Conditions of service

Education staff at higher vocational colleges

Lecturers and instructors in public higher vocational colleges are civil servants. The law specifies the rules and procedure of their employment. Lecturer candidates first apply for the title lecturer of a certain subject or three subjects at most. Higher vocational colleges advertise calls to apply for titles every three years. The lecturer who meets all the requirements is appointed by the college board of lecturers for five years, namely by the consent of the accreditation commission. If a college is pending founding, the accreditation commission appoints the first board of lecturers.

The title of a lecturer applies only to teaching a particular subject at any higher vocational college. Only lecturers holding the respective title may apply for a job advertised by higher vocational colleges. The directors or head teachers of higher vocational colleges and their application committee make the selection of applicants.

The common work code, specifies tentatively the working conditions in public higher vocational colleges, collective agreements, law on civil servants and school regulations (see Conditions of service for teachers [1]). Most vocational college lecturers are employed on work contracts and only a small number have agreed an employment relationship. In this way, a fresh flow of practical professional experience into the study process is assured.

Academic staff at higher education institutions

Higher education teaching staff, scientific staff and associates at public higher education institutions are civil servants. Their work conditions are regulated by general labour legislation, the Civil servants Act (en [2]), collective agreements and regulations on higher education. According to the full work time equivalent and/or full-time student equivalent there were 16.8 students per 1 teacher in the 2014/2015 academic year. If we also take into account higher education staff, the proportion was 1:10.3. Furthermore, women made almost 40% of the higher education teaching staff in the 2014/2015 academic year. (Source: SURS [3])

Planning policy

Demographic projections, student intake, the number of employees and the manner of employment is monitored and published by the national Statistical office (SURS [4]). The Ministry of education [5] monitors statistics and gives consent to student intake proposals.

HR planning in specific higher education institutions is partially affected by financial regulations. In 2014 and 2015 all public higher education institutions must also adopt an HR besides the work and financial plan, while the competent minister must submit the basis for drafting the HR plan. The basis
must be prepared in such a way that the total number of staff with indirect recipients of budget funding in the period from January 2014 to January 2015 under its jurisdiction will decrease by 1%. This applies to the entire public sector.

Quality regulations in higher education already demand a human resources plan for the initial accreditation of the higher education institution or study programme. This is also subject to judgement with external evaluation. Financial regulations determine that a higher education institution needs to design an annual work programme. In it, plans for new employment positions of higher education teachers, scientific workers and associates, a plan for retirement and potential relocations must be outlined. Pedagogical and research training, tutorship training, working with special needs students and similar have to be planned, as well. The career development of higher education associates, especially research and teaching assistants, is planned separately.

**Entry to the profession**

**Education staff in short-cycle higher education**

Positions of higher vocational college (HVC) pedagogical staff that are determined in job structuring are filled with an open recruitment process. Job structuring is determined by a HVC head teacher or director. The head teacher or the director determines the open recruitment process and selects a candidate among the applicants with the valid title of a college lecturer (or instructor). The head of HVC concludes an employment agreement with the chosen candidate, either fixed-term or open-ended, or nonsalaried contract. The employment relationship may be full-time or part-time. The contract stipulates the legal rights of the employee and the rights determined by the collective agreement.

An employment agreement may be terminated by mutual consent, or an employee can terminate it unilaterally. In cases permitted by law, HVC may also terminate it.

**Academic staff in higher education**

Higher education institutions have their own internal organisation, which is self-determined. In accordance with the general regulations they decide about appointing titles and determine the requirements for reappointments. The policy of employing higher education teachers, scientific workers and associates is also in their competence. The rector is responsible for the educational, research, artistic and other activity at the university and the dean at the single higher education institution. They are also responsible for job structuring and concluding employment relationships. In job structuring the rector and the dean take into consideration rules related to:

- the scope of education, research and artistic work;
- regulations on teacher workload;
- standards determined by the National Higher Education Master Plan (e.g. the ratio between the number of students and the number of higher education teachers and associates) and the rules for undertaking research and development.

As specified by general regulations and higher education regulations specify that positions can be filled through advertising a vacancy. In order to recruit the best teachers possible, higher education institutions opt for international advertisement of vacancies, as well. Vacancies are advertised and filled in adherence to time limits and ways as specified by the charter of the higher education institution.

The Public Finance Balancing Act allows for recruitment upon approval by the management board of a
Public higher education institution prior to the beginning of the recruitment process.

Professional status

Lecturers and instructors in public higher vocational colleges (HVC) are public servants. The duties of the employer are performed by a HVC head teacher or director. For the purposes of employment and employment relationships of public servants in HVCs and for their rights and duties, the Employment relationships Act [en (6)], the Education Collective Agreement [7] and individual school and HVC legislation are used. Employment is executed in a way that ensures equal opportunity for all interested candidates so that the one who is most qualified to perform the tasks of a certain position is selected.

