Curriculum, subjects, number of hours

Vocational courses

These courses provide students with initial vocational training and diversified learning according to their interests, with a view to entering the job market and continuing their studies.

These courses constitute one type of upper secondary level training of the National Qualifications System (Sistema Nacional de Qualificações - SNQ), conferring a level 4 qualification (National Qualifications Framework), and offer dual certification (academic and professional).

The courses being run cover several education and training areas, which are published online in the Network of Educational Provision for Training Cycle 2018-2021 [1].

The curricular structure of these courses is divided into subjects and short-term training units (Unidades de Formação de Curta Duração - UFCD), which offer greater flexibility and allows for the different learning paces.

With the publication of Decree-Law no. 55/2018, 6th July, the curricular model of vocational education courses includes the following training components: socio-cultural, scientific, technological (previously known as technical) and Training in a Work Context).

The socio-cultural training component involves a total timetable of 1,000 hours and aims to contribute to building students’ personal, social and cultural identity and includes the following subjects:

- Portuguese: 320 hours;
- Foreign language I, II or III: 220 hours;
- Integration area: 220 hours;
- ICT - Information and communication technologies: 100 hours;
- Physical education: 140 hours.

The scientific training component includes 2 to 3 subjects with a total workload of 500 hours and aims to provide scientific training consistent with the professional profile associated with their qualification.

The technological training (known as the technical training component for the courses that started before 2018/2019) are designed for the acquisition and development of learning, knowledge, skills and technical skills defined for the professional profile associated with their qualification, according to the National Qualifications Catalogue (Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações - CNQ) framework.
On courses started up to the 2017/2018 academic year, this component consists of 3 to 4 subjects, having a total duration of 1,100 hours.

With the new legislation (Decree-Law No. 55/2018) this training component is now divided into short-term training units lasting between 1,000 and 1,300 hours, in order to respect each training framework.

Vocational courses also include a TWC (Training in Work Context) component, lasting between 600 and 840 hours, in order to acquire and develop technical, relational and organisational skills relevant to the professional qualification.

The total workload is not compartmentalised by the three-year training cycle. It is managed by the school, as part of its pedagogical autonomy, safeguarding the balance of the annual timetable, in order to optimise modular management and training in a work context.

The total workload of those vocational courses started until 2017/2018 varies between 3,200 and 3,440 hours. As for the courses started in 2017/2018, this varies between 3,100 and 3,440 hours.

The basic curricular model of vocational courses includes the citizenship and development component, a transversal area with an interdisciplinary approach, using contributions of different training components, subject areas, subjects or short-term training units.

The model also includes the optional moral and religious education, with a workload of 81 hours taught over the three years of the training cycle, which is is added to the total of the model.

**Education and training courses**

These courses, which are part of the [National Qualifications System](https://www.anqep.pt/) (Sistema Nacional de Qualificações – SNQ), allow for the conclusion of the basic level (2nd and 3rd cycles) and upper secondary education and training, allowing dual certification (academic and professional).

The courses cover several education and training areas and there is a complete listing at [ANQEP](https://www.anqep.pt)’s webpage.

Each education and training course corresponds to an education/training stage (from Type 1 to Type 7). Access to these stages depends on the academic and vocational qualifications of each trainee. The different types of secondary-level training pathways, components, training areas, as well as the school and vocational certification they confer can be found on the ANQEP, I.P. site.

Their training pathways must fulfil the following minimum duration, as stipulated in the curriculum programmes:

- Training path: Type 4 - minimum length: 1,230 hours
- Training path: Complementary training course - minimum length: 1,020 hours
- Training path: Type 5 - minimum length: 2,276 hours
- Training path: Type 6 - minimum length: 1,425 hours
- Training paths: Type 7 - minimum length: 1,155 hours

All education and training courses curriculum programmes are divided into four training components:
socio-cultural, scientific, technological and practical. Socio-cultural and scientific training components are geared towards acquiring skills in languages, culture and communication, citizenship and society, as well as the different applied sciences, using interdisciplinary and transversal methods in terms of instrumental learning. They are divided into subjects and focus on personal, social and professional development in conjunction with the technological training and practical training components. The socio-cultural and scientific training components subjects follow the programmes approved by the Ministry of Education (ME).

