



# Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

Romania

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European Commission





# STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

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## ROMANIA

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If you wish to obtain more details on education systems in Europe, please consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>), the Cedefop database ([http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/)) and the website of the European Training Foundation (<http://www.etf.europa.eu/>)



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## INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

The name Romania was adopted in 1862, after the foundation of the nation-state through the unification of the two Romanian Principalities, Wallachia and Moldova, in 1859.

General data:

- Form of government: republic
- Location: in the South-East of Central Europe, at the intersection of the parallel 45° N with the meridian 25° E, on the lower course of the Danube river; open to the Black Sea.
- Neighbours: Hungary in the West, Serbia in the South-West, Ukraine in the North and East, Republic of Moldova in the North-East and East, Bulgaria in the South.
- Area: 238,391 km<sup>2</sup> (the 12<sup>th</sup> in surface in Europe)
- Official language: Romanian
- Population: 21 504 442 (1 July 2008; Source: National Institute of Statistics)
- Nationalities: Romanian 89.5 %, Hungarian (*Secui* included) 6.6 %, Roma (Gipsy) 2.5 %, others 1.4 %
- Religion: Orthodox: 86.8 %, Romano-Catholics 4.7 %, Reformed 3.2 %, Pentecostal 1.5 %, others 3.8 %
- Capital: Bucharest (since 1862)

With regard to its administrative organisation, the territory of Romania is organised in *comune* (groups of villages), *orașe* (towns) and *județe* (counties). Romania has 41 counties, plus the capital region of Bucharest that has a statute similar to that of a county. In point of population, Romania is the 43<sup>rd</sup> country in the world and the 9<sup>th</sup> in Europe. 54.9 % of the population lives in urban areas and 45.1 % in rural areas. The male population represents 48.8 % and the female population 51.2 %.

After the end of the totalitarian regime in 1990, Romania is today a democracy with democratic laws and a market economy. Recent developments and short- and medium-term concerns in all areas were directed towards the accession to the European Union, an event that took place on 1 January 2007.

Romania is a republic organized according to the principle of separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, within the frame of a constitutional democracy.

The president is elected by universal vote, equally, directly, secretly and freely expressed and can hold at most two 5-year terms. The President of Romania is also the chief of the army and has the function of President of the Supreme Council for the Defence of the Country.

The legislative body is the Parliament of Romania, elected by uninominal suffrage based on the principle of proportional representation for a term of four years (471 members in the legislature 2008-2012). The Parliament is bicameral – the Senate of Romania (137 members) and the Chamber of Deputies (334 members).

The executive body is the Government of Romania, lead by the Prime-Minister. The President of Romania nominates a candidate for the position of Prime-Minister and appoints the members of the Government based on the vote of trust given by the Parliament. The Government, according to its government programme accepted by the Parliament, ensures the implementation of the country's internal and external policies and the general management of public administration. The Government is politically liable only to the Parliament for its entire activity.

The education and training sector is managed at national level by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. In the execution of its specific responsibilities, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports cooperates at central level with other ministries and institutional structures subordinated to the Government.

The general legal framework for the organisation, administration and provision of education in Romania is established through the Constitution, the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed) – a fundamental law, ordinary laws and governmental ordinances. Specific procedures and regulations are established through Government Decisions and Orders of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Basic principles with regard to the education in Romania are established by the Constitution, Chapter II '*Fundamental rights and liberties*', Article 32 '*Right to education*'.

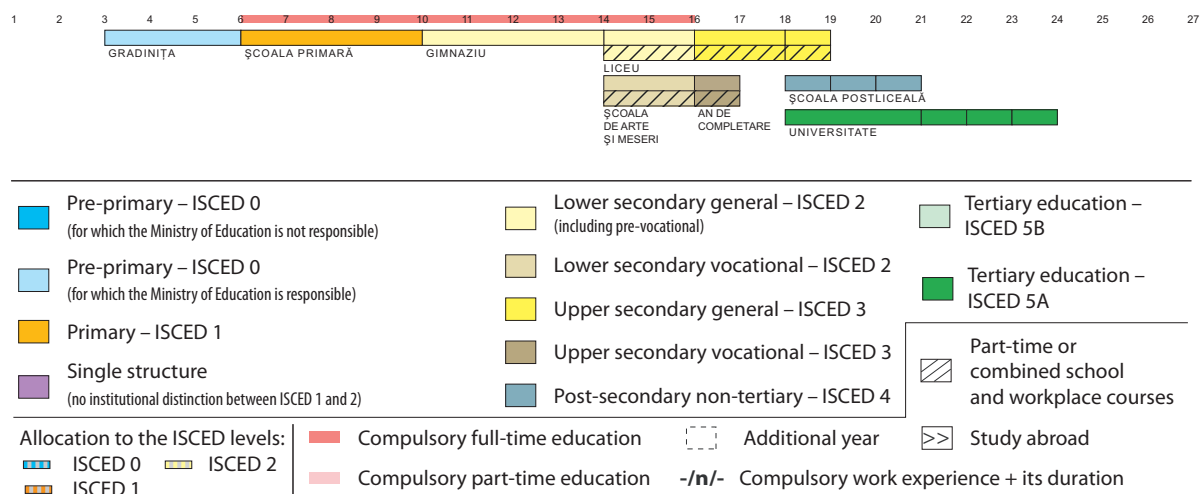
The Education Law regulates the organisation and functioning of the national education system.

According to the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed), education in Romania is a national priority and pursues the free, integral and harmonious development of the human individuality, and the development of the autonomous and creative personality ('the educational ideal'). All Romanian citizens have equal access rights to all levels and forms of education, irrespective of their social and financial condition, gender, race, nationality, political or religious orientation. The state promotes the principles of democratic education and guarantees the right to differentiated education based on educational pluralism, in the benefit of the individual and of the entire society, and promotes the principles of continuous education.



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

## 1.1 Organisation of the initial education and training system



The main components of the Romanian education system are: pre-school education, compulsory education (primary education and lower secondary education), upper secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, post-secondary/non-tertiary education, and tertiary/higher education. This structure is based on interrelated levels, each level being a fundamental step for the Romanian students and youth on the long path leading to education and career.

Pre-school education (kindergarten): the last year of kindergarten (called the school preparation year) is part of the compulsory education and involves explicit preparation for primary education. Pre-school education is designed for children aged from 3 to 6/7. It is intended to provide both day care and nursery school experiences at an early age with an increasing emphasis on their preparation for formal education/schooling.

This level of education is provided in both public and private institutions, with a large majority of public institutions.

### Compulsory education

Compulsory education covers primary education (4 years) and lower secondary education (6 years). Lower secondary education includes the first 4 years of lower secondary education called *gimnaziu* followed by 2 years of *învățământ liceal* (high school education) or *școala de arte și meserii* (arts and trades school, which is being wound up as from the 2009/10 school year).

In primary education, students begin educational programmes at 6/7 years old and for the next 4 years they study based on the national curriculum framework, which for primary and lower secondary education is set up by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

### Upper secondary education: high school education and vocational education

Upper secondary education is organised as a second cycle of high school education (*învățământ liceal – ciclul superior*).

High school education (provided by a type of schools named *liceu*) in Romania normally lasts four years from grade 9 to grade 12 in day classes, or five years in evening or extramural classes. The

almost 1400 institutions are overwhelmingly public, but an increasing number of private high schools have emerged in recent years, predominantly in urban locations.

### Technical and vocational education and training

The provision of initial vocational training in vocational and technical education is in compliance with the regulations specific to compulsory secondary education and the technological path of high school education (grades 9-12/13). Students' vocational training in vocational and technical education is provided mainly in two routes:

- high school education, the technological path, which includes:
  - the lower cycle of high school (grades 9-10), which leads to the award of the Vocational Competence Certificate for Level 2 of Vocational Qualification (EQF – Level 3, ISCED 2) in one of the three fields: natural resources and environment protection, the technical field, and services; this applies as from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of the 2009/10 school year, as required by the *Extraordinary Ordinance 40 of 22 April 2009*;
  - the upper cycle of high school (grades 11-12), which leads to the award of the Vocational Competence Certificate for Level 3 of Vocational Qualification (EQF – Level 4, ISCED 3);
- the progressive vocational route (this route is being wound up as from the 2009/10 school year), which includes:
  - the school of arts and trades (as from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of the 2009/10 school year), which allows for the award of the Certificate for Level 1 of Qualification;
  - the 11<sup>th</sup> grade – the additional year, which allows for the award of the Certificate for Level 2 of Qualification;
  - the grades 12-13, functioning within technological high schools, which allows for the award of the Certificate for Level 3 of Qualification (EQF – Level 4, ISCED – Level 3).

The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system also includes post-secondary education (non-tertiary education) delivered by:

- post-secondary schools (*școli postliceale*) as a specialist training route, with a duration of 1 to 3 years, which lead to the award of an Advanced Level 3 Competence Certificate;
- foremen schools (*școli de maiștri*), aimed at ensuring the appropriate education and training of foremen – instructors for the TVET system and foremen for industry. It may have alternative financial sources, from social partners and enterprises or by request of individual financing. As all post-secondary schools, they lead to certificated competences at Level 3 advanced (specialised technician).

Post-secondary education provides an opportunity for advanced vocational training for the graduates of secondary schools. Programmes may be recurrent or specially arranged to meet the needs of specific employers. The latter is closely related to the ongoing provision of on-the-job training for employers. Such training may be formal or informal with formal training being most closely related to post-secondary schools.

### Tertiary/Higher education

Since 2005, the higher education system in Romania has been organised in three cycles: first degree (Bachelor) programmes, master programmes and PhD (doctorate) programmes compatible with the European qualification framework and laid out in Law 288 of 2004.

Students who have graduated from an upper secondary institution are eligible to apply for admission to a first degree programme according to the admission methodology of each university and study programme. Admission generally depends on student performance at the national examination at the end of upper secondary education (called *Bacalaureat*), performance in upper secondary school and performance at the university entrance examination.

Higher education is mainly public, but also private. The Romanian higher education system includes 56 public universities, 30 private accredited universities, and 20 private authorized universities.

## 1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports is the central level of authority and is mainly responsible at the national level for:

- design and implementation of educational policies and strategies on medium and long term;
- specific initiatives as base for Government Decisions in education and correlated fields;
- approvals of curricula, the national assessment standards and the education units network;
- distribution of the financial resources from the state budget to the school inspectorates;
- ensuring social protection in education, recommending appropriate measures to Government and local authorities;
- establishing procedures for the recognition of diplomas, and certificates awarded abroad;
- setting the structure of state school education, school exam sessions, intervals of competitions and school holidays.

The School Inspectorate, one in every Romanian county and in Bucharest (6, one in each district, and a general one) is an intermediate level of authority and mainly ensures:

- the distribution of the financial resources coming from the ministry/state budget to the schools;
- the appointments of school head teachers;
- the teaching staff policy and the approval of the trades and specializations that are to be taught;
- the monitoring of students and teachers performances and activities;
- the educational conditions in all schools, jointly with the local public administration;
- the set up of public education units and the proposals to the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports on the local school network and the student enrolment plan;
- the school attendance for the duration of compulsory education, jointly with the local public administration.

The school unit (school) is the last element in this up-bottom chain of responsibilities and authority. Consequently, among other responsibilities and tasks, the school unit:

- is responsible for the organization and implementation of educational programmes and the way the financial resources are used;
- submits to the county's inspectorate the list of trades and specializations that are to be taught, list of teaching staff etc.

- is responsible for staff training and professional development;
- ensures the appropriate conditions and resources for carrying out the educational activities;
- is the first responsible with the students and teachers' monitoring and evaluation activities in order to ensure school quality.

### 1.3 Financing

Public spending in education system has constantly increased in recent years to about 6.0 percent of Romanian GDP. From this point of view, Romania remains one of the few EU countries that allocate much less than 10.0 percent of the national GDP to education. Compulsory education is entirely state funded. The situation changes at the next education levels, but not significantly, the state financial support covering most of educational spending, even in the higher education sector.

Public spending on higher education has risen sharply in the past three years, driven mainly by increases in capital spending. Total public spending on higher education rose to more than 0.8 percent of GDP in 2007 and 2008.

Approximately 64 percent of a public university's funding comes from the government, while 36 percent is raised by a university from its own funds including fees and consultancy activities, scientific research, external projects, micro production, and student accommodation (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, National Council for Higher Education Financing, 2006). In 1999, Romania moved from a system of input-based higher education funding to a mixture of per capita and quality based financing that uses a methodology developed by the National Council for Higher Education Funding (CNFIS). The higher education budget is proposed by CNFIS to the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports for the next fiscal year based on data provided by each university. Every year the government approves the total number of study grants per study area and per study cycle that it will fund based on the country's economic and social development requirements. The Ministry distributes the study grants to universities depending on quality indicators and institutional capacity through an Order of Minister. Each university senate then distributes the study grants to study programs and study cycles according to its own strategy.

Higher education is free of charge for state funded students; however the institutions may collect fees from these students for application and registration, and for the repetition of examinations.

### 1.4 Quality assurance

Quality assurance and quality management represent a systemic effort in Romania, institutionally controlled. Therefore, the institutional capacity building was equally important as the empowerment of multiple actors involved, their active participation and support.

In the school education sub-system (from pre-primary education to upper secondary education inclusively) the quality improvement driven model is based on a support system, based on the coordinated and coherent actions undertaken at national, regional and local level.

At the national level of the education system, the quality assurance strategy is implemented by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in School Education.

This agency is responsible for:

- external evaluation of the quality of education offered by schools;
- authorisation, accreditation and evaluation schools.

The purpose of the external evaluation is mainly (i) to certify the capacity of the schools to meet the quality standards, (ii) to play a role in the development of a 'culture of quality' in school education institutions, and (iii) to recommend policies and strategies to the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in order to improve the quality of education.

As far as the university education system is concerned, a similar national agency was established in 2006, namely the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

One major change has been that universities are now less strictly controlled by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. However, in every university growing autonomy should be accompanied by the development of a quality assurance system that safeguards the quality of university education and highlights differences between universities in terms of educational performance. Universities are very much aware that their appeal among students is largely determined by their ability to deliver tangible results. Furthermore, Romanian universities are implementing an effective quality assurance system in order to prepare for future competition with other universities.

From this perspective, the main principles of Romanian quality assurance system focus on:

- *the European Dimension*, characterized by the integration in the European Higher Education Area of all Romanian higher education institutions;
- *institutional responsibility*, considered as a concept based on the principle of academic autonomy;
- *institutional diversity*, guaranteed through the external quality evaluation of all study programmes;
- *cooperation* of all the components of the education system as parts of a whole system;
- *a performance-based system*, by reference to the position obtained in quality assurance/evaluation;
- *institutional identity*, by influencing good practices and successful structures in the field of academic quality;
- *internal institutional self-evaluation*, as universities present the specificity of the quality culture through self-evaluation reports, continuous performance improvements;
- *external evaluation*, by monitoring the results reported by universities, through analysis of performance and relationship with the stated institutional reality (including student activities, conformity to the stated standards);
- *improvement of quality* – the main objective of all higher education institutions and, therefore, of the Romanian quality assurance system.

## 1.5 Statistics

Table 1.

EDUCATION BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION						
TOTAL	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Units</b>	<b>18012</b>	<b>14396</b>	<b>11865</b>	<b>8484</b>	<b>8230</b>	<b>8221</b>
<i>Pre-school education</i>	7616	5687	3769	1720	1731	1718
<i>Primary and secondary education</i>	8714	7023	6411	5045	4737	4727
<i>High school education</i>	1397	1413	1410	1421	1426	1444
<i>Vocational and apprenticeship education</i>	79	77	90	115	147	147
<i>Post high school and foremen education</i>	84	79	78	79	83	79
<i>Tertiary education</i>	122	117	107	104	106	106
<b>Enrolled population</b>	<b>4472493</b>	<b>4403880</b>	<b>4360831</b>	<b>4345581</b>	<b>4404581</b>	<b>4324992</b>
Children in kindergartens	636709	644911	648338	648862	650324	652855
Pupils – total	3214999	3108634	2996029	2911213	2846904	2781039
<i>Pupils enrolled in forms I-VIII</i>	2122226	1996604	1900561	1842208	1789693	1752335
<i>Pupils enrolled in High schools</i>	758917	773843	767439	780925	791348	784361
<i>Pupils enrolled in vocational education</i>	279124	289494	284412	250383	220335	189254
<i>Pupils enrolled in post high school education</i>	54732	48693	43617	37697	45528	55089
Students enrolled – total	620785	650335	716464	785506	907353	891098
<i>of total: foreign students studying in Romania</i>	9006	8935	9944	10396	11095	11887
<b>Teaching staff</b>	<b>281272</b>	<b>285861</b>	<b>281034</b>	<b>277318</b>	<b>276849</b>	<b>275426</b>
<i>Pre-school education</i>	34585	35288	35755	36555	37348	38253
<i>Primary and secondary education</i>	150510	150168	144489	141601	138972	138560
<i>High school education</i>	58925	62192	61914	62048	61620	60647
<i>Vocational and apprenticeship education</i>	5782	6290	6234	5643	5939	5129
<i>Post high school and foremen education</i>	1333	1066	1099	888	1006	864
<i>Tertiary education</i>	30137	30857	31543	30583	31964	31973

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009, National Institute of Statistics, 2010.

