cycle years, retention implies the repetition of all areas and subjects of the year in which the student was retained. In situations of retention, the class teacher in the 1st cycle, and the class council in the 2nd and 3rd cycles, must draw an analytical report identifying the skills the student lacks. These must be taken into account when drawing up the curriculum project of the class into which the student will be integrated the following school year.

Students who obtain a pass in the summative assessment at the end of the 3rd cycle will be granted the compulsory education diploma by their school administration and management body.

Students, who have reached the age limit of compulsory education without a pass in the final assessment of the 3rd cycle, or without having completed year 9, can apply for the compulsory education diploma by taking national exams in all subjects.

According to Order no. 2351/2007 of 14 February, all students who attend public, private and cooperative schools take assessment exams at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles of compulsory education. These are aimed at generating indicators that will allow to simultaneously assess the quality of learning, the adequacy of programmes and their conformity with teaching and pedagogical practices, highlighting those aspects that need to be changed in order to achieve significant improvements in students' performance.

### **3.5 Teachers**

In accordance with the Education Act (Law no. 46/86), compulsory education teachers gain a professional qualification in specific teacher training courses, according to the curriculum needs of the corresponding level of education and teaching. These courses are provided at teacher training colleges or universities that have their own training units for that purpose and award the same diplomas as teacher training colleges.

Teachers have access to the profession as long as they have a professional qualification, based on the academic and pedagogical classifications obtained, as well as on the number of years of teaching experience.

Training of teaching staff comprises initial training, specialist training and in-service training, as set out in the Education Act (Law no. 46/86).

Initial training of compulsory education teachers includes a scientific and technical component, and a pedagogical component, directed towards the attainment of a specific professional qualification obtained through attendance of higher courses which award a bachelor's degree, as set out in Law no. 115/97, which amended, in this respect, the previous wording of the Education Act (Law no. 46/86).

According to the new wording, initial training of nursery school teachers and teachers from the three cycles of compulsory education is carried out at teacher training colleges – integrated into polytechnic higher education – and universities.

Teaching staff in non-higher education work a 35-hour week. Teachers' timetables include a teaching and a non-teaching component. The teaching component of teachers from the 1st cycle is of 25 hours weekly, whereas that of teachers from the 2nd and 3rd cycles is of 22 hours a week.

The conditions of service for all teachers in the public sector are regulated by the Career Statute for Nursery School and Compulsory and Secondary Education Teachers. Public education teachers are civil servants.

Career progression requires a performance evaluation in which the minimum descriptor of Good is awarded at least during two terms, as well as the successful completion of in-service training modules which, in the period under evaluation, must correspond to an average of twenty-five hours a year.

It is important to note that progression in the teaching career is currently under debate, so its conditions might be changed soon.

### 3.6 Guidance and counselling

Guidance is provided by the Psychology and Guidance Services (SPO), which operate in pre-primary, compulsory and secondary schools, acting in the fields of psycho-pedagogical support for students and teachers, support to the development of interpersonal relationships within the school and between the school and the community, and school and professional guidance. These are specialist educational support units incorporated into the school network and acting inside schools or school clusters. In the 1st and 2nd cycles, guidance is essentially psycho-pedagogical, whereas in the 3rd cycle it includes vocational and professional guidance.

### 3.7 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Students enrolled in compulsory education, according to nature of institution, cycle, type of education and age.

School Year 2007/2008 – Mainland			
	Total	Public Education	Private Education
<b>Compulsory education</b>	<b>1 207 801</b>	<b>1 045 933</b>	<b>161 868</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> cycle</b>	470 603	421 315	49 288
Regular education	467 851	418 827	49 024
Specialist artistic education	250	161	89
EFA courses	1 728	1 728	-
RVCC process	774	599	175
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> cycle</b>	<b>257 107</b>	<b>224 752</b>	<b>32 355</b>
Regular education	241 639	212 898	28 741
Specialist artistic education	259	140	119
CEF courses	956	794	162
Recurrent education	65	65	-
EFA courses	5 407	5 074	333
RVCC process	8 781	5 781	3 000
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> cycle</b>	<b>480 091</b>	<b>399 866</b>	<b>80 225</b>
Regular education	322 922	283 478	39 444
Specialist artistic education	263	175	88
Vocational courses	669	255	414

CEF courses	43 984	37 980	6 004
Recurrent education	2 307	1 883	424
EFA courses	32 560	27 143	5 417
RVCC process	77 386	48 952	28 434

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education

## 4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

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The Education Act, Law no. 46/86 of 14 October, by establishing the aims and organisation of secondary education, defines it as a single cycle of compulsory education (recently determined by Law no. 85/2009 of 27 August), lasting three years and organised according to different forms, directed both to the continuation of studies and to working life. Permeability between these two paths must be ensured. The Education Act also establishes the goals, admission requirements and organisation models of vocational training, as a special mode of school education.

Secondary education has the following aims:

- To ensure the development of reasoning, reflection and scientific curiosity, as well as an enhanced knowledge on the key elements of a humanistic, artistic, scientific and technological culture, which will form the appropriate cognitive and methodological basis for possible further studies and for entering into working life;
- To provide young people with the necessary knowledge to understand aesthetic and cultural manifestations, enabling the improvement of their artistic expression;
- To promote the acquisition and application of an ever deeper knowledge, based on study, critical reflection, observation and experimentation;
- To train, building on the concrete reality of regional and national life and the appreciation of society's permanent values, in general, and of Portuguese culture in particular, young people concerned with the resolution of the country's problems and duly aware of the problems of the international community;
- To promote contacts and experiences with the world of work, strengthening the mechanisms of convergence between the school, working life and the community, and boosting the school's innovating and participating role;
- To promote youngsters' vocational guidance and training through technical and technological support, with a view to their entry into the world of work;
- To create individual and group work habits and to favour the development of attitudes of methodical reflection, open-mindedness, sensitivity, and openness and adaptation to change.

With the aim of diversifying and increasing the provision of vocational training, through a network of local schools, using public and private resources, vocational schools were created in 1989 (Decree-Law no. 26/89 of 21 January). The regime regulating the creation, organisation and running of these schools was amended in 1998 (Decree-Law no. 4/1998 of 8 January), in order to consolidate vocational teaching at upper-secondary level.

New study plans for upper-secondary education came into force in the academic year 2004/05, as part of a reform aimed at adapting secondary-level training to social changes and the developmental needs of the country. Essentially, such curriculum changes are defined in Decree-Law No. 74/04 of 26 March, which establishes the guiding principles for curriculum organisation and management, as well as those applicable to assessment and certification for this level of education.

Secondary education aims at providing varied learning and training and includes:

- Scientific-humanistic courses: directed towards the continuation of studies at higher level;

- Technological courses: directed both to entry into the world of work and continuation of studies, especially through attendance of post-secondary technological specialist courses and higher education courses;
- Specialist artistic courses: directed, depending on the artistic area, towards further studies;
- Vocational courses: directed at the initial qualification of students, favouring their integration into the world of work and allowing for the continuation of studies.

Scientific-humanistic courses are mainly aimed at students who, having completed year 9, wish to receive a secondary-level education in order to pursue studies at higher (university or polytechnic) level. The general education option, directed to entry into higher education, includes five scientific-humanistic courses.

Technological courses are mainly aimed at students who, having completed year 9, wish to attain an intermediary-level professional qualification allowing them to enter the labour market.

Specialist artistic courses are aimed at young people with specific talents and skills, and are mainly taught at specialist art schools in the fields of visual arts, audiovisual, dance and music. They aim at providing a high level of specialist education to future performers, creators and professionals in the different art fields.

Vocational courses are a special type of education aiming essentially at the development of qualifying vocational training for young people. Due to the fact that a large part of this training is devoted to technical, technological or artistic training, vocational courses allow young people to develop specific skills for the exercise of a profession. Vocational teaching is intended to respond to the needs of the job market at local and regional level and, therefore, courses taught at each school should relate to the characteristics and needs of the respective region.

Vocational courses taught at vocational schools are regulated and recognised by the Ministry of Education, although they are normally created at the behest of society, namely the local authorities, companies or business associations and trade unions, among other organisations.

The school network is made up of public and private, compulsory or secondary schools, schools combining compulsory and secondary education, and private and cooperative schools.

## 4.1 Admission

Those who successfully complete compulsory education are eligible for admission to any secondary education course.

## 4.2 Curriculum

According to the organic and functional restructuring of the Ministry of Education, responsibility for the pedagogical and didactic conception of secondary-level education lies with two bodies: the Directorate-General for Curriculum Innovation and Development (DGIDC), for regular education, and the National Agency for Qualification, P.I., also under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, for vocational and specialist artistic education.

The curriculum structure of all courses in upper-secondary education is made up of a number of subjects and non-subject areas, which are organised into training components.

