



# Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

Hungary

2009/10 Edition

European Commission





# STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

---

# HUNGARY

2009/10

---

**Prepared by**

Judit Juhasz, Judit Lannert, Edit Sinka, Eva Tot

If you wish to obtain more details on education systems in Europe, please consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>), the Cedefop database ([http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/Thematic/)) and the website of the European Training Foundation (<http://www.etf.europa.eu/>)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Organisation of the initial education and training system .....	7
1.2 Distribution of responsibilities.....	8
1.3 Financing.....	10
1.4 Quality assurance .....	12
<b>2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Admission.....	13
2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue .....	14
2.3 Curriculum .....	14
2.4 Assessment.....	15
2.5 Teachers .....	15
<b>3. SINGLE STRUCTURE EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Admission.....	17
3.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue .....	19
3.3 Curriculum .....	20
3.4 Assessment, progression and certification .....	22
3.5 Guidance and counselling.....	24
3.6 Teachers .....	25
<b>4. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Admission.....	28
4.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue .....	29
4.3 Curriculum .....	31
4.4 Assessment, progression and certification .....	31
4.5 Guidance and counselling.....	33
4.6 Teachers and trainers .....	33
<b>5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Admission.....	37
5.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue .....	38
5.3 Curriculum .....	39
5.4 Assessment, progression and certification .....	39
5.5 Guidance and counselling.....	41
5.6 Teachers and trainers .....	41
<b>6. TERTIARY EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>43</b>
6.1 Admission.....	44
6.2 Students' contributions and financial support .....	45
6.3 Organisation of the academic year .....	47
6.4 Assessment, progression and certification .....	47
6.5 Guidance and counselling.....	49
6.6 Academic staff.....	50
<b>7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING .....</b>	<b>52</b>
7.1 Policy and legislative framework.....	53
7.2 Distribution of responsibilities.....	54
7.3 Financing.....	54
7.4 Programmes and providers.....	55
7.5 Quality assurance .....	56
7.6 Guidance and counselling.....	57
7.7 Teachers and trainers .....	58
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND WEBSITES .....</b>	<b>59</b>



---

## INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

---

In 1989/90 Hungary experienced a peaceful political and social changeover as part of the landslide transformation marked by the collapse of the Soviet empire and the fall of communism. Since the promulgation of the Amendment of the Constitution on 23 October 1989 Hungary has been a parliamentary democracy. The Republic of Hungary is an independent democratic state of due procedure. The country joined the European Union in 2004.

Hungary's supreme body of legislative power and popular representation is the unicameral National Assembly (National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary) with 386 members. The National Assembly elects the president of the Republic, the prime minister, the members of the Constitutional Court, the parliamentary commissioners (ombudsmen), the president of the Supreme Court and the prosecutor general. The president of the Republic of Hungary is elected by secret ballot with two-thirds majority for five years. Hungarian citizens with the right to vote above the age of 35 are eligible for the presidency. Executive power, i.e. government functions and the highest-level control of public administration is exercised by the government, in which the Prime Minister plays a dominant role.

The system of public administration is fairly decentralised. The (3152) elected bodies of local municipalities of villages and towns enjoy considerable political and financial independence. The country is divided into 19 counties, 7 statistical regions and Budapest, the capital. As regards public administration, an important development in the past years is the establishment of micro-regional associations, which go beyond traditional county organisations of public administration to ease the way for municipalities to establish regional co-operation on voluntary and multi-purposive basis. Micro-regional associations facilitate the complex application of regional development policy tools of the government geared to solving the social and economic problems specific to a micro region. The government's bill on reconstructing public administration and creating regions with elected bodies did not get the required two-thirds majority which is necessary for it to pass.

The general rights of local governments, set in the Constitution, are detailed in the Local Government Act. A local government is responsible for administration and development at the local level. It has competence over preserving the built-up and the natural environment, managing housing, providing services of local transport, public sanitation and fire protection.

Hungary occupies 93 030 square km of territory and had 10 031 million inhabitants on 1 January 2009; 14 thousand down year-on-year. The number of inhabitants has been declining due to natural attrition for the past 28 years. Population density per square km is 107.8 persons. Average life expectancy at birth was 69.8 years for men and 77.8 years for women in 2008. Nearly 70 per cent of the population live in towns and urban communities with Budapest and its agglomeration concentrating nearly 30 per cent of the total population.

The overwhelming majority (over 97 %) of the population of the Republic of Hungary is Hungarian (Magyar) and Hungarian is the official language. The Constitution recognises the national and ethnic minorities as constituent parts of the state and grants them rights to maintain their culture, to be educated in their native languages, to use their mother tongue and to use their names in their native language and to participate collectively in public affairs. Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities defines precisely the concept of national and ethnic minority. According to the Act thirteen ethnic or national groups are officially recognized as nationalities living in Hungary (Bulgarian, Roma, Greek, Croatian, Polish, German, Armenian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian and Ukrainian). The 2001 census showed that 314,059 people of the Hungarian population claimed to be a member of a national or ethnic minority. They are represented by 1 827 local and 13 minority governments. The Constitution grants each ethnic and national minority equal treatment under the law and free use of their mother tongue.

The law on Public Education ensures the right to minority education and the right to be educated in the mother tongue. The National Core Curriculum recognizes five main types of programs for teaching minorities: instruction in the minority language (mother tongue program), bilingual education, Hungarian as the language of instruction with minority language taught as a foreign language (language teaching program), intercultural education programs and what are known as segregated remedial or corrective programs for Roma children.

On the basis of the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary the main statutory provisions referring to education include a number of basic constitutional values such as equal rights to education, freedom of conscience, maintenance of freedom of religion and the promotion of patriotism through education, as well as free access of national and ethnic minorities to education in their mother tongue.

Basic legislation on education and training and its reform is open to social dialogue in order to harmonise the interests of the various stakeholders with vested interests in shaping a competitive knowledge-based society. Educational legislation has been fully in line with EU recommendations and the provisions of the *acquis*.

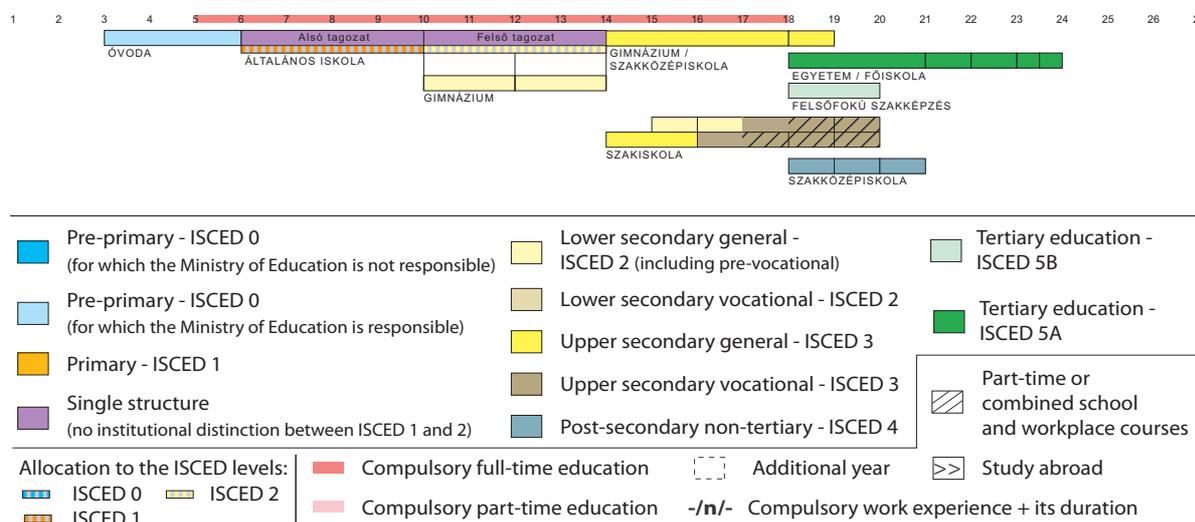
Educational legislation is primarily enacted by the laws on education. Bills are prepared by the government based on continuous in-depth professional dialogue and co-operation with a network of social partners. The current legislative mechanism was established in the framework of 1985 Act on Public Education, which had declared the principles for professional independence of educational institutions, ensured basic guarantees for this, and justified pedagogical experiments.

The Act on Public Education, which entered into force in 1993, has since been amended repeatedly. Drafted also in response to the Bologna process, the Act on Higher Education took effect in 2005 (and has since been amended). (A former act was also promulgated in 2005.)

The Act on Public Education offers opportunity to organise extracurricular activities such as the *Tanoda*. *Tanoda* is a form of education that aims at reducing inequalities and helps disadvantaged children to be more successful at school. The regulations were modified in order to enhance the progression of children living in poor families to help them obtain vocational qualification and/or secondary school leaving examination.

# 1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

## 1.1 Organisation of the initial education and training system



Pre-primary education, public education and higher education covered 2 million 150 thousand pupils/students in the 2008/09 academic year, including 1 million 931 thousand attending pre-primary education and full-time education or training, which represents 88 % of the 3-22 year echelon of the population. This ratio keeps increasing and is 15 % up from the level recorded for 1990.

Crèche (*bölcsőde*) is the first institution in the life of a child, which is part of primary child welfare and is therefore supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour rather than the Ministry of Education. Crèches provide professional daytime care, nursing and education to children between 20 weeks and 3 years of age raised in a family. Crèches occasionally agree to providing services in addition to primary welfare. Kindergarten (*óvoda*) provides institutional education to children between 3-7 years of age in a full-time arrangement and in compliance with the system of controls operated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Kindergarten training may begin when a child reaches three years of age and is compulsory after age 5. Starting September in the year of their fifth birthday, children must attend four hours of kindergarten training a day, which is known as the school prep grade.

Children reach compulsory school age in the year of their sixth birthday or at age 8 the latest provided that they are mature enough to attend school. Compulsory school attendance terminates at the end of the academic year when a schoolchild has his/her 18th birthday.

Hungary provides primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2) in 8-grade single-structure schools (*általános iskola*), which cater for laying the foundations of knowledge in general in the group spanning from 6 to 14 years of age.

In the present structure of Hungarian public education, the institutions of upper secondary education essentially correspond to upper secondary (ISCED 3), i.e. the pathway leads from primary schools on to four or five grades (9-12/13) spent in secondary school. Vocational training institutions (chiefly vocational secondary schools (*szakközépiskola*)) offer four grades of general education that underpins vocational grades, while vocational schools (*szakiskola*) are meant to provide basic general education and culture in grades 9-10 followed by vocational training from grade 11, which continues (for 2-5 years) in a number of vocational training grades specified in the National Register of Qualifications.

The system of higher education in Hungary has been subject to several changes in recent years. Since the country's accession to the Bologna process the former structure that provided three or four years of college (*füiskola*) and five years of university (*egyetem*) education has been realigned. Since 2006, the uniform two-cycle structure typical of the European Union has also been present in Hungary and divides tertiary education into 3+2 grades, terminating in bachelor and master degrees to go onto 3 years of postgraduate training to acquire a PhD/DLA degree. In principle, the initial 3 years of undergraduate education promotes mobility across disciplines and universities as students graduating after their three-year undergraduate studies have a variety of pathways to enter a master course.

## 1.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Decentralisation is a key feature of the administration of public education in Hungary. By adopting the Act of Public Education, the Act on Vocational Training and the Act on Higher Education in 1993, the (Hungarian) National Assembly regulated the foundations of the system. Since 2006, the Minister of Education and Culture has been in charge of the branch level administration of single-structure and upper secondary education. The Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, who is also in charge of vocational education/training and adult education, has been responsible for the central administration of vocational training since 2007. Administration is based on legislation, and sectoral direction is exercised through the National Core Curriculum, central programmes (VET curricula), national pedagogical guidelines, and ministerial decrees.

Management and decision-making responsibilities are shared at various levels, which results in a complicated system of distributing responsibilities. In addition to shared management responsibilities, the administration system of education in public education is characterised by integration into the general administration as well as by wide-ranging local and institutional independence. Competences related to local administration are exercised by a large number of local governments, fairly heterogeneous in their size and socio-economic situation. They have a fairly broad scope of decision making competences and responsibilities which do not depend on the size, population number and/or other socio-economic features of the village or town concerned. Most pupils attend public-sector schools, which are managed and organised mainly by local governments. Private-sector educational establishments, which are set up and run by other authorities, receive over 50 % of their subsidies from the public authorities. The administration of education in Hungary traditionally lacks strong regional structures as administration tends to be territorially organised involving counties and the capital city. Nevertheless, regional administration seems to have gathered quite a lot of strength in recent years with increasing role of micro regions.

There are two agencies contributing to the national administration of public education, with both responsible for decision support, one (National Public Education Council) in technical matters and the other (Public Education Policy Council) in education policy issues. National economic chambers along with the National Institute of Vocational Training and Adult Education play a role in the administration of vocational training. Interests are mediated at national level within the framework of the National Tripartite Reconciliation Council. Regional employment councils are responsible for reconciling vocational training interests at regional level.

Sectoral administration at national level is mainly comprehensive and provides an overall framework. In certain areas, the regulatory role of the government takes over central sectoral administration (for example the financing of church schools). Horizontally, administrative responsibilities are shared between ministries; mainly between two ministries (the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour), which are directly responsible for education and training and involve other ministries (such as the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development). Vertically, administrative control is shared across central (national), regional (regions, counties) local (cities, towns and villages) and institutional levels, with the local level

representing a wide variety in terms of size, professional competence and financial resources. Both the Local Governments Act (Act LXV of 1990 on Local Governments) and the Public Education Act contain provisions that determine the responsibilities of local governments relating to public education. Accordingly, the system of public education institutions is aligned to the system of local governments, i.e. local (village, city, capital city district, and town with county status) and regional (county and capital city) responsibilities are defined precisely. A new type of organisation known as a multi-purpose regional association was introduced in 2004 with the legal framework provided in a separate act (Act CVII of 2004 on Multi-Purpose Regional Associations of Local Governments). Such associations may be formed by local governments voluntarily in an attempt to fulfil their duty to provide public education in a more effective way. Local governments of a region (identified geographically in a statute) may agree to tend collectively some or all of the educational duties which are to be provided by a county level authority. A county level authority that delegates certain educational duties to a regional association must also grant the association the right to use the property designated for performing such duties. The most common duties associations take over include the substitution of teachers, in-service training, evaluation and assessment, special education services (i.e. speech therapy), special education of the gifted and consultation services. Regional administrative levels have weak competences relative to both the central and the local levels. Administrative responsibilities have been recently allocated to micro-regions, whose future weight in regional administration is expected to grow.

The authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture is restricted to general management and regulation duties. These include establishing the criteria and conditions for compulsory education, setting the framework of operations for institutions, and determining the examinations that conclude upper secondary education. County level and local level governments control the institutions that provide pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, the different establishments enjoy a fair degree of decision-making autonomy not only in terms of organisation and functioning but also with regard to financial management. The institution system of public education comprises independent institutions legally separate from their maintainers, enjoying full professional autonomy, but otherwise controlled by the decisions of the maintainer. A maintainer's administrative powers are wide, ranging from the act of establishment through determining the budget to exercising regulatory control, but may not infringe on the professional independence of the institution. Maintainers include, apart from the state, and local governments, also churches, NGOs, foundations, etc. The management powers of the latter are identical to maintainers of state institutions. The legitimacy of the operation of the maintainer is controlled by the state through the involvement of municipal clerks and chief administrators. Educational institutions are also granted a wide range of managerial competences. Nevertheless, the enforcement of the autonomy of schools and of the responsibility of the managers of institutions is subject to strong limitations (such as the regulation of the employment of teachers).

The School Union and the school board including the representatives of teaching staff, student and parents associations at an equal rate play an important role in democratizing school life. The establishment of these institutions is not binding by law, however, the school board has to be established if two of the stakeholders initiate it and participate in its work, The School Boards include the same number of representatives of teaching staff, student and parents associations, and some members may represent the maintainer, minority local governments as well as Business Chambers in case of vocational institutions.

Due to the system of shared responsibilities, there are broad opportunities for the civil sector and the economy to participate, including the participation of churches, foundations and private entities in founding and operating schools, an option which opened up once again since the 1990 Act on Public Education. The civil sector also plays an important role in certain service areas of public education (such as the market of textbooks and teaching equipment, the provision of teaching and technical consultancy), whilst the role of the business sector receives emphasis from the perspective of social

partnership (participation of the residents, cooperation between the public and private sectors), particularly as regards planning and the reconciliation of interests and in areas where there is a particular need (e.g. life long learning, strengthening social cohesion).

In tertiary education – consistently respecting the autonomy of the universities – the Ministry of Education and Culture has been responsible for general policy, regulatory and control related tasks in line with the provisions of the new Act on Higher Education, which took effect on 1 January 2006. Tertiary education is basically financed from the central budget on a head quota basis. Government decides annually the number of students that can be admitted to state financed education in each sector in response to a recommendation submitted by the Minister of Education and Culture.

In respect of the administration of higher education, Parliament is responsible for enacting the Act on Higher Education, setting the directions of development, granting state recognition to or depriving the same from institutions of higher education and specifying the funds allocated by the state from the central budget to developing and operating higher education. It is the Government's duty to submit to Parliament inter alia proposed legislation and medium term development plans in connection with tertiary education, and to determine the total number of students admissible to state financed courses in any one year and the distribution of the same across training areas and levels. The Government is entitled to establish scholarships.