Table 2.

ENROLMENT RATE FOR SCHOOL AGED POPULATION [%]						
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
3-6 years	81,0	81.6	80.4	80.9	81.8	81.7
7-10 years	98,2	98.0	98.0	97.0	96.0	95.0
11-14 years	94,2	93.6	96.2	95.0	94.4	94.4
15-18 years	73,0	74.9	73.5	75.7	77.4	79.2
19-23 years and over	43,3	45.7	51.2	55.9	63.8	63.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74,2</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>79.6</b>

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2009, National Institute of Statistics, 2010.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

In Romania, pre-primary education is part of the public education system and its delivery is based on the Education Law 84/1995, the Rules of Pre-Primary Education Units (2000) and the National Curriculum. Many changes in the area of education policies have been made in recent years, and they have impacted on the entire system, with some being particularly targeted at pre-primary education.

A new Education Law will be applied in the near future and it sees early childhood education as part of the education system which, this time, includes early childhood education for children from 4 months to 3 years of age and kindergarten education for 3 to 6/7-year-olds. This is the first time when the concept *early childhood education* is used in a legislative text, and the idea of early childhood education for children from 4 months to 6/7 years of age is promoted.

In addition, since September 2008, early childhood education for children from 3 to 6 /7-year-olds has been delivered based on a new National Curriculum.

The main goals of early childhood education for 3 to 6/7-year-olds are:

- free, integral and balanced development of a child's personality, based on their own pace and needs, and in support of their autonomous and creative training
- development of the ability to interact with other children, adults and the world around in order to gain new knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours; encouragement of exploration, exercise, testing and experimentation as autonomous learning experiences
- discovery by all children of their personality and autonomy, and development of a positive self image
- helping children to learn knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes necessary when entering school and throughout life.

While for children aged from 4 months to 3 years, early childhood education services are not available yet, as legislation regulating them is to come into force, for children aged between 3 and 6/7, these services are provided by public and private kindergartens.

Pre-primary early childhood education covers the age group of 3-6/7-year-olds and its attendance is not compulsory except for the last year, which under the new law will be made compulsory and serves to prepare children for school. In point of the structure of the education system, this preparation year will be a part of primary education, preceding the 1st grade. However, the rate of children's inclusion in kindergartens in Romania is high compared to other countries in Central and South-East Europe, and it has grown with every year.

As a tendency in recent years, the inclusion rate for different age groups, especially for the early ones, has increased constantly. If 7 to 8 years ago the inclusion rate was above 80 % for 6-year-olds (after the shift to compulsory schooling from the age of 6 instead of 7 in the 2002/03 school year, the number of 6-year-olds in kindergartens has slightly decreased), data referring to the period 2001-2007 show that the number of children aged 3 to 5 has increased (see table below).



The specific inclusion rate, for different age groups, in pre-school education								
Age		2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
3	Total	39.1	40.5	44.1	54.8	55.2	55.0	58.1
	Urban	42.6	44.9	51.4	60.9	60.1	60.3	62.7
	Rural	36.2	36.9	38.4	49.9	50.8	50.1	53.7
	Girls	40.2	41.7	44.8	56.0	56.1	56.6	59.4
	Boys	38.2	39.4	43.4	53.4	54.2	53.4	56.9
4	Total	58.7	63.3	66.5	75.2	75.9	75.0	76.7
	Urban	60.7	64.4	70.9	77.1	78.0	77.7	77.4
	Rural	57.1	62.3	62.9	73.7	74.1	72.7	76.0
	Girls	60.1	64.3	67.9	76.1	76.9	75.5	78.2
	Boys	57.4	62.3	65.1	74.3	74.9	74.6	75.4
5	Total	76.4	76.6	83.2	85.7	86.2	86.0	85.4
	Urban	77.5	77.6	84.6	86.7	88.3	88.1	86.1
	Rural	75.5	75.7	82.1	84.8	84.5	84.3	84.8
	Girls	77.7	78.0	84.0	86.7	86.5	86.3	85.8
	Boys	75.3	75.2	82.5	84.7	85.9	85.8	85.1
6	Total	87.9	89.9	90.4	67.8	70.3	76.5	78.2
	Urban	93.8	96.7	97.4	78.0	80.1	85.8	84.7
	Rural	83.0	84.4	84.7	59.5	61.9	68.6	72.6
	Girls	88.6	90.8	91.3	67.7	70.5	76.4	77.7
	Boys	87.3	89.2	89.6	67.8	70.1	76.6	78.7
Source: Data based on information from the National Institute of Statistics, 2001-2007.								

Public kindergartens are established by the County School Inspectorates, and private kindergartens can be established only with the approval of the County School Inspectorates.

In Romania, there are now approximately 5 000 kindergartens with a legal person status, and 8 000 structures assigned to schools. There are more kindergartens in rural areas than in urban areas. Compared to the number of children aged between 3 and 7, the kindergarten network in Romania is not large enough to ensure that all families who apply for a place for their child will get one. This is especially true in urban areas.

In most of the cases, the buildings in which kindergartens function are separated from school buildings and they are provided with furniture and sanitary installation appropriate for the age of children.

Educational services provided by public kindergartens are free of charge, and parents make a contribution only for their children's meal.

In recent years, the interest in and concern for early childhood education has significantly increased, a fact demonstrated by the existence of a National Strategy for Early Childhood Education (developed in 2003), an Early Childhood Education Reform Project 2006-2011 (co-funded by the Government of Romania and the Development Bank of the Council of Europe, amounting to €105 million), an Inclusive Early Childhood Education Project 2006-2011 (co-funded by the Government of Romania and the World Bank), as well as the development, with UNICEF support, of the Early Learning and Development Standards for children from birth to 7 year old (2007-2009) – a policy document that promotes an integral approach to education, care and protection services for children below the age of 7 and a child's global development. The main purpose of all these efforts was:

- to increase access to education services for children below the age of 7, especially children from rural areas and those with a disadvantaged social background;
- to increase the quality of education services for children below the age of 7 and their families;
- to promote a global approach to a child's development and the perspective of integrated education, care and protection services.



## 2.1 Admission

Children's admission in kindergartens is within the limits of available places, based on the criteria of age, home proximity to the kindergarten and the fact of having or not siblings attending that particular kindergarten. Parents are free to choose the service provider, considering the criteria mentioned above. When going to enrol their children, parents must present to the kindergarten staff documents showing the child's health history, results of recent analyses, as well as special information which needs to be considered by the educational and care staff. Children with special educational needs can be admitted in kindergartens, and those with difficulties attested by a specialist diagnosis can benefit from the support of an assistant teacher. However, this situation is not valid for all cases.

## 2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Based on their working hours, there are three types of kindergartens:

- kindergartens with normal hours, that provide educational and care services by midday (for 5 hours a day) – widespread in rural areas;
- kindergartens with extended hours, that provide educational and care services by the afternoon (for 10 hours a day) – more frequent in urban areas;
- kindergartens with weekly hours, that provide educational services for a week, from Monday to Friday.

Based on how many children attend them, kindergartens organise age-based groups: the lower group (3 to 4-year-olds), the middle group (4 to 5-year-olds) and the upper/preparation group (5 to 6-year-olds). Because the law says that admission to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade starts at the age of 6 (the child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday must have been before the date at which the school year begins) only if parents agree to enrol their child at this age, the upper/preparation group now also includes children older than 6 and even 7.

Groups in kindergartens are formed based on the sole criterion of age, education being provided to mixed groups. There are kindergartens in rural areas, where due to a small number of children, groups are heterogeneous in point of age.

The minimum number of children required by law for the organisation of a group is 10, and the maximum number is 20.

## 2.3 Curriculum

Since 1 September 2008, a new curriculum has been applied in early childhood education. The novelties in the curriculum were determined by the promotion of a new approach to early childhood education:

- promoting a child's global development (including all the development areas indicated in the document Early Learning and Development Standards);
- promoting education centred on development and learning specific to very young children (encouraging play, exploration, experimentation, interaction with the world around) and children's preparation for school and life;
- focus on individual needs, interests and pace of development when organising, carrying out and assessing learning, with an emphasis on the spontaneity and naturalness of learning;

- promoting the principle saying that every experience in kindergarten is a learning experience for a child, including all moments of routine, transition, arriving/leaving the kindergarten, having a meal, sleeping etc.
- promoting teacher's freedom of choice when organising and carrying out learning activities, guided by curriculum objectives.

The new curriculum enabled the transition from activities focused on particular areas of knowledge (knowledge-centred) to experiential fields (centred on learning experiences). The curriculum setting the framework objectives and standards for 5 experiential fields (that do not coincide with the five areas of development, but cover them in their formulation) is established at a central level and is applied by all kindergartens in the public sector.

Priority is given to the promotion of learning based on play, exploration, experimentation, and cooperation, giving children freedom of expression, freedom of choice and the opportunity of various learning contexts.

A good practice guide is attached to the curriculum and it supports teachers in the application of the new curriculum, provides suggestions for organising the learning environment in order to respond to children's diverse needs and interests and create various learning situations, as well as suggestions for learning aids appropriate for a particular age group.

## **2.4 Assessment**

According to the new curriculum, assessment is ongoing and is based on observation with the resulting data being added to the children's portfolios along with their works. At the end of kindergarten, teachers fill in a psychopedagogical form for every child intended to characterise their development, and this form will be used when children are admitted in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The psychopedagogical form is different from one county to another and its role is not to recommend or not a child's admission to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Children with development problems are directed by teachers, through their parents, to specialised offices for therapy or counselling, or to specialised education services.

Testing children or grading their work or giving qualifying descriptors is not allowed in kindergartens. The new curriculum promotes the idea of encouraging children and helping them to develop a positive self-image, gain confidence in their own abilities and individual progress at one's own pace.

## **2.5 Teachers**

Initial education and training for kindergarten teachers is currently provided by universities, in compliance with the Bologna process, through the Departments for Pre-School and Primary Education Teacher Training. The duration of the training programme is three years and its completion leads to the award of a first degree in pre-school and primary pedagogy. The graduates can hold a position as a teacher in pre-primary education and primary education.

Because initial education and training – before new decisions were adopted following the Bologna Process – was provided by pedagogical high schools and pedagogical colleges, teachers who are currently working in the system can complete their studies by taking first degree and master programmes at universities.

In-service teacher training in pre-primary education is obligatory and it is regulated by the law on the statute of teachers in school education. According to this law, teachers must accumulate, in a 5 years period, 90 transferable credits from accredited in-service training courses.

At present, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports is running, within the Early Childhood Education Reform Programme, a national in-service training programme for all teachers in the early childhood education system. Upon the completion of this programme, every teacher, head teacher and psychopedagogical counsellor working in a kindergarten receives an in-service training certificate and a number of credits.

However, teachers in the early childhood education system are free to choose the courses that best suit their training needs from the offer of the training providers accredited by the National Centre for the Training of School Teachers.

In recent years, the percentage of qualified teachers in the early childhood education system has increased, but there is still a gap between urban and rural areas, the percentage being lower for the later (see table below).

Percentage of qualified staff in pre-primary education

	Pre-school	
2000/01	Total	84.9
	Urban	89.6
	Rural	79.1
2001/02	Total	88.6
	Urban	92.8
	Rural	83.6
2002/03	Total	86.4
	Urban	88.7
	Rural	83.6
2003/04	Total	93.9
	Urban	97.4
	Rural	89.7
2004/05	Total	94.7
	Urban	97.3
	Rural	91.5
2005/06	Total	94.0
	Urban	96.6
	Rural	90.7
2006/07	Total	93.7
	Urban	96.2
	Rural	90.6

Source: Raport privind starea invatamantului 2007 (Report on the state of education 2007), Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, 2008.

The teaching positions in school education are established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997). Therefore, the teaching position in pre-primary education is *educatoare/educator*, *institutoare/institutor*, and teacher for pre-primary education.

The selection, recruitment and employment process for *educatoare/educatori*, *institutoare/institutori*, teachers for pre-primary education is based on an annual examination-based competition (a national competition for all available posts or positions published at national level). The access to the examination-based competition is open – anyone who meets the education requirements established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997) can participate. Methodological coordination is ensured by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, while the local organisation and the way it takes place are ensured by the School Inspectorates and some schools (representative schools) appointed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

The selection, recruitment and employment of *educatoare/educatori*, *institutoare/institutori*, teachers for pre-primary education for posts or positions in private pre-primary education are based on an open recruitment procedure. Accredited or temporarily authorised private pre-primary schools have full responsibility in conducting the selection, recruitment and employment process for their own posts or positions. The process must be in compliance with the general provisions of the Education Law and the

Statute of the Teaching Staff. More precisely, the open recruitment procedure must be based on a competition open to anyone who meets the education requirements established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff for a particular teaching position. Accredited or temporarily authorised pre-primary schools must inform the School Inspectorates on the final results of the process.

### 3. PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education is a part of the compulsory education and can be organised in public and private schools. According to the provisions of the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed), primary education is organised for pupils aged 6 to 10 and includes grades 1-4. A class of any grade in primary education works with one teacher and comprises in average 20 pupils, but no less than 10 and no more than 25.

Primary education is equally provided for all children, including the ones with special educational needs either in units of special education or in mainstream education institutions. Primary education gives all children equal opportunities in accomplishing the first stage of basic education ('elementary education') and in continuing their education.

Public primary schools are established by the County School Inspectorates with the agreement of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and are financed from the state budget and the local budgets (town, village group; county – only for special education).

Public primary education is organised in independent units (primary schools) or within schools covering all grades from 1 to 8 (called *școală generală*). In urban areas, primary education can also be organised in schools covering grades 1 to 12 (usually in arts, sports or pedagogical schools). In rural areas, independent public primary schools are organised mostly in the villages where the number of pupils is too low to organise *gimnaziu* schools (grades 5-8).

According to the local needs and possibilities, and with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, the County School Inspectorates can establish schools or classes providing primary education with complete/partial tuition in the languages of the national minorities or providing only study of the mother tongue.

The Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed) allows the organisation and functioning of educational alternatives in public and private education: Step by Step programme; Waldorf education system; Montessori pedagogy; Freinet techniques; Jena Plan.

Financial support provided from the state and/or local budgets for the families with children attending primary education is also included in the following measures: ensuring free of charge textbooks for pupils attending primary education; scholarships for pupils; ensuring free of charge school supplies for pupils coming from disadvantaged families; providing free of charge dairy and bakery products for pupils attending primary education and high and pre-primary education with normal hours.

Businesses, individuals and entities with legal personality can establish private primary schools with the agreement of the County School Inspectorates following an accreditation procedure. Evaluation criteria for private school education institutions refer to the basic domains of organisation and functioning: teaching staff, content, material basis and financial activity. The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in School Education (ARACIP) establishes the national standards for each criterion, differentiated by education level. The curriculum frameworks and corresponding syllabi of private primary schools have to be similar or alternative to the ones used in public education and have to comply with the national standards. Financing of private schools is performed according to the financial norms in force and is ensured by their initiators and through fees paid by the parents. The fees are established autonomously by the schools, within the general framework provided by law.

#### 3.1 Admission

The Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed) now stipulates that children who are 6 years old by the beginning of the school year are enrolled in the first grade of primary education by the local educational authorities. Upon the written request of the parents or legally

appointed guardians, children that are 6 years old by the end of the year can also be enrolled in the first grade of primary education, if their general development is consistent with the general requirements. At the same time, parents or legally appointed guardians can request postponement of the enrolment of their children even if they are 6 years old by the beginning of the school year.

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

The organisation of the school year in primary education is determined each year at central level through an Order of Minister. The framework plans for primary education, approved through an Order of Minister, include the allocation of hours (minimum and maximum) for every subject and year of study, per week.

Primary education is usually organised in the morning, every day of the week (5-day week system). Class periods are 45-50 minutes long and are followed by 10-15 minutes breaks. Most schools organise a 20 minutes break after the third class hour. The weekly (5-day week system) and daily timetables for primary education are established by the administration council of the schools after consultations with teachers and parents.

For primary education, as in the case of pre-primary education, the school year in Romania has two semesters, four holidays during the school year and a summer holiday. The exact calendar of the school year is established every year through Order of the Minister of Education. The 2009/10 school year has 35 weeks of school (5-day week system), summing up 173 working days. It begins on 1 September 2009 and ends on 31 August 2010.