The general training component, common to scientific-humanistic, technological and specialist artistic courses, aims to contribute to the building of students' personal, social and cultural identity and



includes the following subjects: Portuguese, Foreign Language, Philosophy, Physical Education, and Information and Communication Technologies.

The specific training component in scientific-humanistic courses aims to provide a consistent scientific training that varies from course to course, depending on the area of knowledge.

With a corresponding role, the scientific training component in technological, specialist artistic and vocational courses includes a set of subjects that vary according to the area of knowledge, also aiming at the acquisition and development of basic knowledge and skills for each course.

The technological, technical-artistic and technical training components in technological, specialist artistic and vocational courses, together with the scientific training component, are aimed at the acquisition and development of basic knowledge and skills for each course, including specific workplace-based learning, namely through an internship.

The curriculum model of scientific-humanistic courses includes the Project Area in year 12, aiming to mobilise and integrate the knowledge and skills gained in the different subjects. In turn, the model of technological courses includes the Technological Project in the Integrated Technological Area, enabling the development of a project related to the training area of the course. In this way, the curriculum structure of technological courses favours an approach to the world of work, both through the introduction of the technological project, to be developed throughout three years, and the compulsory inclusion of a workplace-based internship.

Schools can also organise optional recreational and cultural activities that are complementary to the curriculum, aiming at the creative and formative use of students' free time, and at the development of a culture of active participation in civic life.

In secondary education, the study plans for all educational and training paths must include at least one foreign language in the general training component. All secondary-level students can choose an introductory foreign language as an optional subject.

Apart from their cross-curricular approach, the study plans include ICT for all students in the 10th grade. This is intended to ensure that all students, irrespective of their socio-economic context, develop autonomy in the use of these resources, as a means to promote access to information and knowledge.

Specialist artistic education can be taught at Secondary Art Schools, Vocational Schools with a specialisation in the arts, and Secondary Schools. Secondary Art Schools have their own study plans and are aimed at young people who wish to pursue their studies or find a job in this area.

In the fields of dance and music, specialist training is provided to talented students with recognised skills in these areas. These courses are taught in music conservatories, schools and academies and dance schools that offer education that is integrated or linked to regular education in secondary schools.

### **4.3 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

Secondary education lasts three years and is organised according to differentiated forms, including courses that are predominantly directed to the continuation of studies or to working life. Both types of courses contain training components of technical, technological and professionalising nature, as well as of Portuguese language and culture, suited to the nature of the different courses. Permeability between courses predominantly directed to the continuation of studies and courses predominantly directed to working life is ensured.



Each regular secondary school must include courses of the abovementioned paths in its educational offer, though there might be preponderance of one or other path on account of the streamlining of human and physical resources.

In theory, students can choose their educational path according to their interests, abilities and skills, taking into account the educational offer of the school. If the student wishes to attend a course that is not available at the school nearest to his/her home, he/she can be transferred to another school and might have to resort to a public transport or school transport made available by the local authority.

Just like in compulsory education, secondary education classes are mixed and organised according to age groups, bearing in mind the need to keep together the group/class of the preceding school year, in order to ensure the numerical balance between sexes, and to include students with special educational needs.

Secondary education classes include at least 24 students and no more than 28. Classes with students with special educational needs cannot exceed 20 students. In practical subjects classes are split according to specific conditions.

In terms of school organisation, the weekly hour load for classes from scientific-humanistic courses varies between 16 and 20 hours, while technological courses can range from 20 to 36.5 hours. Specialist artistic courses have a hour load of 20.5 to 25 hours. Vocational courses are organised within an overall training cycle of 3100 hours.

The academic year corresponds to at least 180 days of school activities, its starting and ending dates being set every year through an order published by the Ministry of Education. Within this calendar, schools themselves establish the dates for assessment meetings, the announcement of students' grades, enrolments and equivalence exams.

#### **4.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

The assessment of students' learning is seen as essential in the teaching and learning process, not only to assess results but also to regulate processes. Assessment procedures regarding students' final results are defined for each mode of education.

With the exception of vocational education, which has its own assessment models, the focus on action-oriented methodologies in the assessment of scientific-humanistic, technological and art courses implies a continuous, formative and systematic assessment, as well as a summative assessment using multiple observation and information gathering processes.

Formative assessment is carried out by the teachers, in liaison with the guidance and educational support bodies. It is aimed at providing students, parents/guardians, teachers and other parties involved with information about the development and quality of the educational process. This assessment model, which is descriptive and qualitative in form, is instrumental in establishing intermediate goals that promote the student's educational success, in adopting differentiated methodologies, in promoting educational support measures and in redirecting the student regarding his/her curriculum options.

Summative assessment takes on two forms: internal summative assessment and external summative assessment.

Internal summative assessment is jointly undertaken by the teachers in the Class Council and is aimed at informing the student and his/her parent/guardian of the state of achievement of the curriculum goals and at providing a basis for decisions on the student's future school path. This assessment, carried out at the end of the 3rd term of each school year, will lead to student progression or retention,

or to completion of the course. The class council must draw recommendations for the adoption of support and complementary educational measures, where justified.

External summative assessment is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and is aimed at allowing access to higher education to all students from secondary-level courses. This type of assessment is also compulsorily used in scientific-humanistic courses for completion of the course, together with the internal summative assessment, through a weighted mean that must correspond to a final grade of 10 or more.

The result of internal or external summative assessment is expressed as a grade on a scale from 0 to 20, in each subject. Students in years 10 and 11 are considered to have passed the year if they achieve a final grade of 10 or more in all curriculum subjects, or in all but one or two, provided these negative grades are not lower than 8. Enrolment in subjects in which the student did not achieve at least grade 10 for two consecutive years in each subject is not allowed.

For completion of secondary-level studies, students from technological, specialist artistic and vocational courses pass the year if they achieve a final grade of at least 10 in the internal summative assessment. Students from scientific-humanistic courses, besides a final minimum grade of 10 in the internal summative assessment, shall be submitted to external summative assessment through national examinations in certain subjects defined by specific legislation.

In technological courses, completion of secondary education requires passing all subjects and non-subject-based areas in the study plan of the corresponding course, as well as the Internship and the Technological Aptitude Test (PAT).

Likewise, in specialist artistic courses students complete secondary education if they pass all subjects in the study plan of the corresponding course, as well as the Work-Based Training (FCT) and the Artistic Aptitude Test (PAA).

The assessment of students from vocational courses is predominantly formative and continuous and focuses on the learning acquired in each module, groups of modules or subjects. The school technical-pedagogical board may establish a regime of annual progression, as well as the criteria on which such progression is based.

Summative assessment takes place at the end of each module and is expressed on a scale from 0 to 20. These assessments are carried out by the Class Council and it is the responsibility of each school to regulate the procedures to be adopted.

Study plans include an internship with an assessment of its own. As part of the assessment, the course also includes a Professional Aptitude Test (PAP), which must assume the character of an interdisciplinary project and whose final result is presented to the educational community in a public session. Students who achieve a minimum grade of 10 pass this test. The final grade for each subject is the weighted mean of the grades achieved in each module, the weighting being defined by the school technical-pedagogical board. Completion of the course requires an overall final grade of at least 10.

It is important to note that the student cannot enrol more than three times for attendance of the same year of his/her course. However, he/she can do so in an equivalent course of another alternative system to regular education.

Completion of a technological course grants two types of diplomas: a level-3 vocational qualification diploma, which qualifies a young person to enter the job market as a semi-skilled professional; and a secondary-studies completion diploma, allowing to apply to higher education, preferably to polytechnics. Vocational education grants a level-3 vocational qualification diploma. Specialist artistic courses award the same certificates as other secondary-level courses, together with a secondary-

education completion certificate, allowing access to the labour market or to higher education. A secondary-education diploma, in any course, provides access to higher education courses in related areas of knowledge.

## **4.5 Teachers**

Teachers have access to the profession as long as they have a professional qualification based on the academic and pedagogical classifications achieved as well as on the number of years of teaching experience. Professional qualification of secondary education teachers, including teachers of professional, vocational and artistic subjects, can be obtained through bachelor courses that ensure scientific training in the corresponding area of teaching, complemented by suitable pedagogical training.

Secondary education teachers with pedagogical experience in regular education or special education can become qualified for teaching in special education provided that they pass a specialist course to that effect conducted in higher education institutions. Other postgraduate/specialist courses, namely in school administration and inspection, management of socio-cultural activities and adult education, are also taught in higher education institutions.

Career progression requires a certain number of hours of attendance of in-service training.

Teaching staff in non-higher education work a 35-hour week. Teachers' timetables include a teaching component and a non-teaching component, which vary according to the school's Educational Project and are divided into five week days. Secondary education teachers teach 22 hours a week when all classes belong to this level of education. The same applies to teachers who also teach CITE 2 classes.

Public education teachers are civil servants, and they can teach at a school with a fixed-term contract or a tenure contract.

