Curriculum, subjects, number of hours

Vocational training institutes

According to law 4186/2013 [1], as amended and in force, in order to formulate curricula for each specialisation, the related job profiles are taken into consideration. They are certified by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) [2] or on the basis of the required professional qualifications. Curricula are assessed and if necessary, renewed every 6 years at least.

The initial vocational training curricula are classified in orientation groups of sectors and specialisations. They are reflected in the respective study guides. The study guide [3] for each specialisation includes:

1. The job profile
2. Learning outcomes expected in terms of knowledge, skills and competences for each subject and specialisation
3. Credit units
4. Correspondence between specialisation and candidate classification
5. Timetable for the teaching material of theoretical or laboratory section, prepared according to the learning outcomes sought after for each subject
6. Trainer qualifications
7. Teaching method and equipment
8. Means of instruction.

The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (including youth policy) plans and supervises the curriculum for each specialisation of initial vocational training.

Attendance lasts 5 semesters: 4 semesters of theoretical and laboratory training of a total duration of 1,200 hours of specialised training and one semester of internship or apprenticeship of a total duration of 960 hours.

Training includes:

- Theoretical subjects: they are taught in classrooms by one instructor and aimed at trainees acquiring the knowledge required to understand the cognitive object of their training
- Laboratory courses: they are carried out solely in laboratories and aim at the consolidation of the theoretical part of the training and the acquisition of skills. All or a part of the registered trainees of each class may attend them
- Mixed courses: these require concurrent theoretical training and skills acquisition.

Upon the completion of the training hours per semester, the entire ratio of theoretical, laboratory and mixed courses, as provided for by the timetable, must have been completed (ministerial decision)
Apprenticeship at IEK is divided in 192 hours of training at IEK and 768 hours of apprenticeship at the workplace (dual system).

As established by law 4186/2013, IEKs may offer distance learning curricula, enabling students to obtain a vocational training certificate and take part in EOPPEP certification procedures.

**Post-secondary year - apprenticeship class**

The curriculum per specialisation is defined with the respective ministerial decisions, while the programme of laboratory subjects of the respective specialisation has a 203-hour duration.

Within the context of linking vocational education and training with the needs of society and the professional and scientific developments, instructors apply the study programmes of post-secondary year - apprenticeship class. The latter are structured in learning modules which constitute of learning results that cover the whole span of the subject.

The curriculum of post-secondary year - apprenticeship class is quite flexible. 20% of the total teaching time, that is 42 out of 203 teaching hours of the apprenticeship programme that takes place in the school unit, is covered by the syllabus chosen by the teacher.

The instructor can act autonomously and cover the special educational needs and interests of the trainees, as well as other needs that arise from local or other type of peculiarities. He/she can also specify further the rest of the programme or even introduce new elements related to the specialisation.

Taken into consideration that trainees during their integration in the apprenticeship, are in a transition phase from the school to the work environment, the implementation of the apprenticeship curricula draws elements from the pedagogical theories of learning and the principles of adult learning.

The laboratory subject is structured in 1-3 partial thematic units or specific subjects. It lasts a total of 7 hours. It is taught in the morning or afternoon timetable for day EPAL and in the afternoon or evening timetable for evening EPAL.

**Teaching methods and materials**

**Vocational training institutes**

Vocational training institutes' (IEK) main task is the provision of high-level qualifications, with a view to assist trainees to enter the labour market.

This is achieved through:

- The selection and development of accredited initial vocational training programmes that correspond to specific job profiles, based on specialisations with relative higher labour market demand
- The selection of trainers with appropriate knowledge or experience to provide high quality training
- Fully equipped laboratories of formal education structures, which ensure a suitable environment for comprehensive training.

Due to the nature of the training provided, specific teaching material (including textbooks) are not used in IEK, contrarily to what happens in the formal education system. The instructors are free to find and choose teaching materials and methodology. However, they are assisted in their duties by the deputy head of each IEK, who provides some guidance.
**Teamwork** is encouraged. The teaching methods in use aim at offering modern and qualitative training, as regards content and means that combine theoretical presentation and laboratory practice.

**Practical training** at the workplace is also part of the curricula. Visits to companies are foreseen, as a means to better understand the workplace, in order to assimilate and transform theoretical knowledge and so as to facilitate trainees' access to the labour market.

**Laboratory Centres** operate as independent administrative structures, that is, as school units. They co-operate with vocational upper secondary schools and the vocational training institutes based in the same area. They are formed by at least two school units while in their premises laboratories of different fields and expertise operate. They aim at improving students' laboratory practice.

**Post-secondary year - apprenticeship class**

The implementation of the post-secondary - apprenticeship class is based on apprenticeship curricula designed by the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) [5]. The programmes meet quality standards set by the approved quality framework of programme studies, as well as the criteria that are compatible with the respective validated job profiles of EOPPEP.

As regards teaching methods, within the framework of the apprenticeship curricula, educational methods and teaching techniques are proposed to the educators. These methods give emphasis on linking theory with practice and are focused on the trainee and his/her needs.

In particular, during the implementation of the apprenticeship curricula, emphasis is given on:

1. Self-motivation
2. Active participation
3. Learning based on experience
4. Collaboration
5. Cultivation of skills and competences

Indicatively, educators may use the following methods and techniques:

1. Debate
2. Brainstorming
3. Exercises-applications related to the professional context of each specialisation
4. Demonstration
5. Case studies
6. Group work
7. Role playing
8. Simulation
9. Projects
10. Problem solving
11. Interview
12. Educational visit.

Emphasis is also given in the practice of digital and practical skills of the students related to the use of general or special software and machines.

The material in use for the implementation of the post-secondary year - apprenticeship class curricula may be drawn from multiple resources that must be valid and reliable. Such resources are scientific papers, published surveys, conference minutes, professional and technical manuals, professional guides, technical plans and studies, work documents, training material, as well as webpages of accredited professional bodies and organisations.
In addition, the instructor can use free software and educational tools, if necessary. Finally, the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) has support material and guidelines for the specialisations of the post-secondary year - apprenticeship class (also available via the webpage of the Ministry of Education).