In general, private education reflects the structure of the state provided system. That means that any of the public education institutions defined in the Act on Public Education can be established and operated in this form. This form of maintenance happens to be most popular in primary arts education (mainly music schools) and in upper secondary education (*középiskola*). Founders may be found in all the parts of the private and nongovernmental sector including churches, foundations, associations, legal entities, or natural entities and private entrepreneurs. A condition is that they prove their title to engage in that activity, and obtain the permission to be registered and to maintain their institution. These are issued by the municipal clerks and/or the chief administrator following set procedures. Permission to operate is conditional upon satisfying equipment and staffing requirements similarly to any institution in the public sector. Controlling the operation and sanctioning belongs in the jurisdiction of the municipal clerk and the chief administrator who issued the initial permission. Act XXIII of 1990 amending Act I of 1985 <sup>(1)</sup> on Education granted churches, economic organisations, foundations and associations, etc. the right to participate in delivering public education in addition to local governments and state agencies.

### 1.3 Financing

The funds required to operate the system of public education are allocated from the central budget and contributed by the maintainer and may occasionally be supplemented by the fees paid by children or students against certain services or by the income of a particular institution of public education. The head quota known as normative support is allocated from the government budget as determined by the Budget Act annually. The sum of normative and other financial support granted to the local authorities for the purposes of education must reach the level of the normative and other financial support granted in the previous year (taking into consideration the actual number of students enrolled). The sum of normative allocation from the central budget to the non-state maintainers (for example non-profit management bodies: churches, foundations, etc.) for the purposes of public education may not be less than the normative allocation provided to state maintainers for the same purpose. Private educational establishments set up and operated by other bodies receive over 50 % of their subsidies from the public authorities.

---

<sup>(1)</sup> The 1985 statute has since lost effect when it was superseded in 1993 by a separate act integrating all the regulations pertaining to public, higher and vocational education.

It is an important principle of the funding system that the government budget must provide the student numbers-based normative support and contributions specified in annually in the Budget Act to the maintainers of public education institutions rather than to the institution directly. A maintainer supplements this amount as required and forwards it to its institution. Maintainers are entitled to government subsidisation on the basis of their legal status, the duties performed by their institutions and the number of children enrolled. Since 2007, part of the government support has been earmarked and is awarded through tenders. Support covers 60-70 % of the operating budget of an institution and the difference must be covered by the maintainer. Schools and kindergartens maintained by the church are unique in that Hungary agreed in a treaty signed by the Republic of Hungary and the Holy See in Vatican City on 20 July 1997 to provide for the purposes of public education institutions maintained by the Catholic Church financial support which is equal to the contributions received by state and local government owned maintainers operating similar educational institutions. Act CXXIV of 1997 on the Financial Resources for the Spiritual and Public Activities Pursued by Churches expanded the scope of the provisions set in the Vatican treaty to other churches maintaining institutions. Church maintainers are allocated the first element of the dual system of funding in full and in exactly the same way as local governments based on the number of pupils learning at their institutions. The second element of the funding (the contributions made by local governments) is transferred to churches in the form of an 'earmarked church supplement', which no institution maintained by a local government or a foundation is entitled to.

Maintainers of schools receive a contribution from the government budget to be able to support the purchasing of school textbooks distributed at market price. The teaching staff has the authority to determine the method of providing this support to pupils taking into consideration the applicable legislation. This measure is designed to ensure that textbooks are available even for children in poor circumstances. Maintainers also receive additional support designated to organising student meals at a discount rate.

Local governments of counties, cities of county status and the capital city may establish a public foundation to support the performance of their public educational tasks at local, regional and national level (as previously approved in their development plans). Public foundations rely on contributions from the central budget as the bulk of their income.

The Government has the power to establish public foundations to support the performance of public education duties relating to teaching children with special educational needs, to ensuring pedagogical services, to early childhood development and care and to developmental education.

Pre-primary education and primary education are free of charge services, however, on the basis the Act on Public Education all parents or caregivers should pay for the meal resorted in the institute. For most children with special educational needs and for all children with multiple disadvantages more social allowances are provided by the central budget, e.g. free meals, free books or exemption from cost compensation. Statutes specify the services provided against tuition. Payments are typically charged (independently of the maintainer) in basic arts education, as institutions of this kind are not engaged in providing compulsory education. Most of these institutions are music schools. Payment may take the form of reimbursement or tuition. Reimbursement is due for instance for attending a certain number of lessons, one examination and one lecture each year, the repetition of a year of studies and the use of some school facilities. Since 2005, a minimum reimbursement rate has been set in the Act on Public Education and the collection thereof is a condition precedent to applying for government support.

Education expenditure is determined by education policy objectives and first of all by the condition of the economy, the size of young generations and the rate of schooling. Pursuing life long learning on a wide social basis requires material amounts of spending. In 2007, the education expenditure of the government budget, including accumulation spending, amounted to 5.4 % of GDP or over HUF 1 228

billion. 72 % of the total (HUF 885 billion) was used in public education (pre-primary, primary and secondary education), with 21 % (HUF 253 billion) spent on higher education. Compared to other members of the European Union, Hungary spends a little over the average on education and vocational training. Government spending on education tended to reach 5 % of GDP in EU member states in 2005. Malta, Romania, Luxemburg, Slovakia and Greece spent substantially (over 4 %) less than the average and Denmark is at the top of the list with her stunningly high 8.3 %. At 5.5 %, the Hungarian index surpasses the EU average and is almost at par with the ratio of Austria and the UK.

#### **1.4 Quality assurance**

The system of evaluating institutions comprises both self-evaluation and external evaluation by the maintainer. There is no regular, technically controlled and independent evaluation in Hungary. The Act on Public Education provides that maintainers are responsible for evaluating the professional efforts of public education institutions and the statute also specifies the tools maintainers may use for the purpose. Section 54(1) of the Act on Public Education provides that the head of an educational institution is responsible for pedagogical work, for operating a program of control, measurement, evaluation and quality management at the institution, for organising and performing tasks related to the protection of children and the young, for ensuring healthy and safe circumstances for teaching and upbringing, for preventing accidents involving pupils and children and for organising regular health checks for children and pupils. A 2003 amendment of the Act on Public Education requires maintainers to conduct regular audits (at least every four years) of public education institutions, covering the evaluation of financial management, the legal compliance of operations, efficiency and the effectiveness of teaching. Maintainers are required to publish their evaluation of the work of their institutions. Quality management used to be regulated as part of the pedagogical program, but the amendment of the statute introduced a separate, public document which had to be completed for each institution by 30 June 2004. The quality management program of institutions maintained by local governments must be aligned to the quality management program of the local government. A decree issued by the Minister of Education in 2002 set the legal basis of quality assurance and development at institutions. The scope of the decree covers every institution active in public education regardless of the maintainer. The decree required each institution of public education to engage in continuous quality development based on self-evaluation. To assist these efforts, guidelines have been issued by the Educational Authority to offer solutions for organisation and methodology to each institution.

National Assessment of Basic Competencies is held in every year nationwide serving the quality assurance in public education too. See chapter 3.4.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The phase of primary education is preceded by full daytime kindergarten education and care for children between 3-7 years of age. Kindergarten education and care starts at the age of 3 and is compulsory from the age of 5, when children are obliged to participate 4 hours a day in the guided kindergarten activities from the first day of the academic year. In Hungary, kindergartens are co-educational institutions, which are organised separately from schools in the majority of cases. The maintainer can provide education and care in the same institutional framework but the provisional tasks should be carried out in a divided way. The declining trend of the number of children participating in kindergarten education started in 1995/96 and came to a halt in 2005/06 as the number of participating children increased slightly after a small downturn in the 2007/08 school year. The number of kindergarten children has reduced by 13 % due to unfavourable demographic processes in the past ten years. A tally of the number of children over 3 years of age in crèche (*bölcsőde*) care and six-year-old children enrolled to school suggests that 92 % of 3-6-year old children are provided crèche care, kindergarten or school education.

Act LXV of 1990 on Local Governments and the Act on Public Education provide that providing kindergarten education is the duty of local governments. A local government may fulfil this task by maintaining its own institution, or by participating in a partnership or through an agreement with another maintainer, taking into consideration Section 41 (1) of Act XXXI of 1997 on Child Protection and Guardianship Administration (hereinafter the Act on Child Protection). From the age of 3, when children have the option to participate, kindergarten education is the duty of local governments.

Government Decree 137/1996 (VIII. 28.), which is attached to the Act on Public Education, serves as the basic document of regulating the content of kindergarten education. It lays down the pedagogical principles, goals and objectives of kindergarten education in general, which will only be realised institutionally if kindergartens include them in their educational program.

Section 118 of the Act on Public Education provides that the operation of the public education system is ensured by the funds provided from the central budget and the contribution of the maintainer, which may be supplemented by the fees paid by children/pupils against certain services or by the income of a particular institution of public education. The support allocated from the government budget to performing public education duties is determined by the Budget Act annually. Taking into account the number of children and the nature of the tasks an institution performs, the central budget allocates normative support to maintainers, which may be state agencies, local governments and NGOs, for the purpose of operating the institutions of education/instruction they maintain.

The 2009 Budget Act reduced the specific amount of the performance indicator used in financing public education from HUF 2 550 000 to HUF 2 540 000 starting 1st September. The budget allocates support to merged crèche-kindergartens (see details below) for each group of children. A child below 3 years of age counts as two children for the purposes of calculating group size and absences can be ignored.

### 2.1 Admission

The Act on Public Education identifies the right to select a kindergarten that matches the child's capabilities, skills and interest and the parent's religious or ideological conviction and membership in national or ethnic groups as one reserved for parents. Parents may apply for admission for their children after their third birthday. Children attend kindergarten starting the calendar year of their third birthday and normally up to age 6. Attending this educational institution is compulsory for children starting September in the year of a child's 5th birthday. This year is also referred to as preparatory to school. Children may stay in this form of education for an extra year up to age 7 upon parental request

or expert recommendation. Children with the need for special education may attend kindergarten up to age 8. Amended in 2006, the Act on Public Education requires local governments maintaining institutions to ensure the provision of kindergarten care to children over 3 years of age with multiple disadvantages starting 1st September 2008 in response to parental request. Maintainers have the right to determine the method of applying for kindergarten admission and the date of evaluating applications for admission. Applications for admission may be submitted any time during a school year.

## 2.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

School year starts on 1st September and ends on 31st August each year in every institution of public education.

The Act on Public Education provides that the grouping of children admitted to the kindergarten is the responsibility of the head of the kindergarten. Kindergarten groups are to be organised in a way that the number of children does not exceed the maximum number defined in the Act on Public Education. Groups are organised in Hungary on both peer and mixed age basis. Kindergartens are free to decide their own form of group assignment. The (weekly and annual) opening hours and the time and duration of holidays of a kindergarten are determined by the maintainer taking into account the provisions of the Act on Public Education. Kindergarten education is provided within the framework of guided activities covering the full scope of kindergarten life necessary for the education of the child. Kindergarten activities should be organised in a way that kindergarten education and care could satisfy parental needs. The time frame for performing the duties specified in the Act is 50 hours per week, which may, in reasonable cases, be increased with the time necessary for the fulfilment of daytime care related tasks. Kindergarten teachers prepare the weekly and daily timetables of kindergarten groups in accordance with the principles of the local educational programme of their institution and their Bylaws of Organization and Operation.

Starting from the 2009 school year, institutions merging crèche and kindergarten functions may also be set up in locations where the provision of crèche (*bölcsőde*) care is not compulsory, i.e. locations with fewer than ten thousand inhabitants and no groups of 20 children can be formed independently either for crèche or for kindergarten care as the number of children is insufficient. Merged crèche-kindergarten units cater for a single group of no more than twenty children, including no more than five below three years of age.

## 2.3 Curriculum

Bipolar regulation is typical of both kindergartens and schools. As regards the former, bipolar regulation means that institutions draft their own program of education taking into consideration the National Core Program of Kindergarten Education (hereinafter: Core Program). Government Decree 137/1996 (VIII. 28.), which governs the publication of the Core Program, defines the basic principles and tasks of kindergarten education, the principles of organising kindergarten life, the forms of kindergarten activity, the forms of learning that occur during such activities as well as the parameters of development attainable by the end of kindergarten age. As kindergartens participate in performing duties related to the protection of children and the young, kindergarten education programs must also provide ways to mitigate or possibly eliminate child exposure to danger, as the goal calls for getting every child to reach a level of development required by schools, getting them to acquire the experience that supports seamless integration into school communities.

National content regulations also serve as the guiding documents for educating and upbringing children with special educational needs, but the institutions catering for such children must take into account the guidelines issued in respect of teaching and upbringing children with special educational

needs for the purposes of drafting their own programs as the guidelines specify the methods of enforcing the right to special care, the principles and content of habilitation and rehabilitation care.

## **2.4 Assessment**

The Government Decree on the Core Programme provides that designing kindergarten education and becoming familiar with and developing children are supported by (compulsory and non-compulsory) memoranda taken by kindergarten teachers.

Kindergarten teachers select from available reference books or develop themselves a system for monitoring child development with a view to their local program of education. Kindergarten teachers take note of the development of children in such a monitoring document from admission to school entry and inform parents of the development of their children.

## **2.5 Teachers**

In the academic year of 2008/09 29 860 kindergarten teachers worked in Hungarian kindergartens. The national average number of children per kindergarten teacher was 10.9, the number of kindergarten children per group was 22.8.

Teacher education and training is part of the education system of higher education. Kindergarten teachers perform education related tasks in the phase of kindergarten education, i.e. this job requires a degree earned in higher education. Since 1 September 2006, the training of kindergarten teachers has been provided in the first cycle of the multi-cycle training, and ends in a bachelor's degree.

The subject matter of training covers pedagogical and psychological skills and knowledge needed to support the differentiated development of a child's psyche, social integration and personality using a variety of (mostly playful) activities. Teachers are prepared in theory, methodology and are offered teaching practice simultaneously. Complex personality development is a target attainable through nursing and physical education, language and communication, arts education, the study of mathematics and natural science. Training time is 6 semesters. Kindergarten teachers may major in the language of a national minority. For a more detailed discussion of teacher education and training see Chapter 3 and the chapter on Tertiary education.

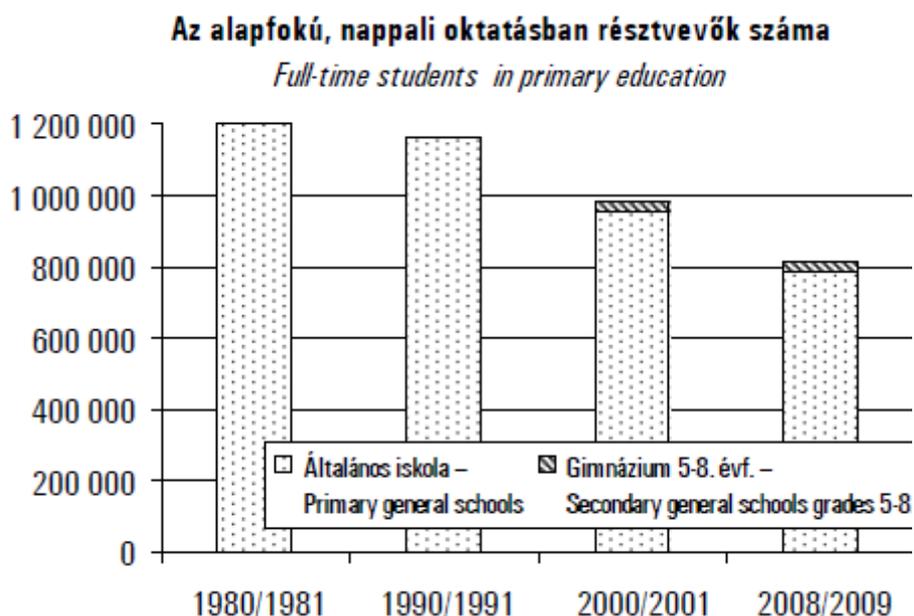
### 3. SINGLE STRUCTURE EDUCATION

Primary education has been provided in Hungary since 1945 in the form of a single structure eight-grade primary school, which means that this form of education covers levels ISCED 1 and ISCED 2. Pupils start their education at the age of 6 in this school type and if they continue uninterrupted, their primary education is completed when they are 14 years old. Primary education starts in the first grade and lasts until the end of the 8th grade.

The most general purpose of this consolidated structure of education is to facilitate that people can assert their statutory right to education in line with equal opportunities and also comply with their statutory obligation to study.

Primary education consists of two main phases: the lower primary phase starts in grade 1 and finishes with grade 4; the upper primary phase starts in grade 5 and finishes with grade 8. There has been a certain degree of overlap between the upper primary and the lower secondary level since 1990 with the advent of lower secondary education, i.e. the six-and eight grade secondary schools. See more details in Chapter 4.

Due to the unfavourable demographic trends the number of primary school pupils in full time education is 20.5 thousand less than last year. Currently (in 2009/10) the headcount is 789 thousand and an additional 27 thousand pupils learn in the 5th to 8th grades of six or eight-grade secondary schools. Whereas the number of pupils dropped by hardly more than 2.6 per cent in the years between 1980 and 1990, 15 per cent less were seated at the school desks by the end of the subsequent decade. This drop in headcount has continued since, and remained 17.7 percent from 2000/01 to 2008/09.



Twenty-three thousand of primary school children go to classes following special education curricula, and another 30 thousand children with special education needs are integrated into mainstream education. The proportion of pupils educated in special education classes was 4.1 % in 2001/02, and dropped to 2.9 % in 2008/09. The proportion of pupils provided integrated education increased from 0.9 % in 2001/02 to 3.8 % in 2008/09.