## **4.6 Guidance and counselling**

The psychology and guidance services provide school and professional guidance and offer psycho-pedagogical support to all members of the school community (students, teachers, parents/guardians, support staff, etc.), promoting the development of relationships within the educational community.

These services have a permanent technical team, consisting of a variable number of people as set out by order of the Ministry of Education. The team may include psychologists, teachers qualified in educational and vocational guidance, and welfare officers.

Educational support measures are available to students with learning difficulties who are willing to benefit from such measures, have attended school regularly, and have not cancelled their enrolment in the subject in question.

Support measures may take the form of additional, diversified teaching support throughout the year, or an intensive, diversified teaching support programme after the end of regular 3rd term classes.

The action programme of each service must be included in the School Educational Project and in the corresponding annual plan of activities, which in turn is approved by the competent executive management body and is based on a work plan to be carried out with classes and/or individual students, so as to help them in their vocational or professional choices or in redefining their training paths.

## 4.7 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Students enrolled in secondary education, according to type of institution, cycle, mode of education and age

School year 2007/2008 – Mainland			
	Total	Public education	Private education
<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>405 860</b>	<b>313 703</b>	<b>92 157</b>
Regular education	208 630	182 248	26 382
General/scientific-humanistic courses	185 555	159 173	26 382
Technological courses	23 075	23 075	-
Specialist artistic education	2 264	2 264	103
Vocational courses	66 494	34 414	32 080

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education

## 5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

The growing needs of the socioeconomic fabric in terms of middle management staff, capable of assuming a proactive conduct in relation to the challenges of a rapidly changing labour market and a fast scientific and technological development, call for a strategic policy to (re)structure the training provision and adapt it to these new demands. Technological specialist courses (CET) are post-secondary non-tertiary training courses granting a level-4 professional qualification and aimed at providing not only a response to those needs but also a valid alternative for the professionalization of specialised and competent workers.

Decree-Law no. 88/2006 of 23 May regulates the technological specialist courses as well as post-secondary non-tertiary training courses providing a level-4 professional qualification, and repeals implementing orders nos. 393/02 of 12 April, 698/2001 of 11 July, and 989/1999 of 3 November, which established those very courses.

Said decree also complies with the commitments undertaken by the Government, in terms of extending the lifelong training provision to new publics and involving higher education institutions in the expansion of post-secondary training, with a view to linking the secondary and higher levels of education and crediting the training acquired in these post-secondary specialist courses for the purpose of pursuing higher studies.

Technological specialist courses are developed by the network of public, private and cooperative schools, technological schools, vocational training centres under the direct management of, or co-managed by, the Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP), and other accredited training entities as well as public and private higher education institutions.

### 5.1 Admission

Technological Specialist Courses (CET) are aimed at those who have completed a secondary education course or a course providing legally equivalent qualifications; have passed in all subjects from years 10 and 11 and, having been enrolled in year 12 of a secondary education course, or a course providing a legally equivalent qualification, have not completed it; have a level-3 professional qualification; have a technological specialist diploma, or a higher education degree or diploma, and wish for their professional requalification.

Individuals aged 23 or more can also apply to a CET in a higher education institution if, based on their experience, that institution recognises abilities and skills that qualify them for entry to the CET in question.

### 5.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Technological Specialist Courses may be taught at:

- Public and private educational institutions or independent cooperative institutions, with pedagogical parallelism, that teach secondary level courses;
- Public and private higher education institutions;
- Training centres belonging to the network coordinated by the IEFP, under the direct management of, or co-managed by, the same;
- Technological schools;
- Other training institutions accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity.

The CET are structured according to 3 training components: general and scientific training, technological training and work-based training. The total duration of each course is between a minimum 1200 hours and a maximum 1560 hours.

The general and scientific as well as the technological training components last between 840 and 1020 hours, each being allocated, respectively, 15% and 85% of the total length of the course. The technological training component, involving practical, laboratory, workshop and/or project activities, must be allocated at least 75% of the presential sessions.

Work-based training may last between 360 and 720 hours. This component is developed in partnership, the promoter being responsible for establishing the protocols aimed at ensuring that this training is carried out at the employing entities best suited to the specificity of the training area as well as the characteristics of the job market.

Training paths vary according to the characteristics of trainees' projects and profiles. Trainees who have not completed secondary education will receive additional training, with a number of extra hours to be decided by the competent body of the training institution, which must determine the number of extra credits they shall be awarded.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The curriculum of Technological Specialist Courses is structured according to three training components: general and scientific training, technological training and work-based training.

The general and scientific training component is aimed at developing suitable attitudes and behaviours in professionals with a high level of professional qualification and adaptability to the world of work, and improve, where necessary, scientific knowledge underpinning the specific technologies of the training area.

The technological training component includes technological fields directed towards the understanding of practical activities and the resolution of problems at work.

The work-based training component is aimed at applying the acquired knowledge to the practical activities of the corresponding professional profile, and involves performing tasks under proper supervision, using the skills, equipments and materials included in the processes of producing goods or rendering services. It may take on different forms of practical training in real work situations, namely internships. To ensure integration in the employment market and workplace-based training, the training institution enters into agreements, or other forms of partnership, with companies and other employing entities, business and socio-professional associations or other organisations best suited to the specificity of the training area as well as the characteristics of the job market.

### **5.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

The assessment system is aimed at assessing the degree of attainment of the professional skills certified by the technological specialist diploma and includes formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment focuses on all training modules, is systematic and continuous, and awards descriptive and qualitative grades. Summative assessment, predominantly resorting to practical tests, is expressed on a twenty-point scale.

In theoretical training modules, the assessment focuses on the training target to be achieved in terms of the acquisition of professional skills aimed by the CET.

The trainee who passes in all training modules included in a training component will pass in that training component.

The grade for a training component is the simple arithmetic mean, calculated until one decimal place, of the result of the summative assessment in all training modules included in each component. The trainee who passes in all training components of the CET passes the CET.

The technological specialist diploma provides access to a Professional Aptitude Certificate (CAP), issued within the scope of the National System of Professional Certification. In this sense, the CET award a Technological Specialisation Diploma (DET) and a level-4 professional qualification after completion of a training plan with 60 to 90 ECTS credits.

Individuals over 25, and with at least 5 years of proven professional activity in the area of a CET, can receive a diploma based on the assessment of their professional skills.

## 5.5 Teachers

The development of each course is ensured by a pedagogical team consisting of teachers from the various subjects and other professionals involved in its preparation and implementation.

## 5.6 Guidance and counselling

Both the specialist in school guidance and teachers play a key role in accompanying young people, clarifying them about the possible paths, liaising with other services of socio-educational support, proposing and establishing protocols between the school and different services, companies and other community agents at local level.

## 5.7 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Students enrolled in post-secondary non-tertiary education.

School year 2007/2008 – Mainland			
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	Total	Public education	Private education
Technological specialist courses	284	284	-

**Observations:** does not include students enrolled in educational institutions under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education.



## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

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According to the Education Act (LBSE) (Law no. 46/86 of 14 October), higher education is aimed at ensuring a solid scientific and cultural preparation and providing a technical training that qualifies for the exercise of professional and cultural activities while developing the capacity for conception, innovation and critical analysis.

Under the programme of the XVII Government, one of the main targets of higher education policy is to ensure the qualification of the Portuguese within the European area by implementing the Bologna Process, a unique opportunity to encourage attendance of higher education, improve the quality of training provided and making education international while fostering the mobility of students and graduates.

To achieve that goal, the Government drew up Law no. 49/2005 of 30 August, which amends the Education Act and establishes the following:

- The creation of conditions allowing all citizens to have access to lifelong learning, changing higher education admission requirements for those who did not attend it during the normal age, giving higher education institutions the responsibility for their selection, and creating conditions for the recognition of professional experience;
- The adoption of the three-cycle organisation model in higher education;
- The transition from an education system based on the transfer of knowledge to a system based on the development of skills;
- The adoption of the European system of curriculum credits (ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

Following the amendment of the Education Act, the Government approved Decree-Law no. 74/2006 of 24 March, which introduced changes regarding the new organisation model of higher education in what concerns study cycles and their duration, in line with the principles of the Bologna Declaration.

Higher education in Portugal is thus organised into a binary system, consisting of university education and polytechnic education, each with distinct aims that are reflected in specific curriculum conceptions.

University education, directed towards the permanent goal of promoting research and creating knowledge, is aimed at ensuring a solid scientific and cultural preparation and providing a technical training that qualifies for the exercise of professional and cultural activities while developing the capacity for conception, innovation and critical analysis.

Polytechnic education, guided by a permanent focus on applied research and development and directed towards the understanding and resolution of concrete problems, is aimed at providing a solid higher-level cultural and technical training, developing the capacity for innovation and critical analysis and providing scientific knowledge (both theoretical and practical) together with its practical applications, in order to prepare students for working life.