Higher education teaching staff, scientific staff and associates at public higher education institutions are civil servants, while duties and responsibilities of the employer are in the domain of the rector of the university or the dean of a single higher education institution. Their professional (employment) status is established on several legal bases. It is specified by:

- Employment Relationships Act [en (6)]: stipulates general rules on employment relationships between the employee and the employer (for a limited or unlimited time period), rules and duties of this relationship (pension, disability, health insurance and unemployment insurance, traineeship, trial work, organisation of working time, breaks, annual leave and notice periods, salary);
- Civil Servants Act [en (2)]: establishes the most important principles of their employment such as equal opportunity, professional and occupational ethics, general competencies, reliability, accountability for results, effective management, protection of professional interests, transparency of work, etc; and the way of determining the rights and duties of public servants.

Salaries and awards are stipulated by the Salary System in the Public Sector Act, governmental decisions (on the promotion of public servants into wage grades, performance related bonuses, the sale of goods and services on the market, position bonus, etc), collective agreements and internal procedures for work evaluation.

Salaries

Salaries of education staff at higher vocational colleges and teaching staff at higher education institution are established on the same legal bases as for salaries of education staff in basic and upper secondary schools [8].

In higher vocational colleges the head teacher or director determines the salaries according to procedure. They also make decisions on the promotion of staff to higher wage grades and make proposals for their promotion to titles.

The actual salary of an individual higher education teacher is determined on the basis of the above and according to the procedure determined by an internal work evaluation or a similar regulation by the higher education institution. Teachers may be promoted by five grades within a title. Promotion is possible every three years, in which period a sufficient number of points must be collected. Work performance is assessed annually.

The lowest and the highest basic salary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2016</th>
<th>minimum (per month)</th>
<th>maximum (per month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wage grade</td>
<td>Basic salary (gross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational colleges</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>instructor</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1,360.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecturer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,414.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education associates</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1,308.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education teachers</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2,244.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supplements**

Salaries are composed of the basic salary and supplements. According to the general regulations stipulated for public servants the salary of pedagogical and academic staff includes supplements for:

- position,
- period of employment,
- mentorship to a trainee,
- completed third cycle degree study programme if it is not a requirement for the position,
- special work load: for work outside regular working hours, in the afternoon, overtime work, increased work load.

**Bonuses**

The HVC pedagogical staff and academic staff in higher education are entitled to the same bonuses as the education staff in pre-school education, basic and upper secondary education.

**Working time and holidays**

**Education staff at short-cycle higher vocational colleges**

According to the general work code, lecturers work 5 days a week, 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week. The right to a 30-minute lunch break is included in the working time.

In a 40-hour working week, HVC lecturers have a 16-hour weekly teaching time, and instructors have to give 480 hours of tutorials a year. A lecturer's duties and responsibilities comprise lectures, tutorials, consultations, exams, mentoring to students writing graduate theses, updating study programmes, preparing study materials, cooperating with employers in their professional field and work related to professional development. Instructors give tutorials and assess students’ practical work.

The teaching time of lecturers and instructors is allocated through the study year, from the beginning of October to the middle of July. Annual leave is arranged from July to September and is from 24 to 35 days depending on the level of education and years of service. Lecturers who are over 50 years of age are entitled to 5 extra days of annual leave.

Additional paid leave is possible in the case of illness, care of a family member, preparation for and sitting the teaching certification examination, taking part in cultural and sports events of national and international importance, natural disasters, a wedding, the birth of a child, death in the family,
moving house and humanitarian activity.

**Academic staff at higher education institutions**

Direct teaching load during the organised study process in higher education, which is operated as a public service, is specified by the Higher Education Act and it totals:

- 6 to 7 hours a week for assistant professors, associates, and full time professors,
- 9 hours a week for senior lecturers, lecturers, and lectors,
- 10 hours a week for assistants.

The forms of direct weekly pedagogical duties are determined by the rector of the university or the dean of a single higher education institution with a special regulation approved by the minister responsible for higher education.

If study programmes cannot be conducted through direct weekly pedagogical duties, the designated body of the higher education institution can assign a higher education teacher or associate additional, weekly teaching time, which is at most:

- 2 hours for assistant professors, associate professors and full professors,
- 3 hours for senior lecturers, lecturers and lectors,
- 4 hours for assistants.

Direct weekly pedagogical duties and a maximum of 4 additional teaching hours for other higher education workers are determined by the rector or dean with a special decree.

Additional weekly pedagogical duty is settled in the same way as direct pedagogical duty.