### **3.3 Curriculum**

The curriculum for primary education is a part of the National Curriculum which, according to the Education Law (Law 84/1995 republished, subsequently amended and completed), consists of a coherent set of framework plans, curricula and textbooks approved by Order of the Education Minister and adequately applied to each grade (year of study).

In primary education, the framework plans set the following for every year of study/ grade: the total number – minimum and maximum – of school hours per week; the compulsory subjects and the minimum and maximum number of hours per week for each subject; the minimum and maximum number of hours per week allocated globally, at school's disposal, for a local curricular offer (at least an optional subject and advanced study and/or extensions of compulsory subjects).

The National Curriculum for primary education has two components: the core curriculum and the school-based curriculum. The core curriculum is the common and compulsory educational offer for all pupils, established at national level and made up of the same subjects, number of hours – for every year of study – to which the same curricula apply. The school-based curriculum is a set of educational processes and learning experiences proposed by every school directly to a class of pupils within its own curricular offer.

The educational objectives (framework objectives and reference objectives) pursued in learning, the learning contents and the curricular standards of achievement for all subjects in the framework plan are set out in the curricula. The framework objectives refer to the development of skills and attitudes generated by the specificity of a subject and guide its organisation throughout primary education. The reference objectives specify the expected learning results at the end of a year of study and pursue the progress in the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge by pupils from a year of study to another. The reference objectives set out in the curricula are associated with learning activities that have the role to provide methodological orientation for the design of learning so as to achieve the objectives and implicitly the curricular standards of achievement. The learning contents are means for the attainment of proposed framework objectives and reference objectives. The curricular standards of

achievement are criteria for assessing the quality of the learning process; they are concise sentences that can indicate the degree to which pupils attain the curricular objectives at the end of primary education. Concretely, the curricular standards of achievement are performance specifications for knowledge, skills and attitudes developed through the curriculum.

In case of subjects for which the framework plan provides the minimum and maximum number of hours per week, the curriculum of each subject established a common body of reference objectives and compulsory contents which represent the core curriculum for the minimum number of hours per week, as well as reference objectives and contents representing extensions of the core curriculum – in case the school chooses the maximum number of hours per week indicated in the framework plan.

The structure of the local curricular offer and the exact number of hours per week for every compulsory subject are set based on a consultation with parents, pupils and other educational partners, with the condition that they are approved by the teachers' council and the administration council of each school. The total number of hours per week must be between the minimum and maximum limits set by the framework plan for each year of study. The school-based curriculum is made up of one or more optional subjects and of advanced study and/or extensions of compulsory subjects for which the framework plan provides the minimum and maximum number of hours per week. Advanced study refers to a diversification of learning activities, and it applies only in 'catch up' cases for pupils who cannot attain the minimum level of objectives and contents provided for in the curricula of previous years. Extensions are addressed to pupils who show an interest in studying a subject more in depth and pursue the additional objectives and contents proposed in the curriculum. Optional subjects are subjects other than those set in the framework plan of a grade (year of study) and they involve the use of curricula with new reference objectives and learning contents, different from those established in the compulsory curricula. Curricula for optional subjects can be developed locally, and they need to be endorsed by a specialist inspector from the County/Bucharest School Inspectorate, or they can be taken from the central offer for school-based curriculum approved by Order of the Education Minister. The central offer for school-based curriculum promotes examples of good practice, curricula piloted nationally through various national and international educational programmes.

The National Curriculum for grades 1-4 is structured in seven curricular areas (delimited based on epistemological and psychopedagogical principles and criteria): 1. Language and Communication, 2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 3. People and Society, 4. Arts, 5. Physical Education and Sports, 6. Technologies, 7. Counselling and Guidance. Optional subjects and activities can be organised within any of these curricular areas.

The framework plans for primary education, approved by Orders of the Education Minister 4686/ 2003 and 5198/ 2004, include the subjects, organised in curricular areas, and the hours allocated to each subject presented in the table below:

Curricular area/ Subject	Grade			
	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Language and Communication</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>7-9</b>
Romanian Language and Literature	7-8	7-8	5-7	5-7
Foreign Language 1	-	-	2-3	2-3
<b>2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>4-6</b>	<b>4-6</b>
Mathematics	3-4	3-4	3-4	3-4
Knowledge of the Environment	1	1	-	-
Natural Sciences	-	-	1-2	1-2
<b>3. People and Society</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>4-6</b>



Curricular area/ Subject	Grade			
	1	2	3	4
Citizenship Education	-	-	1-2	1-2
History	-	-	-	1-2
Geography	-	-	-	1-2
Religion	1	1	1	1
<b>4. Arts</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>
Musical Education	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
Plastic Education	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
<b>5. Physical Education and Sports</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>
Physical Education	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
<b>6. Technologies</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>
Practical Abilities	1-2	1-2	-	-
Technological Education	-	-	1-2	1-2
<b>7. Counselling and Guidance</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>0-1</b>
<b>Total number of hours per week for the core curriculum</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>School-based curriculum/ Optional subjects</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-4</b>	<b>1-4</b>
<b>Minimum number of hours per week</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Maximum number of hours per week</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>

When the language of instruction is Romanian, pupils belonging to national minorities can study, upon request, their mother tongue (language and literature) as part of the core curriculum. The number of hours allocated to this subject is 3-4 hours/week in every year of study and it adds to the minimum number of hours per week set in the framework plan.

When instruction is delivered in one of the national minority languages, the subject Romanian language and literature is studied for 4 hours per week, and the mother tongue language and literature is studied for 7-8/5-7 hours per week in grades 1-2, and 3-4 respectively.

According to the provisions of the National Curriculum, the study of foreign languages is part of the core curriculum, with the study of the first foreign language starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. In these conditions, a relatively important number of schools, using the opportunities of the school-based curriculum, offer the optional study of the first foreign language from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

For pupils with aptitudes – in schools offering an additional or integrated (arts or sports) programme – additional hours are allocated to specific instruction in that particular curricular area. There are more hours per week for this type of programmes than for the ordinary programme because they are aimed at a high level of achievement.

For pupils with disabilities, depending on the type and degree of disability, schools can apply either the mainstream curriculum, with additional hours allocated to specific compensatory therapies, psychological diagnosis, social education etc., or a special curriculum, also approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports which includes both framework plans, curricula and textbooks, and auxiliary materials developed according to the type and degree of disability.



In primary education, only textbooks and auxiliary materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports can be used in the classroom. For most of the subjects, there are three alternative textbooks, approved by ministry, for each grade. Based on the characteristics of their classes, teachers choose the textbook for every subject at the beginning of the school year. Teachers also enjoy the freedom, and responsibility, to decide on the teaching-learning-assessment methods they are going to use with their pupils considering the structure of their class, the teaching materials available in their school and following the methodological guidance provided for in the National Curriculum and specialist publications.

### **3.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

Pupils' assessment has to be performed on a regular basis for all subjects (compulsory and optional) during the semesters by the teachers working with the class. Each semester includes periods dedicated to the consolidation and assessment of the competences acquired by pupils (formative and summative assessments) established by the teachers working with the class. Usually these periods are established towards the end of the semester and teachers pursue: to improve the results of the teaching-learning process; to support systematisation of the knowledge acquired; to stimulate the performance of low and high achievers.

Assessment methods and instruments are established by teachers according to the age and psychological particularities of their pupils and taking the specificity of the subject into consideration. These can include oral questioning, written papers, practical activities, reports and projects, interviews, portfolios, as well as other instruments developed by the school's chairs/departments and approved by the head of school, or developed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the County School Inspectorates.

In primary education, each assessment (continuous, formative or summative) of the pupils' performance at each subject is materialised in a qualitative descriptor: 'insufficient', 'sufficient', 'good', and 'very good' and 'excellent'. However, the final semester and school year qualitative descriptor for each subject has to be within the 4-level scale mentioned above. Assessment of pupils is performed according to the curricular standards of achievement provided for by the National Curriculum and the assessment standards and descriptors established at national level, for each subject and grade.

The descriptor assigned by the teachers following each assessment has to be communicated to the pupils. The teachers have also the obligation to immediately register the descriptor in the class book and the pupil personal books under the corresponding subject. At the end of each semester and of the school year the final average descriptors for each subject are registered in the class book and the pupil personal books. The school year average final descriptors for each subject are also registered in the general school register. The official school data throughout the schooling period are recorded in the class books and the school register – official documents that are permanently archived by the school or, later on, by the State's Archives.

In primary education, pupils can progress from one grade to the next if for each subject studied in a particular grade their final average qualitative descriptor at the end of the school year is at least 'sufficient'.

According to the legislation in force, pupils are declared 'failed' (meaning they have to repeat a school year) if they are in one of the following situations by the beginning of the school year: pupils that obtained the final average descriptor 'insufficient' in more than two subjects (no 'second examination' allowed in this case); pupils that obtained the final average descriptor 'insufficient' for behaviour (separately marked by the class teacher/tutor); pupils that 'failed' one or two subjects and that either did not sit or did not pass the 'second examination' for at least one subject; pupils who postponed at least one subject and did not sit the examination necessary for the conclusion of their academic situation.

There is neither a leaving examination nor a formal certification at the end of primary education, pupils completing primary education going directly to *gimnaziu* (grades 5 to 8).

### 3.5 Guidance and counselling

In most cases, educational guidance during primary education is ensured by the class teacher working closely with the children's parents and the school psychologist. The National Curriculum includes the curricular area Counselling and Guidance, dedicated to the educational guidance of pupils. In the case of primary education, the curriculum frameworks stipulate the possibility to allocate, within the school-based curriculum, an hour per week for counselling and guidance. There is also a central curricula offer for this curricular area, approved by an Order of the Minister of Education.

### 3.6 Teachers

The teaching positions in school education are established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997). Therefore, the teaching position in primary education is *învățător/învățătoare, institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education.

The minimum requirements of initial education and training for the teaching position of *învățător/învățătoare, institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education are: either graduation of a pedagogical high school with a diploma examination or graduation of an equivalent school, or a first degree or a higher education diploma followed by a course in the psychopedagogical and specific methodological field.

Initial education and training of *învățător/învățătoare, institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education provided in formal education is complemented by an induction period of at least 2 years. During their induction, beginner teachers are employed based on a work contract which is identical to that for definitive teachers, comprising the same responsibilities, rights and obligations (including teaching load, salary etc.). In their induction, beginner teachers are assisted by the specialist school inspector and a mentor appointed by the head teacher of the school. After the minimum 2-year period provided by law, beginner teachers can take the teacher confirmation examination (*examenul de definitivare în învățământ*) – an assessment that certifies that the teacher has the necessary professional competences. Taking the teacher confirmation examination becomes obligatory after two years since the end of the induction, and beginner teachers can sit this examination at most 3 times in a 5-year period. Those who don't pass the teacher confirmation examination as provided by law can no longer work as qualified teachers.

The selection, recruitment and employment process for *învățător/învățătoare, institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education is based on an annual examination-based competition (a national competition for all available posts or positions published at national level). The access to the examination-based competition is open – anyone who meets the education requirements established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997) can participate. Methodological coordination is ensured by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, while the local organisation and the way it takes place are ensured by the School Inspectorates and some schools (representative schools) appointed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

The selection, recruitment and employment of *învățător/învățătoare, institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education for posts or positions in private primary education are based on an open recruitment procedure. Accredited or temporarily authorised private primary schools have full responsibility in conducting the selection, recruitment and employment process for their own posts or positions. The process must be in compliance with the general provisions of the Education Law and the Statute of the Teaching Staff. More precisely, the open recruitment procedure must be based on a competition open to anyone who meets the education requirements established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff for a

particular teaching position. Accredited or temporarily authorised primary schools must inform the School Inspectorates on the final results of the process.

According to the Statute of the Teaching Staff, posts/teaching positions in school education can be occupied by teachers with tenure, associated teachers or substitute teachers.

The professional development of *învățător/învățătoare*, *institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education is a process with several stages. It is advancement with the teaching/professional degrees that can be obtained after confirmation as a teacher in the following order: teaching degree II and teaching degree I, followed by in-service training once in 5 years. At the same time, the Statute of the Teaching Staff stipulates that teachers in school education participate in in-service training programmes at least once in 5 years or anytime this is recommended by the School Administration Council or by the County School Inspectorate. This condition is considered fulfilled when a teacher obtained his/her teacher confirmation or a teaching degree in this period.

According to the Order of the Education, Research and Youth Minister 4796/2001, regular in-service teacher training is structured in modules quantified in transferable credits. The minimum standard for regular in-service teacher training is 90 professional transferable credits.

The effective teaching load refers to activities carried out in the classroom for teaching-learning, education and assessment of children. A post of *învățător/învățătoare*, *institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education is allocated to every class in primary education, or to simultaneous classes where separate classes cannot be set up.

Some subjects in primary education, such as foreign languages, religion, physical education and music, can be taught by specialist teachers or by *învățător/învățătoare*, *institutor/institutoare* or teacher for primary education only if they prove they are qualified with a diploma or a certificate issued by an education institution for that particular subject and validated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

## 4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### 4.1 Lower secondary education

Lower secondary education is part of compulsory education and gives all pupils equal opportunities in continuing their education at the next education levels. It is provided in two phases, the first is *gimnaziu* (middle school) and the second is either the lower cycle of *liceu* (high school) or *școala de arte și meserii* (arts and trades school).

Regarding the specialisation of studies, the structure of the lower secondary education is as follows:

- in *gimnaziu* (grades 5-8) there is no specialisation of studies; education is provided as general education, for pupils aged 10-14;
- in the lower cycle of *liceu* (high school) there are three paths – general, vocational and aptitude-based (military, theological, sports, arts and pedagogical) – further divided into educational profiles and specializations; it includes grades 9 and 10, for pupils aged 14-16;
- in *școala de arte și meserii* (arts and trades school) education is organised based on the vocational qualifications provided (levels and specialisations), and includes grades 9 and 10, for pupils aged 14-16.

#### 4.1.1 Lower secondary education – *Gimnaziu*

*Gimnaziu* (grades 5-8) is the first stage of lower secondary education, following the 'elementary education' provided in the first four grades.

The education at *gimnaziu* level can be organised in various types of educational institutions, but most frequently it is organised together with primary education in schools covering grades 1 to 8 (the sequence of compulsory education until 2003) named *școala generală* (general schools). Especially in urban areas, there are also schools offering both primary and full secondary education (grades 1 to 12/13), or only secondary education (grades 5 to 12/13).

In most of the counties, there are also schools providing arts and sports education for pupils with special abilities in these particular areas and their programme usually starts in primary education. The educational institutions which provide this type of education can have a supplementary programme or an integrated programme, approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, based on a proposal from the School Inspectorates. These schools have a specific curriculum, adapted to their profile, and the study of specific subjects is carried out in groups or individually, according to the criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The curricula pursue the educational objectives specific to that profile.

##### 4.1.1.1 Admission

All pupils who have completed primary education (grades 1-4) are admitted to *gimnaziu* (grades 5-8; general education).

Transition from primary to *gimnaziu* education is conditioned by only the completion of the first four grades. In some cases, schools include in their profile fifth grade classes with intensive study of a modern language. In this case, the schools may organise admission examinations for pupils who completed the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in order to test their communication skills in Romanian and in the modern language, as well as their basic skills at mathematics. This situation also occurs in some cases where for some schools – known for high performance – the demand is higher than their available places. The overall enrolment quota approved every year for the fifth grade is at least equal to the number of pupils

who complete primary education in every town/group of villages or for neighbouring groups of villages in rural areas.

#### 4.1.1.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The organisation of the school year for secondary education is determined every year by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Secondary education is organised every day of the week (5-day week system). Class periods are 50 minutes long and are followed by 10 minutes breaks. In schools functioning in double shifts due to insufficient schooling capacity, certain classes begin their programme at 12, 1 or 2 pm. The weekly (5-day week system) and daily timetables for secondary education are established by the administration council of the schools after consultations with teachers and parents.

For secondary education, the school year in Romania has two semesters, three holidays during the school year and a summer holiday. The exact calendar of the school year is established each year through Order of the Minister of Education. The 2009/10 school year has 35 weeks of school (5-day week system), summing up 173 working days. It begins on 1 September 2009 and ends on 31 August 2010.

#### 4.1.1.3 National Curriculum for *gimnaziu*

The curriculum for secondary education is a part of the National Curriculum which, according to the Education Law (Law 84/1995 republished, subsequently amended and completed), consists of a coherent set of framework plans, curricula and textbooks approved by Order of the Education Minister and adequately applied to each educational level/cycle and grade (year of study).

The National Curriculum for secondary education is developed according to the structure of secondary education and covers both a segment of compulsory education (*gimnaziu* – grades 5 to 8 – followed either by the lower cycle of high school, or the school of arts and trades), and a segment of post-compulsory education (the upper cycle of high school). Considering the diversity of interests and training needs of students aged between 11 and 18/19, the National Curriculum for secondary education is characterised by a structural diversity, more visible in the general, aptitude-based and technological paths of high school education, as well as in the vocational paths – direct/ progressive – of vocational and technical education.

