

REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
38TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT

Chapter 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Objective and Range of the Act

Art. 1. (1) This Act shall regulate the social relations connected with:

1. ensuring the right of the citizens to vocational education and training according to their personal interests and abilities;
2. satisfying the demand for skilled labour which is competitive on the labour market;
3. providing conditions for the functioning and development of the system of vocational education and training based on the co-operation between the institutions of that system, the Executive Power and the local self-government and the social partners.

(2) This Act shall regulate the organisation, institutions, management and financing of the system of vocational education and training.

(3) Primary and secondary general education, acquired respectively at the vocational schools and the vocational high schools shall be subject to the regulations of the Public Education Act and the National Education Standards unless this Act provides otherwise.

Objective of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 2. The system of vocational education and training trains citizens for a career in the economy and in other sectors of public life by creating conditions for acquiring vocational qualification and its continuous upgrading.

Tasks of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 3. The main tasks of the system of vocational education and training are:

1. acquisition of vocational qualification;
2. continuous upgrading of the vocational qualification;
3. development of a motivation system for self-fulfillment in the civil society;
4. amassment of general knowledge on the basis of the national and universal human values.

Structure of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 4. The system of vocational education and training includes career guidance, vocational training and vocational education.

Essence of the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 5. (1) Career guidance provides information, consulting and advice to students, unemployed and any other person about the choice of a vocation and career development.

(2) Vocational training ensures the acquisition of qualification for a vocation or part thereof, as well as the upgrading of that qualification. Under conditions stipulated by this Act and the Public Education Act, vocational training also provides completion of primary education or grades of the secondary education. Vocational training includes:

1. initial vocational training - acquisition of initial qualification in a vocation or part thereof;
2. continuing vocational training – improvement of competencies acquired in a vocation or part thereof.

(3) Vocational education ensures the acquisition of the general education minimum valid for secondary education and the acquisition of qualification in a vocation.

Chapter 2

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS TO THE Organisation of vocational education and training SYSTEM

Part 1

Vocations and Levels of Vocational Qualification

List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 6. (1) Career guidance, vocational training and vocational education are provided for vocations and specialties in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training.

(2) The List under para 1 shall be endorsed by the Minister of Education and Science in coordination with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, as well as with the relevant branch ministers and representatives of the organisations of employers and of workers and employees nationwide.

Structural Components of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 7. The structural components of the List under Art.6 para 1 are vocation and specialty.

Classification Characteristics of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 8. (1) The vocations and specialties are classified into vocational areas, level of education and level of vocational qualification.

(2) The levels of vocational qualification, acquired under this Act, are Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4.

(3) In order to acquire the qualification levels, the following is required:

1. for Level 1 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving routine activities performed under routine conditions;

2. for Level 2 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a range of complex activities performed in changing conditions;
3. for Level 3 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a range of complex activities performed in changing conditions, as well as responsibilities for the performance of others;
4. For Level 4 - acquired vocational competencies to practise vocations involving a wide range of complex activities performed in changing conditions, as well as managerial responsibilities for the performance of others and for allocation of resources.

(4) The entry minimum education level to acquire the relevant vocational qualification levels shall be:

1. For Level 1 – completed 6th grade;
2. For Level 2 and Level 3 – completed 7th grade or primary education;
3. For Level 4 – completed secondary education.

(5) The exit education level to acquire the relevant vocational qualification levels shall be:

1. For Level 1:
 - a) primary education – for pupils;
 - b) primary education or completed 6th or 7th grade for persons who are 16 years old and older.
2. For Level 2 – completed 10th or 11th grade, eligibility to hold National Matriculation Exams to complete secondary education or completed secondary education.
3. For Level 3 – secondary education or eligibility to hold National Matriculation Exams to complete secondary education.

Part 2

Terms and Procedure for Acquiring Vocational Qualification

Training for Acquisition of Vocational Qualification

Art. 9. (1) The right to provide training for the acquisition of vocational qualification is granted to:

1. vocational schools, vocational high schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centres;
2. junior high schools and primary schools, secondary general schools and special-purpose schools in individual classes, if they meet the conditions posed by National Education Standards.

(2) Training for the acquisition of vocational qualification can be provided by ministries, municipalities, workers' and employers' organisations and individual employers.

(3) The acquisition of vocational qualification can be carried out on the basis of individual tuition.

Programmes for Acquisition of Vocational Qualification

Art. 10. (1) The acquisition of vocational qualification in the system of vocational education and training shall be regulated by programmes.

(2) The programmes under para 1 determine the age and entry educational and qualification level of the candidates, as well as the contents and duration of vocational education and vocational training.