Depending on the number of students in a class, the direct pedagogical duty of an assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, senior lecturer, lecturer and lector can be decreased by a maximum of 2 hours. Comparatively, it can also decrease for those who engage in research and developmental work.

The criteria for direct pedagogical duties are determined by university rectors and deans of single higher education institutions, which they adjust and send to representative unions, which can give their opinions within 15 days. In addition, they need to receive the approval of the minister responsible for higher education.

Assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, lectors, assistants and other higher education associates can, if financial means permit, take on an additional 20% of full time weekly employment with the same employer.

If all attempts to concluding an employment agreement have been unsuccessful and the pedagogical process needs to be undisturbed, a higher education institution can conclude a work contract. It can be concluded for one third of all pedagogical duties and for the maximum of ten months in one study year. Anyone who is in a current working relationship in higher education must receive approval from their employer before signing the contract.

The workload of higher education teaching and research faculty staff, and higher education associates is 40 hours a week, with a 30-minute lunch break each day. The scope of the direct pedagogical duty is determined by law, internal regulations stipulate time allocation for lesson preparation, mentorship, examinations etc, time for research work and assisting with the management of the higher education institution. Teaching time may be dispersed (or appropriately lowered) due to other tasks, e.g.
leadership positions or due to increased scientific research work.

The study year lasts from 1 October to 30 September with classes being conducted in 2 semesters of 15 weeks, usually from 1 October to mid-January and from mid-February to the end of May. A part of January and February, June and September are examination periods, while July and August are the holiday period. Annual leave is usually taken during the holiday period. The duration of annual leave is set individually in accordance with the general Employment Relationships Act and internal regulations set by the employer (at least 4 weeks or 20 working days, additional days for years of service, the level of complexity, and age over 50). As any other worker, higher education teachers also have the right to additional paid leave in the case of illness, care of a family member, supplementary education, a wedding, the birth of a child, death in the family, and other special events. Some personal circumstances allow for unpaid leave, which is subject to agreement with the employer.

**Promotion, advancement**

**Education staff at short-cycle higher vocational colleges**

Lecturers and instructors may be promoted to the title of mentor, advisor or councillor.

Lecturers may apply for the position of the head of the programme area, head teacher or director under conditions stipulated by law.

**Academic staff at higher education institutions**

Promotion and advancement in higher education is related to the elected (habilitation) titles. The procedures of election are stipulated in greater detail in the charter of the higher education institution, in accordance with rules and regulations for the appointment. In relation to this, minimum standards for appointing to a title as specified by the National Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA) have to be taken into account.

Higher education teachers, scientific workers and associates are elected by senates of higher education institutions. Assistant professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, lectors and senior scientific associates are appointed for five years while full professors and scientific councillors have permanent appointments. Higher education associates are appointed for a time period determined by the statute, generally for three years. The title can also be revoked.

Retired higher education teachers, scientific workers and higher education associates keep the title that they had at the time of retirement.

The Higher education Act stipulates general procedures for title appointment. Minimal standards have been determined by the SQAA, although a higher education institution is permitted to implement more demanding and stricter standards.

Minimum standards enable a more precise content analysis of professional, artistic and pedagogical skills. The procedures of proving these skills are formal. In terms of content, success in solving scientific, research and development and professional issues, international involvement and work experience are relevant. To prove relevant pedagogical skills, a clear and systematic approach, successful mentoring to students writing graduate theses and master's and doctoral dissertations, research work, international exchanges, etc are taken into consideration, as well as attitude towards students, preparation of study materials, developing specialised classrooms and pedagogical training. Professional skills are proven by documented publications about the applicant's scientific research work or public art works (bibliography) and evidence of international involvement (guest lectures,
membership in international associations, citation in scientific literature, lecturing at foreign higher education institutions, participation at festivals and similar events abroad, awards). At the first appointment the candidate must give evidence of active knowledge of at least one foreign language. Pedagogical skills at the first appointment are proven by a test lecture and a favourable assessment by the student council at reappointments. The rules also include special requirements for appointment in which indicators of quality and quantity are used to determine the conditions for appointment to a particular title. At an appointment of a full professor these are normally presented in an inauguration lecture, while teachers from the field of art publicly present their art work.

At least a half of the requirements must be fulfilled for reappointment. Higher education teachers can be appointed to a higher title after their previous appointment has expired, according to the set order. If a candidate shows evidence of exceptional achievements they can advance before due time and irrespective of the set order. Higher education teachers can apply for the position of a Chair Head or Head of Department and other internal units at a higher education institution, they can be elected deans or vice deans while those with the highest titles can be vice rectors and rectors. Higher education teachers and scientific workers can also be heads of research programmes, projects, infrastructural groups, etc.

**Retirement and pensions**

For the retirement process of pedagogical and academic staff the same rules apply as for pre-school, basic and upper secondary teachers [13].

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