Technological training is divided into units or modules, possibly associated with subjects or areas, according to the skills that define the vocational qualification envisaged. In this component the courses follow the National Qualification Catalogue framework.

Practical training is part of an individual training plan undertaken in the workplace, takes the form of a traineeship and aims to facilitate the acquisition and development of technical, relational, organisational and career management skills, which are relevant for the qualification, access to job market and lifelong learning.

**Apprenticeship courses**

The apprenticeship course curriculum model includes the following training components: socio-cultural, scientific technological and practical.

The socio-cultural training component involves a minimum total workload of 700 hours and a maximum of 800. It aims to contribute to the building of students’ personal, social and cultural identity and prepare them to use new technologies.

The scientific training component has a minimum workload of 200 hours and a maximum of 400. It aims to help students acquire the basic scientific knowledge and skills of the respective course.

The technological training component has a total minimum workload of 800 hours and a maximum of 1,000. It aims to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are specific and necessary to the profession and respects the training frameworks of the National Qualifications Catalogue.

The practical training component has a minimum total workload of 1,100 hours and a maximum of 1,500. It aims to help students acquire and develop knowledge and technical, relational and organisational skills that are relevant to the respective profession. This component is undertaken within a work context, using a combined educational/vocational approach throughout the training process.

**Curriculum Structure of Apprenticeship Courses – level 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Components</th>
<th>Skills Areas</th>
<th>Training Areas (divided into short-term training units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>Languages, Culture and Communication</td>
<td>- Living in Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicating in a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Information and Communication Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship and Society</td>
<td>- Today’s World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Social and Personal Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total length of training varies between 2,800 hours and 3,700 hours, according to the knowledge required by the different qualifications. In addition to this, there can be up to 90 hours, 30 of which are dedicated to support activities for trainees, such as recovery plans, and the remaining 60 hours for trans-curricular projects in the community, for example, which should be defined in specific regulations.

### Specialised artistic courses

In upper secondary education, visual arts and audio-visual arts, dance and music curricula are divided into training components.

The general training component, which aims to help construct a learner’s personal, social and cultural identity, is the same in the four courses and includes the following subjects:

- **Portuguese:** Grades 10 and 11 – 180 minutes a week; Grade 12 – 200 minutes a week, per grade;
- **Foreign language I, II or III:** Grades 10 and 11 – 150 minutes a week per grade;
- **Philosophy:** Grades 10 and 11 – 150 minutes a week, per grade;
- **Physical education (with the exception of the dance course):** Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 150 minutes a week, per grade.

The scientific training component helps students acquire and develop a body of knowledge and basic skills of the respective course.

In the visual arts and audio-visual areas, this component is identical to the courses of communication design, product design and artistic production, including the following subjects:

- **History of culture and the arts:** Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 180 minutes a week, per grade;
- **Descriptive geometry A:** Grades 11 and 12 – 270 minutes a week, per grade;
- **Biennial subject option (image and sound B; mathematics; school provision):** Grades 11 and 12 – 180 minutes a week, per grade.

The scientific training component is common to the secondary courses of music, singing and Gregorian Chant, including the following subjects:

- **History of culture and the arts:** Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 180 minutes a week, per grade;
- **Image and sound A:** Grades 11 and 12 – 270 minutes a week, per grade;
Biennial subject (descriptive geometry B or mathematics or school provision): Grades 11 and 12 – 180 minutes a week, per grade.

In the case of music, it is the same on the following four courses: dance, music, singing and Gregorian chant, and includes the following subjects:

- History of culture and the arts: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 135 minutes a week, per grade;
- Musical training: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 90 minutes a week per grade;
- Composition Analysis and Technique: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 135 minutes a week, per grade;
- Complementary provision (optional): Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 90 minutes a week, per grade.