In the hierarchy of regulation of primary education the stage below the level of statutes of Parliament is that of government decrees, which, among others, contain the National Core Curriculum, the conditions related to the student card, the structure and the operation of the information system of public education, and the rules of financing private operators. Decrees issued by the minister provide

the major framework in terms of administration on the one hand and that of the content of training on the other hand.

It is the parents' statutory obligation to make sure that the child participates in compulsory education. This principle is translated into everyday practice by the Act on Public Education. Children reach their school age at the age of six at the earliest, and in the year of turning eight at the latest. Compulsory education lasts until the end of the school year in which the student turns 18. Compulsory education lasts until the age of 16 in the case of youth who have graduated from secondary school or obtained state qualification or have come of age through marriage. In such cases the obligation to participate in compulsory education ceases at the written request of the individual concerned rather than by the power of law.

At the parents' request the child may start complying with the obligation to study even if they complete their sixth year of age by the 31st day of the December of the year in question. The obligation to study may start in the 8th year of age of children who were born on a day following 31 August. The obligation to study may be extended for children with special education needs until, at the most, the end of the school year in which they complete their 20th year of age.

State primary education is free of charge. Pupils may be financially supported in various forms while they study. In addition to state subsidies the most frequent form of support is study grants or social needs based allowance, which is extended by the school operator or the institution, or funds. Local governments or the state operate 87 % of schools, 8 % are operated by the Churches and about 5 % are operated by funds or private individuals (2008/09 school year data). As for schools that are not operated by the state, some of them charge tuition and some of them do not but if the maintainer undertakes educational tasks from the state or local government by a public educational agreement, the education should be free of charge for the pupils/students according to the provisions of the Act on Public Education. This has been discussed in detail in chapter 1.1.

In the 2008/09 school year 790 722 children studied in 3 363 primary schools. In 3 050 institutions from them less than 500 children study and there are only six schools where the number of pupils is over 1 000. All this demonstrates that the vast majority of schools are small or medium sized, which results from a low level of regional concentration and from the fact that the majority of local governments try to provide primary education locally even in small villages. The 1993 Act on Public Education provides that the operator must convert primary schools operating with less than eight grades into affiliate institutions, or must provide for primary education related duties without operating a school. The deadline of implementation was 2008 and derogation had to be specially requested from the Educational Authority in January 2007. When such decisions are prepared, the child's overarching interest must be paramount, for example in terms of providing the services specified in the Public Education Act at an adequate level even after reorganisation, and that the use of such services should not mean a disproportionate burden on the child (e.g. the school's geographic location).

The several Hungarian surveys show that the Hungarian education system is exceedingly selective and is unable to offset the drawbacks deriving from children's varying cultural backgrounds. Disadvantaged pupils and students are more likely to drop out, which often leads to marginalisation in adulthood. Currently this is the greatest challenge for the Hungarian educational system.

### **3.1 Admission**

Admission to the primary school is by neighbourhood. The local government operating the institution of public education specifies and announces the catchment area of schools. Admission and transfer of pupils who live in the school district (catchment area) cannot be denied by the primary school. The regulation has been in force since the mid-1990s, facilitating free choice of school (i.e. the parent can enrol the child into any school if the school is prepared to accept the child), and the Act also permits

the primary school to admit pupils from outside the school district provided there are still places available after the district children have been admitted.

The rules relating to admission were slightly modified in 2007: Local governments operating the school must determine the primary school district in such a way that the proportion of children with multiple disadvantages should not differ by more than 25 % in the districts if there are several primary schools in the locality. The measure has been aimed at promoting the integration of pupils with multiple disadvantages. Pursuant to another provision serving the same purpose, if children applying to the school from within the district have been admitted and the school still has places available it is obliged to give preference to pupils who live at the seat of the school, and in particular pupils with multiple disadvantages, whose admission can only be denied due to a lack of places.

Parents are obliged to enrol the child in the first grade of the primary school of their choice or the school ensuring compulsory admission at the dates announced by the local government. The obligation to learn can be met by attending school or through home schooling. The school's principal has the right to contemplate, thus it may occur that either he or the childcare authority of the local government does not agree with the parent's decision of home schooling considering it to be disadvantageous for the pupil or that it can be predicted that the completion of the studies started in this form cannot be expected. In this case the notary issues the corresponding decision. The obligation to study can be complied with through attending primary school and, from grade 5, in the secondary school or, from grade 9 in the vocational secondary school.

The school principal concerned takes decision about the start of compulsory education based on the kindergarten's opinion. If the child has not attended kindergarten, or if the kindergarten initiates it, the opinion of the educational consultant service must be sought. In the case of children with special education needs the principal may rely on the opinion of the specialist and rehabilitation panel testing learning skills or the national level specialist and rehabilitation committee to decide about the start of studies. The preventive development testing system (PREFER) has been in use in Hungary since the late '70s to measure school maturity. Testing at the age of 5 serves preventive purposes as there is still a chance to improve underdeveloped skills until the child is admitted to school at the age of 6 or 7. In the test conducted at 6 shows lack of maturity for school this may be ground for the child to stay at kindergarten for another year. PREFER also tests children's behaviour and skills. Calculation of the skills index, for example, is based on tests performed in numeracy, reasoning, relational vocabulary and motor skills for writing; calculation of the behaviour index relies on an assessment of task compliance and the attitude to peers. PREFER can be administered by skilled kindergarten teachers, teachers or psychologists. The author updated the procedure measuring school maturity in 2003 (the new name of which is DIFER) and thus it has become suitable for administering diagnostic tests on pupils in the first grade of primary school. The tests of DIFER (diagnostic development testing system) were performed by each first grade pupil in the 2003/04 school year as part of a national competence test and, from the 2005/06 school year, the test has been compulsory for all primary schools.

With the exception of special arts or sports schools, primary schools in Hungary are not allowed to conduct admission tests. The free choice of parents is in theory not limited in any way in choosing from among the various programmes offered by the school, and they can enrol the child for example to minority schools even when the parent does not belong to the minority group, the child can be enrolled in bilingual primary schools even if they do not speak the target language at all. The parents' choice can be limited, however, by their financial situation in the case of schools not operated by the state or the Church.

A new possibility is that children with severe and multiple disabilities may participate in special development programmes from the first day of the school year in which they turn 6 years of age, and can comply with their compulsory education obligation in this context. Special development schools are governed by special rules. Pupils are assigned to developmental groups in consideration of their

disability, general maturity and age. Currently this form of education is still optional but from 2010 operators (maintainers) will have to provide it as a statutory duty.

### **3.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

If broken down into greater detail, primary school education is divided into four parts: grades 1 and 2 constitute the introductory phase; grades 3 and 4 are the initial phase; grades 5 and 6 are the preparatory phase; and grades 7 and 8 are the development phase. Education in the introductory and initial phases is not divided into subjects. Act LXI of 2003 provides that in grades 5 and 6, 25-50 % of the compulsory classroom sessions must be provided as sessions not divided into subjects. This provision was introduced in the first grades of primary schools on 1 September 2004 and reached grade 5 by 1 September 2008. A new element with respect to the regulation of the content of education not divided into subjects is that the 2007 amendment of the Act on Public Education links this form of education with the concept of so-called key competences introduced in the National Core Curriculum also amended in 2007: 'education not divided into subjects promotes the development of the key competences specified in the National Core Curriculum' ((31), Section 121). An immediate history of this was the recommendation adopted by the European Parliament and Council in December 2006 about key competences necessary for lifelong learning, the text of which has been integrated with minor modifications into the National Core Curriculum.

The principal of the school takes decisions regarding the distribution of classes and groups. The aim of the education process divided earlier into two and later into four phases is to lay the foundations of general education and, after the end of the eighth grade, to support further studies and career choice. The subjects and requirements of the individual school grades are built on each other with the National Core Curriculum providing for the unity of the learning content and transition between the schools. Each year is divided into classes, and groups can be formed in each class. The decision about class (form) and group distribution is taken by the school principal. As for the number of teachers working with each class there are two systems in operation in Hungary's schools. In the so-called two-phase system the same teacher teaches all the subjects in the first two grades and another teacher teaches in the third and the fourth grades. In the single-phase system each form has one teacher throughout the four lower grades. Every form has a form teacher (or head teacher), who undertakes work related to school life and community as well as different organisation and administration tasks. It is a typical feature that subject teachers teach their subject throughout the entire period during which the subject is taught or until the end of grade 8.

The Act on Public Education determines the maximum and recommended class and group headcounts. The maximum headcount is the more important one because it can only be exceeded in the narrow margin specified by the Act. In the cases specified by the Act the decision is taken by the operator or the Educational Authority. Those who violate the provision may be fined. The school determines the percentage of obligatory and elective classes when forms are divided into smaller groups and also the subjects to be taught in groups. Typically a form is divided into groups for learning certain subjects or for certain activities, for example foreign languages, physical education, or classes related to development, gifted and talented students support, and consulting. In some primary schools, mainly private schools, education is almost exclusively administered in the form of individual or cooperative group sessions, the rigid separation of subjects is replaced by integrated subjects and projects, and the material is processed in an epochal framework.

Schools operating with less than eight grades occur primarily in small villages. They typically operate with a lower primary section, i.e. with four grades, but there are two or three-grade schools as well. In 2004 a new type of partnership emerged, the so called multi-purpose small area partnership, the legal framework of which is set out in a special act (Act CVII of 2004, on the multi-functional micro-regional associations of local governments). In accordance with the amendment of the Public Education Act a

4-grade primary school may not operate on its own, it may operate only as an affiliate school, which means the operator must take care of affiliating the school or deliver the task without operating a school. In the smallest villages, where the number of children in a given age group is small, pupils of various ages and grades may attend a one-room mixed age class. Mixed age classes cannot combine more than four grades.

The structure of the school year is set out by a decree of the minister of education and culture. It is mandatory for all schools irrespective of the operator. Keeping this structure in mind, schools establish their local structure of the school year, which is a part of the school's work plan. The first and the last day of teaching in the school year are established by the decree. It is a general rule that the school year starts on the first working day of September of each year and finishes on the 15 June or, if that day is a non-working day, on the working day preceding 15 June. At the same time, the pedagogical year finishes on 31 August.

The school year consists of five-day teaching weeks with teaching typically in the morning in most schools (generally from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.). An exception to this is the so-called whole-day school where pupils continue to study after lunch and classes are over at around 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays are days of rest without teaching. Pupils are also granted rest without teaching on holidays. At least 30 consecutive days' summer holiday must be granted to children after the last day of the school year.

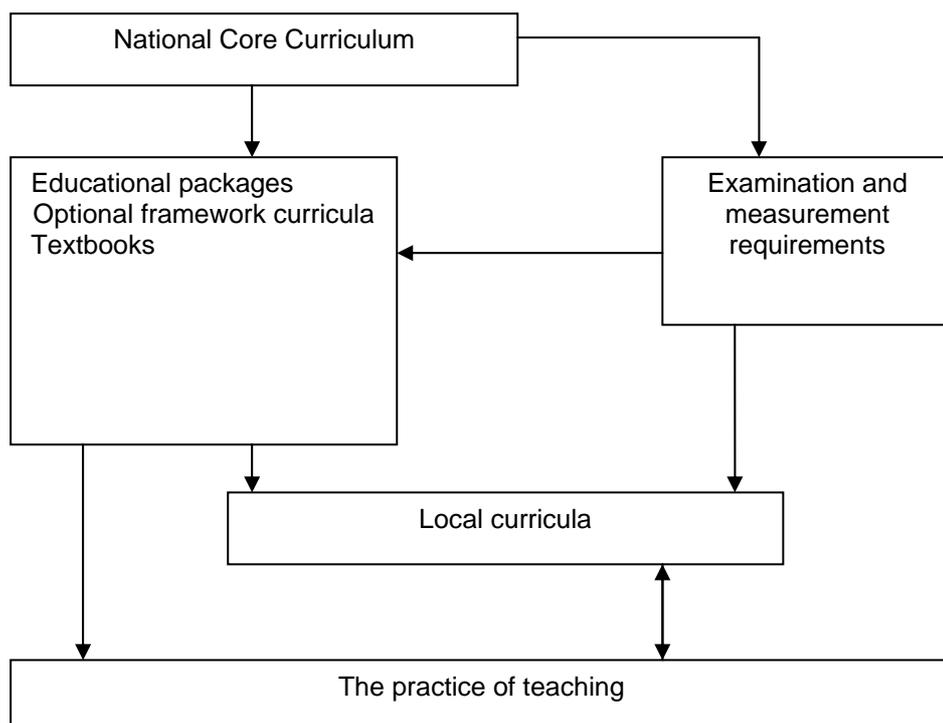
The maximum obligatory class load is set out in the Public Education Act. The number of lessons per day is four in grades 1 to 3, four or five per day in grades 4-6 and five per day in the seventh to eighth grades. Schools also offer elective classes in consideration of the pupils' interests and needs with the aim of remedial teaching, development, talent care or consultation, as well as providing special skills. The maximum number of electives is set out by law for each grade in relation to the number of compulsory classes. Accordingly, elective classes can be 10 % of obligatory classes in grades 1-4, 25 % in grades 5-6 grades, and 30 % in grades 7-8.

Supervision outside classes is organised in the form of day care or homerooms. The Public Education Act provides for schools to organise day care or study rooms in each grade of the primary school if parents request it. In homeroom or day care pupils are provided care and supervision while they prepare for the next day's lessons.

### **3.3 Curriculum**

In Hungary since 2000 the teaching-learning content has been provided for by statute in three-tier curriculum regulation.

Regulation of content:



Source: Vágó – Vass, 2006

The central and highest level of the regulation is the National Core Curriculum, which is a strategic document compulsory for every institution and public education actor. It constitutes the basis for the concept, theory and philosophy of teaching that determines for the entire duration of compulsory education the main areas of culture, the phases in the content of public education (grades 1-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12) along with the developmental tasks to be asserted in each phase of the content. The National Core Curriculum ensures the universality of the content of education and teaching and the transition among schools in public education, which lays the foundations of general education (in primary as well as lower and upper secondary education). The core curriculum contains the core principles of the education of national and ethnic minorities as well as pupils with special educational needs, and the tasks of the schools related to health promotion, environmental protection and consumer protection. Accredited framework curricula help implement the National Core Curriculum. In the school year 2006/07 the National Core Curriculum was revised. Minor changes have been introduced, the most important being the promulgation of the development of key competences. To further emphasise the priority of competence based education the adapted version of EU's framework system that contains eight key competences has been incorporated in the part titled Common Values in School Education. The National Core Curriculum (NCC) issued in 2007 is different in the sense that there are nine competence areas since mathematics became one separated area, separated from Sciences.

The second level of the regulation of content equally provides support to curriculum and methodology. The amendment of the Public Education Act in 2003 radically revisited the role of framework curricula in the regulation of content. As opposed to the former practice, framework curricula do not form part of the central regulation and their application is in no way compulsory for schools. Instead of one obligatory framework curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education for each school type since the 2004/05 school year accredited framework curricula have been available for schools seeking professional support in using the National Core Curriculum. The framework curricula contain recommendation for purposes of education and teaching, the system of subjects, the contents of the individual subjects, the requirements in each subject in each grade, the time available for meeting the

requirements and the implementation of tasks related to health promotion, consumer protection and environmental protection.

The third or local level of the regulation is the schools' pedagogical programme and its component, the local curriculum. The pedagogical programme is either prepared by the schools' teachers independently or they select from among the accredited framework curricula. The school level documents regulating the content of education are accepted by the corps of teachers and approved by the operator after consultation with experts. The school follows the pedagogical programme, which must be disclosed. Part of the pedagogical programme is the education programme which contains tasks related to personality and community development, as well as the local curriculum, which constitutes the school level regulation of content. This document determines the subjects to be taught at each grade of the school, the study material to be used, the requirements and number of lessons, as well as the principles of selecting textbooks and other teaching materials. The local level curriculum also sets out the requirements related to advancing to a higher grade and the forms in which pupils are assessed or rated.

Schools and teachers are granted complete freedom as regards the methods used in the teaching-learning process and there is no central document that would provide for applicable procedures. The pedagogical programme of the school determines the core pedagogical principles, purposes and tasks of education and teaching at the school as well as the tools and procedures to be used. The main documents regulating public education give priority to both methodological diversity and teaching-learning strategies aimed at skills and competence development.

In Hungary the most widespread alternative method is the Waldorf method, but methodologies and tools elaborated by Freinet, Gordon, Rogers and Montessori are also used.

Act XXXVII of 2001 states with respect to the rules of the textbook market that textbook supply is a public duty that serves the exercise of the statutory right to education. The minister of education takes care that a list of textbooks in public education is issued each year, which may contain only textbooks having passed a quality test and not exceeding the price cap specified for the year. The approval procedure of textbooks examines in the first place whether the book responds to the requirements of the National Core Curriculum to communicate the teaching content of the particular subject to the target age group through appropriate pedagogical methods. As for the approval or rejection of textbooks the most prestigious expert panel of Hungary's public education, a special committee of the National Council for Public Education submits a proposal to the minister.

Apart from textbooks the so-called non-traditional content carriers such as digital materials play an increasingly significant role. Their development has been a key area of utilising the resources available through the Structural Funds in Hungary.

### **3.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

Pupils may progress to a grade if by the end of the school year they have successfully complied with the study requirements prescribed, i.e., according to their achievement during the year and marks or achievement at the school exam, have obtained at least a mark (2) – i.e. sufficient. An exception to this rule have been, since the 2005/06 school year, grades 1-3 of primary school where no pupil can be ordered to repeat a school year for failure to meet the study requirements. Retake of a year is necessary only for pupils who have missed more classes than the minimum attendance specified by law.