Regarding their nature, higher education institutions are corporate bodies under public law. However, they may also take the form of public foundations governed by private law. The legal regime governing higher education institutions, set out in Law no. 62/2007 of 10 September, regulates the creation, the powers, the organisation, the operation and the remit of their statutory bodies.

Public higher education institutions enjoy statutory, pedagogic, scientific, cultural, administrative, financial, patrimonial and disciplinary autonomy. In this sense, they have the right to create, suspend,



abolish and change courses or organic units. These courses only take legal effect once registered with the Directorate-General for Higher Education.

It is the responsibility of the Portuguese Universities Chancellors Council to ensure the coordination and global representation of the Universities it represents, without prejudice to the autonomy of each one of them.

This Council is also responsible for cooperating in the formulation of national education, science and cultural policies, giving its opinion on bills directly concerned with public university education and on budget matters pertaining to this level of education. It also contributes to the development of education, research and culture, and, generally, to dignify the roles of the university and its agents, as well as to strengthen the links with their foreign counterparts.

The Coordinating Council for Higher Polytechnic Institutes is the collective representative body for public polytechnics. It includes higher polytechnic institutes, through their president, as well as non-integrated higher schools, through their director or president of the school board. It is responsible for giving an opinion on all matters relating to this system of education, from the legal as well as the budgetary points of view.

The mission of the Coordinating Council for Science and Technology (CCCT) is to advise the member of government responsible for higher education, science and technology in the field of scientific and technological policy and in the promotion of innovation.

The mission of the Coordinating Council for Higher Education (CCES) is to advise the member of government responsible for higher education, science and technology in the field of higher education policy.

The Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Agency is responsible for assessing and accrediting higher education institutions and their study cycles, as well as for Portugal's integration in the European system of quality assurance in higher education. It is a private foundation and legal entity, recognised as being of public interest. It is governed by Decree-Law no. 369/2007 of 5 November and by the statutes attached thereto.

Private higher education can be private or cooperative. In the latter case it is made up of universities and non-integrated university schools, or is based on a concordat, as is the case with *Universidade Católica* (the Portuguese Catholic University), with centres or extensions, including organic teaching units named faculties, institutions or schools.

According to the Education Act and Law no. 49/2005 of 30 August, the State recognises the value of private and cooperative education as a concrete expression of the freedom to learn and teach, and of the family's right to guide the education of their children. The same law establishes the State's responsibility to ensure the right to create private and cooperative higher education schools.

The Statute of Private and Cooperative Higher Education was approved by Decree-Law no. 16/94 of 22 January and amended by Decree-Law no. 94/99 of 23 March. These institutions enjoy pedagogic, scientific and cultural autonomy.

The Portuguese Association of Private Higher Education (APESP) is an association of non-state higher education institutions, officially recognised under the terms of the Statute of Private and Cooperative Higher Education and other relevant legislation. It is a private law association the main aim of which is to represent and fully integrate non-state higher education into the Portuguese education system, it being responsible, in this field, for upholding the freedom to learn and to teach and representing its associate institutions.

Regarding education based on a concordat, the Portuguese Catholic University, created with a statute of its own under Article XX of the Concordat signed between Portugal and the Holy See on 7 May 1940, is officially recognised since 1971. Its legal framework complies with Decree-Law no. 128/90 of 17 April.

This institution can create faculties, higher institutes, departments, research centres and other organic units, as long as it previously informs the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

## **6.1 Admission**

To apply to higher education through the national system, students must: hold a secondary education degree, or a legally equivalent qualification attesting the capacity for its attendance; have taken the entrance examinations required for the course they wish to attend, with a minimum score of 95 points; and meet the prerequisites (if applicable) for the course they are applying to.

Those aged 23 and over who are not formally qualified for access to higher education, but prove their ability to attend it by taking specific exams carried out by higher education institutions, also have access to higher education. The same applies to those with appropriate post-secondary qualifications. It should be noted that, besides the abovementioned requirements, entry into each higher education institution is subject to *numerus clausus*.

Regarding admission to the 2nd cycle of studies, leading to a master's degree, the following can apply: those holding a bachelor's degree or legal equivalent; those with a foreign, higher academic degree, recognised as fulfilling the aims of the bachelor's degree by the relevant statutory scientific body of the higher education institution where they wish to be admitted; those with a school, scientific or professional curriculum recognised as attesting the capacity to cope with this cycle of studies by the relevant statutory scientific body of the higher education institution where they wish to be admitted.

The following may apply to the 3rd cycle of studies, leading to a PhD degree: those holding a master's degree or legal equivalent; those with a bachelor's degree who have a particularly relevant school or scientific curriculum recognised as attesting the capacity to cope with this cycle of studies by the relevant legal and statutory scientific body of the university where they wish to be admitted; those with a school, scientific or professional curriculum recognised as attesting the capacity to cope with this cycle of studies by the relevant legal and statutory scientific body of the university where they wish to be admitted.

## **6.2 Students' contribution and financial support**

Tuition fees are fixed according to the nature and quality of the courses and vary between a minimum amount corresponding to a third of the national minimum wage and a maximum amount to be fixed at the beginning of the school year (Art. 16(2) of Law no. 37/03, amended by Art. 3 of Law no. 49/05 of 30 August). Tuition fees for postgraduate degrees are fixed by the institutions themselves or their organic units.

The power to fix tuition fees in universities and polytechnics belongs to the General Council, upon the proposal of the chancellor or president, except for organic units with administrative and financial autonomy.

Within the framework of Law no. 1/2003 of 6 January, adopting the Legal Regime of Higher Education Development and Quality, the State may grant, by means of a contract: social action support to students; teachers' training support; investment incentives; research support; merit scholarships for students; other types of support provided under contract; and support to loan systems.

Through the higher education social action system, the State ensures the right to equal opportunities of school access, attendance and success, by overcoming economic, social and cultural inequalities. The social action system in force includes direct and indirect support. Scholarships and emergency aid are included in direct support, while access to meals, accommodation, health services, support to cultural and sport activities, and other types of educational support are included in indirect support.

Economically disadvantaged students who demonstrate merit, dedication and school achievement may benefit from scholarships granted with a view to contribute for the payment of accommodation, meals, transport and school material expenses as well as tuition fees. Merit scholarships are awarded to students with outstanding school achievement. All scholarships are granted annually, fully borne by the State and non-repayable.

Law no. 37/2003 of 22 August, amended by Law no. 49/05 of 30 August, thus enhanced the importance assigned to social action policy aimed at allowing all students, irrespective of their economic status, to attend Higher Education.

### **6.3 Organisation of the academic year**

There is no fixed date for the start of teaching activities at higher level. The academic year usually starts on 15 October and ends on 31 July, but it is the institutions' duty to set their academic calendar. Most higher education institutions divide the year into semesters, although some subjects are annual.

### **6.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

The implementation of the Bologna Process, by introducing a new educational paradigm where student work plays a key role, may change assessment schemes by including new practices that value students' efforts regardless of their presence in traditional learning spaces.

According to Decree-Law no. 42/2005 of 22 February, the student's degree of attainment of the objectives of each curriculum unit in which he/she is enrolled must be assessed. The assessment is carried out according to the rules adopted by the relevant legal and statutory body of the educational institution.

The final assessment of a curriculum unit is expressed through a grade on a scale from 0 to 20. A student who achieves a minimum grade of 10 will pass the curriculum unit, whereas a student with a lower grade will fail.

In the 1st study cycle at universities and polytechnics, a bachelor's degree is awarded to those who, having passed in all curriculum units included in the study plan of the bachelor course, have achieved the number of credits stipulated.

In universities, the study cycle leading to a bachelor's degree usually lasts between six and eight curriculum semesters, corresponding to 180 or 240 credits.

In polytechnics, the study cycle leading to a bachelor's degree usually lasts six curriculum semesters, corresponding to 180 credits, and exceptionally, for the performance of certain professional activities, it includes a training of up to 240 credits, usually lasting seven or eight curriculum semesters, as required by specific national or European Union legal standards, or resulting from an established practice in leading European higher education institutions.

Regarding the study cycle of universities and polytechnics, a master's degree is awarded to those who, having passed in all curriculum units included in the study plan of the masters course and

successfully defended their thesis, their project work and internship report, have achieved the number of stipulated credits.

This second cycle of studies usually lasts between three and four curriculum semesters, corresponding to 90 or 120 credits. In universities, a master's degree may also be awarded following an integrated cycle of studies with 300 to 360 credits and a normal duration of 10 to 12 curriculum semesters, in those cases where access to the performance of certain professional activities requires a longer duration set by EU legal standards or resulting from a stable and established practice within the European Union.

In polytechnics, the study cycle leading to a master's degree must primarily ensure a professional specialisation, whereas in universities the study cycle leading to a master's degree must primarily ensure an academic specialisation involving research activities or improving professional skills.