(3) The programmes under para 1 are as follows:

1. Programmes A for initial vocational education for acquiring Level 1 of vocational qualification;
2. Programmes B for initial vocational training for acquiring Level 2 of vocational qualification;
3. Programmes C for vocational training for acquiring Level 2 or Level 3 of vocational qualification;
4. Programmes D for vocational training for acquiring Level 4 of vocational qualification;
5. Programmes E for initial vocational training for acquiring qualification in part of a vocation;
6. Programmes F for continuing vocational training for updating or expanding a vocational qualification already acquired and also for obtaining Level 1, 2 and 3 of vocational qualification.

Programmes for Students

Art. 11. The programmes addressed to students' training are as follows:

1. Programmes A for students who have completed at least 6th grade, with duration of up to 3 years;
2. Programmes B for students who have completed primary education or a grade from the secondary education, with duration of up to 4 years;
3. Programmes C for students who have completed primary education, with duration of 4 years, and with duration of 5 or 6 years for students who have completed primary education or with completed 7th grade;
4. Programmes E for students who have completed primary education or a grade from the secondary education, with duration of up to 1 year.

Programmes for Persons Who Are 16 Years Old and Older

Art. 12. The programmes addressed to persons who are 16 years old and older are as follows:

1. Programmes A for persons who have completed at least 6th grade, with duration of up to 1 year;
2. Programmes B for persons who have completed a grade from secondary education or secondary education, with duration of 1 year;
3. Programmes D for persons who have completed secondary education, with duration of up to 2 years;
4. Programmes E with duration which is determined by the specific vocational training documentation;
5. Programmes F with duration which is determined by the specific vocational training documentation.

Content of the Programmes

Art. 13. (1) The Programmes under Art.10 para 3, subparas 1,2,3 and 4, are specified for each vocation from the List in Art.6 para 1, by the National Education Standards for obtaining qualification in a vocation.

(2) The content of the Programmes under Art.10 para 3, subparas 5 and 6 is determined by the specific documentation for vocational training.

(3) The documentation under para 2 is developed by the training institution or by the customer who has demanded vocational training, whereas, when a level of vocational qualification is acquired, this documentation shall comply with the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Requirements to the Candidates

Art. 14. (1) The requirements to the candidates willing to join the programmes for vocational education and vocational training concern the age threshold, health status, pre-enrollment education level and pre-enrollment qualification level.

(2) The candidate's age threshold shall be 13 when he or she applies for school and 16 when training is provided by other training institutions.

(3) The candidate shall present a medical certificate to certify that the vocation he or she applies to be trained in is not harmful to their health. The requirements shall be laid down in an Ordinance of the Minister of Health prior to an agreement on the part of the Minister of Education and Science.

(4) The pre-enrollment education level of the candidate shall be a completed grade of primary or secondary education or a completed level of education, that is required to obtain the respective level of vocational qualification.

(5) The pre-enrollment qualification level of the candidate shall be the obtained level of vocational qualification required for enrollment in Programme F.

Admission of Candidates

Art. 15. The admission procedure for the candidates shall be decided by the training institution in compliance with the requirements under Art. 14.

Part 3

Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process

Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process in Vocational Education

Art. 16. (1) The forms of training, the organisational forms and the school time dedicated to Programmes C conform to the Public Education Act and the Public Education Act Enabling Regulations.

(2) The organisation of the teaching and learning process for each vocation in the List in Art. 6, para 1 shall be determined by the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Organisation of the Teaching and Learning Process in Vocational Training

Art. 17. (1) The forms of training, organisational forms and the school time dedicated to Programmes A, B and E for students shall conform to the Public Education Act and the Public Education Act Enabling Regulations.

(2) The organisational form for Programmes A, B, D, E, and F for persons who are 16 years old and older is a qualification course. The forms of training, the school time dedicated and the number of the trainees in the course shall be decided by the training institution. They can be agreed on with the customer who has demanded vocational training.

(3) The organisation of the teaching and learning process in Programmes A, B and D shall be determined by the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation or by the documentation under Art.13 para 2 with respect to Programmes E and F.

Chapter 3

Institutions within the vocational education and training System

Institutions

Art. 18 . The institutions within the vocational education and training system are:

1. vocational schools;
2. vocational high schools;
3. vocational colleges;
4. vocational training centres;
5. vocational information and career guidance centres;
6. train the trainers centres;
7. The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Vocational Schools, Vocational High Schools and Vocational Colleges

Art. 19. (1) The vocational schools, vocational high schools and vocational colleges are state-run, municipal and private, Bulgarian with foreign participation, and foreign, and these shall be opened, transformed and closed down following the procedure as provided for in the Public Education Act.

(2) Vocational schools shall provide initial vocational training for Level 1 and Level 2 of vocational qualification and for qualification in part of a vocation with duration of up to 4 years. These institutions shall be open to enrollment to students who have completed at least the 6th grade. Also vocational schools shall be free to provide vocational training providing they meet the requirements set by the National Education Standards.