The teacher assesses a pupil's achievement and progress regularly during the school year by giving marks and grading overall achievement at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. A pupil's conduct and effort are also evaluated and graded by the head teacher after seeking the

opinion of the teachers who teach the class concerned. Both the pupil and the parent of an underage pupil have to be regularly advised about the grades. Schools apply a five-grade (1-5) system for evaluating and rating the pupil's knowledge and a four-grade (2-5) system for evaluating and rating their conduct and effort. Schools can prescribe different assessment system but when a pupil moves to another school, the school is obliged to provide the 1-5 numerical grading. In a phasing-in system beginning from the 2003-04 school year, a descriptive evaluation is to be used to express whether a pupil's achievement has been excellent, good or satisfactory, or whether the pupil needs remedial work. However, during the year, even in the initial school phase marks can also be used as a formative evaluation. Exploratory (diagnostic) evaluation aimed at rating the pupil is relatively rarely used by teachers, rather more for assigning pupils to groups depending on their level of achievement and to develop the teaching and pedagogical strategies best suited to the needs of the group or the individual. Formative and summative grading, on the other hand, is a tool frequently used at schools.

The conditions of progressing to higher grades and the requirements and forms in which pupils have to give account of their knowledge as well as the requirements related to and the rating of pupils' conduct and diligence are set forth in the school's local curriculum. There are no obligatory examinations in primary school.

Pupils are given a certificate of achievement attesting completion of a particular grade at the end of the school year. The marks and the descriptive evaluation in the certificate reflect the pupil's achievement during the year (coursework) and achievement at the school examination; therefore the certificate is generally not preceded by a special certificate examination. An exception to this rule are home schooled pupils or pupils completing two grades in one school year, who have to sit for a grading examination to give account of their skills achieved by the end of the year, as well as pupils who are obliged to sit for a makeup examination. The year-end grading or descriptive evaluation is established by the teacher and on this basis the corps of teachers decides whether or not the pupil may advance to a higher grade. As a difference, the school's examination board or, at the pupil's request, an independent examination panel does the grading. The certificate of achievement is a public document. It means that until the contrary is proven, everybody is obliged to accept its content. The certificate must be turned out in Hungarian or, in bilingual schools, in both languages. The format of the certificate is approved by the minister of education. Also the minister's permission is required for the manufacture and distribution of these printed documents.

The law permits that a pupil may accomplish several grades in one school year with the principal's permission. In such cases, however, the pupil must sit for a grading examination at the end of the school year. This generally occurs in the case of home-schooled pupils or highly talented pupils.

In the first grade of the primary school, if the pupil fails to meet the requirement, the school year will be considered as a preparatory year and the child is admitted to the first grade. A pupil may attend a preparatory year only for one school year and only in the event the pupil started going to school not later than at the age of seven.

A school examination (grading, makeup or supplementary) can be taken either at the school or before an independent board of examiners. The board convenes in the school but the examination itself is organised by the Educational Authority. It generally applies to cases when there is a conflict between the pupil, the parent and the teacher, or there is a loss of trust. After grade 4, a grade can be repeated at the end of the school year. It is obligatory to repeat a grade when the pupil has been rated fail. However, the pupil may sit for a makeup examination before the new school year starts. If, however, the pupil has failed in more than one subject, the teaching staff's permission will be needed for the makeup examination. The pupil will be obliged to repeat the grade also in the event the total of justified and unjustified absences exceed the highest number of days or classes specified by law and the teaching staff has not granted a makeup examination.

After the turn of the millennium, a national competence assessment system was introduced to the analogy of the PISA study. The minister has been obliged by law to conduct the assessment (Section 99, Public Education Act of 1993). Thus, since 2001 the National Competence Assessment has been organised for six times and is expected to improve the effectiveness of the education system in the long run. First in grades 5 and 9, then in 2003 grades 5 and 10, and since 2006 in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 every May a national competence assessment is organised in reading and mathematics. Every school and pupil has been involved. In 2009 the Educational Authority has published the national results and also the results of each institution. Results of individual pupils have been put at the disposal of teachers and parents who have an access with a given password. It has already made an impact on the assessment and evaluation culture of institutions. The development of pupils' most important skills (reading comprehension and mathematical culture) is tracked by regular national competence surveys, which earlier usually covered two or three grades and, since the 2006/07 school year they have covered four grades (4., 6., 8. and 10.) The surveys are prescribed by the minister of education in the decree issued about the structure of the school year, or in another ministerial decree. When the Public Education Act was amended in 2006, a section was included to ensure the publicity of both the data consolidated at the national level, and school-level data.

### **3.5 Guidance and counselling**

Career guidance in public education is the task of the whole school, the pedagogical cycle and every area of education. However, curricular requirements are mostly met in the harmonisation of classroom and extracurricular activities carried out in the framework of lifestyle and practical skills education. According to the National Core Curriculum the task of this area of education is to improve pupils' self awareness and to introduce to them the world of work as well as the content and requirements of the various branches of qualification along with the learning paths and alternatives leading to them through practical activities and experiences.

The Cultural domain called Life management and skills designed for grades 1-10 is about 5-8 per cent of the total recommended time framework. There are 12 main topics in the domain, one of which is career guidance whose importance has increased for the last two years. In addition an educational program was designed relating the renewed NCC to develop life guidance competences. This framework curriculum is not binding, but it is made available for every school.

In grades 7 and 8 of the primary school lessons integrated in the timetable and specifically aimed at career guidance in the areas of lifestyle and practical skills help eighth-graders to choose a school or career path at the end of the first semester. In these lessons pupils are provided help in articulating their individual needs and in setting career targets and designing learning paths. In addition to these each school operates personal continued education and career guidance consulting in one way or another. It is mostly the teachers responsible for career guidance and the head teachers who are the most familiar with the pupils who help them in taking their decision related to continued education.

Continued education and career consulting outside school belongs to the scope of special pedagogic services available free of charge in Hungary. Their job is to assess pupils' abilities, skills and orientations and to recommend further education or a school type. The task is delivered by the independent career consulting institute of the capital city, which offers a wide range of services, and, in the provinces, in about half of the counties, by one or two professionals also engaging in career consulting. In addition to this the educational counselling service organised in each county (and each district in the capital city) may provide, on an ad hoc basis, advice concerning continued education to youth in their care for problems related to learning differences, social mal-adapting or behavioural problems or, for that matter, talented youth.

### 3.6 Teachers

Hungary's tertiary education is currently undergoing a major change due to the Bologna Process. (See more on this in the Section on Tertiary Education). The dual nature of the former tertiary system of education (which meant the existence of colleges and universities side by side) prevailed in teacher education and training as well. Primary school teachers used to be prepared in two institution types: teachers of grades 1-4 (ISCED 1) at the so-called teacher training college, teachers of grades 5-8 (ISCED 2) at the so-called colleges of education. Teachers teaching lower grade pupils were prepared to teach all subjects, while teachers teaching higher grade pupils generally obtained qualifications in two subjects. The duration of education in both institution types was four years. Universities also delivered teacher education and training, in the framework of which secondary school teachers (ISCED 3) were prepared.

The Bologna System has combined the former college and university level teacher training: after graduation from the first training cycle, which lays the foundations in specific disciplines students can obtain teaching qualification in the second training cycle. Here education and training is focussed on preparing students for the teaching tasks in grades 5-12 (13), i.e. for becoming a qualified teacher in the speciality concerned. According to the plans of multi-cycle training system, the structure and level of specialisations at teacher training faculties will be universal: a teacher's degree can only be obtained through graduating from the MA (master) cycle. In the first, undergraduate, cycle training according to the special area covered by the subject is provided. Teacher training takes place in the two-year MA (master's) degree training built on the first cycle. The main aim of the change in teacher education and training has been to improve the quality of training: on the one hand through an increasingly demanding screening of training participants in the respective cycles and, on the other hand, through a renewal of content which accompanies restructuring and which will be able to be implemented through harmonising training with labour market needs, its relationship with practice and applying the strategy of competence based training. In the framework of founding training only elementary school teachers, kindergarten teachers, special education teachers and technical instructor's qualifications can be obtained.

Currently however the majority of teachers working in schools obtained their qualification in the previous, so-called dual system.

In the area of teachers further training the greatest change was introduced by the amendment of the Public Education Act in 1996 (Act LXII of 1996 to amend Act LXXIX of 1993 on public education), which prescribed for teachers the obligation to attend further training. (Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education, paragraph 8, section 19: 'The teacher shall participate at least once in every seven years in further training as provided for by law.')

The teacher not having complied with the obligation to attend further training due to a reason attributable to them, the head of the institution may dismiss them from their job.

Section 5, Government Decree 277 of 1997 (22 December) sets out the ways in which teachers may comply with their obligation to attend further training every seven years. According to this apart from participation in 120 hours further training courses in every seven year (which can be accomplished in several parts, for example through four times 30-hour training courses) the obligation may be complied with through taking the special teachers degree, obtaining an additional degree or scientific degree or, in the framework specified in this legislation, through attending further training abroad.

Only accredited further teacher training can be counted as compliance with the obligation of further training. The list of such training is announced each year by the ministry's accreditation institution. Costs of further training are partly contributed to by the school employing the teacher, for which a standard support can be applied for. Further training must be organised by the school, therefore it

becomes transparent and predictable for participating teachers plus it ensures that the skills promoting the achievement of the school's pedagogic targets are obtained efficiently.

## 4. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

The basis for the legal regulation of upper secondary education is the Constitution, the Act on Public Education of 1993, the Act on Vocational Training (Act of 1993 on Vocational Training), the Act on the Contribution to Vocational Training (Act LXXXVI of 2003 on Vocational Training Contributions and Support for the Development of the Training System) and the Government Decree issued in 1997 on the Regulation of the School-leaving Examination. These high level legal regulations articulate the core principles of this level of education, the special features of the system of its institutions, the rights and obligations of students and teachers, with special regard to the special features of vocational training.

The Act on Public Education of 1993 divides this level of education into two phases: that of upper secondary general education and upper secondary vocational education. Upper secondary vocational education, preparing pupils for obtaining a vocational qualification normally starts after upper secondary general education.

There are three types of institutions at upper secondary level in Hungary: secondary grammar schools (*gimnázium*) provide general secondary education and prepare pupils for tertiary education (ISCED 3 or 2+3); secondary vocational schools (*szakközépiskola*) provide upper secondary general and post secondary non tertiary vocational education (ISCED 3, 4); vocational schools (*szakiskola*) provide two years of general education and 2-4 years of vocational education and training (ISCED 3) and may also provide remedial lower secondary general education (ISCED 2) for those who did not accomplish single structure education. Vocational schools may also operate as special vocational schools (*speciális szakiskola*) providing education for pupils with special educational needs.

As the numbering of school grades is continuous from the first grade of the primary school to the last grade of secondary school studies, the upper secondary phase starts in the 9th grade and ends either in the 12th grade, or in case of two-language secondary schools with a language preparation grade and in case of secondary vocational schools with additional vocational training grades in the 13th grade. (Education is also completed in grade 13 when intensive foreign (or minority) language teaching is administered in the 9th grade in a time-frame corresponding to at least 40 % of classroom sessions and also when the school prepares pupils in the framework of an advanced level education in grades 10 to 13 for passing an advanced level secondary school final examination in the language concerned (see more details further down about the final leaving examination)).

All grades of secondary grammar school as well as grades 9 and 10 of vocational schools and grades 9 through 12 (or in some cases 13) of secondary vocational schools provide general secondary education aiming at laying the foundations of general culture. The specific rules of each school type are integrated in this framework: for example, the obligation of secondary grammar schools to prepare pupils for tertiary education, or the obligation of vocational schools to spend not more than 40 % of compulsory classes with laying the foundations of theory and practice of the given trade in grade 10.

In the wake of the reform launched in 2004, upper secondary general education has also been divided into two phases: a phase consolidating general education that begins in grade 9 and lasts through grades 10 or 11, and the phase deepening general education in accordance with the pupil's interests and abilities and helping career choice, from grade 11 or 12 through grades 12 or 13.

A pupil may enter school based VET at several points: usually after grade 10 or grade 12 of upper secondary education or after the upper secondary school final examination but in some cases also before or after finishing single structure primary school.

Considering VET institutions, in the 2008/09 school year the number of pupils in vocational schools was 128 848, in special vocational schools 9 809, and 271 351 in secondary vocational schools. The

number of pupils in the vocational training grades of these institutions was 160 409, full-time and adult education combined. Most of the pupils were trained in the major vocational branches of catering, civil engineering and the construction industry, commerce (wholesale and retail), mechanics and metal work, management and administration as well as the industry of motor vehicles, ships and aircraft.

A total of 567 trades were taught in vocational schools in the 2008/09 school year. Pupils were able to acquire 276 different vocational qualifications at vocational schools, 82 qualifications in special vocational schools and 338 in secondary vocational schools.

The most frequent departure from the eight-grade primary and lower secondary (single structure) education is because of the six-grade or eight-grade secondary school, which includes part or the whole of lower secondary (ISCED 2) education. Education in the six-grade secondary school starts in grade 7, and in the eight-grade secondary school it starts in grade 5, and ends in grade 12 in both school types. It is important to point out that in six-grade or eight-grade secondary schools requirements of primary education must be met by the end of grade 9.

Multi-purpose institutions have been mushrooming in secondary education. The majority of vocational schools operate jointly with secondary vocational schools and some schools also launch secondary grammar school grades. This process of proliferation of multi-purpose institutions has continued recently: the number of a complex of institutions that include several affiliated institutions and offer in many cases primary and secondary education is on the increase.

In school year 2008/09 the number of participants in different types of full-time upper secondary education has changed distinctly. The number of students of vocational schools grew by 0.5 %. Headcount of special vocational schools has hardly changed (grew by 0.1 %) The slow decline in the headcount of vocational secondary schools reverted in 2002/03 then started to drop again in 2004/05 and continued to decline in the last year (by 2.3 %). Whereas 44 % of the students participating in secondary education studied at vocational schools in 1990/91, their rate was 23.2 % in 2008/09. The proportion of secondary grammar schools providing general education and preparing more effectively for tertiary education grew from 24 % to 35.5 %. The rate of students attending the most favoured type of institution, the vocational secondary school jumped from 33 % to 41.2 %.

#### **4.1 Admission**

The freedom of choice of school in upper secondary education is ensured by legal regulations to every student falling within the scope of compulsory education. Secondary school admission in general, and the admission examination in particular, has repeatedly been on the agenda in the past decade. In the early 1990s only a smaller number of those applying for secondary school admission sat for an admission examination, i.e. those who chose some kind of specialised programme. With the proliferation of six and eight-grade secondary schools admission to the secondary school became possible at varying stages: at age 10, 12 or 14. A strong competition emerged among schools and the number of applicants to some institutions increased to such an extent that some form of selection had to be introduced. Schools arranged this within their own competence by administering admission examinations.

Almost as many types of the admission examination as the number of schools – more or less this was the situation by the end of the 1990s. To make things even more complicated, most of the pupils were applying to more than one school, which resulted in quite a chaotic situation. Taking this into consideration a central admission examination system was introduced in the 1999/2000 school year for six and eight-grade secondary schools mainly with the purpose of removing the burden of students having to sit for various types of admission tests in multiple schools. The content and the form of the universal written examination were determined by the Ministry of Education. In developing mathematics and reading comprehension tests the Ministry tried to assert the principle that the results

of students should depend to the least possible extent on their social and cultural status, and they should rather more indicate the 'learning potential' inherent in students. Tighter rules were also introduced regarding the admission. From the 2002/03 school year six and eight-grade secondary schools were allowed to organise admission tests only in the event of a 150 % overapplication (relative to the average of the previous three years). Since 2009 the possibility of oral examinations has been terminated, and currently six and eight-grade secondary schools where overapplication has not been significant are allowed to rank applicants only on the basis of their primary (i.e. single structures) school achievements. Where overapplication is high, participation in the central admission test can be prescribed for students besides their primary school achievements.

In the meantime admission examinations for grade 9 have become increasingly popular with traditional secondary grammar schools. Here again, centrally organised written examinations appeared, but as an option for the school rather than a compulsory part of the admission procedure. About one-third of secondary schools require applicants to sit for an admission test with the majority organising their own admission test alongside or instead of the central written examination. The regulation in force since 2009 has changed this practice and eliminated local written examinations. The rank of admission for applicants to grade 9 consists of three elements: the central written examination, the scores carried over from the primary school, and an oral interview. The school can combine the components as it deems best; any of the components can be omitted and it is also possible to include all three components in the admission procedure.

The guarantee of a school granting obligatory admission serves for the implementation of equal opportunities and compliance with compulsory education. According to the new regulations, the school thus guaranteed is not allowed to make admission conditional to meeting requirements. If pupils attend primary and secondary education in the same institution, their progression cannot be tied to an admission examination and the child may progress to the relevant secondary education institution in accordance with the school's pedagogical programme.

If the vocational school or secondary vocational school prepares for a vocational qualification where pupils must comply with certain health and/or aptitude requirements, the expert opinion regarding health and vocational aptitude must be taken into consideration when the pupil is admitted, transferred or progressing to the first grade of vocational education. Irrespective of admission tests and other special conditions of admission, the precondition for secondary school studies is the completion of the prerequisite grades of the primary school.

