



Executive summary of the public audit report

QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

10 May 2016, No. VA-P-50-3-5

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

OECD (EBPO): Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*): an international assessment of 15 year old students organised and coordinated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Accreditation: a procedure with which an authorised institution acknowledges that an educational programme or an education provider meets established requirements¹.

General education: primary education, basic education, secondary education².

Institutional programme: a programme that lasts no less than 18 academic hours and is dedicated to ensuring the implementation of national education policy, developing innovation in education and promoting successful practices³.

School performance assessment: a systematic assessment of performance and results that helps determine how a school keeps to its strategic plan, the objectives of its annual operational programme and what objectives the school can set for the future⁴.

Informal education: education based on various programmes for satisfying various educational needs, developing qualifications and acquiring additional competencies, except for formal education programmes⁵.

External assessment of school performance: a formative assessment of the processes occurring in a school that provides information on what the school should adjust in order to produce better results.

Teacher's qualification: the entirety of an individual's competencies and professional experience necessary for teaching students recognised based on a certain procedure established by Lithuanian law⁶.

Qualification development: informal education or self-education that seeks to acquire and/or develop the competencies necessary for professional activity⁷.

Qualification development establishment: an educational establishment or another provider of education that has the right to develop the qualifications of headmasters, their deputies,

¹ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, 25/06/1991, No. I-1489 (amended version No. XI-128 of 17/03/2011), Art. 2, p. 1.

² Ibid, Art. 2, p. 2.

³ Description of the Procedure for the Accreditation of Qualification Development Programmes for Headmasters, their Deputies, Department Heads Responsible for Organising Education, Teachers and Student Aides, p. 2. approved by Order No. ISAK-2275 of the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science of 23/11/2007.

⁴ Performance Self-Assessment Recommendations for General Education Schools approved by Order No. ISAK-607 of the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science of 30/03/2009.

⁵ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, 17/03/2011, amended version No. XI-128 of 17/03/2011, Art. 2, p. 17.

⁶ Ibid, Art. 2, p. 20.

⁷ Provisions of Qualification Development for Headmasters, their Deputies, Department Heads Responsible for Organising Education, Teachers and Student Aides of National and Municipal Schools, p. 2. approved by Order No. ISAK-556 of the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science of 29/03/2007.

department heads responsible for organising education, teachers and student aides of national and municipal schools⁸.

Qualification development event: activity based on a qualification development programme⁹

National programme: a programme of no less than 30 academic hours commissioned by the Ministry for the purpose of implementing the strategic priority areas of national education policy¹⁰.

Result: student achievements (the entirety of general and topical competencies acquired by students) and progress (the level achieved within a given period of time based on the start of learning and personal development possibilities, the students' optimum pace, and the requirements established by general education programmes)¹¹.

Teacher: an individual who has received a higher education (or advanced vocational education and training up to 2009, or a special secondary education up to 1995) and the qualification of a teacher¹².

Accredited programme: a programme assessed by an institution whose qualification development activity is accredited based on the Rules for Assessing and Accrediting the Performance of Institutions Conducting Qualification Development for Teachers and Educational Aides¹³.

Self-education: independent learning that is based on the knowledge and experience acquired by an individual from various sources¹⁴.

Standardised tests: assessment tools the purpose of which is to create the conditions for schools and teachers to independently and objectively assess the academic achievements of their students and collect feedback for the purpose of improving education and management quality¹⁵.

Education provider: a school, independent teacher or other education provider (establishment, company, organisation, a member state's legal entity or other organisation or their branches, established in the Republic of Lithuania, for which education is not their principal area of activity) that has the right to conduct educational activity by Lithuanian law¹⁶.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Description of the Procedure for the Accreditation of Qualification Development Programmes for Headmasters, their Deputies, Department Heads Responsible for Organising Education, Teachers and Student Aides, p. 2.

¹¹ The Good School Concept, p. 13.1., approved by Order No. V-1308 of the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science of 21/12/2015.

¹² Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, amended version No. XI-128 of 17/03/2011, Art. 2, p. 19.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, amended version No. XI-128 of 17/03/2011, Art. 2, p. 22.

¹⁵ <http://www.nec.lt/342/>

¹⁶ Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Education, amended version No. XI-128 of 17/03/2011, Art. 2, p. 32.

SUMMARY

Increasing the professionalism of teachers is one of the strategic goals in the field of education. The competence and qualification development of teachers has a great influence on the quality of education, which is measured by student achievement and progress. Even relatively small improvements in the capabilities of the country's school children can have a very great impact on the national economy in the long-term¹⁷.

This is why it is important to establish an effective and results-oriented system for developing the qualification of teachers. The programme of the 16th Government included plans to set up a qualification development system that ensure effective assistance for the student, teacher and school based not on the formal confirmation of qualifications, but the acquisition, assessment and acknowledgement of competences.