(3) Vocational high schools shall provide vocational training for Level 2 of vocational qualification with duration of 4 years or for Level 3 of vocational qualification with duration of 5 or 6 years. These institutions shall be open to enrollment to students who have completed primary education or 7th grade. Vocational high schools shall be free to provide vocational training for Level 1, Level 2, and level 4 of vocational qualification and for qualification in part of a vocation.

Vocational training for Level 4 of vocational qualification shall be provided only if the vocational high schools meet the requirements set by the National Education Standards.

(4) Vocational colleges shall provide vocational training for Level 4 of vocational qualification with duration of up to 2 years. These institutions shall be open to enrollment to persons who have completed secondary education.

Vocational Training Centres

Art. 20. Vocational training centres shall provide vocational training to persons who are 16 years old and older.

Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres

Art. 21. The vocational information and career guidance centres shall advise students, unemployed and other persons.

Status of the Vocational Training Centres and the Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres

Art. 22 (1) The vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres are state-run, municipal or private, Bulgarian with foreign participation and foreign.

(2) The state-run and municipal centres shall be legal entities holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(3) The private centres shall be single-member companies or legal entities constituent as commercial companies, cooperatives, partnerships or foundations holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(4) The Bulgarian vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres with foreign participation shall be partnerships of Bulgarian and foreign physical and/or legal entities registered in the Republic of Bulgaria and holding a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(5) The foreign vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres are foreign legal entities that act in the Republic of Bulgaria pursuant to international agreements and that hold a license to provide vocational training or career guidance.

(6) The license to provide vocational training or career guidance shall be issued by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training. The documents required by the Enabling Regulations of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall be attached to the application by which license is requested.

(7) Within two months of the date of submission of the application the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall issue or reject the license and explain the reasons for the rejection.

- (8) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall have the power to withdraw a license it has issued for vocational training or career guidance in the event:
1. The centre fails to start operating within 12 months of the date of license issuing;
 2. The centre fails to observe the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation;
 3. The centre provides vocational training or career guidance in a manner that disagrees with the license it holds.

Train the Trainers Centres

Art. 23. (1) The train the trainers centres are state-run or municipal service units within the public education system and shall be opened, transformed and closed down in the procedure provided for by the Public Education Act.

(2) The train the trainers centres shall update and expand the competence of the teachers and other persons who provide vocational training.

Chapter 4

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARD FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Part 1

General provisions

Content of the National Education Standard for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 24. The National Education Standard for vocational education and training in the sense of Art. 16 para 6 of the Public Education Act shall regulate the organisation of vocational education and training and the structure and content of the vocational education and training programmes in vocational schools, vocational high schools and vocational colleges.

Admission in Vocational Schools, Vocational High Schools and Vocational Colleges

Art. 25. (1) The state-run and municipal schools shall organise their activities in line with a State Admission Plan by Vocations that is approved for every school year.

(2) The state-run schools shall propose a State Admission Plan by Vocations to the Minister of Education and Science through the Inspectorates of Education.

(3) The municipal schools in conjunction with the municipality shall propose a State Admission Plan by Vocations to the Minister of Education and Science through the Inspectorates of Education.

(4) The Inspectorates of Education shall agree the propositions in paras 2 and 3 with the Regional Employment Offices and with the Regional Employers Bodies.

(5) The Minister of Education and Science shall approve the State Admission Plan by Vocations and coordinate the state-run schools component of the Plan with the relevant branch ministers.

(6) Private schools, Bulgarian schools with foreign participation and foreign vocational schools shall draw up their admission plans by themselves.

Organisation of Vocational Training after Completion of Secondary Education

Art. 26. (1) State-run and municipal schools shall be free to provide vocational training to persons who have completed secondary education provided that the vocational training is financially supported by legal or physical entities.

(2) The organisation, provision, material and financial support of vocational training shall be subject to a contract between the school director and the person who finances the training.

Part 2

Vocational Education and Vocational Training Content

Structure and Content of the Programmes for Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 27. (1) The structure of the vocational education programmes includes general education training, compulsory vocational training – general, sector-oriented and job-specific, compulsory foreign language training with a focus on the specialty and optional courses that are compulsory elective and noncompulsory elective.

(2) General education training provides the minimum required for secondary education.

(3) General compulsory vocational training is standardised for all occupational areas and takes into account their specifics. It includes theory classes and practicals – practical training.

(4) Sector-oriented compulsory vocational training is standardised for all vocations in the occupational area and takes into account the specifics of each vocation. It includes theory classes and practicals – practical training.

(5) Job-specific compulsory vocational training includes theory classes and practicals - on-the-job training.

(6) General education training shall conform to the National Education Standard of level of education, general education minimum and curriculum.

