According to the Labour Code [1] (SK), a pedagogical employee is a protected person. The employment may be concluded for a definite or indefinite period (tenure), and the teacher may work either full-time or part-time. The salary is dependent on the teaching load. The teacher may be employed by several employers as well (up to 48 hours per week). The working conditions are adjusted by the Labour Code and by work orders of individual types of schools or school facilities.

There is a lack of qualified teachers in regional education in Slovakia. The problem is most prominent in the capital – Bratislava. This is related to low salaries in education and the increasing costs of living and the lack of interest in teacher training study. The list of vacancies for teachers is published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR [2], school authorities, Eduportal [3] (SK), and schools.

Planning policy

National Program for Development of Education and Training [4](SK) approved on 27. 6. 2018 presents long-term concept of education and training covering the 10-year perspective goals and objectives from pre-primary education through primary, secondary to higher education as well as further education to ensure personal development and the acquisition of the relevant knowledge and skills necessary for the successful employment of graduates in the labor market.

The strategic objectives of the strategy are

- to increase the quality of the education and training system,
- to increase access to quality education for all and
- to modernize the education and content system as well as management, funding and evaluation.

Cross-section priorities

1. Integration and inclusion of marginalized Roma communities and students from a socially disadvantaged environment
2. Linking the education and training system to the needs of the economy and the labor market
3. Development of a non-formal education system.

Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information [5], as a directly managed organisation of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic [2], is the national information centre for science, technology, innovation and education, and the Slovak Scientific Library.
It coordinates and manages interdisciplinary research-development centres and the national infrastructure for research, development, innovation, and education.

It provides basic information on the structure of the school system, trends and prognoses on the development of regional education; manages the network of schools and school facilities; predicts indicators in education; prepares statistical yearbooks, an overview of schools, schedules, and information on admission to higher education institutions. It prepares analyses, prognoses, and studies for regional and higher education. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic works with Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information data to plan and manage education. It is trying to attract young people to work in education by proposals in the area of teachers’ remuneration (salary increase, career benefits). Currently, the offer of places in teacher training study programmes surpasses the demand.

**Entry to the profession**

Only those applicants may be employed who meet the personal (integrity, medical fitness), educational and qualification requirements.

Teachers’ work contract can be made for a fixed term (for a minimum of one school year) as well as with an indefinite duration, which is decided by the school’s headteacher. The work contract must comply with the valid Labour Code.

The vacancies of headteachers and their deputies are filled by selection procedure. The way and procedure is similarly defined by the legislation.

Filling vacancies with teachers is within the competence of headteachers.

**Induction**

Upon completion of their study, qualified teachers start working in schools as novice teachers. Within the first two years of practice, they will complete adaptation education under the supervision of the inducting teacher (a teacher with at minimum the first attestation). If necessary, the adaptation process can be provided by an organisation authorised to provide professional development of teachers (e.g. The Methodology and Pedagogy Centre [7] (SK)).

The adaptation education aims to provide the required professional competences. The adaptation education programme is approved by the school’s headteacher. It usually finishes after two years upon recommendation of the inducting teacher. It is completed by a presentation of acquired competences in front of a three-member committee chaired by the school’s headteacher.

Upon successful completion of the adaptation education, the novice teacher will be classified as an independent pedagogical employee.
Professional status

The new Act on pedagogical and professional employees [8] (SK) is based on the Slovak Government Programme Statement for the years 2016 – 2020 [9] (SK) and it aims to effect changes in the system continuing education, career system, and obtaining attestation in relation to the professional standards of pedagogical and professional employees in regional education.

The act introduces a right for protection against social-pathological behaviour of the management pedagogical employees, management professional employees, other employees of the school and school facilities, founder, legal representatives, or other natural or legal persons (for protection against mobbing, bossing as well as staffing). Code of Ethics [10] (SK) was introduced as well as the obligation to behave in compliance with it.

Teachers belong to the category of protected persons and they are public employees.

Replacement measures

An educational employee is obliged to substitute preliminary absent teacher on headteacher’s command and, if necessary, to take over the teaching activity or educational work over the extent of his/her teaching or educational work. Long-lasting absence is solved by employing a substitute teacher for a fixed term.

Support measures

For increasing motivation and efficiency of teachers several measures were taken:

- a trend of a faster rise of salaries is enforced,
- adoption of the act on creation of loan fund for novice teachers,
- the moral reward for teachers, which is connected with a financial or material gift for work, extraordinary results, teaching in the Slovak language abroad, playing a significant part in the development of education in the Slovak Republic, and an extraordinary contribution to the professional development of teachers,
- approval of the Act on professional and pedagogical employees [8] (SK) and supplementary decrees and regulations of the Government of the Slovak Republic listed in the legislative part of this chapter.

Salaries
Remuneration of employees in public service is defined by salary schedules.

In compliance with salary schedules valid as of 1. September 2019, teachers’ salaries depend on their salary class 4-9, work class 1 or 2, and years of professional experience. The salary table indicates that the lowest tariff salary – 671 € is paid to pedagogical employees in the class 4 without professional experience. Pedagogical employees without professional experience in class 9 have a tariff salary of 1137.5 €. Years of professional experience are added to the tariff salary. If a pedagogical employee in class 4 adds 40 years of experience, his/her tariff salary will amount to 792 €; for a pedagogical employee in class 9 with added 40 years of experience it will be 1342.5 €.