In the case of the Dance course:

- History of culture and the arts: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 135 minutes a week, per grade;
- Music: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 90 minutes a week, per grade;
- Complementary provision (optional): Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 90 minutes a week, per grade.

The technical-artistic training component, which aims for learners to acquire and develop a body of knowledge and basic competences of the respective course, involves specific ways of learning within a work context (when applicable), including the following subjects:

- Visual arts and audio-visual arts;
- Drawing A: Grades 10, 11 and 12 – 250 minutes a week, per grade;
- Project work and technology: Grades 10 and 11 – 360 minutes a week; grade 12 – 720 minutes a week (part of in-service training), per grade;
- Biennial subject (applied physics and chemistry, arts management, school provision): Grades 11 and 12 – 180 minutes a week, per grade.

Dance and music: the subjects vary according to the vocational area of each course, as does the minimum workload;

- Dance: 3,060 minutes a week, per cycle total;
- Music: 765 minutes a week, per cycle total;
- Singing: 1,305 minutes a week, per cycle total;
- Gregorian Chant: 1,035 minutes a week, per cycle total.

The courses in the visual arts, audio-visual and dance areas also feature training in the workplace, with a workload of 132 hours.

**Teaching methods and materials**

Private and public vocational schools can develop their own educational, cultural and technological activities according to the applicable legislation (Decree-Law no. 92/2014, 20th June) and under the
supervision of Ministry of Education.

**Methodological guidelines**

*Ordinance 235-A/2018* [4], 23rd August, describes the responsibilities of pedagogical supervision of vocational courses, providing the following general guidelines:

- pedagogical coordination between the different subjects and training components of the course;
- guidance and monitoring of students during the preparation for the vocational aptitude test;
- articulation between schools and bodies that host training in a work context (TWC) to prepare protocols, draft work plans and training contracts, as well as monitor the students;
- help students acquire and apply knowledge, a sense of initiative, autonomy, creativity, communication, teamwork and cooperation in connection with the environment and implementation of projects;
- identification of students’ learning difficulties and development of remedial and/or extra activities.

*Joint Dispatch No. 453/2004* [5], 27th July, defines the responsibilities and pedagogical coordination of the Education and Training Courses, in relation to the teaching positions and their duties.

To this end, the course director is responsible for the technical-pedagogical management of the courses, including the coordination of the different training components, the different disciplines/areas, as well as everything related to the preparation of practical training in a work context and the transition to working life plan. The course director is appointed by the training body, preferably from among the professionals teaching the technological training component, taking into account the necessary coordination with the psychology and guidance services.

In short, in terms of teaching methods and materials used on vocationally-oriented courses in dual VET upper secondary education, teachers can decide which method to use, although, at school level, processes and methodologies might be adopted, as well as pedagogical materials to be shared among teachers from the school or school cluster.

There are no official guidelines on homework.

**Textbooks**

Educational publishers devise textbooks appropriate for dual VET provision. Like science-humanities courses at upper secondary education, the design of textbooks is the responsibility of publishers. The production, publishing and distribution of school textbooks follow the principle of market freedom and competition.

Procedures for the assessment and certification of school textbooks are defined centrally by bodies previously accredited by the Ministry of Education.

Teachers/schools are free to choose and use school textbooks. The acquisition of the textbooks by the students is not free, unlike other didactic resources provided by the teachers/trainers.

On vocational courses, school manuals are adopted for the training cycle of the course the subject is part of (i.e., for the duration of the course and not for a specific grade), respecting the school’s pedagogic autonomy regarding the management of the teaching load.

*Law no. 71/2018, 31st December* [6] extends the free school textbooks scheme to upper-secondary education. At the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, all students attending compulsory
education in public schools received textbooks at no cost. The legislation defines the procedures and deadlines associated with the school textbook registration process and estimates the number of students for the 2019/2020 academic year in public schools offering vocational and education and training courses.

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