## **4.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue**

Schools have to organise their work in the time frame of the school year. This time must be sufficient for mastering the requirements of a grade. The first and last day of teaching in the year is always set out in the competent minister's decree. It is a general rule that the school year starts on the first day of work of the September of each year, and closes on the 15th day of June or, if that day happens to be a holiday, on the workday preceding 15 June. The number of actual teaching days is also set out by law, which also specifies that the school staff may use five workdays for pedagogic purposes, when no teaching takes place. The programme of one such day may be determined by the student government.

Students are granted at least three breaks in a school year, twice at least six and once at least four consecutive days. The relevant ministerial decree specifies the time of autumn, winter and spring breaks. A school may deviate from this, subject to certain terms and conditions, but it may not alter the first and the last day of teaching.

It is a central provision that the school year is composed of five-day weeks of teaching. Saturdays and Sundays are days of rest without teaching. At least 30 consecutive days' summer holiday must be

granted to children after the last day of the school year. The school stays open during school holidays and the summer holidays typically with a standby work order for administrative purposes. At the request of the school board and the student government and with the consent of the operator, six-day teaching weeks may be organised with Saturday being a teaching day. With the operator's consent the school principal may also organise six-day teaching weeks. In this case the school is open also on days of rest. This solution is rather rare and is used only in some (mainly Church) secondary boarding schools; nevertheless, this opportunity also facilitates for school operators to have major building works and remodelling accomplished during extended summer holidays.

Weekly and daily timetables of students are decided by the school heads in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions. The timetable is always set out for one school year. When the timetable is compiled the guiding principle is that the length of theoretical teaching lessons is generally 45 minutes, however the school may organise shorter or longer (maximum 60-minute) lessons. There must be a break between classroom lessons and lessons held outside the classroom.

In vocational training practical training must be organised consecutively in 60-minute lessons. The student's schedule of work is adapted to the schedule of work of the entity organising vocational practice. The Act on Vocational Training, however, establishes limits to protect students, for example no practical training can be organised on school days when theory classes are held, nor on the day of vocational examinations. For underage students the training time cannot exceed seven hours a day and for students of age it is limited to eight hours a day. If the daily hours of hands on training exceed four and a half, the student must be ensured minimum 30 minutes' uninterrupted break.

In vocational training students with study contract and participating in hands on training, at least 30 days of holiday without training must be ensured in each school year, which is extended by further five days, if the student is less than 19 years old. The student must be granted at least 10 days for preparation before the vocational examination.

Training at the secondary level therefore is typically organised in five-day working weeks and in the great majority of schools in the morning (generally between 08.00 to 14.00 hours). The number of students' hours during the week consists of obligatory and not obligatory (optional) classroom sessions. The number of the former may not exceed five or six lessons a day (5.5 as a weekly average) in grade 9 and 10, and six hours of teaching a day from grade 11. In vocational training grades the number of lessons in which the theory of the vocation is thought may not exceed seven hours of teaching a day, plus on one teaching day the number of lessons in which vocational theory and practice is taught cannot be more than eight. The purpose of elective lessons organised according to the students' interests and needs is primarily remedial, development, talent care and counselling. The time available for this purpose constitutes 45 % of obligatory classes for grades 9-10, 60 % for grades 11-13, and 5 % for vocational training grades. If necessary, the principal may, with the operator's consent, determine wider time frames. Additional lessons can be offered in school of national and ethnic minorities and for students with special educational needs. The school may organise extracurricular activities (special interest and self education groups, sports groups, school choir, etc.) according to the students' needs, interests and its own pedagogical programme. Supervised afternoon study sessions also belong to this scope of school services, which, according to parents' needs, provide the opportunity for organised learning outside the classroom. Two hours a day are available for this purpose in grades 9 and 10.

The duration of breaks and the sequence of lessons and sessions outside the classroom is determined by the school concerned and set out in the school's internal regulations (e.g. Rules of the House). Consequently the practice of various schools may differ from the general pattern described above.

The Act on Public Education contains the minimum and recommended headcount in classes and groups. The more important between these two is the maximum headcount, which can be exceeded only to a limited extent as specified by the Act. Heads of institutions violating this limit may be fined. The school also determines the percentage of the obligatory and not obligatory hours of teaching used through dividing the class as well as the lessons it is used for. Generally, classes are most frequently divided into groups in language and information technology lessons and physical education.

### 4.3 Curriculum

Information related to this heading fully corresponds to what has been described in section 3.3. The curriculum relating to the vocational grades of vocational education is described in section 5.3.

### 4.4 Assessment, progression and certification

The system of education is assessed on the one hand by applying internationally accepted indicators and through participating in international surveys. Hungary has delegated members to of the OECD's INES working groups engaged in the design of indicators, data collection and, occasionally, the conception and coordination of international surveys since 1996 and joined international surveys as early as 1969, for example the IEA, TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA surveys. Commanding a significant professional and public interest are the results of PISA surveys according to which 15-year old Hungarian students' achievement lags behind the international average primarily in the area of listening comprehension and, due to the selective practice of admission to higher secondary education the achievement of vocational school students lags behind the achievement of vocational school students by 20 % and secondary grammar school students by 27 %. The achievement of Hungary's school system has not changed considerably over the past three years according to the results of the third PISA survey: students' achievement in sciences has been average, and somewhat below the average in listening comprehension and mathematics. After the turn of the millennium a national competence measurement system was introduced according to the pattern of the PISA survey, as mentioned in the previous section.

Assessment practically follows the same pattern as at upper primary school.

The Act on Public Education of 1993 states that students' achievement must be assessed with marks regularly and declares the parents' right to be regularly informed in detail and merit about the child's progress, conduct and academic achievement. Taking this into consideration and also to motivate students the majority of teachers use the tools of formative evaluation on a daily basis. The teacher has the right to select the tools of evaluation within the framework specified in the school's local curriculum. There is no central regulation whatsoever in this regard. The most popular tools of formative evaluation are the students' oral and written tests (the latter of about 5-20 minutes) and checking their homework. Tools of summative assessment are the so called subject closing tests in writing at the end of some major section of the learning material; reports to be given about the material of several lessons; presentations in writing on the basis of individual observations, experiments and material collection; and, more rarely and mainly in alternative schools, annual or more frequent internal examinations and the practice of mainly secondary grammar school of internal examination at the end of the 10th grade (the so called „minor' school leaving examination).

Most teachers use the same five-grade scale for the formative and summative evaluation and consequently the two types of assessment tend to get mixed up and lack the transparency necessary for both parents and children. The marks and grades used for the assessment of knowledge are the following: excellent (5), good (4), satisfactory (3), pass (2), and fail (1). Conduct and effort are assessed using a four-grade scale: exemplary (5), good (4), could do better (3) and poor (2). Marks are recorded in the class logbook, which also contains students' core data. Alongside marks,

achievement may be assessed by using percentages or a text evaluation in institutions of secondary education.

The legal material regulating secondary education used to contain two types of examinations: the basic education test (after the end of the 10th grade) and the school leaving examination (after completing grade 12). The basic education test, however, was earlier conducted on an optional basis only in some schools. In 2008 it would have become obligatory; however it had been removed from the system of content regulation in 2006.

The output examination at secondary grammar and vocational secondary schools is the secondary school final examination (*érettségi vizsga*). In 2005, after an almost decade-long preparation the new two-tier final examination system was introduced. In the new system students are free to decide whether they intend to sit for an advanced or ordinary level examination in each subject. Moreover, standardization is stronger at the ordinary level in comparison to the earlier practice. The advanced level final examination is administered outside the school, both ordinary and advanced serve at the same time as an admission test to tertiary education institutions. Thus they replace the old university/college admission system, which has been long and widely criticised. Advanced level examinations are administered by state examination boards operating independently from schools. Ordinary level examinations continue to be administered by schools; however the standardised tests and correcting keys ensure a greater degree of objectivity than before even for this type of examination. The ordinary level school leaving examination differs from the pre-2005 examination in both content and nature but its organisation and execution remained basically the same. Examinees solve the tasks in writing in their own school in each subject on a previously determined day, then, in the same school, they sit for an oral examination before a final examination board composed of the school's teachers and a chairperson who is not a teacher of the school. Contrary to the previous practice there is a written and oral examination in almost every subject. The test paper for the written test and the assessment guide are compiled centrally in all subjects. The tests are corrected and evaluated by the school.

Once the student has acquired the secondary school leaving certificate, this document entitles them to be admitted to tertiary education institutions, join vocational training, take a job or pursue certain activities.

At the end of vocational studies a vocational examination can be taken. This is a state examination, which has to be taken in front of an independent vocational board serving as an examination board in compliance with the rules governing vocational examinations. A certificate of vocational qualification can be granted to a person having complied with the vocational and examination requirements at the vocational examination. A person having met a partial examination related to a vocational requirement module may be granted a partial vocational qualification.

The certificate of vocational qualification is a public document and its manufacture and distribution are also tied to a ministerial permission. The certificate is issued by the vocational examination board. This document qualifies its holder to take a job or pursue some activity.

An important development from the point of view of regulating the output of secondary level education has been the emergence of the European Qualifications Framework (hereinafter: EQF). At the initiative of the heads of governments of EU member states the draft having been worked out by the European Commission the major function of which is to ensure transition among various national and sector specific qualification systems and framework systems was finally approved by the Committee on 5 September 2006. The most important aim of the document is to determine in the form of specific learning achievements the qualifications available at the respective levels and branches of education. Learning achievements in this sense are the skills, abilities and competences the individual masters by the end of the learning process. An important task of the forthcoming period will be to bring about a

national framework system of training through harmonising the output levels of the various institutional types of secondary education and EQF levels.

#### 4.5 Guidance and counselling

Upper secondary programmes largely differ in terms of their guidance and counselling services. One-to-one counselling and guidance regarding tertiary studies is more frequent than the average at secondary grammar schools (visits to higher education institutions, invitation of representatives of higher education institutions). In addition, career guidance is a topic of the form teacher's class and help students to make their choice of educational institution for further studies or a career. In vocational secondary schools and vocational schools career guidance is incorporated in the teaching process from the start. Students are acquainted with various trades and receive counselling to help them make a choice in several classes a week. Vocational secondary schools offer more than the other two secondary programmes in terms of informal counselling. They help students acquire first-hand experience about the labour market as well as about higher education (visits to various employers, invitation of employers and representatives of higher education institution). Vocational schools provide this type of assistance in the context of curricular career guidance and counselling classes (8 classes per week).

In addition to the above services, every school offers some form of individual career guidance and counselling. Typically teachers who are responsible for guidance and counselling and the form teachers, who know the students best assist students in making their decision about further studies or choosing a career.

The network of county (in Budapest, district) education counselling services also provides guidance on further studies and training to young people with learning disorders, adaptive or behavioural problems in their care, or, conversely, to the exceptionally gifted and talented in the context of lifestyle counselling on an ad hoc basis. Every county operates Job Information and Counselling Offices as part of the employment service system (*Foglalkozási Információs Tanácsadó Iroda*). Their professional services are sought by a growing number of young people including secondary school students. The Offices use career guidance and planning support software extensively (Blueprint, Real Game, Choices).

There are also non-profit providers whose website provides information and access to databases and sometimes services to both students who intending to pursue post-secondary studies and job seeking young people.

More details can be found in section 3.5.

#### 4.6 Teachers and trainers

Hungarian higher education is characterised by parallel existence of universities and colleges and university and college programmes or courses. In the past pathways were one-way: a college graduate could go on to university but a student who started a university programme could not acquire a college diploma partway through.

As a result of the Bologna process, the earlier college and university level system of teacher training has become unified: after successful completion of undergraduate studies that lay the foundations in a particular discipline the student acquires teaching qualification at master's level. In the new system graduates will be qualified to teach their chosen discipline in grades 5-12 (13) of public education and vocational education and training. According to the plans, the programme structure of the two-cycle teacher training system will be uniform: teaching license can only be acquired by graduating from master's programmes. The three-year undergraduate level will focus on the particular disciplines.

Preparation for the teacher's profession will take place at the two-year master's level relying on the undergraduate level foundations. The main purpose of this change in teacher training is to improve the quality of education and training partly through increasingly demanding screening of students in the two cycles, and partly by upgrading the content of education. This can be done by harmonising education with labour market demands, linking training to practice, and adopting a competence based education and training strategy. In the course of restructuring education in the spirit of Bologna it is teacher training that is undergoing the most fundamental change.

At present the overwhelming majority of teachers at schools graduated in the old dual system. In secondary education courses in general domains of culture are taught by teachers who are qualified as to teach subjects in cultural domains. In vocational secondary schools and vocational schools vocational orientation, basic vocational theory and practice courses and vocational training related courses are taught by teachers qualified in VET and vocational tutors. Arts and physical education (jointly called skills subjects) and foreign languages are also taught by teachers with relevant special qualifications acquired in the context of college or university level teacher training. Teachers who graduated from colleges can teach skills subjects and foreign languages in secondary education as well.

Improvement of the quality of teaching of course cannot be expected solely from restructuring teacher education. There are many teachers active today who graduated earlier but will continue teaching for decades. Continuing education of teachers is paramount. See section 3.6. for details as the rules of continuing education of primary and secondary school teachers are entirely the same.

## 5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

Two independent training programmes can be classified in this category. They differ mainly in terms of their status; the actual training practices are largely similar.

1) The first type of programme is post-secondary vocational education and training. Students can opt for this programme after obtaining the secondary school leaving certificate. At the end of the programme they acquire ISCED 4C qualifications that are listed in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ by its Hungarian acronym).

VET is provided for by the 1993 Vocational Training Act and its subsequent amendments.

Under the Act, the minimum age limit for involvement in VET is 16. Consequently, grades 9-12 of secondary vocational schools (upper secondary level) offer so-called vocational preparatory education. ISCED 4C level vocational qualifications featuring in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ) can be acquired in the context of programmes starting in grade 13. The duration of a programme depends on the chosen trade and can be one, two or more years after finishing secondary school.

The law has been amended in this respect (Act XLIX of 2009 on the amendment of Act LXXIX on Public Education), pursuant to which from 2010 on vocational schools (vocational training schools) (*szakiskola*) can also be organised only with vocational training grades for pupils who have accomplished single structure education, provided that education is based on the requirements of general education in at least one-third of total training time.

The format of education, practical training and assessment/evaluation is essentially the same as the general practice in VET (determined by the Vocational Training Act and the vocational training and examination requirements published in the form of ministerial decrees by the competent ministries in charge of the various areas of qualification).

2) The other type of programmes were initially called accredited school-based advanced vocational programmes, which were then shortened to advanced vocational programmes after 2001 (FSZ by its Hungarian acronym). This VET programme is part of both secondary VET and tertiary education. It is a kind of bridge between the two, as it does not provide higher education qualifications or degrees.

There is a certain disagreement in Hungarian educational literature regarding the classification of this type of programme. Official statistics classifies it as tertiary education (ISCED 5B).

Introduction of this programme type was approved by Parliament in 1996. The legal basis lies in the amendment of the 1993 Higher Education Act, the 2005 Higher Education Act, and Government Decree 45 of 1997 (12 March) on the Establishment and Starting of Training Programmes.

The typically two-year programme is based on the secondary school leaving certificate. Students acquire vocational qualifications listed in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ) that will enable them to find jobs on the labour market or continue their studies in undergraduate programmes in tertiary education (Bachelor, BA or BSc programmes). The credits earned in advanced vocational programmes are transferable to higher education institutions.

Advanced vocational programmes were first launched in the 1998/99 academic year. In 2000 student numbers were 2 % of those in higher education. Numbers increased to reach around 13-14 % in 2008/09; however, despite the substantial growth the number of applicants does not reach the number of state subsidized places available.

In the 2008/09 academic year the number of students was 15 677 including 65.7 % women.

Programmes are launched primarily in areas of business and technology. Currently a total of about 70 different vocational qualifications can be acquired (but in 2007 in only 58 were programmes actually launched).

Due to the statutory provisions, participants are over 18 years of age. The great majority of them are young people who, having finished secondary school, were not admitted to universities or colleges. However, the trend has been changing and there have been growing numbers of more mature students year after year. In a questionnaire-based survey conducted in 2001, 60 % of the respondents said they intended to continue their studies after the advanced vocational programme (in 2003 the same rate was 50 %); however, the rate of those who really do so is low and many continue their studies as part-time, working students <sup>(2)</sup>.

Somewhat differently from the original intent, advanced vocational programmes are an alternative way for students to access higher education. State funding is almost a hundred percent and admission is easy because of low thresholds. The system is highly advantageous for students as once they have acquired an advanced vocational qualification they are still entitled to free (i.e. state financed) higher education and may thus continue their studies as undergraduate students in tertiary education.

Advanced vocational training programmes have a dual legal status. If the institution operating the programme is a higher education institution the participant's legal status is higher education student. Conversely, if the programme is offered by a vocational secondary school based on an agreement concluded with the higher education institution, the legal status of the participants is secondary school student. In the latter case, the payment obligations of the vocational secondary school are set forth in the agreement between the two institutions. Depending on the level of involvement of the higher education institution this may include a variety of titles (lecturer's fee, examination fee, travel costs, purchase of teaching materials, office supplies, admin charges, etc), and the amount is generally between 5 % and 20 % of the per capita financing by the state.

In Hungary, the costs of acquiring the first vocational qualification is financed from the state budget, from the statutory contributions of companies involved in practical training, and from grants. VET institutions receive allocations from the state on the basis of their student numbers – this is the so-called per capita financing. Introduced in 2005, those who want to obtain a second (or more) qualification have to pay a tuition fee (with the exception of students with multiple disadvantages).