(7) Compulsory vocational training, compulsory foreign language training with a focus on the specialty and optional courses that are compulsory elective and noncompulsory elective shall conform to the National Education Standards of the acquisition of qualification in a vocation.

(8) The number of school hours for the compulsory vocational training shall exceed the number of school hours for general education training at least 1.5-fold.

(9) At least half of the school hours for compulsory vocational training shall be reserved for practical training.

Structure and Content of the Vocational Training Programmes

Art. 28. (1) The structure of the vocational training programmes includes:

1. general education training; compulsory vocational training; optional training for the programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification with completion of primary education or a grade of secondary education;
2. compulsory and optional vocational training for the programmes for acquisition of vocational qualification.

(2) The compulsory vocational training includes theory classes and practical training.

(3) For the compulsory vocational training the number of school hours for practical training shall exceed the number of school hours for theory classes at least 1.5-fold.

(4) The general education training shall conform to the National Education Standard of the level of education, the general education minimum and the curriculum.

(5) The compulsory vocational training and the optional training shall conform to the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Part 3

Practical Training

Types of Practical Training

Art. 29. The practical training is organised as training practice and work placement.

Places for Conducting Practical Training

Art. 30 .(1) Practical training takes place in:

1. training facilities and workshops at the schools;
2. training facilities and workshops of similar schools or vocational training centres in the Republic of Bulgaria or abroad;
3. enterprises owned by legal or physical entities;
4. training facilities and workshops within the enterprises.

(2) The training facilities and workshops shall be equipped according to the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

(3) In the places where practical training is conducted, conditions shall be secured to meet the National Education Standard for safe conditions of education, training and work.

Organisation of Practical Training

Art. 31. (1) Practical training is conducted as training, training-production and production-training activities.

(2) The schools shall conclude contracts for carrying out the practical training at the places under Art. 30, para 1, subparas 2, 3 and 4.

(3) The schools shall be free to organise independently and/or in co-operation with legal or physical entities the manufacturing of products and services while adhering to the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation or the documentation for vocational training of the school or of the customer who has demanded vocational training.

Part 4

Vocational Education and Vocational Training for Persons with Special Education Needs

Vocational Education and Vocational Training Programmes for Persons with Special Education Needs

Art. 32. (1) Vocational education and training shall be provided for persons with special education needs according to programmes adapted to their health condition or social status.

(2) Persons suffering from chronic diseases and physical handicaps may be trained under programmes for vocational education or for vocational training in vocations or parts of vocations which are not harmful to their health condition.

(3) Persons suffering from sensory troubles may be trained under programmes for vocational education or vocational training in vocations or parts of vocations where training and practicing is not harmful to their health condition.

(4) Mentally deficient children may be trained under programmes for vocational training in part of a vocation or in a vocation for acquiring Level 1 of vocational qualification.

(5) Children with deviant behaviour may be trained under programmes for vocational education or vocational training in a vocation or part of a vocation.

(6) Prisoners may be trained under programmes for vocational training in a vocation or part of a vocation.

(7) Children from social institutions shall be given an opportunity for training under programmes for vocational education and vocational training.

(8) The vocations under paras 2, 3 and 4 shall be determined by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health, those under para 5, by the Ministry of Education and Science, and those under para and 6, by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Justice and European Legal Integration.

(9) Up to 5 students suffering from chronic diseases, physical handicaps or sensory troubles and children from social institutions are admitted in each class of the vocational schools and the vocational high schools.

Chapter 5

COMPLETION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Completion of Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 33. (1) Vocational education is completed by holding the following examinations:

1. National Matriculation Examinations for completion of secondary education in compliance with the National Educational Standard for the level of education, general educational minimum and the curriculum;
2. National Matriculation Examinations for acquiring vocational qualification - theory of the vocation and practice of the vocation.

(2) Vocational training under Programmes A, B and D is completed by holding examinations for acquiring vocational qualification - theory of the vocation and practice of the vocation.

(3) Holding examinations for acquiring vocational qualification completes vocational training under Programmes E and F. National examinations shall be held when a level of vocational qualification is acquired.

Organisation and Content of the Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification

Art. 34. (1) Upon the completion of Programmes A, B, C and D, the organisation of the examinations is designed in compliance with the National Education Standard for the assessment system, and their content - in compliance with the National Education Standard for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

(2) Upon the completion of Programmes E and F, the organisation and content of the examinations shall be decided by the training institution following agreement with representatives of the employers and workers, and when a level of vocational qualification is acquired, these shall also conform to the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation.

Vocational Qualification Examination Panels

Art. 35. (1) The members of the examination panels shall include equal quotas of representatives of the training institution, of the employers and of the workers.

(2) The representatives of the training institution must be teachers or other persons who provide vocational training.