In Romania, one of the objectives of the 2009-2012 Government Programme is ‘the introduction of a school curriculum based on competences’. With a view to this objective, it was necessary to develop a curricular model of school subjects centred on competences, in relation with the eight key competences recommended by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (1. Communication in the mother tongue 2. Communication in foreign languages 3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology 4. Digital competence 5. Learning to learn 6. Social and civic competences 7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship 8. Cultural awareness and expression).

Curriculum design focused on competences responds to the research in cognitive psychology which says that competence ensures the transfer to and mobilisation of knowledge and skills in new situations. Therefore, from the 2009/10 school year, the model of curriculum design centred on competences is applied across secondary education. This curriculum design model is something new only for *gimnaziu* (grades 5-8) because the next segments of secondary education (grades 9-12/13) have applied the competence-centred curriculum design model since the 2000/01 school year.

For *gimnaziu* education that – like the preceding educational level (primary education) – has a single educational path, the framework plans set the following for each year of study/grade: the total number – minimum and maximum – of school hours per week; the compulsory subjects and the minimum and

maximum number of hours per week for each subject; the minimum and maximum number of hours per week allocated globally, at school's disposal, for a local curricular offer.

The framework plans for *gimnaziu*, approved by Order of the Education Minister 3638/2001, divides the educational offer into two components: the core curriculum and the school-based curriculum. The core curriculum is the common and compulsory educational offer for all pupils, established at national level and made up of the same subjects, number of hours – for every year of study – to which the same curricula apply. The school-based curriculum is the set of educational processes and learning experiences proposed by every school directly to a class of pupils within its own curricular offer (at least one optional subject and advanced study and/or extensions of compulsory subjects).

The new curricula for *gimnaziu*, approved by Orders of the Education Minister 5097/2009 and 5098/2009, are applied in the 2009/10 school year. The curricula were designed with a view to the shift from an objective-centred curriculum design model – implemented in the Romanian education system in the mid-90s – to the competence-centred model. This model updated the format of curricula, gave them unity in conception (through a systematic and unitary approach to the National Curriculum) and ensured the connection with current curricular developments, oriented mainly towards explicit and measurable learning results (rethinking learning from the perspective of its final acquisitions and emphasising the role of action in the development of a child's personality).

The general competences, the specific competences and contents associated with them, as well as the values and attitudes pursued in *gimnaziu* education are set out in the new curricula. The general competences are defined for each subject; they are very general and complex, and guide learning towards pupils' final acquisitions. The specific competences correlated with content units are built throughout a year of study and they derive from general competences, being steps in their development. The learning contents are means for the development of competences; the content units are presented in a non-obligatory order. In the curriculum design endeavour, the concept of competence is given the meaning of 'organiser', and in relation with it learning goals are established, specific contents are selected and teaching-learning-assessment strategies are organised. The values and attitudes are presented in an explicit list and their role is to emphasise the affective-attitudinal and moral dimension of learning, from the perspective of the specific contribution of subjects to the achievement of education goals. Curricula also include methodological suggestions; their role is to guide learning design and teaching-learning-assessment activities in accordance with the particularities of a subject.

The structure of the local curricular offer and the exact number of hours per week for every compulsory subject are set based on a consultation with parents, pupils and other educational partners, with the condition that they are approved by the teachers' council and the administration council of each school. The total number of hours per week must be between the minimum and maximum limits set by the framework plan for each grade. The school-based curriculum is made up of one or more optional subjects and advanced study and/or extensions of compulsory subjects for which the framework plan provides the minimum and maximum number of hours per week. Advanced study refers to a diversification of learning activities, and it applies only in 'catch up' cases for pupils who cannot attain the minimum level of competences and contents provided for in the curricula of previous years. Extensions are addressed to pupils who show an interest in studying a subject more in depth and pursue the additional competences and contents proposed in the curriculum. Optional subjects are subjects other than those set in the framework plan of a grade (year of study) and they involve the use of curricula with new specific competences and new learning contents, different from those established in the compulsory curricula. Curricula for optional subjects can be developed locally, and they need to be endorsed by a specialist inspector from the County/Bucharest School Inspectorate, or they can be taken from the central offer for school-based curriculum approved by Order of the Education Minister. The central offer for school-based curriculum promotes examples of good practice, curricula piloted nationally through various national and international educational programmes.



The National Curriculum for *gimnaziu* education (grades 5-8) is structured in seven curricular areas (delimited based on epistemological and psychopedagogical principles and criteria): 1. Language and Communication, 2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 3. People and Society, 4. Arts, 5. Physical Education and Sports, 6. Technologies, 7. Counselling and Guidance. Optional subjects and activities can be organised within any of these curricular areas.

The framework plans for *gimnaziu* (grades 5-8), approved by Order of the Education Minister 3638/2001, include the subjects, organised in curricular areas, and the hours per week allocated to each subject presented in the table below:

Curricular area/ Subject	Grade			
	5	6	7	8
<b>1. Language and Communication</b>	<b>9-10</b>	<b>8-9</b>	<b>8-9</b>	<b>9-10</b>
Romanian Language and Literature	5	4	4	4
Foreign Language 1	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Foreign Language 2	2	2	2	2
Latin	-	-	-	1
<b>2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9-10</b>
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Physics	-	2	2	2
Chemistry	-	-	2	2
Biology	1-2	2	2	1-2
<b>3. People and Society</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>4-5</b>	<b>6-7</b>
Civic Culture	0-1	0-1	1-2	1-2
History	1-2	1-2	1-2	2
Geography	1-2	1-2	1-2	2
Religion	1	1	1	1
<b>4. Arts</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>1-2</b>
Plastic Education	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
Musical Education	1-2	1-2	1-2	
<b>5. Physical Education and Sports</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>6. Technologies</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>
Technological Education	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
<b>7. Counselling and Guidance</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total number of hours per week for the core curriculum</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Optional subjects</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>1-2</b>
<b>Minimum number of hours per week</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Maximum number of hours per week</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

When the language of instruction is Romanian, pupils belonging to national minorities can study, upon request, their mother tongue (language and literature) as part of the core curriculum. The number of hours allocated to this subject is 3-4 hours/week in every year of study and they are part of the core curriculum.

When instruction is delivered in one of the national minority languages, the framework plan also provides for the study of the following subjects: Romanian language and literature – 5 hours per week in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 4 hours for week in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades; mother tongue language and literature – with a number of hours equal to that for Romanian language and literature set in the general framework plan; history and traditions of minorities – 1 hour per week, in grades 6 and 7. For education in one of the national minority languages, it is the school that decides if pupils study or not a second foreign language, and in case they do, 2 hours per week can be allocated to the second foreign language.

For pupils with aptitudes – in schools offering an additional or integrated (arts or sports) programme – additional hours are allocated to specific instruction in that particular curricular area (Physical Education and Sports, or Arts). There are more hours per week for this type of programmes than for the ordinary programme because they are aimed at a high level of achievement.

For pupils with disabilities, depending on the type and degree of disability, schools can apply either the mainstream curriculum, with additional hours allocated to specific compensatory therapies, psychological diagnosis, social education etc., or a special curriculum, also approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports which includes both framework plans, curricula and textbooks, and auxiliary materials developed according to the type and degree of disability.

In *gimnaziu* education, only textbooks and auxiliary materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports can be used in the classroom. For most of the subjects, there are three alternative textbooks, approved for each grade. Based on the characteristics of their classes, teachers choose the textbook for their subject at the beginning of the school year. Teachers also enjoy the freedom, and responsibility, to decide on the teaching-learning-assessment methods they are going to use with their pupils, considering the structure of the class, the teaching materials available in their school and following the methodological guidance provided for in the National Curriculum and specialist publications.

#### **4.1.1.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

Pupils' assessment has to be performed on a regular basis for all subjects (compulsory and optional) during the semesters by the teachers working with the class. Each semester includes periods dedicated to the consolidation and assessment of the competences acquired by pupils (formative and summative assessments) established by the teachers working with the class. For some subjects that are part of the common core curriculum and are established yearly through Order of Minister, pupils have to undertake a semester summative written paper covering all the content taught during the semester. The semester consolidation and assessment periods are usually established towards the end of the semester.

Assessment methods and instruments are established by teachers according to the psychological particularities of their pupils and taking the specificity of the subject into consideration. These can include oral questioning, written papers, practical activities, reports and projects, interviews, portfolios, as well as other instruments developed by the school's chairs/departments and approved by the head of school, or developed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the County School Inspectorates.

In secondary education, the assessment of pupils' performance at each subject is materialised in marks on a 10-level scale (from 1 to 10), corresponding roughly to the following achievement levels: 1.00 to 4.00 – 'insufficient'; 5.00 to 6.99 – 'sufficient'; 7.00 to 8.99 – 'good' and 9.00 to 10 – 'very good'.

The teachers have the obligation to immediately register the marks in the class book and in the pupil personal books under the corresponding subject and mentioning the date.



The official results of the pupils throughout the schooling are recorded in the class books and in the school register – official documents that are permanently archived by the school or, later on, by the State's Archives.

At the end of each semester and at the end of the school year, teachers have the obligation to conclude the academic situation of each pupil for each subject (compulsory or optional). Conclusion of the academic situation consists of calculating and registering in the school records the final average mark for each subject (rounded-up for the semester final average mark). The mark obtained at the semester summative written paper counts for 25 % of the semester final average mark for a particular subject. The semester final average mark is considered 'legally constituted' if it is calculated based on the minimum number of marks set by the Rules for the Organization and Operation of Schools.

Final marks for behaviour that are below 7 have to be decided by the Teachers' Council of the school. In secondary education, at the end of each year, an official ceremony is organized where the class teachers (tutors) award distinctions to the three pupils of each class that have obtained the highest overall final average marks during the school year and 10 for behaviour.

In secondary education, pupils can progress from one grade to the next one – within the same education level/cycle – if for each subject studied in the school year they obtained a final average mark of at least 5.00 and at least 6.00 for behaviour.

By the end of the first semester and of the school year, every school has the obligation to report the statistical situation of pupils – both to the County School Inspectorate and to the county office of the National Institute of Statistics. The head teacher has to present and analyse the statistical situation of pupils in his/her semester/annual report. The statistical situations are centralised by the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and become part of the Statistical Yearbook and of the annual evaluation report of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

All students who complete *gimnaziu* receive upon request the certificate of completion and the school record (*foaia matricolă*). The school record is issued by the school and lists all the subjects studied during grades 5 – 8, with the corresponding school year final average marks and the overall school year final average marks for each grade. For the pupils that do not continue their studies in the same institution, the school has the responsibility to send the school record to the school where the pupil will move.

#### 4.1.1.5 Guidance and counselling

At secondary level, the educational/vocational guidance is ensured through the National Curriculum and delivered by the class teacher, together with pupils' parents and the school counsellor. The National Curriculum includes the curricular area Counselling and Guidance. The curriculum frameworks allocate one hour per week to this curricular area, for all phases at secondary level (*gimnaziu*, *liceu*, arts and trades school, additional year).

For this curricular area there is also a central offer with curricula approved by an order of the minister of education which establish for each phase (*gimnaziu*, *liceu*, arts and trades school, additional year) the educational objectives and contents, providing at the same time methodological suggestions which guide the activity of teachers in order to reach the objectives/ to develop the specific skills in this particular curricular area.

The County School Inspectorates organise a 5-day fair known as 'The Fair of Your Chances' every year. The schools display all the information on their current educational offer (enrolment quota, specialisation of studies, school-based curriculum, etc.) as well as on the quality of the education they provide (educational conditions, resources, internal and external efficiency, relationships established with

industry, etc.). School management teams and class teachers facilitate and organize visits for their pupils to the fair in support of their educational guidance.

#### 4.1.1.6 Teachers and trainers

The teaching positions in school education are established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997). Therefore, the teaching positions in *gimnaziu* education are *profesor* (teacher), *profesor-psihopedagog* (psychopedagogue teacher), *profesor-pedagog social* (social pedagogue teacher), and *maistru-instructor* (foreman instructor).

The minimum requirements of initial education and training for:

- teacher (*profesor*) in middle school education: a first degree (*absolvirea cu examen de licență*) from or graduation of a higher education institution or a pedagogical college in the profile of the post, or a diploma of postgraduate studies with a duration of at least one year and a half and approved for this purpose by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports – advanced studies, academic postgraduate studies, postgraduate specialisation studies, in the profile of the post, as well as the completion of courses organised by a Teacher Training Department;
- foreman instructor (*maistru-instructor*): graduation with a diploma examination from a post-secondary school (*școala postliceală*) which provides education in this area, as well as a traineeship with a duration of at least 3 years in the area; this position also requires the completion of courses organised by a Teacher Training Department.

Based on the field of studies and area of specialisation, teachers in secondary education are qualified to teach a single subject (most of them) or a maximum of two subjects (specific to graduates of short higher education).

In higher education institutions, training is delivered in specific activities organised by the Teacher Training Department of the institution. According to the Education Law (Law 84/1995 republished, with its subsequent amendments), the curriculum for teacher training is integrated with the general curriculum of faculties (a parallel or a concurrent training model) and teacher training is offered as an optional programme. Teacher training becomes compulsory for those students who decide to take the specific activities (a 'contract' is concluded between students and the Teacher Training Department).

The curriculum for teacher training provided by the Teacher Training Departments is established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

The selection, recruitment and employment process of *gimnaziu* and high school/vocational teachers (*profesori*) is similar to that described in section 3.6.

#### 4.1.2 Liceu – Second phase of lower secondary education

*Liceu* (high school) is the educational institution that offers to all pupils who completed *gimnaziu* and have a completion certificate the possibility to specialise in various theoretical fields and to prepare for the labour market and/or to continue their studies at the subsequent education levels – post-secondary non-tertiary education or tertiary education. High school education is organised in three paths:

- the general path with two educational profiles: humanities and sciences;
- the technological path with three educational profiles: technical, services, and exploitation of the natural resources and environment protection;

- the aptitude-based path with five educational profiles: military, public security, theological, sports, arts and pedagogical.

The general path is usually organised in theoretical high schools and is mainly meant to ensure preparation for higher education. The technological is organised in technological high schools with one or more profiles and several specialisations and it offers to those who complete compulsory education the possibility to obtain a Level 3 Qualification and to prepare for higher or post-secondary education at the same time.

#### 4.1.2.1 Admission

Pupils who complete *gimnaziu* are admitted to *liceu* – lower cycle (grades 9 and 10) – based on a selection and distribution procedure established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Pupils who complete *gimnaziu* can meet their obligation to attend compulsory education by continuing their education in the second phase of lower secondary education according to their options and following a selection and distribution procedure. The selection criterion used for this procedure is the 'admission average mark'.

In vocational and technical education and in the technological path of high school education (*liceu*), the admission of students who completed the first three years of secondary education (*gimnaziu*) complies with the methodological provisions of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, which are valid for the entire high school education sector – for example, the Methodology for organising and carrying out admission in public high school and vocational education in the 2009/10 school year, Annex 1 to the Order of the Education, Research and Youth Minister 5166/29.08.2008 on the approval of the methodology for organising and carrying out admission and the timetable of the admission in public high school and vocational education in the 2009/10 school year (<http://www.admitere.edu.ro/2009/>). According to these documents, the criterion at the basis of the admission to vocational and technical high school education is the admission average mark which is calculated based on the general average mark for grades 5-8, weighing 50 %, and the general average mark in the single topic theses (or the final examination, for pupils who completed *gimnaziu* education until 2003 inclusively, or the national tests for the classes who completed *gimnaziu* education in the period 2004-2007), weighing 50 %. Pupils' admission is computer-based, and takes place in the decreasing order of their admission average marks, based on the applicant's option for a path, profile, specialisation or field of study, within the limit of available places, approved in the school inclusion plan.

The number of available places in vocational and technical education is established following an analysis and consultation process at regional and local level – the Regional Action Plan for Education, the Local Action Plan for Education – which results in proposals from the County School Inspectorates, subsequently included in the legal provisions referring to the school inclusion plan.

#### 4.1.2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

For lower secondary education – the lower cycle of *liceu*, the general and aptitude-based paths, see section 4.1.1.2

For vocational and technical education, the structure of the 2009/10 school year has 2 semesters, totalling between 36 weeks (178 working days) and 39 weeks (193 working days), which means between 1 050 and 1 170 course hours per year. Classroom activities take place 5 days a week. The duration of a course hour is 50 minutes, and the number of hours per week varies between 29 and 30 (see Order of the Education, Research and Innovation Minister 3411/16.03.2009).