The study cycle leading to a PhD degree includes writing an original thesis especially conceived for this purpose and suited to the nature of the field of knowledge or speciality, and possibly taking curriculum units directed at research training, the ensemble of which is called PhD course, whenever the corresponding rules so require.

The PhD degree is only awarded by universities and is granted to those who have passed all the curriculum units of the PhD course, when applicable, and have successfully defended their thesis.

In summary, universities award bachelors, masters and PhD degrees, while polytechnics award bachelor's and master's degrees. All diplomas issued by universities and polytechnics are accompanied by a supplement to the diploma, as provided for by the laws regulating the European higher education area.

## **6.5 Guidance and counselling**

The laws regulating higher education in Portugal do not provide, to date, for any type of counselling or vocational guidance, whether for students or for teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **6.6 Teaching and non-teaching staff**

According to Decree-Law no. 205/2009 of 31 August, the university teaching career comprises the categories of full professor, associate professor, and assistant professor. The number of full professors and associate professors in each higher education institution should represent between 50% and 70% of the total number of professors.

Full professors are responsible for coordinating the pedagogic and scientific direction of a subject, a group of subjects or a department, according to the organic structure of the corresponding higher education institution.

The role of associate professors is to assist full professors.

Assistant professors teach practical and theoretical-practical classes, guiding laboratory and field work in subjects from bachelor and postgraduate courses, being in charge of these subjects. They may also be assigned an identical role to that of associate professors if they have five years of teaching experience as university teachers and service conditions so allow.

Recruitment of teaching staff is done via open application based on qualifications, by the institution itself, which also regulates career progression. The categories, functions, recruitment, appointment, duties and rights of, as well as the regimes governing the provision of services by, higher education teaching staff are laid out in the Statutes of University Teaching Careers, Decree-Law no. 205/2009 of

31 August. Applications for the recruitment of full, associate and assistant professors are international and open to a subject area, or areas, to be specified in the vacancy notice.

Holders of a PhD degree for more than five years who are likewise holders of an aggregate title can apply for the recruitment of full professors; holders of a PhD degree for more than five years can apply for the recruitment of associate professors; and holders of a PhD degree can apply for the recruitment of assistant professors.

Teachers must undergo performance evaluation, as set out in the regulations to be adopted by each higher education institution. Positive performance evaluation is one of the preconditions for the signing of tenure contracts with assistant professors and the renewal of fixed-term contracts with teachers who are not integrated in the career. Performance evaluation can also change the remuneration position in the teacher's category.

In accordance with Decree-Law no. 207/2009 of 31 August, the teaching career in polytechnics comprises the categories of assistant professor, coordinating professor and main coordinating professor.

Coordinating professors are responsible for the pedagogic, scientific and technical coordination of teaching and research activities included within a subject or scientific area. Assistant professors work with coordinating professors in a subject or scientific area.

Coordinating and assistant professors are recruited exclusively through open application. Holders of a PhD degree for more than five years who are likewise holders of an aggregate title or a legally equivalent title can apply for the recruitment of main coordinating professors. Holders of a PhD degree in the area for which the application is open, or experts in that same area, can apply for the recruitment of assistant professors.

Teachers must undergo performance evaluation, as set out in the regulations to be adopted by each higher education institution. Positive performance evaluation is one of the preconditions for the signing of tenure contracts with assistant professors and the renewal of fixed-term contracts with teachers who are not integrated in the career. Performance evaluation can also change the remuneration position in the teacher's category.

It should also be noted that higher education institutions, both universities and polytechnics, can recruit visiting professors among personalities of renowned skill and remarkable prestige who teach in foreign higher education institutions, in scientific areas similar to those at which the recruitment is aimed. Higher education institutions can also recruit guest professors and national or foreign individualities of renowned competence whose cooperation is seen as being of particular relevance and interest.

## 6.7 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Students enrolled in higher education, according to nature of institution and cycle

School year 2008/2009 – Mainland					
Higher education	Total	Public education		Private education	
		University	Polytechnic	University	Polytechnic
<b>Total</b>	373 002	175 465	106 973	60 755	29 809
<b>Bachelor (a)</b>	261 534				
<b>Master</b>	92 099				
<b>PhD</b>	13 429				

<b>Others (b)</b>	5 941
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**Observations:**

- (a) Includes data on those enrolled in bachelor's degrees;
- (b) Includes data on CET courses and complementary training.

**Source:** Statistics available at the official website of the GPEARI/MCTES.

## 7. YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Portugal has made significant efforts towards the qualification of its population. This has led to the adoption of several measures, among which the “New Opportunities” initiative, aimed at promoting the population’s qualification by generalising secondary education as the minimum qualification target for young people and adults, and ensuring that by 2010 vacancies in vocational options account for half of the total number of vacancies at secondary-education level. The aim is to attract to the learning environment not only unemployed adults but also those who, although employed, live in a precarious situation due to their low level of qualifications.

However, the challenges faced by the “New Opportunities” initiative meant that political action had to extend itself to the stimulation of demand. In the first place, as regards the organisation and running of the courses, envisaging ways to promote the participation, mainly of the employed, and secondly as regards funding strategies, seeking to introduce modes that promote greater individual responsibility in the choice of training paths.

In this sense, fulfilment of the aims generally stated calls for measures focusing on:

- An increase in the number of Adult Education and Training courses (EFA), as an appropriate tool to bridge the training gaps in adults with low levels of schooling;
- The expansion of the network of “New Opportunities Centres” and the extension to year 12 of the system of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills acquired in all contexts of life;
- A strong encouragement of demand for basic training by the several groups of adults;
- A greater access to training for the employed, by modulating and adapting the training provision and adopting mechanisms for the organisation and division of training costs, such as to ensure fulfilment of the individual right to training while being compatible with the current and future competitiveness of companies;
- The reorganisation of the current model of recurrent education – formal adult education option – with smoother and more flexible training paths, without compromising their underlying vocation, which is the pursuit of studies.

### 7.1 Policy and legislative framework

In 1976, the preamble to Administrative Rule no. 419/76 defined the new concept of adult education: “to encourage a learning process specific to adults, which will make these – individually or in groups – the subjects of their own education and the creators of a true national culture”. Following legislation published in 1979, preparatory work began on the National Plan for Adult Literacy and Education (PNAEBA), with the primary aim of eradicating illiteracy. This is a main reference document in the area of adult education.

The Education Act, published in 1986, defined the organisational principles of the education system, considering recurrent adult education as a special form of school education, aimed at providing second-chance schooling, with specific curricula and study methods, and awarding the same diplomas and certificates as the regular education system. The Act also made provision for recurrent vocational training, with non-school education being considered as an integral part of the education system, defining its goals and activities within the scope of a wide range of formal and non-formal initiatives.

Order no. 273/ME/92 of 10 November established the creation of general secondary recurrent education courses, while Order no. 41/SEED/94 of 14 June created, on an experimental basis,



technical courses of secondary recurrent education, which became part of the mainstream system under Order no. 16/SEEI/96 of 29 April.

Legislative Order no. 36/99 of 22 July established new rules for the running of recurrent education by credit units. Besides this rule, the pedagogic experiment of recurrent – 3rd cycle and secondary – education in credit blocks was established under Order no. 20421/99 of 27 October.

Within the general framework of the Curriculum Revision and, later on, the Reform of secondary education, Decree-Law no. 74/2004 of 26 March established the guiding principles for curriculum organisation and management, as well as for the assessment of learning achieved in secondary education, including recurrent education, the formal type of adult education.

Following this reorganisation, Administrative Rule no. 550-E/2004 of 21 May was published, which created scientific-humanistic, technological and specialist artistic courses in recurrent education, aimed at providing a second-chance training, allowing to combine studies with a professional activity.

The legal framework for vocational training was established by said Decree-Law no. 401/91 of 16 October, which regulates vocational training within both the education system and the labour market, and Decree-Law no. 405/91 of 16 October, which establishes the specific legal basis for vocational training within the labour market. The target groups are employed and unemployed persons, including first-job seekers, aiming at the qualified exercise of a professional activity.

Vocational training, whether initial or continuing, is carried out by companies, training centres and other employing or training entities. At the end of 1997, the Ministry of Education (ME) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTS) set up a working group in charge of drawing up a policy document aimed at the revitalisation of adult education. Once published, this document led to the creation of the Adult Education and Training Development Programme and the setting up of a Task Force in charge of its implementation.

In the field of adult education and training, this included: activities for strategic and technical interrelation at all relevant levels; the setting up and running of a network of local organisers of a diversified adult education and training provision; the creation of a system for the formal validation and certification of knowledge and skills; the launching of national tender for funding and supporting innovative initiatives; as well as the development of activities and processes aimed at the creation of a National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA).