(3) The representatives of the employers must have qualification in the respective vocational field and those of the workers must have qualification and not less than 4 years of experience in the respective vocation.

(4) The examination panels shall be appointed by the head of the training institution.

(5) In the event the organisations of employers or of workers do not nominate their representatives for the examination panels, the head of the training institution shall fill the vacancies in the panel with members who he or she has selected.

Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification in Vocational Education

Art. 36. (1) The examination in the theory of the vocation is conducted according to standardised national assignments.

(2) The examination in the practice of the vocation is conducted by assignments set by the school upon coordination with representatives of the employers and workers. The assessment of vocational competencies is carried out according to standardised national criteria.

Examinations for Acquiring Vocational Qualification in Vocational Training

Art. 37. (1) The examinations for acquiring a qualification level in a vocation shall follow the procedure in Art. 36.

(2) The examinations for acquiring qualification in part of a vocation, as well as for updating or extending the vocational qualification are conducted by assignments set by the training institution upon coordination with the representatives of the employers and workers.

Certification of Vocational Education and Vocational Training

Art. 38. (1) The completed vocational education shall be certified by:

1. a diploma for completed secondary education;
2. a certificate for vocational qualification;
3. a certificate of competence issued for vocations whose performance requires a licence of competence.

(2) The completed vocational training with acquiring a level of vocational qualification shall be certified by:

1. a certificate for primary education or a document for completed grade of primary or secondary education;
2. a certificate for vocational qualification;
3. a certificate of competence issued for vocations whose performance requires a licence of competence.

(3) The completed vocational training for acquiring qualification in part of a vocation, for updating or extending vocational qualification shall be certified by a certificate for vocational training.

(4) The content of the documents under paras 1 and 2 is to conform to the National Educational Standard for documents for the national education system and for acquiring qualification in a

vocation, and under para 3 – to the National Educational Standard for documents for the national education system and the specific documentation under Art. 13 para 2.

(5) The conditions and procedure to issue a certificate of competence shall be laid down in ordinances of the Minister of Education and Science unless a statutory act provides otherwise.

The Right to Issue Vocational Qualification Certificates

Art. 39. The right to issue vocational qualification certificates under Art. 38 shall rest with the vocational schools, vocational high schools, vocational colleges and vocational training centres. Schools in Art. 9 para 1 subpara 2 shall also hold the right to issue vocational qualification certificates.

Certification of Acquired Vocational Competencies of Persons

Who Have Been Trained Outside the Vocational Education and Training System

Art. 40. (1) Persons trained in the mode as set in Art. 9 paras 2 and 3 can obtain the documents under Art. 38 para 2 subpara 2 and para 3, providing they have not less than 6 months of working experience in the vocation or have attended practical training the duration of which is determined by the training institution.

(2) In order to obtain a document under Art. 38 para 2, subpara 2 it is required to have completed education or completed grade that are necessary for acquiring the respective level of vocational qualification.

(3) The persons under para 1 shall sign a contract with a training institution for holding examinations under Art. 37, and if necessary, for attending practical training.

Chapter 6

MANAGEMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Part 1

National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Status of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 41. (1) A National Agency for Vocational Education and Training affiliated to the Council of Ministers with headquarters in Sofia shall be established as a legal entity and shall be supported by the state budget.

(2) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training is a state body for accreditation and licensing of activities in the vocational education and training system and also for coordination of institutions that are involved in career guidance and in vocational education and training.

(3) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall operate in accordance with this Act and in line with Regulations that have been endorsed by the Council of Ministers.

Functions of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 42. The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall:

1. accredit institutions in the vocational education and training system upon request of the training institution or of the Minister of Education and Science, or upon decision of its Managing Board;
2. develop and approve criteria for accreditation in compliance with this Act and with the National Education Standards;
3. develop and approve the specific accreditation procedures and the related documentation;
4. issue and withdraw licences for provision of vocational training and/or career guidance;
5. draft and propose to the Minister of Education and Science:
 - a) the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
 - b) the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
 - c) the National Education Standards for the documents within the public education system and for the assessment system in the component concerning vocational education and training;
 - d) the national assignments and the standardised criteria for the national examinations for acquiring vocational qualification;
6. give opinion and motivated propositions to the Minister of Education and Science on alterations in the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act, with regard to institutions in the vocational education and training system;
7. assign research projects and their implementation in the area of the vocational education, training and in career guidance;
8. coordinate the development of strategies for vocational education and training promotion and upgrading;
9. contribute to get international recognition of the certificates for vocational education and vocational training;
10. generate and maintain a directory of the vocational training centres and the vocational information and career guidance centres.

Managing and Executive Bodies

Art. 43. (1) The managing bodies of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall be the Managing Board and its Chairman.

(2) The Managing Board shall set up expert commissions to perform its functions.