In compliance with the legal provisions in force, the size of a class is between 10 and 30 pupils. In the 2008/09 school year, as shown in the document *Raport asupra stării sistemului național de învățământ* (Report on the State of the National Education System), Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, Bucharest, 2009, in high school and vocational education, both in urban and rural areas, a teacher taught on average 15 pupils.

#### **4.1.2.3 National Curriculum for the lower cycle of *liceu***

The lower cycle of high school (*liceu*, grades 9-10) is part of lower secondary education and, along with the school of arts and trades, is one of the two educational alternative routes for completing compulsory education. Unlike *gimnaziu* education, that has a single educational path, the lower cycle of high school is organised in three paths (general, aptitude-based, technological), each of these paths having different profiles and specialisations/training fields.

The curricular offer for the lower cycle of high school – including framework plans, curricula and textbooks – is made up of three components: core curriculum, differentiated curriculum and school-based curriculum – for the general and aptitude-based paths, and locally developed curriculum – for the technological path respectively. The core curriculum and the differentiated curriculum form the central offer, while the school-based curriculum and the locally developed curriculum respectively make the educational offer established at school level.

The framework plans for the lower cycle of high school group the school subjects in 7 curricular areas established in the National Curriculum: Language and Communication, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, People and Society, Arts, Physical Education and Sports, Technologies, and Counselling and Guidance. This ensures continuity between the framework plans for grades 1-8 and those for grades 9-10.

The framework plans for the lower cycle of high school make sure, through the structure of the core curriculum, that all students – irrespective of path, profile, specialisation/training field – study a core group of subjects which includes, both in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Romanian language and literature, foreign language 1, foreign language 2, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, religion, physical education, TIC, to which logics, argumentation and communication are added only in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and psychology and entrepreneurship education only in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. For the study of these subjects a total number of 19 hours/week is allocated. For subjects belonging to the core curriculum, the same curricula are applied to all paths, profiles and specialisations in the lower cycle of high school. The core curriculum ensures therefore the premises for equal opportunities for all students in grades 9 -10 of high school education.

When the language of instruction is Romanian, students belonging to national minorities can study, upon request, their mother tongue (language and literature), with the same number of hours and the same position in the framework plan as for the subject Romanian language and literature.

When instruction is delivered in one of the national minority languages, the framework plan of the path, profile and specialisation/training field also includes, in the curricular area Language and Communication, the subject mother tongue language and literature, with the same number of hours and the same position as for the subject Romanian language and literature.

In the 2009/10 school year, new framework plans are applied in the lower cycle of high school.

For the general and aptitude-based paths, according to the Order of the Education Minister 3410/2009, the core curriculum (CC) and the differentiated curriculum (DC) include the number of hours allocated to all compulsory subjects for an area of specialisation.

In the 2009/10 school year, new curricula are applied only to subjects where the number of hours provided for in the new framework plans is different from the previous school year. The general

competences, the specific competences and contents associated with them, as well as the values and attitudes pursued in the lower cycle of high school are set out in the curricula. The general competences are defined for each subject; they are very general and complex, and guide learning towards students' final acquisitions. The specific competences correlated with content units are built throughout a year of study and they derive from general competences, being steps in their development. The learning contents are means for the development of competences; the content units are presented in a non-obligatory order. In the curriculum design endeavour, the concept of competence is given the meaning of 'organiser', and in relation with it learning goals are established, specific contents are selected and teaching-learning-assessment strategies are organised. The values and attitudes are presented in an explicit list and their role is to emphasise the affective-attitudinal and moral dimension of learning, from the perspective of the specific contribution of subjects to the achievement of education goals. Curricula also include methodological suggestions; their role is to guide learning design and teaching-learning-assessment activities in accordance with the particularities of a class of students.

The structure of the local curricular offer, found in the school-based curriculum, is set based on a consultation with parents, students and other educational partners, with the condition that they are approved by the teachers' council and the administration council of each school. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, the lower cycle of high school, the school-based curriculum may include one – maximum two of the following types of optional subjects: advanced study optional subject – derived from any of the subjects in the core curriculum and/or the differentiated curriculum, aimed at a more in depth study of the specific competences of that particular subject through new content units other than those set out in the curriculum for the specialisation in question; extension optional subject – derived from any of the subjects in the core curriculum and/or in the differentiated curriculum, aimed at the extension of the general competences of that particular subject through new specific competences and new contents, correlated with those in the central offer of the specialisation in question; new optional subject – which introduces a new object of study in a particular curricular area, other than those in the central offer of the specialisation, and develops new specific competences and new contents, other than those set out in the curricula for subjects included in the framework plan; integrated optional subject – which introduces a new subject as an object of study, structured around an integrating theme for one or more curricular areas, and develops new specific competences – complex, integrative – and new contents – interdisciplinary.

Curricula for optional subjects can be developed locally, and in this case they need to be endorsed by a specialist inspector from the County/Bucharest School Inspectorate, or they can be taken from the central offer for school-based curriculum approved by Order of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The central offer for school-based curriculum promotes examples of good practice, curricula piloted nationally through various national and international educational programmes.

In the lower cycle of high school, the central curriculum offer may include the intensive study of computer science or the study of a foreign language in classes with intensive or bilingual programme, if the school has the necessary human and material resources.

In the lower cycle of high school, only textbooks and auxiliary materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports can be used in the classroom. For most of the subjects, there are three or more alternative textbooks, approved for each grade. Based on the characteristics of their classes, teachers choose the textbook for their subject at the beginning of the school year. Teachers also enjoy the freedom, and responsibility, to decide on the teaching-learning-assessment methods they are going to use with their students, considering the structure of the class, the teaching materials available in their school and following the methodological guidance provided for in the National Curriculum and specialist publications.

The curriculum for the technological path, the lower cycle of high school, as part of the National Curriculum, has several specific characteristics such as:

- the structure of the framework plans has the following components: core curriculum (CC), differentiated curriculum (DC), locally developed curriculum (LDC); the core curriculum contributes, through the subjects included in its structure and the number of hours for each subject, to students' basic education provided by compulsory education; the differentiated curriculum and the locally developed curriculum contribute, through the modules included in their structure and the number of hours for each module, to students' vocational qualification, Level 2, as specified in the *Extraordinary Ordinance 40/2009*;
- the curriculum design for subjects in the core curriculum (CC) is guided by curriculum design principles specific to the National Curriculum;
- the curriculum design for modules in the differentiated curriculum (DC) and locally developed curriculum (LDC) is guided by vocational training standards defined in compliance with Levels 1 and 2 of vocational qualification;
- the vocational training standards are based on competence units and their structure has the following components: the name of the competence unit, level of qualification, number of credits, competences/learning results, performance criteria, details with regard to the application of performance criteria, assessments;
- the locally developed curriculum is an educational offer specific to each school, which includes the number of hours indicated in the framework plans, an offer created in partnership with businesses, that ensures a framework for a type of instruction able to develop, in the technological context provided by local businesses, all specific technical competences described in the vocational training standards.

For the lower cycle of high school, the technological path, from the 2009/10 school year the framework plans approved by Orders of the Education Minister 3411/2009 and 3412/2009 are applied. New elements brought by these documents refer both to the structure of the framework plans and the components of the structure. Therefore, for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, the component school-based curriculum (SBC) is replaced by locally developed curriculum (LDC), ensuring in this way a structural unification of all framework plans for vocational and technical education. The changes in the components of this structure refer to the number of hours for subjects/modules and the subjects and modules included in each of the CC and DC components.

The modules of the differentiated curriculum reflect the particularities of the three vocational training profiles and their training fields:

- the technical profile includes the following fields: mechanics, electric, energetic, electronic and electro-technical, automation, constructions and public works, telecommunications, textiles-leather, transport;
- the services profile includes the following fields: tourism and nutrition, commerce, human body aesthetics and hygiene;
- the natural resources and environment protection profile includes the following fields: food industry, industrial chemistry, agriculture, stockbreeding, environment protection.

Within the technological path, throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, the key competence units (KCU) play a major role. They are intended to guide students' training towards acquisitions of transferable learning, important both for their social integration and the labour market. The key competence units are defined



in accordance with the European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and are found in the structure of all Level 2 vocational qualifications provided in vocational and technical education.

The key competence units are present in the vocational and technical curriculum as follows:

1. directly, for a key competence unit in the structure of a vocational training standard (VTS) there is a corresponding subject in the structure of the curricular offer – for example, for the key competence units *communication in a foreign language*, *computer use and information processing*, *personal development for high achievement* we find the following corresponding subjects in the curriculum for vocational and technical education: *foreign language*, *ICT*, *aptitude-based guidance and counselling*;
2. indirectly, in combination with general technical competence units (GTU) or specialised competence units (SCU) from the VTS structure, the curriculum modules making them specific to every vocational qualification – for example, the key competence units *teamwork*, *literacy and numeracy*, *work hygiene and security* are specifically concretised in vocational training standards and curriculum modules of the central offer, specific to different vocational qualifications in vocational and technical education;
3. indirectly, in combination with general technical competence units (GTU) or specialised competence units (SCU) from the VTS structure, where the curricular offer specific to each school and developed in partnership with businesses – locally developed curriculum (LDC) – concretises with priority and specifically key competence units – for example, the key competence units *problem solving* and *satisfying the client's demands* are considered for a priority particularisation in the LDC;
4. directly, in the practical applications specific to different vocational qualifications in vocational and technical education, designed to be conducted with coordination from businesses – for example, the key competence units *organization of the workplace*, *preparation for integration in the workplace*, and *transition from school to work*.

#### 4.1.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification

Assessment of students in lower secondary education – the lower cycle of high school is the same as assessment in *gimnaziu* (4.1.1.4).

At the end of the first two years of high school, there is no final examination; pupils receive a completion certificate (*certificat de absolvire*) and a personal portfolio for lifelong learning. Depending on the results obtained during the first cycle, pupils may choose to continue their studies in the upper cycle of high school, according to the admission methodology approved by an Order of Minister.

#### 4.1.2.5 Guidance and counselling

See section 4.1.1.5.

#### 4.1.2.6 Teachers and trainers

The teaching positions in school education are established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997). Therefore, the teaching positions in high school education are *profesor* (teacher), *profesor-psihopedagog* (psychopedagogue teacher), *profesor-pedagog social* (social pedagogue teacher), and *maistru-instructor* (foreman instructor).

The minimum requirements of initial education and training for:

- teacher (*profesor*) in high school education: a first degree (*absolvirea cu examen de licență*) from a higher education institution or an equivalent institution, in the profile of the post, or a diploma of postgraduate studies with a duration of at least one year and a half and approved for this purpose by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports – advanced studies, academic postgraduate studies, postgraduate specialisation studies, in the profile of the post, as well as the completion of courses organised by a Teacher Training Department;
- foreman instructor (*maistru-instructor*) – see section 4.1.1.6.

The selection, recruitment and employment process of teachers in *gimnaziu* and *liceu* education is similar to that described in section 3.6.

## 4.2 Upper secondary education

Upper secondary education (the upper cycle of high school) offers to all pupils who completed the second phase of the lower secondary level (lower cycle of high school or arts and trades school) the possibility to specialise in various theoretical, vocational and aptitude-based domains in order to prepare for the labour market and/or to continue their education at subsequent education levels. The pupils who attended an arts and trades school, in order to participate in upper secondary education (upper cycle of high school) have to attend an additional year and obtain the Level 2 Certificate of vocational skills.

Regarding the specialisation of studies, the structure of the upper secondary education is:

- the upper cycle of *liceu* (high school) with three paths – general, technological and aptitude-based (military, theological, sports, arts and pedagogical) – further divided into educational profiles and specializations; it includes grades 11 and 12, for pupils aged 16-18 who completed the lower cycle of high school;
- the additional year is organised based on the vocational qualifications that are provided, only for pupils who completed lower secondary education at a school of arts and trades and want to continue their education in the upper cycle of high school and/or to obtain a Level 2 Certificate of Vocational Qualification. (This is being wound up as from the 2009/10 school year.)

### 4.2.1 Admission

Only pupils who completed the lower cycle of high school, or a school of arts and trades with a Level 2 Qualification Certificate are admitted to the upper cycle of high school (grades 11-12/13) based on a selection and distribution procedure established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The upper cycle of high school has the same paths, profiles and specialisations as the lower cycle of high school.

Transition to *liceu* – upper cycle (grades 11 to 12/13) depends on the previous educational route and on the competences acquired during compulsory education. Access of pupils who completed *liceu* – lower cycle to the different paths, profiles and specialisations provided in *liceu* – upper cycle is based on a methodology developed by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Pupils who completed an arts and trades school (*școala de arte și meserii*) holding a Level 1 Vocational Qualification Certificate have to attend the additional year in order to obtain a higher vocational qualification and to continue their studies in *liceu* – upper cycle. The additional year ensures both further development of the vocational competences and completion of the general competences up to the level of curricular standards established for the lower cycle of high school.



## 4.2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

See section 4.1.2.2.

## 4.2.3. National Curriculum for the upper cycle of *liceu*

The upper cycle of high school (grades 9-12/13) covers upper secondary education entirely and is a form of post-compulsory education. The upper cycle of high school is organised in three paths: general, aptitude-based and technological; the general and aptitude-based paths have different profiles and specialisations, while the technological path is organised based on vocational qualifications.

The curricular offer for the upper cycle of high school – including framework plans, curricula and textbooks – has three components: core curriculum, differentiated curriculum and the school-based curriculum – for the general and aptitude-based paths, and the locally developed curriculum – for the technological path, respectively. The three components are highly dependent on the path, profile and specialisation/vocational qualification. Their essential characteristic is the reduction in the weight of the central educational offer (represented by the core curriculum and the differentiated curriculum) and an increase in the weight of the school-based curriculum/locally developed curriculum. This ensures the premises for students' co-participation in the establishment of their own training route and for more responsibility from schools in the management of the curricular offer, in relation with locally identified educational needs.

When the language of instruction is Romanian, students belonging to national minorities can study, upon request, their mother tongue (language and literature), with the same number of hours and the same position in the framework plan as for the subject Romanian language and literature.

When instruction is delivered in one of the national minority languages, the framework plan of the path, profile and specialisation/training field also includes, in the curricular area Language and Communication, the subject mother tongue language and literature, with the same number of hours and the same position as for the subject Romanian language and literature.

In the 2009/10 school year, new framework plans are applied in the upper cycle of high school.

For the general and aptitude-based paths, according to the Order of the Education Minister 3410/2009, the core curriculum (CC) and the differentiated curriculum (DC) include the number of hours allocated to all compulsory subjects for an area of specialisation. The core curriculum is established centrally and includes subjects, and their corresponding number of hours, that are common to all specialisations within a profile. The core curriculum is aimed at the further development of some key competences – acquired during compulsory education and relevant to students' training route –, as well as the development of some specific competences, common to all the specialisations of a profile. The differentiated curriculum is established centrally and includes subjects, and their corresponding number of hours, that are specific to every specialisation within a profile. The differentiated curriculum is mainly aimed at the development of specific competences necessary for an area of specialisation. Students thus benefit from the basics of diversified training, useful to the continuation of their studies and their social and professional integration later on.

The general competences, the specific competences and contents associated with them, as well as the values and attitudes pursued in the curriculum for the upper cycle of high school are set out in the curricula. The general competences are defined for each subject; they are very general and complex, and guide learning towards students' final acquisitions. The specific competences correlated with content units are built throughout a year of study and they derive from general competences, being steps in their development. The learning contents are means for the development of competences; the content units are presented in a non-obligatory order. In the curriculum design endeavour, the concept of competence

is given the meaning of 'organiser', and in relation with it learning goals are established, specific contents are selected and teaching-learning-assessment strategies are organised. The values and attitudes are presented in an explicit list and their role is to emphasise the affective-attitudinal and moral dimension of learning, from the perspective of the specific contribution of subjects to the achievement of education goals. Curricula also include methodological suggestions; their role is to guide learning design and teaching-learning-assessment activities in accordance with the particularities of a class of students.

The structure of the local curricular offer, found in the school-based curriculum, is set based on a consultation with parents, students and other educational partners, with the condition that they are approved by the teachers' council and the administration council of each school. The school-based curriculum may include the following types of optional subjects: advanced study optional subject – derived from any of the subjects in the core curriculum and/or the differentiated curriculum, aimed at a more in depth study of the specific competences of that particular subject through new content units other than those set out in the curriculum for the specialisation in question; extension optional subject – derived from any of the subjects in the core curriculum and/or in the differentiated curriculum, aimed at the extension of the general competences of that particular subject through new specific competences and new contents, correlated with those in the central offer of the specialisation in question; new optional subject – which introduces a new object of study in a particular curricular area, other than those in the central offer of the specialisation, and develops new specific competences and new contents, other than those set out in the curricula for subjects included in the framework plan; integrated optional subject – which introduces a new subject as an object of study, structured around an integrating theme for one or more curricular areas, and develops new specific competences – complex, integrative – and new contents – interdisciplinary.