If a public education institution offers courses or entire programmes to students whose status is higher education students, it is the higher education institution that pays the public education institution for facilities and services rendered (classroom rent, teachers' fees, organisation and admin costs).

Attempts have been made to harmonize the per capita financing structures of the two statuses (as indeed students of the two statuses often learn side by side); today, secondary school status students can have recourse to student loans.

Initially, the number of higher education status students outnumbered those with secondary school status; by now, their numbers are almost equal.

In September 2008 there were 15 cooperation networks nationwide with the participation of more than ten vocational secondary schools and one higher education institution in each.

New FSZ programmes can be founded (i.e. proposals made for inclusion of new programmes in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications revamped in 2006) solely by higher education institutions. Secondary VET institutions are also entitled to launch FSZ programmes on the Register provided they sign a relevant agreement with a higher education institution.

---

<sup>(2)</sup> Dr. Ildikó Sedivi Balassa: A felsőfokú szakképzés tíz éve (Ten years of non-university higher vocational training). AIFSZ Kollégium Egyesület, Budapest, 2008.

The minimum content of the cooperation agreement between the two institutions is laid down in the relevant piece of legislation (government decree), and is verified by the Educational Authority at the time of registration.

Chambers of commerce and professional chambers have a role to play in both types of VET programmes.

Approval of the competent chamber is required for a new qualification to be accepted on the Register.

A representative of the chamber serves on the board of vocational qualification examination (OKJ examination) as an independent co-chair.

Training for qualifications listed in the Register include three months of work training, which is organised by the VET institution in collaboration with the chambers.

There are no statistics about the exact number of VET institutions offering non-university higher vocational training (FSZ) programmes. According to 2007 data, 293 vocational secondary schools and 42 higher education institutions were registered and licensed to launch FSZ programmes. Thirty percent of the registered VET institutions operate in Budapest; the distribution of the rest among the regions is well-balanced. In the wake of the transformation of the VET institutional system (i.e. its organisation into Integrated Regional Vocational Training Centres, or TISZK by their Hungarian acronym) the figures are likely to change. (Sedivi, 2008) Dropout rate is substantial (only about 35-40 % of entrants acquire qualifications).

## 5.1 Admission

Once they pass the secondary school final examination students have the choice of continuing their studies in higher education or in a post-secondary VET programme. It is possible to be admitted to VET programmes for students who did not pass their secondary school final examination but completed grade 12 provided they opt for a programme where the secondary school final examination is not an input requirement; however, the number of these students is low. Participation in vocational preparatory education and training in grades 11 and 12 of vocational secondary schools counts towards post-secondary VET (as a result, the duration of training will be one or two semesters shorter).

School-based post-secondary VET programmes are also available for students who completed secondary education in secondary grammar schools, i.e. secondary schools with a general scope of studies, and acquired the secondary school leaving certificate.

Other admission criteria (such as preliminary education or physical/medical fitness) are determined in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications and the vocational and examination requirements of the individual qualifications.

The admission criteria of Type 1 VET programmes are as follows, depending on the special requirements of the chosen trade:

- secondary school leaving certificate (with or without final examination);
- successful secondary school final examination (in the case of qualifications so requiring);
- special physical/medical fitness if specifically required for certain qualifications.

In the case of Type 2 VET programmes (advanced vocational programmes), the admission criteria for higher education status students are a successful secondary school final examination and obtaining the minimum score determined by higher education in a relevant regulation (currently minimum 140 points based on two secondary school final examination subjects). For those with secondary school

pupil status the admission criteria are determined by the vocational secondary school in harmony with the framework provided by the school maintainer.

## 5.2 Organisation of time, groups and venue

Post-secondary VET as well as advanced vocational programmes can both be organised in the framework of full-time or part-time (evening) programmes.

The teaching period of the academic year uniformly consists of five-day teaching weeks.

Practical vocational training is not a separate out-of-school component but an integral part of school-based teaching. It can be organised in groups or on an individual basis.

In VET there is a maximum of vocational theory and vocational practice classes per day. In each grade of vocational training the number of contact hours in vocational theory subjects cannot be more than seven per day, and the aggregate number of vocational theory and practice contact hours cannot exceed eight per day.

Vocational theory classes are generally 45 minutes long (however, in justified cases the head of the educational institution may determine a different length, so 60-minute classes are also possible). Practical classes are successive 60-minute periods. The working order is adapted to the general order of the training institution organising practical training. Students under 18 cannot be engaged in education and training exceeding eight hours per day. If the duration of practical classes exceeds 4.5 hours, students must be granted an uninterrupted break of at least 30 minutes.

By law, vocational practice must alternate with theory classes on a weekly basis during the academic year, and practice should be uninterrupted in the summer holidays.

Practical training can take place in school workshops or on the premises of business organisations (companies). The most typical form is student contract-based practical training but schools can also sign cooperation agreements with business organisations. Students attending the vocational training grades of vocational secondary schools mostly receive practical training in school workshops.

Vocational students participating in vocational practice on a student contract basis must be granted at least 30 days of school holidays per academic year. For those who are under 19, the school holidays are at least 35 days.

At least 10 days preparation time must be granted for students before taking their vocational qualifying examination.

1) Post-secondary VET is organised in vocational schools in so-called vocational training grades, in classes and groups. The size of classes and groups depends on the number of students in the particular trade.

2) Establishment of advanced vocational training did not entail a new institutional system. The educational administration allocated this type of VET to two existing types of institutions (higher education institutions and vocational secondary schools) that cooperate in implementing the programmes.

The maximum number of students per class or group is 35 in vocational theory classes and 12 in vocational practice. A deviation of about 20 % is permissible; in specially justified cases, the permission of the Educational Authority must be sought for a greater deviation.

Advanced vocational training does not always require compulsory participation in company-based vocational practice. In 2006 an advanced vocational student contract system was developed to the analogy of student contracts typically used in VET. The beneficiary is the student involved in advanced

vocational training. The advanced vocational student contract is concluded between the student and the business organisation. Business organisations must meet certain criteria set forth by law and the relevant specific statutory provisions in order to be eligible. Similarly to VET contracts, advanced vocational student contracts are registered with, and supervised by, the competent chamber of commerce, as are the business associations organising vocational practice.

Paragraph g) of Section 3(4) of Government Decree 79 of 2006 (5 April) provides for vocational practice and requires VET institutions to determine the number of practical classes (in contact hours) to be completed at various training sites as a compulsory part of the VET programme. In advanced vocational training programmes where, due to the area of qualification, practical classes do not take place on the premises of business organisations (companies) but at public institutions or authorities, vocational practice continues to be organised on the basis of cooperation agreements between the training institution and the host institution (e.g. in case of legal assistants, institutional communication officers etc.).

### **5.3 Curriculum**

In post-secondary vocational training (and in VET organised in the context of public education in general) the curriculum is called the VET programme. VET programmes are developed by the educational institutions relying on the vocational and examination requirements and the central programmes of the individual subjects and courses (these are framework curricula developed by the competent ministries). These two basic documents are issued by the minister in charge of vocational education and training. Thus the content of vocational education consists of institutionally developed programmes that are based on nationwide framework programmes.

Curricula for the advanced vocational programmes are developed by the institutions, in consideration of the vocational and examination requirements and the programmes recommended and published by the minister responsible for VET.

The vocational and examination requirements include admission criteria, maximum duration of training, the proportion of vocational theory and practice (there is a wide variety depending on the nature of the different trades), the vocational requirements or task profile and competences, and the contents of the qualifying examination (examination modules) for all of the trades listed in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications.

The National Vocational and Adult Education and Training Institute developed sample curricula for the vocational training grades, which are widely used.

Teachers have full autonomy at all levels of the education and training system to choose teaching and training methods. Widespread traditional frontal teaching methods are gradually replaced by more up-to-date methods of teaching (group work, project work).

The textbook market is regulated by separate legal regulations. The competent ministry compiles a list of recommended textbooks in particular areas and VET institutions choose from the available textbooks based on the list. Besides traditional printed textbooks and manuals there are a number of other documents and publications supporting the teaching/learning process.

### **5.4 Assessment, progression and certification**

Continuous assessment of VET participants is carried out by the vocational training institution. Assessment of student achievement and progress in vocational theory classes takes the form that is generally prevalent in public education.

Students' grades are determined by the teacher course teaching. Course teachers make proposals for the end-of-term grades and the decision will be passed by the teaching corps of the institution.

Assessment takes place on a five-grade scale where 5 is the highest grade. The following grades can be achieved: excellent (5), good (4), satisfactory (3), pass (2), and fail (1).

In practical training, the vocational teacher/trainer responsible for the student evaluates the student's monthly performance at the end of the month. Students' performance is graded weekly, and the grades are entered in the class journal. The monthly grade is the (rounded) arithmetic average of the weekly grades. Rounding can be influenced by the teacher's general impression of the student's work and effort, opinion of co-workers, the general rules at the workplace, etc. The vocational teacher informs the student of the assessment and enters the grade in the student's grade booklet, and certifies it with his/her signature and preferably the institution's seal.

In the case of company-based vocational practice, the student's performance is assessed by the representative of the company (also on a five-grade scale: excellent, good, average, could do better, unacceptable). The assessor also includes in the assessment the student's knowledge of vocational theory, attitude to work, communication skills, adaptability, performance, the amount and general quality of the work performed by the student as well as the quality of the student journal.

At the end of the academic year the assembly of the teaching corps passes a decision regarding the student's advancement to the next grade.

A vocational student fails and has to repeat the grade if the number of (justified or unjustified) absent days or classes exceeds 20 % of the vocational training time in a given academic year.

In the case of advanced vocational training, the duration of programmes are laid down in the vocational and examination requirements, and minimum contact hours are determined by the Higher Education Act (1 200 hours). A total of 120 credits can be earned in FSZ programmes, of which at least 30 but no more than 60 credits can be transferred to undergraduate studies.

The qualification examination of trades listed in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications is identical throughout the entire VET system.

Students participating in advanced vocational programmes do not acquire higher education degrees or higher education qualifications, only registered qualifications recognized by the state that cannot be acquired in the context of tertiary education. After completing the programme the student acquires qualification in a trade that is listed in the Hungarian Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ), and based on the result of the qualification examination, earns at least 30 but not more than 60 credits transferable to higher education.

The qualification for trades on the Register, and the certificate attesting it can be acquired after completion of the programme by passing a qualification examination before an independent board of examiners. The contents as well as the subjects in the written and oral part of the qualifying examination are specified in the vocational and examination requirements. The Register was reviewed in 2006 and the new vocational and examination requirements may prescribe an end-of-module examination as a prerequisite for the qualifying examination.

The chair of the board of examiners is appointed by the minister in charge of the particular vocational qualification. In the case of trades whose examination requirements have been determined by the relevant chamber (there are about 20 such trades at present), the chair of the board is appointed by the local chamber. Other members of the board are delegated by the chamber (or nationwide advocacy organisations) and the institution organising the vocational examination. The location for the qualifying examination is often the training institution.

## 5.5 Guidance and counselling

The network of career counselling and guidance institutions that was developed in the 1990s does not cater for all students involved in vocational education, and the special county-level career institutions that provide guidance to students in public education are understaffed with professional consultants.

Since 2006 higher education institutions must provide career information and guidance about advanced vocational programmes. The service is generally operated through the institutional career centres or offices and through student counselling. Most of the higher education institutions stage job fairs; these are events where students meet potential employers and familiarize with their demands and expectations, and learn how job interviews are conducted.

Vocational students also learn about the actual expectations of the labour market in the context of their practical training and in the Labour Market Studies course or module that is part of the programme.

In the 1990s career guidance was introduced as a separate subject in school-based VET but only some of the schools embraced it. Updated in 2007, the National Core Curriculum formulates career guidance and counselling as a development task.

Information about VET programmes is generally provided in a written form and is reliant on individual initiatives to seek it.

Training institutions, in particular higher education institutions publish various brochures and other publications that describe their advanced vocational programmes on offer.

Advocacies have published a free publication titled Career Guidance and Admission Information three times so far with nationwide distribution. In addition, there are several Internet portals and websites, where anyone interested can find out about programmes, relevant legal regulations, areas of use for the various qualifications, and available grants.

## 5.6 Teachers and trainers

In vocational secondary schools and higher education institutions the teachers and trainers involved in post-secondary VET and advanced vocational programmes are the same as those teaching in other programmes of the institutions.

The initial training and institutional background of teachers is identical with those of vocational secondary school and higher education teachers. However, higher education teachers teaching students in advanced vocational programmes are not required by law to be qualified teachers.

The law provides for differing qualification requirements for teachers of the subjects in the various cultural domains, those teaching vocational theory, and trainers leading vocational practice at business organisations (companies).

Teachers as well as vocational teachers acquire their initial training in the context of higher education. In the new Bologna system, teachers of subjects in the cultural domains acquire teaching qualifications at master's level, and vocational teacher qualifications are obtained at undergraduate level (BSc).

Similarly to all teachers in public education, teachers in vocational schools must undertake a total of 120 hours of in-service education every seven years. Accredited programmes available in the context of continuing education are published annually.

Teachers in higher education are not required to participate in continuing education.

The Association of Teachers of Advanced Vocational Training, a professional association founded in 2002, launches regularly further training programmes, issues publications and organises professional conferences and workshops, which support the continuing education of teachers involved in advanced vocational programmes. Moreover, in 2008 a special online training programme was launched for teachers of the Labour Market Studies course or subject.

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

The series of reform processes in tertiary education was opened by Act I of 1985 on Education (and its 1990 amendment). In 1993 a separate act was legislated on higher education (Act LXXX of 1993 on Higher Education). It provided for the establishment and state recognition of non-public institutions, i.e. the Churches and private higher education institutions. With the entry into effect of the 2005 Higher Education Act (Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education) on 1 September 2006 the structure of higher education changed and the two-cycle education became the general practice.

After the signature of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 Hungary was actively involved in the development of the European Higher Education Area. Higher education is provided through universities (*egyetem*) and colleges (*főiskola*) – jointly: higher education institutions. Based on the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999 the Hungarian higher education system started phasing in the three-cycle educational system from 1 September 2006.

In a system organised into cycles, after secondary school students enter the first cycle of tertiary education, the three or four-year undergraduate level (with the exception of teacher training), followed by the second cycle, master's education, which is not more than two years in duration. The third cycle is PhD education. In addition to the new multi-cycle system the one-tier system survived in certain areas where it was reasonable, offering one-tier master programmes in the Bologna system with 300-360 credits. BA and MA programmes have been opened systematically since the fall of 2006 and 2009 respectively, thus the provision of university education and professional qualifications (*egyetemi képzés*) or college education and professional qualifications (*főiskolai képzés*) are gradually phasing out.

Pursuant to the 2007 amendment to the 2005 Higher Education Act, besides acquiring professional qualifications and degrees or certificates and diplomas students can participate in tertiary courses in specific subfields of studies (*részismeret*) after they have acquired a bachelor's or master's degree. This type of student status can be obtained for a maximum of two semesters at any one time. Credits earned in this context are transferable.

The currently phasing out university and college levels of education are both classified as ISCED 5A. The programmes offered by both types of institution are undergraduate programmes. In the multi-cycle system ISCED 5A encompasses also the bachelor (BA, BSc) and master (MA, MSc) studies.

The first cycle in the multi-cycle system is undergraduate education, which provides a bachelor's degree and related professional qualification. Length of programmes is at least six but not more than eight semesters. Under the Higher Education Act in the case of practice-oriented undergraduate programmes an at least six-week long practical course must be organised.

Government Decree 289 of 2005 on Bachelor and Master Level Education and the Rules of Procedure for Starting Higher Education Programmes provided for lengths of undergraduate studies that differ from the standard three years: undergraduate programmes in agriculture, technology, business, social welfare, health science and special education needs teacher training are 3.5 years, and four years in civil engineering and teacher training (for primary school grades 1-4). Master programmes in these areas are shorter than two years.

At graduate level, master education provides a master's degree and related professional qualification. Length of studies is at least two but not more than four semesters. Total length of studies in the undergraduate programmes and the master's programmes building on them as well as in one-tier programmes is at least 10 but not more than 12 semesters.

The third cycle in the multi-cycle higher education system prepares for and confers the most advanced university qualification, the doctor's degree (ISCED 6). Only universities can award doctor's degrees.

Similarly to the old structure, in the multi-cycle system doctorate studies follow master's degree and prepare for a PhD or DLA (Doctor of Liberal Arts). Doctorate programmes are three-year (36-month) post-graduate programmes preparing for acquisition of a doctor's degree. Doctorate programmes involve regular studies, research and reporting. Students must also fulfil the obligations stipulated in the university's doctoral regulations including taking the required examinations except for the comprehensive doctoral examination.

In the education system determined by the 2005 Higher Education Act (post-graduate) professional higher education training can be organised by higher education institutions and remains a form of continuing education and training that provides new specialist training without any higher degree after the bachelor's or master's degree, and as such, it is part of lifelong learning. The content of professional higher education training can serve for deepening or complementing the qualification acquired at undergraduate or master level in a special direction, or lead to completing studies in additional elective fields related to earlier tertiary studies as determined by the study or programme requirements.

## 6.1 Admission

The general conditions for admission to higher education institutions are provided for by the Higher Education Act and the relevant government decree that sets forth the rules of admission procedure and in that framework higher education institutions determine their admission requirements. Applicants for admission to advanced vocational programmes, bachelor programmes and one-tier master programmes must have taken the secondary school final examination (*érettségi vizsga*). In the multi-cycle system the precondition for admission to master programmes is the diploma (degree) acquired at the end of bachelor studies. Doctorate programmes provide education to acquire an advanced scientific degree; the input requirement is a university (*egyetem*) diploma or a master's degree.