Members of the Managing Board

Art. 44. (1) The Managing Board shall be composed of a Chairman and 24 members:

1. eight members representing ministries;
2. eight members representing organisations of employers;
3. eight members representing organisations of workers and employees nationwide.

(2) The members under para 1 shall be nominated in the procedure provided for in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

(3) The Prime Minister shall appoint the Chairman of the Managing Board on a motion from the Minister of Education and Science.

(4) The Chairman of the Managing Board shall hold a university degree and have at least 5-year track-record in the vocational education and training system.

Term of Office of the Managing Board

Art. 45. (1) The term of office of the Chairman and of the members of the Managing Board shall be four years. A person shall not be a member of the Managing Board for more than two terms in a row.

(2) Half of the members of the Managing Board shall be subject to replacement on a quota basis every 2 years.

(3) A member of the Managing Board may be released before the end of the term of office when:

1. there is a written proposal from the institutions pursuant to Art. 44 para 1;
2. he or she systematically fails to meet his or her obligations;
3. he or she is actually unable to meet his or her obligations for more than 6 months;
4. the member requests so in writing.

(4) The decision to release a member under para 3, subparas 2 and 3 shall be passed with simple majority of all the Board members.

(5) A new member shall fill the vacancy in the Managing Board in the procedure provided for in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

(6) The term of office of a replacing member nominated under para 5 shall expire when the released member's term of office expires.

Organisation of the Activity of the Managing Board

Art. 46. (1) The Managing Board shall meet at least once every three months. Meetings shall be deemed valid if attended by at least two thirds of its members.

(2) The resolutions of the Managing Board shall be passed by show of hands and with simple majority of all Board members.

Functions of the Managing Board

Art. 47. The Managing Board shall:

1. make decisions on initiating accreditation procedures upon request of the training institution or the Minister of Education and Science, or on a motion from a member of the Managing Board;
2. make decisions on initiating licensing procedures;
3. set up expert commissions in vocational areas and an expert commission in career guidance, appoint the members of the commissions and allocate the assignments;
4. make decisions on accreditation or licensing on the basis of the reports of expert commissions;

5. inform the Ministry of Education and Science about the licensed vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres as well as about the accredited institutions within the vocational education and training system;
6. submit proposals to the Ministry of Education and Science for development and improvement of the vocational education and training system as well as for updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
7. draft Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Chairman of the Managing Board

Art. 48. (1) The Chairman of the Managing Board shall also be the Chairman of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

(2) The Chairman of the Managing Board shall:

1. represent the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training;
2. manage the activities of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training;
3. convene and chair the meetings of the Managing Board;
4. conclude, revise and terminate the contracts of employment of the staff at the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Expert Commissions

Art. 49. (1) The expert commissions shall be established by vocational areas included in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training as well as for career guidance.

(2) An expert commission shall consist of 9 members, including:

1. one representative from each of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the respective branch ministry;
2. three members representing organisations of employers from the respective branch;
3. three members from the branch trade unions of the workers and employees in the respective branch.

(3) The expert commissions shall:

1. prepare reports with proposals to the Managing Board for accreditation of institutions within the vocational education and training system and for licensing vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres;
2. participate in drawing up and updating the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations from the respective vocational area as well as the National Education Standards for the documents in the public education system and for the assessment system in the component concerning vocational education and training;
3. participate in drafting and updating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. give opinion to the Managing Board on updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
5. draw up and propose to the Managing Board national assignments and standardised criteria for the national examinations for acquiring vocational qualification.

(4) The nomination procedure of members under para 2 and the organisation of the expert commissions' activities is stipulated in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Information Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 50. The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall publish a newsletter containing:

1. criteria, procedures and documentation for vocational education and training quality accreditation of institutions within the vocational education and training system;
2. criteria and requirements for licensing vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres;
3. the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. the State Admission Plan by Vocations for every school year;
5. accredited institutions in the vocational education and training system from the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act;
6. information on the vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres entered in the Directory as per Art. 42 para 10.

Part 2

Functions of the Ministries, Municipalities and Social Partners Relating to the Vocational Education and Training

Functions of the Ministry of Education and Science

Art. 51. (1) The Ministry of Education and Science shall pursue the state policy in the field of vocational education and training by:

1. approving the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. endorsing the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. endorsing the State Admission Plan for the state-run and municipal schools;
5. ensuring conditions for meeting the National Education Standards for the vocational education and training system;
6. approving training programmes in the vocational education and training system;
7. organising career guidance;
8. specifying, on its own or jointly with the relevant competent ministry, the vocations for persons with special education needs;
9. allocating the approved budget resources for vocational education and training and exercising control over their spending;
10. analysing the results and efficiency of the vocational education and training;
11. designating its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert commissions of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

(2) The Inspectorates of Education with the Ministry of Education and Science shall pursue the state policy in the field of vocational education and training in the respective region by:

1. coordinating the interaction of the schools, the vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres with the Regional Employment Offices and Labour Offices, the Regional Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorates, the local self-government bodies and the regional structures of the social partners;
2. coordinating the schools' proposals concerning the State Admission Plan;
3. participating in the organisation of the examinations for acquiring vocational qualification.