In 1999 ANEFA was created under the aegis of both the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Education, underlining the importance assigned to the need to boost the qualification of the adult population, by enhancing the skills acquired throughout life, both in formal and non-formal contexts, and aimed at increasing the competitiveness of our business fabric in the face of challenges posed by economic globalisation and constant change and innovation in the field of technology.

Decree-Law no. 208/2002 of 17 October, which adopted the new Organic Law of the Ministry of Education, set as a main goal the integration between the policies and the systems of lifelong education and training. This integration policy is aimed both at the initial qualification of youngsters not wishing to pursue their studies, so as to ensure their proper integration into working life, and at the development of adult learning.

The concept of integrated education and training under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education led to the creation of the Directorate-General for Vocational Training (DGFV), whose cross-cutting action was directed towards the development of mechanisms to facilitate the lifelong qualification of young people and adults. This body, also already extinct, replaced ANEFA, taking over the functions and powers assigned to it within the framework of adult education and training.



The recently created National Agency for Qualification (ANQ), under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, replaces the DGFV, providing an integrated education and training offer aimed at young people and adults. This is to be developed within the framework of a national network of public and private entities combining a public service approach with a programme approach. On the other hand, through the Network of Training Centres (under direct or joint management), the ANQ takes on a responsibility of its own in the implementation of a set of adult education and training actions, particularly as regards the corresponding professionalising component.

In order to strengthen the initiatives already developed in the field of education and training provision for adults with low school and professional qualification levels, the Adult Education and Training courses (EFA) were created, and the System of Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification was launched (educational provision established by Decree-Law no. 387/1999 of 28 September, Law No. 46/86 of 14 October, Decree-Laws no. 401/91 and no. 405/91 of 16 October, Joint Orders no. 1083/2000 of 20 November and no. 650/2001 of 20 July, as well as by Administrative Rules no. 1082-A/2001 of 5 September and no. 286-A/2001 of 15 March of the Ministries of Education and Labour and Social Solidarity).

Joint Order no. 453/2004 of 28 July established and regulated Education and Training Courses for young people aged 15 or more who are at risk of dropping out of school, or have already done so before completing 12 years of schooling, or who have completed 12 years of school but do not have a professional qualification. This legislation created a training provision with an identity of its own, presented as a diversified and flexible form of training and qualification, seen as complementary to existing forms, and aimed at ensuring a training continuum, structured in sequential entry and exit levels, so as to encourage the progressive acquisition of higher qualification levels and facilitate entry into the world of work.

Decree-Law no. 88/2006 of 23 May regulates the Technological Specialist Courses (CET), repealing Administrative Rules nos. 393/02 of 12 April, 698/2001 of 11 July and 989/1999 of 3 November, which created these courses, enabling adults' access to specialist courses in different technological areas and allowing for a qualified training that facilitates their entry into the job market or the continuation of studies in special conditions.

In view of the existing framework of qualifications in Portugal, which continues to present deficits in school and professional qualifications, it is important to recognise all learning acquired by workers in non-formal and informal settings, irrespective of their situation in the labour market. Within this context, the recognition, validation and certification of skills takes on a new dimension by allowing personalised training paths, to which education/training systems seek to respond through flexible curricula and arrangements that enhance the personal, social and professional development of citizens.

In this sense, and with a view to adult education/training and the continuing training of the working population, the Government and the social partners agreed on the establishment of Centres for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills (RVCC Centres), recently termed "New Opportunities Centres". The purpose of developing this countrywide network is the certification of a certain education level (compulsory or secondary), based on a Reference Model of Key Skills for Adult Education and Training, according to broad areas of skills.

Order no. 6741/2006 of 24 March adopted the specific regulation establishing the regime of access to support granted to project types under no. 4.2.5, "Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills" in measure 4.2, "Development and modernisation of structures and services in support of employment and training policies" of axis no. 4, "Promoting equity in employment and training policies" of the Operational Programme for Training and Social Development (POEFDS).

Administrative Rule no. 86/2007 of 12 January amends previous legislation and strengthens the RVCC system, redefining and extending the key-skills reference model so as to cover secondary education. Order no. 9937/2007 of 29 May regulates, within the scope of the RVCC process developed in New Opportunities Centres, the short-term training provision directed at adults undergoing the process, according to the needs identified in this context. This training is organised into training modules, corresponding to those foreseen in the curriculum structure of EFA courses. It is provided by duly accredited public or private entities.

## **7.2 Levels of responsibility**

The State has sole legislative power in this area. In this way, the Ministry of Education (ME) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTSS) are the bodies responsible for Adult Education and Training.

The National Agency for Qualification promotes, coordinates and supports most education and training provision for young people and adults in the following modes: Recurrent Education, Education and Training Courses, Adult Education and Training Courses, and the Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification System.

The different adult education activities are carried out in the field by the Regional Directorates for Education. At municipal level there is a Coordinator for adult education.

The MTSS, through the Employment Centres and Vocational Training Centres of the IEF, organises and promotes the implementation of adult-training measures and programmes.

The ME and the MTSS promote the delivery of adult education and training in its various forms. These may be provided by any public or private entity, as long as its scientific and pedagogic quality is assured, as well as the corresponding official recognition.

The following are considered training entities:

- Secondary or higher education institutions, vocational schools and other entities receiving interns and students with scholarships;
- Business, professional and trade union organizations;
- Non-profit entities developing activities in the area of social economy or in support of less-favoured social groups at risk of social exclusion, as long as the training fits the aim of the social mission;
- Public entities, as long as the training is correlated with their remits;
- Companies or business associations, as long as the training they provide is directed at the labour market needs and their training centres are duly accredited.

The following bodies are important within the general framework of adult education:

- a) Social and Economic Council (CES), responsible for deciding on major economic and social policy options;
- b) Standing Committee for Social Consultation (CPCS), the body which signed the agreement on vocational training policy;
- c) National Education Council (CNE), a body which includes representatives of social partners and has consultative functions on education, including matters relating to vocational training;

- d) National Agency for Qualification (ANQ), which aims at boosting the qualification of the adult population;
- e) Standing Committee for Vocational Certification (CPC), the body that coordinates the national system of vocational certification.

Advisory functions regarding educational and vocational training policy issues also fall on the Employment and Vocational Training Observatory (OEFP) and on the Monitoring Committee for the Strategic Consultation Agreement, according to the pact signed by the Government and the relevant social partners in the end of 1996.

Local authorities, companies, employers' and business associations, trade unions and professional organisations, private social solidarity institutions, and local and regional cultural associations are also social partners.

### 7.3 Financing

The vast majority of adult education activities developed within the framework of the ME and the MTSS are funded by the POPH and the General State Budget.

### 7.4 Programmes and promoters

#### Recurrent education

The aim of recurrent education is to provide a second-chance education for adults, or young adults, who require it for professional or cultural reasons and who, having formerly attended school, left the education system without any certification.

Young people aged 15 and over have access to compulsory-level recurrent education, and those aged 18 and over to secondary recurrent education. Access to any level of recurrent education depends on the presentation of a certificate proving completion of the preceding level and on a global diagnostic assessment.

Recurrent education curriculum plans are drawn up on the basis of the definition of the individual skills to be developed in the several education levels, and according to the different characteristics and needs of the students they are aimed at. They must include regional and artistic, or professional, components.

The 1<sup>st</sup> cycle curriculum structure includes a single area comprising the following subjects: Portuguese, Mathematics and Contemporary World. The timetable and duration of the course will be agreed on between trainers and students, lasting at least 150 teaching hours or 60 days. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle curriculum structure includes the subjects of Portuguese, Mathematics and Foreign Language (French or English), and the areas "Man and the Environment" and "Complementary Training", where the latter implies the development of multidisciplinary work. The curriculum plan lasts 1 year, with possible adjustments according to students' needs. The curriculum plan of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of recurrent education includes Portuguese, Foreign Language, Mathematics and Social Sciences, Information and Communication Technologies, and Natural Sciences. The average duration of courses is 2 years, depending, however, on the learning rhythm of each student.

Within the framework of the Curriculum Revision and, later on, the Reform of Secondary Education, Decree-Law no. 74/04 of 26 March lays down the guiding principles of curriculum organisation and management, and assessment of learning in secondary education, including recurrent education, a formal mode of adult education. Following said reorganisation, Administrative Rule no. 550-E/04 of 21 May was published, creating the scientific-humanistic, technological and specialist artistic courses

in recurrent education, aimed at providing a second-chance training and allowing to combine studies with a professional activity.

In line with Decree-Law no. 74/04 of 26 March, establishing the guiding principles on the organisation and assessment of learning in secondary education, the study plans of secondary recurrent education courses are based on the curriculum models of regular secondary education courses. The courses are predominantly taught in the evening and suited to the characteristics of the students requesting them. Courses are organised by subjects, taught in modules, and with a reference school time of three years. However, this time can be shortened, depending on the students' learning rhythm. The annual and weekly hour loads are in line with the aims of recurrent education, with the regime in which it is taught, and with students' characteristics. In that sense, an average weekly timetable of approximately 14 90-minute teaching units was adopted.