Curricula for optional subjects can be developed locally, and in this case they need to be endorsed by a specialist inspector from the County/Bucharest School Inspectorate, or they can be taken from the central offer for school-based curriculum approved by Order of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The central offer for school-based curriculum promotes examples of good practice, curricula piloted nationally through various national and international educational programmes.

In the upper cycle of high school, the central curriculum offer may include the intensive study of computer science or the study of a foreign language in classes with intensive or bilingual programme, if the school has the necessary human and material resources.

In the upper cycle of high school, only textbooks and auxiliary materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports can be used in the classroom. For most of the subjects, there are three or more alternative textbooks, approved for each year of study. Based on the characteristics of their classes, teachers choose the textbook for their subject at the beginning of the school year. Teachers also enjoy the freedom, and responsibility, to decide on the teaching-learning-assessment methods they are going to use with their students, considering the structure of the class, the teaching materials available in their school and following the methodological guidance provided for in the National Curriculum and specialist publications.

For the technological path, the upper cycle of high school, the curriculum is also a part of the National Curriculum, and it is characterised by the same specific aspects as the curriculum for the lower cycle of high school, but the modules making up the differentiated curriculum are designed according to Level 3 vocational qualifications pursued at this stage of education. These vocational qualifications provided in school education are approved by a Government Decision following consultation with the social partners organised in Sector Committees. For the 2009/10 school year, the document regulating this aspect is Decision 866 of 13 August 2008 for changing the Government Decision 844/2002 on the approval of vocational qualification nomenclatures provided in school education, as well the duration of schooling.

In addition, in the upper cycle of high school, new framework plans are applied from the 2009/10 school year. They were approved by Orders of the Education Minister 3412/2009 and 3423/2009.

In compliance with the documents indicated above, the upper cycle of high school provides education and training for more than 30 different vocational qualifications.

At this level of education, the structure of vocational training standards also includes key competence units, appropriate for Level 3 of qualification, maintaining their role in guiding curriculum design so as to help students gain transferable learning acquisitions.

In vocational and technical education, the school of arts and trades (grades 9-10) is a part of lower secondary education and represents, like the lower cycle of high school, one of the two educational paths that students can take to complete compulsory education. This path is included in the progressive training route and is followed by the additional year (grade 11), which gives access to a Level 2 qualification certificate, this additional year being also a bridge to the next level of qualification, namely the upper cycle of high school (grades 12-13), which gives access to a Level 3 qualification certificate (ISCED 3).

The differentiated curriculum, which confers its specificity to the school of arts and trades, is designed in compliance with the vocational training standards for those fields in which the schools of arts and trades provide vocational training. Those fields are (according to Government Decision 866 of 13 August 2008 amending Government Decision 844/2002 on the approval of vocational qualification nomenclatures provided in school education, as well the duration of schooling): mechanics, electrical mechanics, electronics, automations, industrial chemistry, building materials, agriculture, forestry, commerce, tourism and nutrition, food industry, manufacturing of wood products, textile and leather industry, printing techniques, aesthetics and hygiene of the human body.

The structure of the modules making the curriculum derived from vocational training standards, for the school of arts and trades as well as for all vocational and training education, consists of:

- competences corresponding to the competence unit(s) from the Vocational Training Standard;
- contents and learning contexts corresponding to competences as learning results;
- suggestions and recommendations for the learning-teaching-assessment process (inclusively for students with special educational needs);
- examples of assessments.

For the additional year (grade 11), the differentiated curriculum is designed in accordance with the vocational training standards corresponding to those vocational qualifications stipulated in the regulation document indicated above, namely Government Decision 866 of 13 August 2008. Therefore, the additional year provides training for around 100 different qualifications.

The curriculum for the upper cycle of high school (grades 12-13) in vocational and technical education is designed so as to ensure training for a Level 3 qualification certificate (Level 4 EQF, ISCED 3) in around 30 different vocational fields.

New framework plans have been applied in the entire progressive vocational training route from the 2009/10 school year. They are approved by Orders of the Education Minister 3412/2009, 3313/2009 and 3423/2009.

Horizontal mobility between the progressive vocational training route and high school education – the technological path is possible through recognition of competences formally acquired.

For all vocational and technical education, the curriculum design process at national level includes the following phases:

- development of Vocational Training Standards (VTSs) by the initiators, under the coordination of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education and based on identified vocational qualification needs;
- validation of Vocational Training Standards by Sector Committees;
- development of syllabuses, based on VTSs, by the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education in cooperation with the National Centre for Curriculum and Assessment in Vocational Education;
- development of the curriculum for the Technologies curricular area, under the coordination of the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education, based on validated VTSs;
- endorsement of the curriculum by national specialist commissions from the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports;
- approval of the curriculum by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

Moreover, at local level, the design process for the locally developed curriculum includes the following phases:

- identification of local vocational training needs;
- development of a Locally Developed Curriculum (LDC), based on the local specificity of the businesses that are school's partners;
- endorsement of LDC by: the school administration board, the representative of the Local Committee for Social Partnership Development;
- approval of LDC by the school inspectorates.

Also relevant to the curricular design process in vocational and technical education is that the regulation documents in force present the structure of the framework plans for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, both day and evening school, with the following components: core curriculum – CC, differentiated curriculum – DC, locally developed curriculum – LDC. CC and DC include the subjects/modules, and the number of hours for each, that are obligatorily studied in a basic training field. LDC includes the hours allocated to the curricular offer specific to each school and developed in partnership with businesses.

In 2009/10, a series of innovations, initiated in PHARE projects, have been promoted in relation with the vocational and technical curriculum, such as: ongoing review of qualifications provided for in vocational and technical education, ongoing review of vocational training standards and curriculum for a significant number of qualifications, development of learning materials appropriate for applied learning, effective application of information and communication technologies in the teaching-learning process, student-centred learning, the inclusion principle for students with special education needs.

#### **4.2.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

Assessment of students in upper secondary education – the upper cycle of high school is the same as assessment in *gimnaziu* (4.1.1.4).

High school education ends with a national examination (*examen de bacalaureat*), diversified according to the path, profile and specialisation, and the options of candidates. According to the provisions of the

Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently modified and completed), the *bacalaureat* examination is a national external examination.

In order to pass the *bacalaureat* examination, candidates have to obtain at least the mark 5 at each test and the final average mark has to be at least 6. Successful candidates receive diploma de *bacalaureat* issued by the school and listing the marks obtained at each test as well as the average final mark of the exam. Diploma de *bacalaureat* confers to the holder the right to continue their studies in higher education, according to the criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and higher education institutions. High school graduates that do not pass the national exam (*examenul de bacalaureat*) may receive upon request a certificate attesting that they have graduated (completed) the high school. This certificate confers to the holder the right to continue their studies in post-secondary non-tertiary education, according to the general admission criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the specific admission criteria established by educational institutions.

According to the regulation documents in force, the assessment and certification process in Romanian vocational and technical education is designed as an integral part of the initial education and vocational training process provided in school education. At the same time, assessment and certification in vocational and technical education are adequate both to school education goals and objectives (graduates of school education can either continue to tertiary education, or enter the labour market), and to lifelong learning objectives. In this context, at the basis of certification lies the demonstration of competences specified in vocational training standards.

An important aspect in relation with assessment in vocational and technical education is the assurance of coherence between current assessment and assessment for certification purposes by applying the principle of complementary goals and objectives for these two forms of assessment. Therefore, current assessment, continuous and internal, contributes to the development of vocational competences seen as learning results (key competences, general competence units, technical competence units and specialised competence units) in the Vocational Training Standard. This is done both in a school context, by teachers, and in a business environment (for practical training/traineeships) by teachers and tutors (specialists assigned by a business to guide and monitor practical training).

Assessment for certification purposes is done through examination at the end of a vocational training course and is conditioned by a demonstration, throughout training, of all competence units stipulated in the Vocational Training Standard. The document establishing the methodology for the certification examination is Methodology for the organisation of examinations for the vocational qualification certification of school vocational and technical education graduates, applied as from the 2008/09 school year, and approved by Order of the Education, Research and Youth Minister 5172/ 29.08.2008. This document stipulates that assessment for the certification at Levels 1, 2 and 3 of vocational qualification ends with the award of a Vocational Qualification Certificate. Assessment for certification includes a practical test and an oral test, complementary to the practical one, both tests being designed based on a national public list of topics. For Level 1 qualifications, topics come together with assessment forms containing criteria for assessing students' performances in compliance with the Vocational Training Standard. For Levels 2 and 3 qualifications, the assessment of students' projects and their oral presentations is based on a national assessment form. The structure of the project must include: (a) the title page with the following information: identification data for school, student, project mentor; year of graduation, vocational qualification in accordance with the current nomenclature of vocational qualifications provided in school education; (b) the contents; (c) the argument; (d) the project body; (e) references; (f) annexes.

Examination is conducted by mixed commissions, made of teachers and representatives of the businesses with which the schools concluded conventions for practical training.

The following categories of students have access to examinations for the certification of vocational qualification:

- students who completed and graduated from a school of arts and trades or an apprentice school, for Level 1 Vocational Qualification Certificate
- students who completed and graduated from a vocational school or an additional year, for Level 2 Vocational Qualification Certificate
- students who completed the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, full-time education (direct route), and the 13<sup>th</sup> grade, full-time education (progressive vocational training route), evening classes and part-time education, respectively, of the technological path of high school education.

Both graduates of the school of arts and trades, and those of the additional year and upper cycle of high school education – the technological path, are awarded, if they pass the vocational qualification examination, a Certificate of Vocational Qualification – Level 1, 2 or 3 respectively. Graduates also receive certificates attesting the completion of the school of arts and trades, the additional year or the upper cycle of high school education – the technological path, respectively, and a personal portfolio for lifelong learning which also indicates the competences acquired through the differentiated curriculum.

The organisation of examinations for the certification of vocational qualification is coordinated nationally by the National Commission for Assessment and Certification, which is set up every school year and operates under the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. Commissions for assessment and certification are also set up locally, while in the Examination Centres, examination commissions are established.

Vocational certification gives graduates access to opportunities in the labour market, but it cannot be used in higher education. There are still no vocational training routes and/or qualifications which begin in school education and continue in higher education.

Students in vocational and technical education also take national tests and examinations in subjects that are not part of the differentiated curriculum – for example, the *bacalaureat* examination – and so they gain access to higher education according to the admission conditions specific to this level of education.

Quality assurance in the process of examination for certification is ensured through the participation of a representative – a person outside the examination centre – appointed by the County Centre for Assessment and Certification, who has the role of a quality monitor and observes and evaluates how the examination for the certification of vocational qualification is organised and takes place.

#### **4.2.5 Guidance and counselling**

For the upper cycle of high school – the general and aptitude-based paths – see section 4.1.1.5.

Student guidance and counselling in vocational and technical education is ensured through:

- the subject *Vocational Guidance and Counselling*, for the technological path, grades 11 and 12 – direct qualification route, and grades 12 and 13 – progressive qualification route, with a curriculum approved by Order of the Minister 3488/23.03.2006;
- offices for psychological and pedagogical assistance, organised within schools with more than 800 students and subordinated to the County Centres of Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance (Schools with less than 800 students access psychological and pedagogical assistance services provided by other schools.);
- county centres of educational assistance and resources, organised in each county;



- class teachers' activity, guided by the regulations in force, in relation with parents and representatives of education institutions and local businesses;
- students' practical training, conducted in partnership with local businesses, where a major role is played by tutors and students' direct relation with employees.

#### 4.2.6 Teachers and trainers

For teachers in high school education – the upper cycle of high school – see section 4.1.2.6.

For vocational and technical education, teachers are trained in compliance with the regulations for initial and in-service teacher training in force, which are applied to all school education. In the teaching practice, specific roles are assigned to those teachers who coordinate students' practical activity in the framework of a partnership with businesses. Among these teachers, instructor foremen are a category specific to vocational and technical education with specific training centres and methodological guidance for their in-service training, although there is no occupational standard for this teaching position.

At present, initial teacher training for secondary education teachers is provided by specialist structures functioning in universities (Teacher Training Departments). In this context, the development of teaching competences is modular, through theoretical and practical training throughout the academic years of study, and is based on a parallel (concurrent) model. The completion of teacher training is attested through a certificate issued by the higher education institution. Alternatively, higher education graduates who choose a teaching career can attend the courses provided by the Teacher Training Departments after they get a teaching position. In this way, initial teacher training takes place in parallel with scientific specialist training throughout the years of study at university. Analyses of the teacher training system suggest that this type of training provision generates malfunctions along with a series of positive effects. These malfunctions refer to: lack of a precise motivation for a teaching career, a marginal position of psychological, pedagogical and methodological subjects in the general academic programme compared to specialist subjects, fragmentation of psychological and pedagogical training across several years of study, inefficiency of pedagogical practice. At present, the content of initial teacher training for vocational and technical education does not include specific elements related to their specific roles within this system.

In the 2009/10 school year, new regulations appeared – for example, the Order of Minister 5720/2009 approving the *Methodology for In-Service School Teacher Training* – and they provide some innovating elements for teacher training pertaining to such aspects as:

- delimitations of terms and concepts (*initial education and training – a continuous and cumulative process in which teachers acquire and develop their competences, and which is based on the concept of lifelong learning; in-service training – a process in which teachers update and develop their competences, inclusively acquiring new competences based on evolutions in the education needs and educational curriculum, as well as the requirements for the adaptation of teachers' competences to changes in the education structures/processes; competences – integrative sets of knowledge, skills, motivations and attitudes which enable professional conduct and guarantee expert action in areas and contexts specific to the teaching profession*);
- the structure of the competence approach model (The competence system makes use of those categories and levels of competence used in the European Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education including: two basic categories of competences: a. professional competences – cognitive competences and



functional-action competences, b. transversal competences – role competences, and personal and professional development competences.);

- the institutions involved in the organisation of in-service training (a. Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports through its departments; b. National Centre for School Teacher Training; c. Institute of Education Sciences; d. National Centre for Curriculum and Assessment in School Education; e. National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education; f. accredited higher education institutions, centres for school teacher training; g. school inspectorates; h. centres of the teaching staff; i. schools – training centres authorised by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports; j. Children's National Palace, children's county palaces and children and student clubs; k. national sports federations; l. foundations, professional associations and nongovernmental organisations with activity in the area of training and professional development for school teaching and auxiliary staff; m. organisational/institutional structures authorised to implement international programmes in which Romania participates or internationally funded programmes where the beneficiary is the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports; n. other in-service training providers that are accredited under the law).

This model is coherent with the training offer in vocational and technical education, which is also centred on competences as learning results, specified in the Vocational Training Standards, however without any specific reference to teachers working in this system.

## 5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

Post-secondary non-tertiary education (*învăţământ postliceal*) is provided by post-secondary schools (*şcoala postliceală*) and by foremen schools (*şcoala de maiştri*).

Post secondary non-tertiary education consists of 1 to 3 years of study and is organised at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports or following the specific requests of companies and other interested institutions. Post secondary non-tertiary education may be attended only by high school graduates – holding or not a *Diploma de bacalaureat*.

The general legal framework for the organisation and functioning of school education, including secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, is established within the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently modified and completed). Implementation of the general provisions of the law is ensured through Government Decisions and Orders of the Minister of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and of other central public authorities.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education ensures training of specialised technicians and foremen (Level 3 of Advanced Qualification) to work within specific domains according to their qualification. The graduate of post-secondary non-tertiary education has to prove the following acquisitions expressed in terms of knowledge, execution and social competences:

- theoretical and practical knowledge in the speciality domain, operational in the deployment of a technological process or of an economic/social activity;
- entrepreneurial and legislative knowledge to allow management of a small/medium size enterprise or of a technological, economic, social or administrative process;
- basic ICT skills to facilitate administration and management of an enterprise or of a technological, economic, social or administrative process;
- communication skills in 1-2 foreign languages, applicable to the respective domain of activity.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education is usually organised by the education institutions which have technological high school classes – in the same or close profile and specialisations, in order to make a better use of the existing material basis (equipment, workshops, and other resources) and human resources and to improve financial efficiency.

According to the provisions of the Education Law, tuition fees are required for post-secondary non-tertiary education and are paid by the students and/or by companies, institutions, etc. requesting this type of education. Tuition fees are established by the educational institutions and have to cover all education and training related costs. The post-secondary non-tertiary education schools can also establish registration fees for covering admission related costs.

### 5.1 Admission

The enrolment quotas for all education levels in public education are established every year through a Government Decision, based on a proposal from the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. According to the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently modified and completed), the ministry's proposal is preceded by a multi-step fundamentation-consultation-projection process involving: local public authorities, the County School Inspectorates, the Local Development Committees for Social Partnership in VET, teachers' unions, and other players. In each county the exact allocation of places in public schools is established through Order of Minister, according to the provisions of the Government Decision which reflects the conclusions of the consultation process.