Functions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Art. 52. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy shall be involved in pursuing the state policy in the field of vocational education and training by:

1. identifying the needs of vocational education and training by analysing the trends of the labour market development;
2. participating in the development, coordination and updating of the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
3. participating in the coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
4. determining the requirements for healthy and safe working conditions in practical training and controlling that these are observed through the Regional Labour Inspectorates;
5. taking part in the coordination of the State Admission Plan for the schools through the Regional Employment Offices;
6. participating in the organisation of career guidance;
7. designating its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert commissions of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Functions of the Ministry of Health

Art. 53. The Ministry of Health shall:

1. take part in the coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
2. identify the chronic diseases and physical handicaps counter-indicative for the vocational education and training in the vocations included in the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. identify, jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science, the vocations where the vocational education and vocational training is appropriate to the health condition of the students suffering from chronic diseases and physical handicaps, sensory troubles or mental deficiency;
4. identify the requirements for healthy conditions in the practical training and the hygienic and physiological requirements to the weekly timetables, and control that they are observed through the bodies of the State Sanitary Control;
5. designate its own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert commission of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Functions of the Branch Ministries

Art. 54. The branch ministries shall:

1. participate in the development, coordination and updating of the National Educational Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. participate in the drafting, coordinating and updating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;

3. propose updating of the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. take part in the coordination of the State Admission Plan for schools;
5. allocate the funds approved in their budget for the purposes of vocational education and vocational training and control their spending;
6. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the Expert Commission for Career Guidance of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training under the conditions and procedures provided for in the Agency's Regulations.

Functions of the Municipalities

Art. 55. Municipalities shall participate in policy development in the field of vocational education and training in the municipality with regard to:

1. the demand for work force;
2. career guidance to students, unemployed and other persons;
3. updating the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
4. the allocation of the funds approved in their budget for the purposes of vocational education and vocational training and career guidance and the control over their spending;
5. the development of the infrastructure of schools, vocational training centres and vocational information and career guidance centres through funds from the municipal budgets;
6. determination of the State Admission Plan for the schools.

Functions of the Employers' Organisations

Art. 56. The employers' organisations shall:

1. participate in drafting, updating and coordinating the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
2. propose updating of the Register under Art.1 para 2 from the Additional Provisions of the Public Education Act concerning the institutions in the vocational education and training system;
3. participate in the development, coordination and updating of the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
4. participate in the organisation and conducting of examinations for acquiring vocational qualification and nominate members of the examination panels;
5. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the expert commissions of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Functions of the Organisations Representing the Workers and Employees Nationwide

Art. 57. The organisations representing the workers and employees nationwide shall:

1. participate in updating the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in vocations;
2. take part in the development, updating and coordination of the List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training;
3. designate their own representatives to the Managing Board and to the Expert Commission for Career Guidance of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Functions of the Branch Trade Unions

Art. 58. The branch trade unions shall:

1. protect the interests of trainees before the employers on the issues related to the employment and social security during the practical training in the enterprises;
2. take part in organising and conducting the examinations for acquiring vocational qualification and nominate members of the examination panels;
3. designate their own representatives to the expert commissions in vocational areas of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training.

Chapter 7

FUNDING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND CAREER GUIDANCE

Sources of Financing

Art. 59. (1) The state-run and municipal schools, vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres, and train the trainers centres shall be funded by:

1. the state budget;
2. the budgets of the municipalities;
3. sponsorships, donations, testaments;
4. earned income;
5. national and international programmes.

(2) The subsidy from the state budget and the budgets of the municipalities ensures funds for:

1. the costs of vocational education and training in the state-run and municipal schools;
2. administrative and financial support to the state-run and municipal vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres, as well as to the train the trainers centres;
3. the costs of career guidance in the state-run and municipal vocational information and career guidance centres;
4. the costs of the qualification of the persons providing retraining of trainers in the train the trainers centres;

(3) The vocational training centres, vocational information and career guidance centres and the train the trainers centres shall also be financed by the Professional Training and Unemployment Fund.

(4) The state-run and municipal institutions in the system of vocational education and training shall make a budget.

(5) Earned income shall be used to maintain and develop the infrastructure. State budget subsidies and municipal subsidies shall not be reduced providing there is earned income.

(6) The vocational colleges and vocational training centres shall collect tuition fees from legal and physical entities.