Every year the government determines the number of students whose tertiary studies are financed by the state. Depending on their educational capacity higher education institutions may admit additional applicants above the number subsidized by the state who meet the admission criteria and are prepared to pay the costs of their tuition. These students participate in fee-paying education (*költségtérítéssel képzés*). The quota of subsidized students admitted to master training is 35 % of the quota of new entrants in tertiary education in the third year before the year in question, and the quota for doctoral students and students in (post-graduate) professional higher education training is 10 % of the master's quota.

Applicants to higher education institutions are ranked according to their secondary school achievement and their choice of higher education institutions. As regards admission to master programmes, besides the condition of having a BA degree, higher education institutions determine their own admission criteria.

Pursuant to a relevant government decree students who belong to the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries can pursue tertiary studies in Hungary with the same terms as those who are Hungarian citizens.

Pursuant to a special piece of legislation citizens of other countries who are entitled to freedom of movement and the right to stay, as well as refugees, temporary refugees, persons/students pursuing studies based on international agreements, and citizens of countries where Hungarian students can access the educational services of the state on the basis of reciprocity are entitled to the same rights as Hungarian citizen students.

Citizens of the European Economic Area as well as non-Hungarian citizens who are entitled to rights equal to those held by Hungarian citizens can have access to subsidized undergraduate programmes.

Other foreign students who are citizens of countries outside the European Economic Area can apply to participate in fee-based programmes. If they apply for admission to programmes that are taught in Hungarian the conditions of application are the same as for Hungarian citizen applicants. State grants are available for students who stay in Hungary on the basis of international agreements, and, under special legislation, for Hungarian minority students from neighbouring countries who have been admitted.

## 6.2 Students' contributions and financial support

Fees and charges to be paid by university and college students and their financial support are provided for by the Higher Education Act and Government Decree 51 of 2007 on benefits received, and certain charges paid by students participating in higher education and Government Decree on Ph.D. education. In the subsidized system students do not pay tuition fees. Other payments can be required if students fail to meet obligations set forth in the institution's rules and regulations, or fulfil their obligations late. Students are allowed to learn in subsidized form for no more than 12 semesters.

Since 1997 higher education institutions have also offered fee-based programmes (*költségtérítéssel* *képzés*) of their own volition if their academic staff and infrastructure so allows. Students in fee-based programmes must pay tuition fee for their education. The study requirements are identical for students in subsidized and fee-based programmes, however, tuition-fee paying students not only pay the costs of their education but are not entitled to any form of support. Applicants decide whether they are financially capable to undertake fee-based education when they submit their application to higher education institutions. The higher education institution must sign a contract with the students admitted to fee-based programmes. The tuition fee cannot be less than 50 % of the institution's per student spending on professional tasks.

Higher education institutions can launch fee-based programmes in the same areas as subsidized programmes.

Institutions can on the strength of a governmental decree on the subject transfer students from fee-based to subsidized programmes, if the institution's quota of students subsidized by state allows it.

Tuition fee is also paid by foreign students who do not have the right to free movement and stay, and whose native country is not subject to reciprocity in the field of educational services.

The three types of per capita support (for education, for research and for maintaining) allocated to higher education institutions are determined in the annual Budget Act. The per capita state support based on student numbers, which is provided for grants and other financial support for students, is also determined in the annual Budget Act. In addition, a variety of grants and funds are available on application to support students.

Per capita support is currently 119 000 *forints*. Other in-kind and pecuniary support include student housing support (housing in student halls (*kollégium*) amounting to 116 500 HUF per student, support for the purchase and publication of manuals and textbooks, support to sports and cultural activities (HUF 11 900 per person per year), and the support to student housing in lieu of admission to student halls (HUF 119 000 per student per year).

Grants and allowances available for students are regulated by the higher education institution within the scope of the relevant Government Decree.

Students may receive study grants based on their academic achievement, and may apply for social welfare allowance based on their welfare conditions.

From 2007 the breakdown of quota-based state support has changed: the rate of social grants has increased over achievement-based study grants.

Socially eligible students receive a flat amount of start-up grant in the first semester of their tertiary studies. The amount is a uniform 50 % of the state allocation per student in the case of bachelor students, students in advanced vocational programmes, and those in the one-tier programmes, and 75 % of the allocation per student for master's students. A new feature of social grants is a guaranteed flat-rate allowance granted to the most needy. This replaced the earlier allowance whose amount changed from semester to semester by a fixed guaranteed social grant. Government Decree 51 of 2007 on benefits received, and certain charges paid by students participating in higher education provides for regular social grants that students may apply for. Depending on the student's social needs the grant is 20 % or 10 % of the per capita state support. Students with disabilities or with health impairment, socially underprivileged, supporting a family, or having at least three children as well as orphaned students are eligible for social grant.

Students in the state financed higher education system can apply for housing in student halls. When application for regular social grant and housing allowance is assessed the number and income of people living in the student's household as well as distance of the student's home from the higher education institutions are taken into consideration.

After two semesters in tertiary education students showing outstanding academic achievement and active in student research their discipline receive a state study grant (the so-called Grant of the Republic) awarded by the minister of education for a period of one year. The grant is set by the Budget Act and is currently 340 000 HUF per person per year.

To alleviate social inequality the Ministry of Education launched *Bursa Hungarica* Higher Education Local Government Grant in cooperation with the local and regional governments in the 2000/01 academic year. *Bursa Hungarica* is intended to support socially disadvantaged students and would-be students.

Access to tertiary studies is also promoted through support from Public Foundation for Education (legal successor after the merger of A Chance to Study Public Foundation and other public foundations). Twice a year the Foundation invites students who are financially underprivileged or have disabilities and who would not be able to begin or continue tertiary studies without financial assistance. The scheme had a budget of 200 million HUF in 1997 and 1998, which was increased to 400 million HUF in 1999. Besides the social background academic achievement also matters.

By providing advantages the 2005 Higher Education Act promotes the admission and fruitful studies of underprivileged students. The mentor programme is supported by the minister for education and culture. The scheme provides grants to disadvantaged students, which helps them with their living and study expenses. Almost 400 persons have received the grant.

The state provides every student with a student ID card, which grants holders travel at student rate and reductions when they make certain purchases. Students receive their student ID card through the higher education institutions.

Students in the fee-based system can deduct 30 % of the tuition fee, but not more than 60 thousand HUF, from their tax base in the related fiscal year.

Student loan has been available since the autumn of 2001. Student loan is a subsidized loan that can be drawn down in the course of tertiary studies with repayment starting after graduation. When the scheme was introduced the maximum drawdown was 21 000 HUF per month. This was increased to 25 000 HUF by the government in May 2002. Since 2006 non-fee paying students can have recourse to student loan of 30 000 HUF and those paying tuition fee, 40 000 HUF per month at a variable interest rate, which is regulated by decree. Students studying abroad can also take out a student loan. The age of eligibility has been greatly increased, to 40 years.

### 6.3 Organisation of the academic year

Academic year according to Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education consists of two semesters. One semester is a five-month-long period divided into term and examination period.

Further organisation of the semester is the higher education institution's competence that is laid down in the Organizational and Operational Rules of the institute and is determined by the Senate of the institution on the basis of the proposal by the head of the institution. Consequently, the structure of the semester is typical for a particular institution and does not change depending on the programmes offered by the institution.

Typically, the academic year starts with an autumn semester but in a few cases it could commence in the spring semester. Both semesters are constituted by a term period (term-time) and an examination period. Term-time is generally 15 weeks, and the examination period is six weeks per semester. Depending on the institution the autumn semester starts between 1 and 10 September and finishes on 31 January. The spring semester begins between 1 and 10 February and finishes on 30 June. Generally the institutions have a week's spring break in the middle of the autumn semester and around Easter.

The examination period is generally from mid-December to the end of January in the autumn semester and from mid-May to the end of June in the spring semester.

Courses in full-time education are scheduled five days a week (from Monday to Friday; officially, Saturdays are non-teaching days but students may use the institutions' facilities (study in the library, use the computer labs and engage in student research at the departments or use the institution's sports and cultural facilities). The same applies to the summer break. In part-time education lectures take place on the day of rest in the week of after 4 o'clock p.m. on the working days or fortnightly in blocks.

The academic and examination rules of the higher education institution stipulates the number of days of break can be granted to students by the head of institution (generally not more than five days) and by the head of faculty or school (generally not more than five days).

Academic teaching staff must devote on average of two semesters at least 10 hours a week to preparation of students in the forms of lecture, seminar, practice of personal consultation.

### 6.4 Assessment, progression and certification

As stipulated by the Higher Education Act of 1993, institutions of tertiary education define students' performance and examination results in regulations of their own. The related provision, which also contains the main considerations related to students' assessment, falls into the scope of institutional autonomy as well. The law only stipulates that five- or three-grade scales can be used to monitor knowledge; yet the institute can decide on other systems of assessing students' performance of the academic requirements on condition that comparability is guaranteed.

The major forms of assessment of subjects are as follows: practical course mark, report, examination (end-of-term examination, comprehensive examination), field practice and instructor's signature.

On the basis of the curriculum, study and examination regulations are defined by institutions of tertiary education.

On 1 September 2003 all higher education institutions introduced the system of ECTS credits in a phase-in process. Pursuant to the Higher Education Act, the credit is the unit of students' workload, which represents in relation to the course unit or curricular unit the estimated time necessary for the

acquisition of a specific body of knowledge and the fulfilment of requirements. One credit equals 30 study hours.

In case of the multi-cycle system, the number of credits required for obtaining a qualification is regulated by the training and outcome requirements specified in Decree 15/2006 of the Ministry of Education, including the proportion of credits obtainable for compulsory subjects (foundation subjects and core knowledge of the field) subjects selected by students from a set of subjects (differentiated subjects) and optional subjects. Higher education institutions design a model schedule for each programme in order to guide students; however, students are entitled to select what subjects they wish to study in a semester/term and determine their pace of progress or even undertake to accomplish some subjects in an another programme, faculty or institution (e.g. abroad).

In the institutions that provide credit-system education and training, courses are normally obtained with an in-semester mark or an examination mark. The in-semester mark is based on the in-semester (ongoing) assessment of the performance of the requirements of the course. The examination mark is defined on the basis of an oral or written examination administered in the examination period.

At the end of the programme, a final examination is administered in the presence of an examination board. As stipulated by law, the board consists of at least two members plus the chairperson, and at least one of the members is an external specialist.

The 2007 amendment of the Higher Education Act of 2005 provides for the acknowledgement of the performance related to non-formal and informal learning. There are possibilities to recognise prior studies or work experience as a way of meeting educational requirements. The number of credits given on the basis of work experience must not exceed 30. However in lack of general standards and of a broad professional consensus recognition of informal learning outcomes has not gained ground in the institutions' practice.

Doctoral programmes are 36-month long and may be divided into assessment phases. Doctoral training comprises training, research and assessment activities carried out individually or in a team depending on the needs of doctoral students and the requirements of the discipline of science. The prerequisite of participating in a doctoral training is holding a master's degree. A doctoral degree may be obtained in a doctoral degree award procedure after completing the doctoral training. Students who have not attended a doctoral course but prepared individually for the doctoral degree award procedure can also enrol in the procedure.

The provisions for the final examination, diploma and titles are contained in the Higher Education Act of 2005 and in the institutional regulations that fall in line with the Act.

Students complete their studies with a multi-stage final examination. In the course of those final examinations that mark the end of programmes that include teacher's qualification, knowledge required for teacher's qualification is also to be assessed. The final examination is administered in the presence of a committee. At least one member of the committee is a teacher who holds a qualified degree; another member is an external specialist who is not employed by the given institution of tertiary education.

The successful performance of the examinations specified by the curriculum and the meeting of other academic requirements (to the exclusion of language examinations and the preparation of the thesis) is certified – but not qualified or assessed – by the final pre-degree certificate (*abszolutórium*).

The diploma is an official record that bears the arms of the Republic of Hungary; it certifies the accomplishment of studies at the degree course specified in the diploma. The diploma is issued when and if the student has met the academic requirements, obtained the final pre-degree certificate and passed the final examination. If foreign language skills are a precondition for graduation or

qualification the diploma can be issued only after the student has presented a certificate of the required level language proficiency.

Since 2003, the Higher Education Act has stipulated that should the student require, a Hungarian Diploma Supplement (worked out by the European Commission and the Council of Europe) is to be issued. The Supplement is issued in English language as well. In 2004, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, a diploma supplement software was devised which serves for the preparation and archiving of Hungarian and English diploma supplements in institutions of tertiary education. The issue of these official records is obligatory for all institutions on the basis of the Higher Education Act of 2005.

On the basis of a successful vocational examination of an advanced vocational programme, a certificate of vocational qualification can be issued.

The PhD degree – along with the diploma that specifies the area and branch of science – is awarded by the doctoral council.

Persons in the possession of a PhD degree are entitled to use 'doctor (PhD)' or the abbreviation 'Dr.' as titles.

The Higher Education Act of 2005 contains a new provision under which university or college degrees can no longer be obtained; instead, in the new educational system, the first degree can be obtained in the framework of graduate education, while master's degree in the framework of a masters course. The English and Latin versions of the qualification levels certified by diplomas issued in Hungary are as follows:

At the end of successful bachelor programmes (undergraduate studies): 'Bachelor' or 'baccalaureus' (BA, BSc);

At the end of successful master's studies: 'Master' or 'magister' (MA, MSc).

In the new system of education defined by the Higher Education Act of 2005, titles and qualifications are defined by the qualification and outcome requirements that define knowledge at the time of final qualification. In Hungary, first-degree and masters-degree programmes differ in terms of the name of the programme, as well as in terms of the employment-related title and qualification.

## 6.5 Guidance and counselling

To counsel young people who intend to apply for the admission to institutions of tertiary education, the Ministry of Education organises the issue of several publications each year.

These publications include, among others, the prospectus on admission to institutions of tertiary education (with information on degree programmes offered by institutions, admission quotes and details of the admission procedure), *Mit kínál a magyar felsőoktatás* ('What's on offer in Hungarian tertiary education?'). Important source of information is the official website of [www.felvi.hu](http://www.felvi.hu), which provides all the information about the admission process via internet. Another publication (*Doktori felvételi tájékoztató – PhD és DLA képzés*, 'Prospectus on the admission to doctoral courses – PhD and DLA courses') gives information on doctoral programmes.

The National Higher Education Information Centre offers counselling and an information system for those who want to pursue studies in the tertiary education.

Before the admission procedure starts, the institutions of tertiary education organise an open day and issue publications on the institution and recommended courses.

The government decree on the introduction of the credit system (Government Decree 200/2000 on the introduction of the study point system /credit system/ in tertiary education and the uniform record of institutional credit systems) stipulates that all institutions of tertiary education are required to produce a detailed Institutional Prospectus. The prospectus then is uploaded to the home page of the institution.

Institutions offer organised student counselling. It may take various forms. Tutors (teachers or higher-grade students) may be assigned to students. Student counselling offices may operate (either as organisationally separate units or as parts of a vocational guidance counselling office).

The Higher Education Act on 2005 commissions higher education institutions with the follow-up survey of those graduated from the institution. Institutions carry out detailed surveys on the careers of their graduated students; the results are summarised in institutional publications. More and more higher education institutions organise annual job fairs where representatives of companies give information on employment opportunities, jobs for career-starters and opportunities at the given company.

## **6.6 Academic staff**

The promotion system provided for by the Act on Public Employees (Act XXXIII of 1992 on the legal status of public employees) and defined by educational level and period of employment; is supplemented by a promotion system based on gradual performance in jobs defined on the basis of the Higher Education Act of 1993 (Decree 33/2000 of the Ministry of Education on the implementation of Act XXXIII of 1992 on the legal status of public employees in the higher education). At present the status of the employees in higher education is regulated by the Decree 53/2006 (III.28.) of Government and the Law on Higher Education of 2005.

In the promotion system of the academic teaching staff based on gradual performance, the institution may create the following jobs: assistant lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, professor. In this system, PhD degree comes to play an important role in educational jobs. The requirement for working as an assistant lecturer is participation in a PhD training; for senior lecturers, the accomplishment of a PhD training and participation in the procedure of obtaining a PhD degree; for associate professors, the obtainment of a PhD degree. The general requirement for further employment is the obtainment of a PhD degree within the period of 10 years.

One can only be employed as a lecturer if having a master's degree and qualification. Lecturers' and researchers' tasks may simultaneously be performed in the same position, but in this case the contract of employment or the letter of appointment to public servant status specifies the ratio of working hours spent on the different functions.

Professors are employed and are given the title through application and for an indefinite time; they are required to be in the possession of a PhD degree and carry out research that is recognised by the national and international circles of the given branch of science or art.

Those members of the teaching staff who cannot be employed in the promotion system based on gradual performance can be employed in other teaching-related jobs, e.g. as language teachers, dormitory teachers, PE teachers or art teachers under conditions similar to those that apply to public employees who work in other sectors.

Higher education institutions also employ researchers besides the teaching staff.

Research assistants can only be employed if they are participating in a doctoral programme or doctoral degree award procedure. A research fellow can only be employed if having a doctoral degree, Employment as a senior research fellow is conditional upon a doctoral degree as well as being able to manage the studies as well as scientific or artistic work of students, doctoral students and assistant lecturers, being capable of holding lectures in a foreign language and having adequate experience in

education and research. Research professors and scientific advisors must have a doctoral degree and must be internationally acknowledged researchers or artists of the relevant field. They also must be able to manage the studies as well as scientific or artistic work of students, doctoral students and assistant lecturers, write publications and hold lectures in a foreign language as well as lead research projects.