Tariff salaries increase with further education, attestations, and specialised activities as defined by law. Tariff salaries are also increased through various allowances, e.g. for management, substitution, personal allowance for quality work, shift allowance, and others.

Benefits in remuneration include bonuses.

A functional salary is the personal salary of a particular employee.

**Working time and holidays**

Teacher’s occupational activity is comprised of direct education and training activity defined by the government decree, other activities defined by school’s work code, and specialised activities where the teacher meets the qualification and personality requirements.

The extent of teaching duty for teachers and headteachers in schools is defined by the government degree.

The base workload of a kindergarten teacher is 28 hours, a teacher at the first level of the primary school 22-23 hours, a teacher at the second level of the primary school 23 hours and a secondary school teacher 22 hours. Bilingual gymnasium teachers teaching in a foreign language have the base workload of 17-21 hours. Lessons in kindergartens take 60 minutes and 45 minutes in primary and secondary schools. 40-minute lessons take place in schools in nature, the afternoon shift, and special schools.

The weekly working time is made up of activities whereby the educational workers carry out the direct teaching and educational activities and of the time during which they carry out the other activities connected with their educational work. The other working activities connected with educational work are specified by the work order of the school or school facility.

Teaching duty of head teachers and their deputees depends on the number of lessons. For primary and secondary school headteachers, the teaching duty ranges from 6 to 23 hours depending on the number of lessons.

The length of teachers’ leaves is laid down by the Labour Code. The leave of teachers, headteachers and their deputies, instructors of vocational training and tutors, kindergarten teachers including their headteachers and deputies, is 8 weeks in a calendar year. If the tutor educates the young people under heavy conditions, at least in the extent of half of the weekly load set down, he/she has the right for extra leave lasting one week.
Promotion, advancement

Owing to the fact that under the act on performance of work in public interest the teachers are public employees, their procedure is limited by this law. The procedure is more or less automatic depending on the length of practice.

The career diversification is given by the work position held. Teachers’ career possibilities are defined by the act on pedagogical and professional and pedagogical employees.

According to law, the career system is a set of rules for career advancement and incentives. The career system provides pedagogical and professional employees with salary progression, bonuses, as well as the time off for attending training or attestation examination. Ultimately, it motivates pedagogical and professional employees to grow professionally.

Categories of pedagogical employees: teacher, master of vocational training, tutor, accompanist, school coach, pedagogical assistant, foreign teacher, school special pedagogue, professional development instructor.

Career grades express the demands of work and the extent of obtained professional competences.

Career grades in the category of teachers include:

- novice teacher,
- independent teacher,
- teacher with the first attestation and teacher with the second attestation.

A career position is a functional assignment of the teacher to the performance of a specialised or management activity.

Specialised activities can be performed only by teachers who have completed specialisation education.

The structure of career positions and the extent of responsibility for specialised activities are defined by the headteacher in the internal regulations upon discussion in the pedagogical board. Specialised activities are performed in schools in career positions such as inducting teacher, class teacher, head of the subject committee, head of the educational area, head of the methodological association, educational counsellor, career advisor, school coordinator in education and training, supervisor.

Teachers choose their career pathways freely (according to their professional goals), namely by advancement through career grades (1.attestation, 2.attestation) or training for performance of the above-mentioned specialised activities. It is possible to remain in one career grade throughout one’s whole work-life by simultaneously implementing professional development through formal, non-formal, and informal education.

The following conditions for obtaining the first attestation were set for teachers: a minimum of 5 years in the career level “independent pedagogical employee” (teacher) and completing the first attestation or obtaining a PhD degree in the respective study field.

The same condition applies to the classification in the career level „pedagogical employee (teacher)
with the second attestation": a minimum of five years in the career level pedagogical employee (teacher) with the first attestation and completing the second attestation or obtaining a PhD degree in the respective field. The requirement to perform specialised activities after the completion of the respective specialisation education programme is a part of the systematic support of the professionalisation of specialised activities.

The law makes it possible for teachers to take part in education directly at school during their working hours in the form of actualisation education, which maintains and updates their professional competences. Every teacher is entitled to 5 paid workdays per calendar year for professional development in the selected career pathway.

**Mobility and transfers**

The transfer of teachers from one school to another is not controlled centrally; teachers are transferred on the basis of terms of employment and relevant regulations of the Labour Code, as well as their own decision.

**Dismissal**

The dismissal of teacher from the category of educational staff is not regulated by a separate rule. In case of gross violation of working discipline the appropriate regulations of the Labour Code are followed. Teachers can change employment based on their own decision.

**Retirement and pensions**

Employment of a pedagogical employee and a professional employee will be terminated at the latest after the completion of the school year in which he/she reached the age of 65; in case of headteachers, at the end of their term of office in which they reached the age of 65.

Every Slovak citizen can terminate employment by reaching retirement age or by retiring early upon meeting the defined conditions (e.g. at least 15 years of social insurance, a maximum of 2 years before the retirement and the pension being higher than 1.2 times the amount of the minimum subsistence for an adult natural person).

**Legislative references**


National Council of the Slovak Republic, 2003. Act No. 553/2003 on remuneration of some employees at the work performance in public interest and on the change and supplement to some acts as amended by subsequent provisions (Zákon č. 553/2003 Z.z. o odmeňovaní niektorých zamestnancov pri výkone práce vo verejnom záujme a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov [12]) (last accessed 07/01/2020).


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[3] https://www.eduportal.sk/