(7) The state-run and municipal vocational information and career guidance centres shall also be financed through additional activities that are subject to their regulations.

Funding of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Art. 60. (1) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall be financed by funds from the state budget, earned income, sponsorships, donations, testaments, etc.

(2) The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training shall collect fees to issue licenses for vocational training and career guidance on the basis of a tariff approved by the Council of Ministers.

(3) The costs for the accreditation procedures shall be paid to the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training by the customers under conditions and in a procedure described in the Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training

Funding of Vocational Training outside the National Education Standards

Art. 61. Funding of vocational training outside the National Education Standards and funding of practical training under Art. 40 para 1, organised in the state-run and municipal schools and vocational training centres, shall be provided by fees paid by legal and physical entities in accordance with the concluded contracts.

Practical Training Abroad

Art. 62. The practical training abroad, organised by state-run and municipal schools and vocational training centres shall be funded by the respective school or centre on the basis of a contract concluded with foreign vocational education and training institutions.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. In the sense of this Act:

1. “occupational area” is a cluster of vocations in a sector of the economy defined in the National Classification of Sectors or in another sector of public life conforming to the respective area of education in line with the International Standard Classification of Education;
2. “vocation” is a type of working activity for which vocational education and vocational training is organised;
3. “part of a vocation” is a specified working activity within a vocation for which training can be organised;
4. “specialty” is an individually specified working activity within a certain vocation;
5. “vocational qualification” is qualification in a vocation or part of a vocation which combines a set of vocational competencies and the general education knowledge and skills that are needed to acquire them;
6. “vocational competencies” are abilities that the person has acquired on the basis of the accumulated knowledge and skills that help come up with initiatives, be fit for teamwork and competently to exercise a vocation in line with the National Education Standards for acquiring qualification in a vocation;

7. “level of vocational qualification” is the scope and content of vocational competencies and the general education knowledge and skills that are needed to acquire them;
8. “deviant behaviour” is behaviour that violates public norms and is subject to moral censure and legal sanction;
9. “accreditation” is the recognition of the compliance of the activity and quality of career guidance and vocational training and education with the National Education Standards;
10. “competence” is the recognized possession of the compulsory amount of vocational competencies that qualify to practice specific jobs.

§ 2. The List of Vocations for Vocational Education and Training shall incorporate, among others, the List referred to in Art. 42 para 6 of the Public Education Act.

§ 3. This Act shall apply in the training institutions that are run by the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and Ministry of Transport unless their articles of incorporation and the provisions of the special laws relating to their organization and activities provide otherwise.

Transitional and Concluding Provisions

§ 4. The Council of Ministers at a motion of the Minister of Education and Science shall approve Regulations on the Activity of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and decide on the number of its full time staff within 6 months of this Act’s entry into force.

§ 5. Within a year of this Act’s entry into force, the Minister of Education and Science at a motion of the National Vocational Education and Training Agency and upon coordination with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, shall transform the existing Pedagogical Consulting Offices and Vocational Information Centres into Vocational Information and Career Guidance Centres, or shall close them down.

§ 6. The Minister of Education and Science, in the span of time until the beginning of 2000/2001 school year, shall endorse by an ordinance the state-run and municipal vocational schools, vocational high schools and vocational colleges in compliance with the requirements of Art.18. The Ordinance shall be published in the State Gazette.

§ 7. Pending the approval of the National Education Standards for acquisition of qualification in vocations, the curricula and syllabi on the respective vocations and specialties endorsed by the Minister of Education and Science shall apply.

§ 8. Half of the Managing Board members in the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training during the first term of office shall be replaced by four representatives from the quotas of the organisations of employers and organisations of workers and employees nationwide subject to lots casting and by four representatives from the ministries’ quota.

§ 9. The following amendments shall be made in the Public Education Act (promulgated in the State Gazette, No 86 of 1991, amended, No 90 of 1996 and Nos 36, 124 and 153 of 1998), in Art. 6, para 1 subparas 7 and 8:

“7. vocational high schools – from the 8th or 9th grade to the 12th or 13th grade;
8. vocational schools – from the 7th or 8th grade, duration of training up to 3 years, from the 9th grade – duration of training up to 4 years, and vocational colleges after completion of secondary education – duration of training up to 2 years.”

§ 10. Section I of Chapter Six “Vocational Training” and § 1, item 8 of the Additional Provisions in the Law on Protection in the Event of Unemployment and on Promotion of Employment (promulgated in the State Gazette, No 120 of 1997, amended, No 155 of 1998, Nos 26 and 50 of 1999) shall be repealed.

§ 11. The enforcement of this Act is assigned to the Minister of Education and Science.

This Act was approved by the 38th National Assembly on July 15, 1999 and the Great Seal of the National Assembly is affixed to it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:

IVAN KOURTEV