Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

Secondary vocational education follows after primary education and is aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and practices from the area of sciences which have applicable practical value. Its objective is to prepare students for work, but also for continuation of their education. Secondary vocational education is structured as: technical education, vocational education for occupations or vocational skilling.

Technical education takes four years and prepares workers for employment in a broader profile occupation in all areas of labour and for continuation of education. It is available in 73 public schools offering syllabi and curricula for 50 educational profiles in 15 occupational areas. It ends with a State Matura or Final Exam. The State Matura facilitates entry into higher education, and the Final Exam into the labour market. The State Matura and Final Exam involve also a Project Tasks which is prescribed in the Concept for State Matura and Final Exam. The purpose of the Project Tasks is to verify the practical abilities of the pupils for completion of tasks from the realm of their profession. The Examination Programme for the Project Tasks [1] has been developed by the National Examinations Centre. For the purpose of the Final Exam the NEC has developed Examination Programme for the each subject [2] (general and vocational subjects) in the vocational education.

The list of 15 vocational areas in the technical education is as follow: economic, law and trade; health; textile and leather processing; graphics and printing; electro-technical; personal services; hospitality and tourism, forestry and wood processing; construction and geodesy; agriculture and veterinary; traffic and transport; sports, geology, mining and metallurgy; chemistry; machinery.

Vocational education for occupations takes three years and primarily prepares workers for the economy, i.e. industry, crafts or services. It is provided in 45 public vocational schools which deliver syllabi and curricula for 36 educational profiles in 12 occupational areas. Of the said profiles, 12 have been reformed already on the basis of the Concept for Vocational Education of Occupations [3] and the Methodology for Development of Syllabi and Curricula. It ends with a Final Exam facilitating transfer to the labour market and continuation of education under special conditions to technical or post-secondary education.

Vocational skilling takes up to two years and provides students with practical knowledge and qualifications for work with lower level requirements in different areas of labour. Programmes for vocational skilling are open to all who have completed primary education or less. Depending on their duration, these programmes provide learners with functional skilling (up to one year duration) and vocational skilling (up to two years durations). They end in Examination for Vocational Skilling which facilitates continuation under special conditions into vocational education for occupations and
technical education. This level of education has not been reformed since 1989, although a new Concept for Vocational Skilling has been developed, and has not been released in the last 10 years.

The last years have seen the application of contemporary approaches to vocational education syllabus and curriculum development. These new learning objective centred curricula attempt to impart knowledge students need to acquire and abilities, skills and attitudes they need to develop through manifest process actions and activities. This approach was expected to enable students acquire process and complex knowledge. However, the goals defined in all three areas of student development, namely the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor areas, have still not managed to change the learning process, where the focus is still on the cognitive area. The psycho-motor area is neglected because of lack of resources (tools, equipment and materials) for the necessary practical activities, whereas for activities in the affective area those realising the educational process lack the necessary competences or self-confidence to more boldly shape and implement activities that develop the value system and social skills of students.

### Teaching Methods and Materials

Resources available for the teaching and learning process are primarily focused on textbooks, whilst other sources of learning (worksheets, manuals, software packages, etc.) are rare, and if at all only for general education subjects. Teaching is dominated by traditional, whole-class frontal work with students at the expense of interactive approach and processes.

The curriculums for the general subjects in the vocational education are developed by the Bureau for Development of Education, whereas the development of the curriculums for the vocational subjects is responsibility of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

Each curricula contains description of the general objectives, specific objectives, prerequisites (in terms of previously acquired knowledge necessary for participation in class for the subject in question), teaching process with explanations about the subject’s content and study areas, structure of the content with explanation of the specific goals in each study area, didactical recommendations and correlation with other subjects, teaching methods, learning activities, organisation and implementation of the teaching activity, prescribed textbooks for the pupils, prescribed literature for the teacher, directions for assessment of the pupils, standards about the teachers, standards about the school facilities (classroom and equipment).

The standards for occupations and the vocational qualifications are developed by Centre for Vocational Education and Training for each occupational area and vocational profile within each occupational area.