In the tertiary education, there is no system of obligatory continuing education and training; yet members of the teaching staff are entitled to go for a sabbatical leave.

## 7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

---

Basically, there are two major types of education organised for people above school age (above 18 years): (1) school-based adult education and training and (2) education and training outside the school system.

The foundations of the former evolved after World War II; this type of education and training offers certificates of the same value as those issued by full-time training programmes. Its social role has changed considerably: in the 1960s, it contributed to tackling the problem of the lack of specialist workforce; later, it widened educational capacities in order to handle the consequences of the demographic wave. Even today, it functions as an institution that offers a second chance. Its significance is highlighted by the fact that nearly one-third of the adult population obtained their highest qualification within the framework of evening or correspondence education and training.

The importance of basic adult education and training has decreased as the schooling rate of the population has increased. However, even today, nearly one-sixth of those pursuing secondary studies and more than 40 % of those pursuing tertiary studies do so while working.

Besides institutions that had been functioning for a long time (i.e. schools and institutions offering continuing education), in the first half of the 1990s – to tackle the exceedingly high unemployment rate – the state created a new (adult) educational system: a nine-unit network of regional workforce development and training centres. In the 1990s, as a consequence of the termination of the state's monopoly on education, an extensive educational market evolved and thousands of enterprises started to offer educational programmes. The state has taken and is taking steps to regulate the educational market, especially through provisions of law.

School-system adult education and training has three levels. The lower level offers an opportunity for adults to obtain primary school qualification (the significance of this type of education has decreased; it involves 2-3 thousand people per year).

Those adults who intend to pursue their secondary and tertiary studies can obtain higher-level general or professional qualification within the framework of evening or correspondence trainings.

Education and training outside the school system can be general, language- or profession-oriented. Besides education and training programmes organised for unemployed persons (career-starters or adults) to help them to jobs, it also involves the continuing training of those persons who already have a qualification or are gainfully employed.

Besides the partially or totally state-financed education and training programmes, a large-scale educational activity is carried out in the profit-oriented educational sector (the educational market) and at workplaces.

The obligatory continuing education and training of persons belonging to certain occupational categories (e.g. civil servants or teachers) and the obligatory continuing education and training for persons with specific professions are regulated by separate decrees.

In Hungary, the ratio of adults who participate in organised education has been very low for a long time and is far behind the European average (as latest figures show, it was 3.1 % in 2008 as compared to the 9.6 % EU average).

Within the framework of a priority development project (in the 2007-2013 period of the National Development Plan), in 2008 the establishment of a comprehensive lifelong guidance network started. The objective of the network is to make the existing, sectorised services accessible for all citizens. A network of career orientation counselling starts operating at the end of 2009 in 28 cities: it offers free

service for all. At the same time, a new informative online portal will be introduced to facilitate independent orientation.

## 7.1 Policy and legislative framework

The Adult Education and Training Act (2001/C1), issued in 2001, is a framework legislation that does not nullify existing legislation on public education, vocational training and employment. It regulates adult education and training organised outside the school system, as well as the services related to the education and the support system. All Hungarian citizens who have met the requirements of compulsory schooling (currently ending at the age of 18) fall under the scope of the Adult Education and Training Act.

Above the age of 23, persons can pursue secondary-school studies exclusively within the framework of an adult training programme.

An institution is entitled to perform activity related to adult education (to offer education and/or supplementary service) if it is registered in the national record of adult education institutions. The registration must be applied for; the organisation providing the education is required to be in the possession of the documents that certify the foundation of the business – in case of the organisation of a vocational examination (*szakmai vizsga*), the certified statement of its licence to administer examinations – and to pay in the procedure fee. The application is submitted to the territorially competent employment centre; the registration is valid for 4 years.

As stipulated by the Adult Education and Training Act of 2001, the institution providing adult education and training is required to conclude an adult education contract with those participating in the programme. The contract contains the qualification and the competency that can be obtained; the location, length and agenda of the programme; the fee of the programme and the examination; the method of checking and assessment of performance.

If the employer obliges the employee to participate in an education and training programme or concludes an education contract with him/her, the length of study leave and the ways of getting such leaves is provided for by Act XXII of 1992 on Labour Code.

The educational and support types that can be offered for the unemployed (job-seekers), as well as the regulations pertaining to the conditions is contained by Act IV of 1991 on the facilitation of employment and on unemployment benefits. The so-called labour market education and training is an employment facilitation tool which – through the education and training of unemployed people or people who are engaged in paid employment yet exposed to the danger of losing their jobs – enhances the opportunities of those concerned and increases the probability of keeping their jobs. Within this framework, registered unemployed persons (called job-seekers in the new terminology) and those persons whose employment relationship is expected to be terminated within a year or whose continuing employment cannot be guaranteed without education and training.

In several strategic documents, the government emphasized that a system for the assessment and recognition of prior knowledge should be established in Hungary. Moreover, Article 17 of the Adult Education and Training Act of 2001 says that 'the education and training programme is required to conform to the preliminary education and training and abilities of adults participating in the programme. The applicant may request the preliminary assessment of his or her level of knowledge; the institution providing adult education and training is obliged assesses it and take it into consideration.' The regulation does not give details concerning the method and the funding of assessment or the method of recognition; consequently, institutions follow highly diverse practices. There are no available data on the number of those who require this service. Within the framework of the second National Development Plan (2007-2013), two independent projects were planned: a

project that establishes a model for the recognition of prior knowledge and another one that works out the so-called validation model (to be established in tertiary education).

## 7.2 Distribution of responsibilities

It is the task of the Minister of Education to control school-based adult education. The Minister defines the conditions of the organization of education and training and subjects, and takes charge of the publication of the central programme (i.e. curricula) of subjects. The school-based adult education and training is organised in a way similar to that of full-time (youth) education and training, and it offers the same qualifications.

Branch level control of education and training outside the school system is performed by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour. Certain special issues are regulated in cooperation with other ministries; for example, the operation of the language examination system and vocational education and training falls into the scope of authority of the Ministry of Education, while in case of other professions, other ministries are competent (e.g. agricultural and health care education).

Social partners participate in the process of shaping vocational education and training (that is, in the most significant area of adult education) through advisory councils created by law. The National Reconciliation Council (OET) is a platform to discuss strategic issues.

The National Vocational and Adult Training Council is a national body that facilitates the performance of sectoral management functions, prepares profession-related decisions, expresses opinions and makes proposals.

The Adult Education Accreditation Association (FAT by its Hungarian acronym) is responsible for the accreditation of institutions and programmes, and performs tasks related to quality assurance.

Those institutions of adult education and training that apply for state support are required to establish a professional and advisory body of the representatives of professional and other stakeholder organizations.

Chambers express their opinion on the national strategy; in addition, they play a role in the definition of the qualification requirements, in the administration of examinations and master's examinations (and in the preparation for it), and organise education and training programmes, mainly from resources acquired through application for funds.

## 7.3 Financing

Funds for school-based adult education are provided in a way similar to full-time education. However, the funds available for evening students are half of the full-time student quota support and one-fifth for correspondent programmes.

The financing of adult education rests on four pillars (the latest available data on the ratios are from 2007):

- central budget (the maintenance of regional education centres and the training of target groups, 12 %);
- certain parts of the Labour Market Fund (primarily for the education and training of unemployed persons and other target groups);
- employers' statutory contribution to vocational training by paying VET tax (1.5 % of wage costs) and organising in-service training courses training for staff (the contribution of VET tax to financing is 33 %);

- those participating in the training (primarily fares and textbooks and, to a smaller degree, tuition fee or training contribution); ratio in financing: 33 %;
- other resources, e.g. applications (10 %).

Businesses pay for the education and training of their own employees if the training is not the initiative of the employee. In this field there is a governmental incentive: companies can allot one-third of the obligatory vocational training contribution (1.5 % of labour costs) for the education of their own employees; in the case of small and medium enterprises, the ratio is 60 %.

#### **7.4 Programmes and providers**

The objective of the school-based primary adult education is to offer assistance for those adults who have dropped out of school or have not finished primary school during the period of compulsory schooling (primary school qualification is the pre-requisite for training in certain professions).

Adult education and training in secondary school can aim at the obtainment of the secondary school-leaving certificate or of a given vocational qualification.

These two forms of education are offered by state-recognised institutions that form a part of the school system; most frequently, an adult education programme is operated by the institution. The school-system adult education and training can be organised in the form of full-time, evening or distance education and training.

In tertiary education, a person can obtain a qualification while working (part-time education and training); this type of education offers approximately half as many class hours as full-time education and training.

In tertiary education, there is an opportunity to supplement one's higher education qualification (to raise a college degree to the level of a university degree, or to obtain a specialised qualification in the course of a 4-semester (postgraduate) professional higher education training programme.

At all the three levels, the qualification obtained is of the same value as those obtained within the framework of public education or full-time tertiary education.

The educational programmes outside the school system differ in as much as they offer or do not offer state-recognised qualification.

The Adult Education and Training Act of 2001 defines three types of education and training: general, professional and language education and training. There are several institutions that provide such programmes: the 9 regional educational centres (established by the state), profit-oriented and non-profit organisations, chambers, workplaces, schools, institutions of tertiary education and cultural institutions enter the market offering such programmes.

Primarily, the state supports the education of unemployed persons (job-seekers), persons who are in danger of losing their jobs, disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities within the framework of programmes and applications.

Those persons who are under 25 (or those holding a degree and are under the age of 30) and are not entitled for unemployment benefit can also participate in a supported education and training programme.

Regional employment centres determine which educational branches and which vocational training programmes are to be supported on the basis of information obtained from social partners and from the labour market. Those participating in the training and education are selected by the local employment centres; the centres also help the persons they have registered to select the educational

programme. Employment centres select educational providers from public regional labour force education centres and accredited providers of training and education via applications.

The majority of the programmes of vocational education and training outside the school system offer ISCED 3C-level Register (OKJ) qualifications. In the case of those education and training programmes that offer vocational qualification there is a difference if compared to school-system education and training: educational providers do not rely – are not required to rely – on central programmes of education and training; they can work out their own programme of education and training on the basis of professional and examination requirements defined by the Ministry responsible for the given education and training programme. As in other sectors of vocational education and training, the qualification is obtained on the basis of a vocational examination that is uniform everywhere in the country.

In addition to vocational education and training, there are numerous training courses that do not offer a qualification but a specific skill (foreign language, IT skills, artistic skills, sports, etc.).

Training programmes that aim at the obtainment of driver's licence fall into a separate category.

A significant part of those participating in adult education and training cover the expenses of their own training (45 %).

Those jobs where due to the nature of work (e.g. compliance with safety regulations or because of the constant change of law) requires special education and training constitute a special category. Examples include the continuing education and training and examination systems of employees in the public sector or of those working in certain jobs in the private sector (accountants, auditors, persons working with dangerous substances, professional drivers, etc.) These education and training programmes and examinations do not fall into the scope of the regulation pertaining to the qualifications of the National Training Register.

These continuing education and training programmes fall into three categories; the promotion system of the 'uniformed' jobs (e.g. policemen, firemen) is linked to a special examination system.

The system of the obligatory continuing education and training programmes for employees working in the public administration started to operate in the 1990s. The system applied to public employee doctors, teachers, social workers, etc. also forms a separate sub-system. Chambers and ministries participate in the definition of the contents of the education and training programmes; preparation and examination is administered by institutions of continuing education and training that were established for this specific purpose. Some public companies (e.g. the post and the railways) operate their own system of continuing education.

The organisation of masters' examination (that is, examinations where participants may obtain a higher, 'master' level vocational qualification) falls into the scope of competence of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Agriculture.

## **7.5 Quality assurance**

The quality assurance of the public education system and the elements of related regulations (qualification requirements for teachers, the mechanism of the preparation of the curriculum; in the case of vocational education and training: student's contract, boards of examination and programmes of the quality assurance of public education) pertain to adult education and training provided by institutions of public education.

The major tool of assuring the quality of adult education and training is the programme accreditation and institution accreditation introduced in 2002. Accreditation is not compulsory yet state support can be given exclusively to those institutions that are accredited.

The accreditation of education providers and programmes on the market are conducted by the Adult Education Accreditation Association (Hungarian abbreviation: FAT), on the basis of the opinion of an experts' committee. The institutional accreditation is valid for 4 years; the accreditation of programmes, for 2-5 years. The institutional accreditation investigates the educational activities and related services, as well as the regulated nature of the management of the institution. Accreditation provides a quality assurance system based on self-assessment. In the course of programme accreditation, it is examined whether the programme complies with the qualification objectives and requirements; feasibility and the adequacy of methods are also inspected. As provisions of law stipulate, the Adult Education Accreditation Association can conduct post-accreditation inspection in an institution with competent external services and persons involved.

The adult education contract and the activity of examination committees in education and training programmes that offer vocational qualification also serve quality assurance.

Organisations that provide adult education and training are registered and monitored by the regional employment centres; the authorization of employment centres is restricted to monitoring the programme's compliance with regulations. If deficiencies are disclosed, employment centres can impose a fine or – in case of serious problems – they can prohibit the continuation of the education and training programme.

Since 2007, regional employment centres, in cooperation with local chambers of economy, have been monitoring the practical training section of National Register of Vocational Qualifications (OKJ) VET programmes.

The ratio of those profit-oriented NGOs that carry out educational activity and are in the possession of ISO qualification is increasing.

## **7.6 Guidance and counselling**

Act IV of 1991 on Employment stipulates that one of the major tasks of regional employment centres is to run guidance and counselling services for unemployed people (job-seekers) and employees. In most cases, the service is provided by external authorised agents.

The network of Employment Information Counselling (FIT) offices, established in 1992 with German support, carries out similar tasks; at present, there are 20 units in Hungary. FIT and the National Euroguidance centre offer information for independent orientation. Primarily, disadvantaged groups are provided with counselling services (e.g. career orientation training) by the 9 regional workforce training centres.

Providers of adult education and training (enterprises and non-profit organisations alike) also offer this type of service – in several cases, as a part of their education and training programmes.

The majority of career orientation services assume independent orientation; personal counselling is of low volume and non-systemic. The development project referred to in the introduction of this section aims at establishing an integrated national system.

Those employed in the services provided by labour force centres are required to have a qualification defined on the basis of the service; as a rule, higher qualification is required, and in certain cases field practice is also necessary. There are various forms of education and training to train counsellors (training courses, special projects and professional higher education training programmes.).

## 7.7 Teachers and trainers

Teachers working in the school-system adult education and training (at primary, secondary and tertiary level) are the same teachers who are teaching school-age students; the same qualification requirements and continuing education obligations apply to them.

Depending on the nature of the programmes of education and training outside the school system (general, professional, language), a teacher's status can be as follows: a teacher conducting education and training on general, language, professional theory or professional theory. In adult education and training – depending on the task – the expert who facilitates training is called a trainer, a mentor or an instructor. In addition, programmes employ experts who work in the field of the planning, organisation or assessment of adult education and training, or experts on counselling.

In vocational training offered within the framework of adult education and training, qualification in the field of pedagogy or psychology is required exclusively from those teachers and trainers who participate in training and education programmes organised for disadvantaged persons by accredited institutions. Practical trainers are required to have of a five-year professional and adult education practice.

The majority of these experts, whose task is to facilitate learning, obtain initial training in the framework of tertiary education.

The training assistants are trained in advanced vocational programmes, whose admission requirement is the secondary school-leaving certificate. These programmes entitle graduates for working (as assistants) in vocational education and training and for the organization of adult education and training.

Tertiary education programmes offer those with teacher's qualification, qualification of humanities or social professions an opportunity to participate in a professional higher education training programme and obtain the qualification of an expert on adult education and training.

For persons employed in adult education and training programmes outside the school system, presently there are no obligations for continuing education; accredited institutions, however, are required to have a plan or an internal regulation that contains the arrangements for the continuing education and training of those who work as teachers and trainers in the given organisation.

Those profit-oriented service providers that have an ISO qualification have an internal arrangement that guarantees the continuous development of their employees (teachers and trainers).

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

---

### **Bibliographical references**

A szakképzés Magyarországon. Refernet országjelentés 2007 (Vocational education and training in Hungary – Country Report 2007). Observatory for Educational Development, Budapest, 2009.

Comission staff working document – Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Report based on indicators and benchmarks. 2008.

Country Report 2009, Eurydice

Dr. Ildikó Sedivi Balassa: A felsőfokú szakképzés tíz éve (Ten years of non-university higher vocational training). AIFSZ Kollégium Egyesület, Budapest, 2008.

Eurybase 2007-2008

Higher Education Act of 2005

Vágó Irén-Vass Vilmos: Az oktatás tartalma. In: Halász Gábor-Lannert Judit szerk.: Jelentés a magyar közoktatásról. (The content of education. In: Gabor Halasz-Judit Lannert eds.: Education in Hungary 2006) OKI, Budapest, 2006. p.: 197-278.

### **Websites**

Ministry of Education and Culture: [www.okm.gov.hu](http://www.okm.gov.hu)

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour: [www.szmm.gov.hu](http://www.szmm.gov.hu)

Educational Authority: [www.oh.gov.hu](http://www.oh.gov.hu)

Observatory for Educational Development: [www.observatory.org.hu](http://www.observatory.org.hu)

National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education: [www.nive.hu](http://www.nive.hu)