In the 1st and 2nd cycles, assessment is continuous, descriptive and qualitative. It has a global character in the 1st cycle and is carried out by subject area in the 2nd cycle. Trainees who so wish may request a final assessment. In the 3rd cycle of compulsory education, assessment allows to link the continuous assessment carried out within the classroom, unit by unit, to the capitalisation of knowledge and know-how. Assessment modes include diagnostic, formative and internal summative (presential or non-presential) assessment, as well as reassessment upon a student's appeal. The assessment process differs according to the student's choice for a presential or a non-presential regime.

Assessment under the presential regime applies to all subjects and subject areas, and is formative and summative. It is a continuous process, carried out on dates agreed between the teacher and the class. Assessment tools, provided they are adapted to the subjects' specificity, can take the form of a piece of work, a practical or a written test and, in the case of languages, an oral test. Assessment under the non-presential regime can take the form of a practical or a written test and an oral test in the case of languages.

In 2nd and 3rd cycle courses, certificates may be awarded for each subject area or subject unit, with a diploma being awarded after completion of each entire cycle. For all legal purposes, a diploma awarded after completion of the 3rd cycle of recurrent education is equivalent to year 9 of regular schooling, corresponding to compulsory education.

Completion of secondary recurrent education confers a diploma of secondary studies, allowing access to higher education, through the sitting of national examinations in specific subjects, defined by each university or polytechnic institution.

Completion of a technological or a specialist artistic course, besides the diploma of secondary studies, also grants a level-3 professional qualification diploma, allowing access to higher education according to the established rules.

### **Extra-school education**

The aim of extra-school education is to promote the development and updating of knowledge and skills, in replacement of, or as a complement to, school education. It is primarily aimed at individuals with low levels of education, who are no longer in the normal age for attendance of regular education (at least 15 years old at the beginning of the school year in which they enrol). The setting of admission requirements and of the profile of trainees is the responsibility of the promoters of extra-school education initiatives, which will fix them case by case, according to the nature and aims of the various activities.

The policy contents of each training plan are established according to a previous diagnosis carried out with the group of trainees, and adequately adjusted to their knowledge, interests and educational

needs, as well as to the local contexts where they come from. All courses must be part of local adult-education projects and duly linked with the other activities that form them.

The setting of the calendar and timetable of activities must take into account trainees' working hours, working rhythms and conditions regarding working time concessions.

Assessment is continuous and qualitative. Trainers must prepare individual reports, organised by subject areas, describing the progress made and the difficulties encountered by each trainee, as well as to what extent the stated objectives were met. At the end of each course, trainees will be given a pass ('apt') or fail ('not apt') grade.

Extra-school education is not a process directed at obtaining an academic degree. However, the knowledge acquired through extra-school education can be recognised and credited as equivalent to recurrent education units or levels.

All courses must be certified and the certificate must include, inter alia, the name of the course, the training programme, the assessment results, the school equivalence and professional qualification level, when applicable.

Mobility between extra-school education and recurrent education is ensured through a system of curriculum equivalences. In cases where extra-school courses are carried out together with subjects and areas of recurrent education, the organisation and certification of the former will be made according to the legal framework of the corresponding cycle.

### **Education and Training Courses (CEF)**

The aim of CEF is to ensure the fulfilment of compulsory education and to combat exclusion, allowing access to the world of work with a certified professional qualification, and access to higher education. Access to CEF is open to young people aged 15 or more at risk of dropping out of school, or who have already done so before completing the 12-year schooling, and to those who, after completing the 12 years and not having a professional qualification, wish to gain one in order to enter the job market.

CEF grant a level 1 or 2 qualification and equivalence to years 6 and 9, respectively, to young people who did not complete year 9 or are at risk of not completing it; a level-2 qualification to young people who have completed year 9 or attended secondary education, who are at risk of early school leaving and unqualified entry in the labour market; a level-3 qualification and equivalence to year 12 to young people wishing to have a professional qualification of that level in order to enter the job market and who fulfil specific conditions set by the legislation in force (having completed year 9; having attended or completed school years at secondary, vocational or technological level; or having completed secondary courses directed towards the continuation of higher studies).

CEF training paths tend to focus on a professionalising curriculum structure, adjusted to the intended levels of qualification, and include socio-cultural, scientific, and technological training areas, as well as practical training. As a rule, the courses' duration varies between 1200 and 2200 hours, depending on the training's organisation and development model. The practical, workplace-based training component lasts between one and six months.

In Education and Training Courses, assessment is continuous and has a regulating character. It is carried out by subject or field, and by training component, according to the scale defined for the corresponding schooling level: (i) in courses granting a year 6 or 9 certificate and a level-2 professional qualification, it is expressed on a scale from 1 to 5; (ii) in courses granting a year 12 certificate and a level-3 professional qualification, it is expressed on a scale from 0 to 20.

Completion of each training cycle allows the trainee to continue his/her studies and to receive training in the following levels. Certificates of years 6, 9 or 12 grant a professional qualification of level 1, 2 or

3, respectively, and allow for the continuation of post-secondary non-tertiary studies and higher-level studies, through the sitting of national examinations, defined in specific legislation.

Whenever the conditions for professional certification and specific assessment required by the National System of Professional Certification are met, trainees have access to the corresponding certificate of professional aptitude (CAP).

### **The process of Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification (RVCC)**

The aim of the RVCC is to provide all citizens of working age, both employed and unemployed, and particularly those with less schooling, with the opportunity of having their knowledge and skills, acquired in various contexts throughout their life, recognised, validated and certified.

They are aimed at adults aged 18 and over, without compulsory schooling, who wish to raise their levels of school certification and professional qualification and carry out ensuing paths of adult education and training (EFA course), or another education and training path that proves to be more adequate, under the terms and conditions regulating such education and training provision, with a view to lifelong learning.

The process of recognition, validation and certification of the adult's skills, which is based on the Key Skills Reference Model for Adult Education and Training, is carried out at the RVCC Centres, now termed New Opportunities Centres, and organised around three axes of intervention – (i) Recognition, (ii) Validation, and (iii) Certification, ensuring a wide range of services.

- Skills recognition: in this stage, the adult identifies the skills acquired throughout life, using the skills assessment methodology;
- Skills validation: this stage is centred on a session in which the adult and the pedagogical team analyse and assess the reflective learning portfolio (PRA), in relation to the Key Skills Reference Model/ Professional RVCC Reference Model, identifying the skills to be validated and highlighted/developed, through continuation of the RVCC process, or the provision of training at a certified training entity. In the case of a Professional RVCC process, analysis and assessment of the PRA are jointly carried out by the technical and pedagogical team of the New Opportunities Centre.

The level corresponding to compulsory education is made up of four areas of key skills: Language and Communication; Maths for Life; Information and Communication Technologies; and Citizenship and Employability.

The secondary level comprises three areas of key skills: Society, Technology and Science; Culture, Language and Communication; and Citizenship and Professionality.

- Skills certification: this final stage of the RVCC process takes place when the necessary conditions for obtaining a school or other qualification are gathered. It is carried out before a Certification jury, appointed by the Director of the Centre and made up of the RVCC professional, the trainers and the external assessors (with no links to the RVCC process of each adult or to the New Opportunities Centre).

The following entities can issue the certification obtained through the RVCC process:

- public or private education institutions with pedagogical autonomy;
- vocational training centres from the Employment and Vocational Training Institute.

When applicable, after recording the validation of skills in the adult's Personal Dossier of Key Skills, a Certificate equivalent to the diplomas of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of compulsory education will be



issued, corresponding to the three levels of the Key Skills Reference Model – B1, B2 and B3, as well as a certificate of secondary level studies.

### **Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA)**

EFA courses are aimed at providing: an integrated education and training, with a double certification, both school and professional, directed at adults with shortcomings in school and professional qualification, with a view to lifelong learning; socio-professional (re)integration and progression in qualification. They are preferably aimed at people aged 18 or more at the start of the training, without adequate qualification to enter or progress in the job market and, first and foremost, without having completed compulsory or secondary education. Secondary-level EFA courses that are taught during the day or full-time can only be attended by adults aged 23 or more.

The training's duration, operating regime and weekly hour load must take into account the trainees' living and professional conditions, identified upon their entry, and may be adjusted should the initial conditions change significantly. The number of training hours cannot exceed seven hours daily and thirty-five hours weekly, when the training is delivered in full-time, day classes. The number of training hours cannot exceed four daily hours on weekdays, when delivered in evening classes.

The curriculum plan of each EFA Course, at compulsory level, is organised around two interrelated components, basic training and technological training.

Basic Training is structured according to the knowledge already acquired by the adults, and organised into the four areas of key skills for compulsory-level adult education and training: Language and Communication; Maths for Life; Information and Communication Technologies; and Citizenship and Employability.