High school graduates holding or not a *diploma de bacalaureat* are admitted to post-secondary non-tertiary education (post-secondary schools and foremen schools) based on admission methodologies established by the educational institutions according to the general criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. In most cases, the admission of the candidates is based on an admission examination.

The admission requirements for the foremen school also include the additional condition of at least 3 years of work experience in a trade corresponding to the specialisation of studies. The admission methodology is established by the educational institutions, according to the general criteria set by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. In case that the number of candidates is over the number of available places or following the request of the business financing the schooling, the educational institution organises an admission examination. The content of the admission examination is established by the educational institution according to the specialisation of studies offered. In certain cases – if the specialisation requires specific skills, the admission examination may be preceded by an eliminatory aptitude test.

## 5.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

The organisation of the school year for post-secondary non tertiary education is determined by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports every year.

For the post-secondary non-tertiary education the number of classes per week depends on the specialisation and the duration of studies and is established in the curriculum that has to be approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

## 5.3 Curriculum

According to the legislation in force (Government Decision 867/2008), post-secondary non-tertiary education provides Level 3 Advanced Vocational Qualification for the following fields:

- post-secondary school (*școala postliceală*): mechanics; computer science; electronics and automatics; energy; buildings, installations and public works; transportation; manufacturing of wood products; forestry; agriculture; environment protection; services; commerce; tourism and nutrition; textiles and leather; media production; economics; aesthetics and hygiene; health and pedagogical assistance;
- foremen school (*școala de maiștri*): mechanics (9 vocational qualifications); electricity; chemistry; mines, petrol and gases; energy; metallurgy; building materials; buildings, installations and public works; manufacturing of wood products; transportation; textiles and leather; food industry; agriculture.

The curricular design for initial vocational training is based on the competence units of the Vocational Training Standard. The Vocational Training Standard ensures the correspondence between the training programme and the requirements of one or more occupational standards. The Vocational Training Standard presents the competence units of the specialisation (that can correspond to more than one occupational standard) and within each competence unit the competences to be developed through the vocational training process – structured in 'knowledge competences', 'execution competences' and 'social competences'. Vocational qualification is organised based on transferable credits and is provided as modular training for most specialisations. The two categories of competence units – key-competences and technical and vocational competences – have at this moment a variable number of credits according to the qualification level:

- Level 1 – 30 credits out of which 15 for key-competences and work experience and 15 for technical and vocational competences;

- Level 2 – 15 credits out of which 5 for key-competences and work experience and 10 for technical and vocational competences;
- Level 3 – 30 credits out of which 10 for key-competences and work experience and 20 for technical and vocational competences.

According to the conventional equivalence '1 credit = 60 hours of vocational education and training', the total number of hours established in the framework plan has to sum up for example a minimum of 1 800 certifiable hours for a Level 1 Vocational Qualification.

The curriculum for post-secondary non-tertiary education is also based on the Vocational Training Standard. Both the curriculum and the Vocational Training Standard for a particular specialisation are developed in cooperation by the educational institution, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the National Centre for TVET Development.

The Vocational Training Standard includes:

- the definition of the specialisation;
- the list of competence units specific to the specialisation;
- the description of the competences required by the specialisation, grouped for each competence units in knowledge competences, execution competences, and social competences;
- recommendations for the development of the curriculum and of the teaching aids: content units (organised by subjects and modules) horizontally and vertically correlated; types of contents;
- recommendations on the assessments, examinations and certification specific to the specialisation.

The curriculum for post-secondary non-tertiary education is developed in modules determined by the structure of the competence units. For each module performance criteria are developed – based on the competence units and specific competences. Performance criteria refer to the conditions (quality, quantity, duration, location, etc.) and the minimal achievement level of the competences acquired through the content.

## 5.4 Assessment, progression and certification

The general and specific rules regarding the assessment, grading and progression of students are established in the Rules for the Organization and Operation of Schools (Order of the Minister 4925/2005).

Post-secondary non-tertiary education ends with a graduation/completion examination regulated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The graduation examination is a mixed internal – external examination consisting of a practical examination, a written paper and a project preparation and presentation – all related to the specialisation of the studies. In order to pass the exam, candidates have to obtain at least the mark 6 at the practical examination and the project presentation respectively, and the mark 5 for the written paper; in addition, the final average mark of the exam has to be at least 6. Successful candidates receive a Level 3 Vocational Qualification Certificate specifying the mark obtained and listing the vocational competences acquired. The Level 3 Vocational Qualification obtained at the end of post-secondary school and foremen school is defined as 'specialist technician' and 'foreman' respectively (Government Decision 1246/2001). The certificate is issued by the school and confers to the holder the legal right to work in the endorsed trade on the labour market. For the students that do not

pass the exam, the school can issue upon request a certificate specifying the education level completed and the trade/specialisation, mentioning in clear 'without graduation examination'.

### **5.5 Guidance and counselling**

Similar to section 4.2.5.

### **5.6 Teachers and trainers**

Similar to section 4.2.6.

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

According to the Education Law (Law 84/1995, republished, subsequently amended and completed), universities and other higher education institutions are autonomous and have the right to establish and implement their own development policies, within the general provisions of the legislation in force. The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports coordinates the activity of universities and other higher education institutions, complying with their autonomy. Academic autonomy is correlated with the principle of personal and public accountability for the quality of the entire teaching and scientific research activity carried out by higher education institutions.

The national education system in Romania has an open character. At higher education level, the open character is ensured through the University Charter. The University Charter is adopted by the university senate and establishes the assembly of rights and obligations, as well as the norms that regulate the activity of the university community within each area. The academic autonomy covers the areas of management, structuring and functioning of higher education institutions, teaching and scientific research activities, administration and financing. In point of financing, academic autonomy is accomplished through the right to manage the funds from the state budget and other sources, according to the provisions of the law and personal accountability. Public higher education is financed from the state budget based on financing contracts signed between the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the higher education institutions. The entire material basis of higher education is the property of and administrated by the higher education institutions.

Higher education is provided by universities (*universități*), institutes (*institute*), academies of studies (*academii de studii*) and schools of postgraduate studies (*școli de studii postuniversitare*). The mission of higher education institutions is either education and research or only education.

Since 2005, the higher education system in Romania has been organised into three cycles: first degree (Bachelor) programmes, master programmes and PhD (doctorate) programmes compatible with the European qualification framework and laid out in Law 288 of 2004.

### 6.1 Admission

Admission to higher education in the 2009/10 academic year was in compliance with the Order 3331/04.03.2009 of the Minister of Education, Research and Innovation on the general criteria for the organisation of admission to higher education in the 2009/10 academic year. In compliance with this document, admission to higher education for every cycle of academic studies – first degree (bachelor), master, and doctorate – is organised based on the admission methodology of each university, with the observance of the legislation in force.

For all cycles of academic studies, the number of places funded from the state budget is set by a Government Decision. Every public higher education institution is allocated by an Order of Minister a number of places funded from the state budget for which they can organise admission. Besides these places, public higher education institutions are authorised to admit a number of students who accept to pay tuition fees (Law 441/2001). The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports approves each year the exact number of places at every higher education institution for which students pay a tuition fee based on the proposals of the university senates and in compliance with the academic standards for evaluation and accreditation. Tuition fees are established by the senates.

The applicants can apply for more specialisations or to several higher education institutions at the same time. But a successful applicant can attend only one specialisation funded from the state budget during the normal length of studies. Students from private accredited higher education institutions who are admitted for places funded from the state budget can benefit from the recognition of the studies they already completed in accordance with the provisions of the university senate and based on the

transferable credits they have acquired. This provision is also valid for students from public higher education if they are admitted by an accredited private higher education institution.

The graduates of a private accredited institution are entitled to pursue a second specialisation in a public higher education institution in compliance with the law and under the conditions established by the University Charter.

For admission to first degree programmes, as in the previous academic year, according to Law 288/2004 on the organisation of academic studies, subsequently amended and completed, the admission to public and private higher education is organised for fields of study. This category of studies is associated with a number of study credits varying between 180 and 240. Admission is organised in one or two sessions. The periods of the admission sessions, as well as the admission tests, are established in the methodologies of faculties and are made public. The admission tests can be conducted in the Romanian language or in one of the national minority languages if the subjects tested were studied in one of these languages in high school, and also in an international language for studies in that language, with an obligatory test in linguistic competence.

Those who can apply for admission to first degree programmes are high school graduates with a baccalaureate diploma or an equivalent diploma. For the applicants who during their high school studies got a distinction in national school olympiads and school competitions recognised by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports or in international competitions, higher education institutions can provide, in their methodologies and in compliance with the legislation in force, special admission requirements, other than enrolment without going through an admission competition, for places funded from the state budget and for the courses in two specialisations. An applicant can benefit from this provision only once, in compliance with the legislation in force.

For admission to master programmes, both graduates of a first degree programme (with a graduation diploma) and graduates of long academic studies (with a graduation diploma or an equivalent diploma) can apply. Therefore, the condition for admission to a master programme is a graduation diploma after the completion of a first degree programme. This category of studies is associated with a number of study credits varying between 90 and 120, but this number can also be as low as 60 depending on the duration of the first degree programme. For professions that are subject to European norms or good practices, the first cycle (first degree programmes) and the second cycle (master programmes) can be merged into a single programme of academic studies with a duration between 5 and 6 years of full-time education, and the diplomas for such programmes are equivalent to a master title.

Admission to master programmes is organised for those fields of study for which accredited higher education institutions organise first degree programmes, as well as for other fields established by an order of minister (Order 4666/03.08.2009 modifying the Order of the Education, Research and Youth Minister 3.628/2008 on the approval of master programmes evaluated by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). Master programmes are established by decisions of the senates of higher education institutions that have been evaluated with 'high reliability' by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. These senate decisions are subsequently sent to the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (according to Order 5056/2008 on the application of legal provisions referring to the establishment and organisation of master programmes).

For admission to doctorate programmes, the applicants are graduates of a first degree programme with a graduation diploma or an equivalent diploma for long academic studies. Admission to this cycle is organised by higher education institutions that have been accredited to offer this type of programmes and for the fields approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in compliance with the laws in force. Both admission and the organisation and the way the doctorate studies take place are subject to rules set by a Government Decision.



Admission to doctorate studies is organised on a competition base, and its organisation is managed by an admission commission whose members are doctorate mentors and other specialists who hold the title of Doctor and the teaching position of at least reader or researcher with the degree II. The admission commission can also include specialists from other countries who meet these conditions. The admission competition includes tests specific to the specialisation and also a linguistic competence test for an international language. The decision on the admission of an applicant is made by the commission according to the results of the applicants and in the limit of the established number of places.

Admission to all cycles of academic studies is open to citizens of the EU Member States and the states of the Economic European Area and the Swiss Confederation under the same conditions as those provided by law for Romanian citizens.

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

According to the legislation in force (Law 84/1995 republished, with its subsequent amendments), funding from the state budget is ensured by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in accordance with the number of places allocated to each field or to each specialisation/programme of studies. The funding mechanism ensures the decentralised administration of funds, as well as the involvement of local communities in providing additional financial resources for education. The financial allocation for every education institution is determined based on the sum from the state budget per student. This sum is established based on the level and the specificity of education, as well as other educational indicators especially those referring to the quality of education. The university senates set by themselves the number of places with tuition fee. In this case, the tuition fees are set by the university senates taking into account the costs of the education provided.

The higher education institutions can also benefit, under the law, from other sources of funds: income from different activities they organise (educational services, including in-service adult training, letting, micro-production activities etc.), subsidies, donations, sponsorship and fixes. Funds from these sources are completely managed and used at institutional level without affecting the budgetary allocations.

A candidate who has been admitted can benefit from budgetary funding only once for each of the three cycles of higher education. If the duration of free education is exceeded, the tuition costs are covered by the student.

Candidates to a first degree programme who during their high school studies obtained distinctions (1<sup>st</sup> second and 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes, mention, special prizes) in international school olympiads recognised by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports are an exception. They have the right to enrol for the courses of two specialisations without going through an admission competition. Students can benefit only once of this provision with the observance of the legislation in force.

Higher education institutions can ask the applicants to pay a registration fee for taking part in the admission, in compliance with the laws in force. This is necessary for the organisation and progress of the admission, for every of the 3 cycles of higher education. The amount of these fees is approved by the university senates. The senates can also decide, through their admission methodologies, to allow exemptions from or a reduction in these fees.

For every cycle of higher education, the children whose parents are teachers are exempted from paying registration fees for the admission competitions in higher education, only once at a higher education institution.

For all 3 cycles of academic studies, there are scholarships and other forms of material and financial support in compliance with specific criteria. Scholarships for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle are given based on a competition regulated by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the senates. Students also benefit from: free medical and psychological assistance provided in university medical and

psychological offices or in public polyclinics and hospitals, reductions in the cost of internal public transportation (except for air transport), as well as for access to museums, concerts, theatres, opera, cinema and other cultural and sports events organised by public institutions. Orphan students benefit from free internal transportation (except for air transport).

Students living on campuses must pay partially for the necessary costs. The scholarships cover partially or entirely these costs.

As regards the tuition fees, the conditions provided by law for the admission to all higher education cycles for Romanian citizens also apply to citizens of the EU Member States, the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation.

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

For the cycle of first degree studies, the cycle of master studies and for doctorate studies (doctorate schools), the duration of the 2009-2010 academic year is set, in general terms, by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports – the duration of periods dedicated to courses, to practical activities and to examinations. The university senates, on the basis of academic autonomy, establish the organisation of these periods, and the alternation with holidays – except for official holidays.

The academic year started around 1 October and will end in July, the dates varying with the university and the cycle of studies. In accordance with the academic autonomy, teaching/learning activities – such as the presentation of research projects by students from doctorate schools – take place also in September. As a rule, the structure of the academic year has two semesters, each with 14 weeks, during which activities such as courses, seminars, and practical activities take place. Each semester ends with a period called examination session (*sesiune de examene*), and is followed by a period of holidays.

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

In higher education, based on academic autonomy, the documents regulating internally the assessment of students are the rules of student assessment which are developed by universities/faculties. These rules also include norms referring to progression from one year of study to another. The education plans, the subject forms and the Diploma Supplements include information on student assessment, especially on final assessment or even a short description of the assessment process. This kind of information can also be found in the methodologies/tools for the assessment of teachers, or in the documents referring to quality assurance in higher education institutions. For example, the Guide to the assessment of the quality of academic studies and higher education institutions (ARACIS, 2006) includes the student assessment system as a component of the assessment of the content of the education process.

For first degree studies and master studies, there is ongoing assessment (current, continuous) for every subject in the education plan which takes place throughout the approximately 14 weeks in the structure of the semesters. This type of assessment is associated in most cases with seminar or laboratory activities, or practical activities. Final assessment (summative) is either a written examination, or an oral check, or an oral examination, during the two ordinary exam sessions at the end of the semesters and during the re-examination sessions for those students who have not passed the exams at one or more subjects in the ordinary sessions. Ongoing assessment, during seminars or laboratory classes, depending on the rules of different universities or faculties, has a determined weight in the final result at a particular subject or it can be a condition for students' access to the final examinations which take place in the exam session. Ongoing assessment takes very diverse forms – a project, systemic observation of student activities, portfolio etc. The assessment criteria for each subject are implicit to the academic curriculum designed based on competences. Within the assessment system, at national level, grading is done with marks on a 1 to 10 scale.

At the end of a semester, the examination of students is conducted by two teachers. The results of the examination (the marks) are recorded in the student's book and in the official documents of the institution (mark lists, school registers). According to the provisions of the Education Law (Law 84/1995 republished, subsequently amended and completed), higher education institutions can set re-examination fees in order to cover the additional costs involved.

The assessment of students enrolled for doctorate studies is focused on aspects specific to scientific research and takes the form of examinations and scientific research papers (at least 3 from each category). The performance of doctorate students is assessed with descriptors for the examinations and the research papers. At present, within doctorate schools – as an innovative form of organisation for postgraduate studies –, student assessment is regulated through the internal rules and focuses both on subjects studied during classes and seminars and on scientific research activity. In the 2009/10 academic year, there were some scientific events at national level (projects such as those supported by ESF), that included debates related to assessment – assessment methods, types, forms etc. – for doctorate schools.

In higher education, we cannot say there are any unitary mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning acquired in the school education system. An exception could be the case of successful participants in school olympiads who are exempted from sitting the admission examination.

As regards the recognition of prior learning acquired in higher education, the application of the transferable credits system makes possible a flexible management both for the recognition of studies taken at universities in the country or abroad and for progression. Therefore, the maximum number of transferable credits in the ECTS system is set by the Council of each faculty. When a student takes a period of study at another university/faculty (in the country and/or abroad), in compliance with the regulations of each faculty, the credits he or she obtained will be recognised by his/her faculty. Requirements related to progression are formulated by each higher education institution in terms such as the number of times an exam in a subject is taken, the number of passed/failed subjects, a minimum percentage of passed examinations.