Technological Training is structured into short-term units, according to the training references included in the National Catalogue of Qualifications. It may also include a practical, workplace-based training, which is mandatory for adults attending a compulsory-level course and level-2 training, and not exercising an activity corresponding to the job opportunity of the course attended or a professional activity in a related area.

The hour load of compulsory-level EFA courses varies according to the training levels:

- Compulsory level and level-1 training (B1; B2; B1+B2): in basic training and technological training, between 790 and 1240 hours;
- Compulsory level and level-2 training (B3; B2+B3): in basic training and technological training, between 1940 and 2390 hours. In the flexible path from RVCC, the number of hours is adjusted according to the result of the RVCC process, whenever applicable.

For the secondary level, besides technological training, the general reference of basic training comprises the following areas: Society, Technology and Science; Culture, Language and Communication; Citizenship and Professionality.

The basic training includes, in a combined way, the three areas of key skills set out in the corresponding key skills reference model for secondary-level adult education and training. Each skill unit from the basic training corresponds to a short-term training unit, also included in the National Catalogue of Qualifications, which sets out the learning results to be achieved, as well as the training contents.

The organisation of the set of themes associated to the generating nucleuses, and around which the learning process is built in its basic training component, may vary according to the profile of trainees.

The training process also includes, regardless of the path and including the cases foreseen, the area of reflective learning portfolio (PRA), which cuts across basic training and technological training, and is aimed at allowing the adult undergoing training to develop reflective processes and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The PRA area must be developed every two weeks when carried out in full-time, day classes, and every month when carried out in evening classes.

The hour load of secondary-level EFA courses, corresponding to training level 3, varies according to the training path:

Secondary 3: Type A, B and C, between 1575 and 2045 hours; in the RVCC flexible path, the number of hours is adjusted according to the RVCC process, when applicable.

If trainees only wish to attain the secondary level and school qualification, the hour load varies between 315 and 1150 hours. In cases of flexible path (RVCC), the number of hours is adjusted according to the RVCC process, when applicable.

The assessment of trainees is a process based on the continuous observation of the learning process. It has a guiding function, providing information so as to allow for self-assessment, and it works as a regulating process of the adult's self-learning, contributing to his/her training.

To receive a certificate for completion of an EFA course, the trainee must have a positive summative assessment (attendance cannot be less than 90% of the total hour load), with achievement in the training path components, namely the workplace-based practical training, when this is an integral part of that path. Successful completion of a double-certification EFA Course entitles the trainee to a diploma proving completion of the corresponding level of education and professional training. Certificates of equivalence to school or professional qualification levels can also be awarded.

### **S@ber+ actions**

The aim of S@ber+ (Know+) actions is to encourage adults to acquire, develop and enhance their personal, vocational or academic skills, and to create flexible and certifiable solutions tending to improve the school and professional qualifications of adults undergoing the RVCC process, and based on the needs identified in that context. They are intended for adults aged 18 and over who wish to acquire, develop or reinforce skills in specific areas, irrespective of their school or professional qualification.

Short-term actions have a flexible and differentiated curriculum, depending on the adult's interests and needs and developed around four areas of the key skills reference model for compulsory-level adult education and training, or around three areas of the key skills reference model defined for secondary-level adult education and training. Each module lasts 50 hours, organised in 25-hour units. The maximum limit of training for each adult undergoing the process must not exceed 100 hours.

## **7.5 Quality assurance**

Resulting from a protocol signed on 14 April 2008, between the Portuguese Catholic University and the National Agency for Qualification, I.P., External Assessment focuses on two fundamental axes underpinning the current adult education and training policies.

The first axis of assessment focuses on the creation, processing and analysis of indicators on the achievement of the strategic goals included in the axis 'Adults' of the New Opportunities Initiative, and on the running of the New Opportunities Centres within the framework of the general policies and aims of this initiative, of the real and potential demand for these centres, and of their impact on the social and professional paths of the economically active population attending them.



The second axis includes the monitoring and self-assessment of the network responsible for the implementation of the New Opportunities Initiative. It seeks to provide detailed information on the performance and degree of organisational maturity of the New Opportunities Centres and the whole system of adult qualification.

To monitor and assess the running of Education and Training Courses (CEF), a Monitoring Council was set up consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, who will annually submit to said authorities a report describing and assessing the development of this training provision.

## **7.6 Teachers and trainers**

### **Recurrent education**

Recurrent education teachers – assigned teachers, technical-practical training monitors, and volunteer trainers – must have the necessary qualifications for teaching the levels of education they teach, and meet the specific requirements for this type of education. There is no specific initial training to teach in recurrent education, but only postgraduate courses providing specialised training. The specialised training of recurrent education teachers is carried out in higher education institutions with resources in this field, and may take the form of specialised components of initial training or specialised training courses.

### **Extra-school education**

Trainers and other workers in extra-school education are recruited by the actual promoters of this type of education, according to criteria that ensure the educational value and pedagogical quality of all actions undertaken. Both the State and other public, and private, entities resort to a diversified range of trainers, with a view to both responding to the different needs of the population and enhancing the available local resources.

### **Education and Training Courses (CEF)**

The development of each course is ensured by a pedagogical team, coordinated by the director of the course and including the teachers of the various subjects and guidance and other professionals involved in the preparation and implementation of the course.

### **The process of Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification (RVCC)**

Professionals in Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification (RVCC Professionals) must have completed a higher level of education, preference being given to those acquainted with adult education and training methodologies and having professional experience in that area. Trainers of complementary and short-term trainings must have the necessary academic and professional qualifications to be able to teach in each area of key skills defined for compulsory or secondary level education.

### **Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA)**

The technical-pedagogical team of EFA courses and modular training is formed by the facilitator and the group of trainers responsible for each key skills area in basic training and for the technological training, when applicable. Tutors of workplace-based practical training are also part of the technical-pedagogical team, when applicable.

In the Basic Training component, trainers must have the necessary academic and professional qualifications for teaching. In the Professionalising Training component, trainers must have an academic qualification that is equal to, or higher than, the level awarded to trainees after completion of the training, as well as specific professional training, or a professional practice, in the area they will

teach. Unless they are qualified teachers, trainers must have the Professional Aptitude Certificate (CAP) awarded under the National System of Professional Certification.

### S@ber+ actions

Trainers of this diversified, short-term actions must have a teaching qualification or the professional aptitude certificate (CAP) awarded under the National System of Professional Certification.

## 7.7 Guidance and counselling

Information and school and professional guidance services are basically provided by structures framed by the Ministry of Education and included in the school network, and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, through the regional services of the Employment and Vocational Training Institute. Within the framework of the interconnection between these two Ministries, information and professional guidance services must be developed in schools, vocational training centres and employment centres, so as to support the academic and vocational choices of young people and adults.

Guidance services are aimed at supporting the trainee in the management of his/her training path, by identifying opportunities and available funds, and supporting him/her in the choices and options within the overall available provision at local, regional and national level. Involvement of the Psychology and Guidance Services of the Ministry of Education (SPO) has a relevant role, namely in identifying and monitoring problem situations in the learning process; contributing to trainees' self-esteem through counselling and school guidance; implementing strategies of transition to working life; encouraging the training of students from the qualifying paths of compulsory and secondary education, as well as students from recurrent education; training trainers; and developing attitudes of "lifelong learning".

## 7.8 Statistics

**Figure 1:** Students enrolled in compulsory, secondary and post-secondary education

School Year 2007/2008 – Mainland					
	Total	Courses for adults (a)		Age $\geq$ 25 (b)	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 613 945</b>	<b>250 108</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>204 673</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>Compulsory education</b>	<b>1 207 801</b>	<b>129 008</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>112 295</b>	<b>9.3</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Cycle	470 603	2 502	0.5	2 059	0.4
2 <sup>nd</sup> Cycle	257 107	14 253	5.5	13 069	5.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle	480 091	112 253	23.4	97 167	20.2
<b>Secondary Education</b>	<b>405 860</b>	<b>121 100</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>92 326</b>	<b>22.7</b>
<b>Post-secondary non-tertiary education</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18.3</b>

**Observations:**

(a) Includes students enrolled in recurrent education, specialist artistic (recurrent) education, EFA courses and RVCC processes.

(b) Includes students aged 25 and over and enrolled in all levels, cycles and types of (non-tertiary) education.

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education.

**Figure 2:** Students enrolled according to nature of institution and type of education

<b>School Year 2007/2008 – Mainland</b>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Public Education</b>	<b>Private Education</b>
CEF courses	7 827	6 244	1 583
Recurrent education	28 947	24 749	4 198
EFA courses	15 831	14 281	1 550
RVCC processes	75 867	49 606	26 261

**Source:** Educational Statistics 2007/2008 – Educational Statistics and Planning Office, Ministry of Education.

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