Students who completed short higher education and hold a graduation diploma have the possibility to continue their studies in higher education, in the same area of specialisation or in similar areas, in order to obtain a first (bachelor) degree.

Long higher education studies end with the degree or diploma examination which is organised based on the general criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. The content of the examination and its specific criteria are established by the university senates. Students who pass the degree examination receive the title of 'Licențiat' (holder of a first degree) in the profile and specialisation of their studies, attested with a diploma issued by the institution which organised the examination. Students who do not pass the degree or the diploma examination can receive, on request, a Certificate of academic studies and a copy of their school records indicating the subjects they have studied and the marks they have got a copy of their and a copy of their school records.

Master studies end with the presentation of a dissertation in the area of specialisation. The minimum pass mark for the dissertation is 6. The completion of studies is attested by a master Diploma.

Doctorate studies end with the public presentation of a thesis, assessed by a commission of specialists approved by the university senate. The members of the commission draw up analyses containing general and analytical assessments and their conclusion on the scientific value of the thesis, and give their agreement or disagreement on the award of the title of Doctor. The commission makes its final decision through an open vote immediately after the thesis is presented, in front of the candidate and the public. For doctorate theses that have special creativity qualities one of the following distinctions can be awarded: 'summa cum laude', 'magna cum laude' or 'cum laude'. The scientific title of Doctor is awarded

by Order of Minister, following the confirmation of the proposal of the institution organising the doctorate programme by the National Council for the Attestation of Academic Titles, Diplomas and Certificates. The Doctor Diploma is issued by the institution organising the doctorate programme based on the Order of the Education, Research, Youth and Sports Minister.

The Diploma Supplement is a document regulated by an Order of Minister adopted in April 2000. At present, this is issued automatically and free of charge by all tertiary education institutions for first degree and master programmes, in Romanian and in English.

Higher education graduates are integrated into the labour market in accordance with the specific regulations for different occupational fields.

## 6.5 Guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling activities in higher education are regulated by *Order of the Education and Research Minister 3235/10.02.2005 on the organisation of first degree studies*, which requires the establishment of counselling and guidance centres within universities in order to support students to make adequate decisions on their own training. Such counselling and guidance centres function at university level based on this regulation and under different names (consultancy department, career guidance and counselling office, vocational guidance and counselling centre etc.). The mission of these centres, in general terms, is to facilitate the social and professional insertion of graduates through: analyses of the labour market, counselling for students in order to help them discover their personal and professional interests, informing continuously the students on studies and employment opportunities etc. An analysis of the specific activities of these centres shows that they focus mainly on academic counselling for students in the junior years in order to help them meet the requirements and standards specific to higher education, while for students in the senior years, their focus is on career guidance based on information directly correlated with the labour market.

In addition, in every university, the tools for the assessment of teachers include a criterion related to career guidance and counselling provided to students, referring to teacher's relation with his/her students, with a series of indicators which detail this aspect such as: receptiveness to students' interests, learning styles etc.

## 6.6 Academic staff

For higher education, the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997) establishes the following teaching positions: *preparator universitar* (preparatory assistant), *asistent universitar* (assistant), *lector universitar/șef de lucrări* (lecturer/paper chief), *conferențiar universitar* (reader), *profesor universitar* (professor) and *profesor universitar consultant* (consultant professor).

The minimum requirements of initial teacher training (studies) are dependent on the teaching position. According to the Statute of the Teaching Staff (Law 128/1997), they are as follows:

- For the teaching positions of preparatory assistant and assistant: a first degree (*absolvirea cu diploma de licență*) from a higher education institution or an equivalent diploma, or graduation from a postgraduate academic institution, as well as the completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department (for the position of assistant, minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied);
- For the position of lecturer or paper chief: a first degree (*absolvirea cu diploma de licență*) from a higher education institution or an equivalent diploma, or graduation from a postgraduate academic institution, the completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department, as well as the condition of attending a doctorate programme or holding the title of *Doctor* (minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied);

- For the positions of reader and professor: a first degree (*absolvirea cu diploma de licență*) from a higher education institution or an equivalent diploma, or graduation from a postgraduate academic institution, the completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department, as well as the title *Doctor* (minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied).

Initial education and training for all teaching positions in Romania is based on a parallel (concurrent) model, meaning that specialist education and training (education and training in a field of study) is combined with teacher training within the same educational sequence. For some teaching positions, additional teacher training is required and this can be considered as a part of initial education and training although it usually takes place after the completion of the education level necessary for those teaching positions (for example, doctorate studies for the teaching positions of reader and professor etc.).

The institutions providing initial teacher training and the minimum duration of training programmes (studies) depend on the educational level for which the teacher is trained (minimum requirements for each position; durations in full time education):

- Preparatory assistant: a higher education institution with long duration of studies and completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department; duration of initial education and training is 4-6 years;
- Assistant: a higher education institution with long duration of studies (4-6 years) and completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department (minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied);
- Lecturer or paper chief: a higher education institution with long duration of studies (4-6 years), completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department, as well as the condition of attending a doctorate programme or holding the title of *Doctor* (minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied);
- Reader and professor: a higher education institution with long duration of studies (4-6 years), completion of the courses organised by a Teacher Training Department, as well as the title *Doctor* (minimum criteria on the length of service are also applied).

The selection, recruitment and employment of teachers for posts or positions in higher education are based on an open recruitment procedure. Accredited or temporarily authorised higher education institutions have full responsibility in the selection, recruitment and employment process for their own posts or positions. The process must take place in compliance with the general provisions of the Education Law and the Statute of the Teaching Staff.

The open recruitment procedure must be based on a competition open to anyone who meets the education conditions established in the Statute of the Teaching Staff for a particular teaching position. The results of the competition are valid only for the higher education institution that organised it.

## 7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Adult education and training through the education system is accomplished through specific programmes initiated and organised by public and private institutions in the spirit of the social partnership and using interactive methods focusing on a multimedia approach: distance education, video conferences, computer assisted training, etc. Adult education and training through the education system ensures completion of the basic education, vocational training, and civic education – including education for active citizenship.

The criteria and methodology for the accreditation of the institutions providing adult education and training, as well as the final examinations, the certificates issued and the certification procedures are established by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and/or the Minister of Culture and Cults – depending on the type of the programme provided. According to the established rules and procedures, the institutions providing adult education and training can issue educational diplomas and graduation certificates recognised on local and/or national level. The same authorities are responsible for establishing the methodological norms for the organisation and the duration of the adult education and training programmes through the education system. Adult education and training through the education system is ensured by trainers, specialised by domain, from the country or abroad.

According to the specific legislation regarding adult vocational training (Law 375/2002 approving and amending Ordinance of the Government 129/2000), adults are defined as persons old enough to establish work relations and to participate in vocational training programmes. Adults are ensured equal rights in accessing vocational training without any discrimination regarding age, gender, ethnical origin, political orientation or religious beliefs. The law on equal chances for women and men (Law 202/2002) reinforces the equal right of both genders to access vocational training, as well as vocational counselling and guidance. Access of adults (employed or unemployed) to vocational training is a right guaranteed by the Labour Code (Law 53/2003).

### 7.1 Policy and legislative framework

The policy on continuing education and training for adults aims at 'facilitating the access to science and culture for all citizens, regardless of age, in order to enable them to adapt themselves to the major changes occurring in society'.

The general legislative framework for adult education is provided by:

- the Education Law 84/1995, amended by Law 131/1995, which stipulates that adult education comes within the structure of the national education system
- Law 2/1971 referring to the vocational training of adults
- Law 5/1985 referring to continuing vocational training for adults
- Government Decision 288/1991 and Law 1/1991 referring to social assistance and vocational retraining of the unemployed
- Government Ordinance 129/2000 on adult vocational training (republished)
- Law 132/1999 on the establishment, structure, and functioning of the National Adult Training Board (republished), modified and completed by Law 559/2004
- Law 268/2009 on the approval of Government Extraordinary Ordinance 28/2009 regulating some social protection measures (it has 13 articles referring to the National Adult Training Board and the Sector Committees).



## 7.2 Distribution of responsibilities

The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports plays an important role in the provision of adult and continuing education, being involved in setting priorities on curriculum design, imposing quality standards, developing tools for assessment and accreditation of adult education programmes. Its subordinate institutions can offer, on a contractual basis, assistance to the organisers wishing to initiate adult education courses. The department responsible for continuing education within the Ministry of Education, Research Youth and Sports is the Service for Continuing Education, under the General Department for Continuing Education, and Teacher Initial and In-Service Training.

Other ministries and companies may organise various forms of training or retraining courses for their employees. There are courses organised jointly by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in order to ensure social protection and the creation of new job opportunities.

The Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports provides non-formal education programmes with themes like the stimulation of community activities or the revitalisation of rural communities. The Ministry of Health organises programmes on AIDS prevention, drugs, contraceptive education and family planning, etc.

The National Adult Training Board is a tripartite body, which has a consultative role in the substantiation and promotion of adult training policies and strategies.

The National Adult Training Board coordinates and controls at national level:

- the authorisation of training providers, through its territorial authorisation commissions
- the development of occupational standards
- the assessment and certification of competences developed in a formal, non-formal and informal way.

Since 2004, the National Adult Training Board has played the role of a national authority for qualifications.

The National Adult Training Board has the following responsibilities:

- endorses draft laws related to adult vocational training
- contributes to the development of a methodological framework for the authorisation of training providers, the certification of adult training, the assessment and certification of competences acquired in a non-formal and informal way
- provides methodological assistance, coordinates and controls the activity of the authorisation commissions
- monitors the authorised training providers
- develops and updates the National Registry of Authorised Training Providers
- elaborates specific criteria and procedures for the development and use of occupational standards
- approves occupational standards
- authorises the competence assessment centres and certifies the evaluators of competences
- develops and updates the National Registry of Qualifications



- carries out activities for training, transfer of knowledge and technical assistance in its field of activity
- collaborates with governmental, national and international organisations in order to fulfil its object
- develops and implements the methodologies on occupational analysis
- develops and implements the methodologies on qualifications
- develops and implements the methodologies on the validation of qualifications
- develops and implements the methodologies on the certification of professional competences and qualifications
- supports the establishment of sector committees and coordinates its activity
- endorses the annual report activities of the sector committees
- participates in national and international projects and programmes in the area of continuing training.

Research institutes, professional associations, and trade unions are involved as social actors in the organisation of continuing education and training courses for adults. They provide specialised personnel, organisational structures or special facilities. Television, radio and newspaper businesses also support and promote this type of training.

The National Centre for School Teacher Training has the mission to ensure the diversity and the quality of in-service training for school teachers through the accreditation, monitoring and assessment of in-service training programmes. The National Centre for School Teacher Training has the following responsibilities:

- to develop professional standards for the teaching staff, the auxiliary teaching staff and the management, guidance and control staff in school education;
- to coordinate the development of criteria and procedures for the accreditation of training programmes;
- to accreditate (by a specialist commission) the in-service training programmes proposed by training providers, based on standards and methodologies approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports;
- to initiate and conduct research on the content, design, delivery and assessment of teacher training in school education;
- to initiate and conduct training and professional development activities in the educational field, funded by national and international programmes;
- to initiate and conduct professional development activities in the educational field in answer to the conclusions of marketing research on in-service training;
- to initiate and conduct analyses on the needs and the in-service training methodology of the teaching staff in school education;
- to guide and coordinate the in-service training providers, in compliance with standards, criteria and methodologies approved by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports;
- to disseminate and continuously update the in-service training offer.

In-service training for teachers in school education is a right. At the same time, the Statute of the Teaching Staff stipulates that the teaching staff in school education participate in in-service training programmes at least once in 5 years or anytime this is recommended by the School Administration Council or by the County School Inspectorate. This condition is considered fulfilled when a teacher obtained his/her teacher confirmation or a teaching degree in this period.

According to the Order of the Education, Research and Youth Minister 4796/2001, regular in-service teacher training is structured in modules quantified in transferable credits. The minimum standard for regular in-service teacher training is 90 professional transferable credits.

### **7.3 Financing**

The main bodies responsible for funding continuing education and training for adults are the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

The funding of courses focused on the development of human resources in a specific area is the responsibility of the ministry or central administration body concerned. The cost of such programmes is included in investment costs.

The involvement of companies in funding continuing education and training for adults is very low. Most funds come from the state budget, and are dedicated to the retraining of unemployed people. Local authorities contribute to the funding of continuing education and training courses for adults if institutions under their remit are involved. Generally, the cost of open and distance learning courses is met by participants.

### **7.4 Programmes and providers**

Generally, the organisation of continuing adult education and training for adults is similar to formal education. There are full-time or part-time courses, including evening classes, correspondence courses and distance learning. Courses addressed to ethnic minority groups are taught in the minority language.

The main types of institutions involved in adult education are:

- popular universities, which provide various courses and training programmes for adults
- higher education institutions offering a large diversity of courses which vary from in-service teacher training to specialised further education courses
- Teacher Centres, providing in-service training for teaching staff; they support teacher training departments from universities in the organisation of in-service training courses
- institutions providing correspondence and distance education
- institutions under various ministries which organise in-service training for their employees
- prisons which organise basic education courses for illiterate people
- legal persons under public or private law, or natural persons who have mentioned in their establishment document, or – for natural persons – in their authorisation for carrying out independent activities, that they may carry out vocational training activities
- non-governmental organizations and foundations.

Admission requirements for continuing education and training courses are specified by each programme. Sometimes, admission is conditional on age. In other cases, an initial level of education is

a prerequisite (a completion certificate from a lower secondary school, upper secondary school or university). When there is a great demand for certain courses, entrance examinations may be organised.

The main target groups of continuing education and training are: people wishing to attend vocational training or retraining, people wishing to develop new competences for in-demand domains like economy, management or administration, people wishing to add new competences within the same qualification, people wishing to obtain a new qualification, unemployed people, people with social and economic difficulties, people functionally illiterate, people who have never attended, or have dropped out of school.

Generally, the main objectives of continuing education and training programmes for adults are:

- to ensure that initial education and training and in-service training, and formal, informal and non-formal education complete one another;
- to provide a second chance for people who have dropped out of compulsory education;
- to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge in a profession or vocational retraining;
- to provide new organisation and management methods.

Continuing education and training courses are organised in modules of evening classes spread across 2-3 days in a week, for employed people, or compact blocks of day classes, up to 9 months, for unemployed people. Most of these training courses are organised by employment agencies, and are intended to reintegrate people in difficulty into socio-economic activities.

Distance education courses are organised especially by higher education institutions and usually last up to 1-3 years more than the usual courses.

The curriculum is designed by the organising institutions. However, in order to be nationally recognised, the curriculum must be submitted to an evaluation process and accredited by a competent authority (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour, National Adult Training Board).

Continuing education and training courses for adults are permanently revised and updated by the organising institution and aim increasingly at the development of new basic skills related to lifelong learning.

Teachers can choose the teaching methods that seem most appropriate. Therefore, many different methods are used: lectures, seminars, conversation, methods for individualised training, case studies, active and interactive methods, etc.

Curricula for continuing education and training for adults cover various programmes such as: literacy courses, training and retraining for unemployed people, computer literacy, foreign languages, as well as higher education areas: social sciences (history, politics, psychology, anthropology, ethnology, religion, economics, law), medicine and health, engineering, culture and civilisation, literature and arts.

## **7.5 Quality assurance**

There are no special arrangements for quality assurance in continuing education and training for adults. The main way used to ensure the quality of training is the accreditation of courses, which have to comply with criteria established by competent authorities.

## **7.6 Guidance and counselling**

Employment agencies are responsible for guidance/counselling services delivered especially to disadvantaged target groups (mainly poorly qualified or unemployed). They provide information and counselling both for training and employment opportunities, ensuring in this way the necessary coherence between the training offer and the employment demand.

## **7.7 Teachers and trainers**

People carrying out teaching and training activities within the system of continuing education and training for adults do not have a specific denomination in the catalogue of professions. Generally, they are teachers and trainers in secondary or vocational education or teachers in tertiary education, depending on the type of course.

At national level, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection are concerned with the training of teachers and trainers which specialises them in appropriate methods for adult education. As a result, the departments for teacher training in tertiary education and the employment agencies organise particular courses specialising in andragogy.

There are no special arrangements for quality assurance in the training of staff involved in continuing education and training for adults. However, there are specific requirements for various types of training programmes, which are directed to ensure a good quality of training.

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Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului și Sportului (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports): [www.edu.ro](http://www.edu.ro)

Agentia Națională Pentru Calificările din Învățământul Superior și Parteneriat cu Mediul Economic și Social (National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social) <http://www.acpart.ro>

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