The planned qualification development system is still in its developmental stages, thus the provision of the Government programme that seeks to create a qualification development system for the heads of educational establishments and s in 2012–2016 will not be completed on time. A total of 99.8 thousand euros in EU structural funds were used for this purpose.

Based on municipal data, 4,447.4 thousand euros in education vouchers were used for developing the qualification of general education teachers (in 2012–2014). Based on data provided by the Ministry of Education, during this same period, 66,110 thousand euros were used to implement EU-funded projects for 2007–2013 (resulting in a total of 110,767 thousand euros for the programming period of 2007–2013). These funds were used when no priority areas had been established for s' qualification development and at a point when no effective system had been developed for improving the qualification of teachers.

In an international context, the achievements of Lithuanian students do not rank high: in all the subject areas of PISA (natural sciences, mathematics, literacy and reading) they produced statistically significantly poorer results than the OECD average in 2012¹⁸ (see Annex 3). Based on the National Assessment of Student Achievement¹⁹ conducted in 2014, not much has changed. Various issues are pointed out as the potential system errors behind our students' poor performance: the insufficient competence of s, lack of methodological assistance for s, the unsystematic development of qualifications, etc.²⁰ This prompted the need for a public audit.

Teachers from public, municipal, private pre-school education establishments, general education and vocational training establishments all develop their qualifications. During the audit, we reviewed the entire teacher qualification development system, focusing mostly on the qualification development of teachers from general education schools.

¹⁷ Analysis of the education problem. How to improve the academic achievements of students? PISA insights and the experience of European countries. October 2014, No. 8 (113).

¹⁸ http://nec.lt/failai/3954_OECD_PISA2012_rezultatu_pristatymas_2013_12_03.pdf

¹⁹ Report by the National Examination Centre, "National Assessment of Student Achievement 2014", 2015, pg. 21. Accessed via: http://nec.lt/failai/5763_2014_M_NACIONALINIO_MOKINIU_PASIEKIMU_TYRIMO_ATASKAITA.pdf

²⁰ Analysis of the education problem. National Education Strategy for 2013–2022: goals, issues, directions for development. October 2012, No. 17 (81).

In the academic year of 2014–2015, there were 48.6 thousand teachers in the country, of which 33 thousand (68%) were employed at general education schools as teachers or headmasters and principals. Around 345 thousand students were enrolled across 1,200 such schools.

The purpose of the audit was to assess whether the development of teachers' qualification was being implemented adequately.

During the audit, we assessed:

- whether an effective qualification development system had been developed for teachers;
- whether teacher qualification development was being organised appropriately.

The subject of this audit was the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

During the audit, we collected data from the following sources:

- The Ministry of Education and Science (Teacher Activity Division of the Lifelong Learning Department, EU Assistance Implementation Division of the Department of EU Assistance Coordination, Education Financing Division of the Finance Department);
- The Education Development Centre and other establishments under the Ministry that carry out functions related to the qualification of teachers (Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre, Centre of Information Technologies in Education, National Agency for School Evaluation, National Examination Centre, National Centre for Special Needs Education and Psychology, Lithuanian Educational Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Lithuanian Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Lithuanian Centre for Children and Young Adults, the Qualification Development Centre for Teachers of the Arts at the National M.K.Čiurlionis School of Art, Lithuanian Expatriate Education Centre);
- The European Social Fund Agency;
- 9 municipal governments (Kretinga Dist. Palanga Dist. Kėdainiai Dist., Alytus Dist., Kaunas, Anykščiai Dist., Molėtai Dist., Ignalina Dist., Šalčininkai Dist.), 27 schools in their territory and 10 accredited establishments for teacher qualification development (Annex 2).

We surveyed all 9 municipal governments and 64 accredited qualification development establishments on the subject of the organisation and implementation of teacher qualification development. We analysed study data and international practices.

The audit covered the period between 2012–2014 and the first half of 2015. Data from previous and later years was also used to analyse trends and changes.

We established that the planned teacher qualification development system had not been developed, and that the current development of teachers' qualifications was neither results-oriented nor planned and executed with any direction. The impact of qualification development was not measured and responsible authorities failed to ensure the effective use of funding.

Because the most effective and innovative forms of teacher qualification development were not recommended or given a legal basis, teachers opted for the most ineffective ways of improving their qualification and this, according to the specialists themselves, did not afford them sufficient opportunity to acquire new competencies or effectively develop existing competencies.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings. If implemented to an adequate degree, the recommendations would allow authorities to create an effective system for developing teachers' qualifications; plan qualification development based on assessments of demand and purposefully implement it

based on established priorities; ensure periodical impact assessment at the national, municipal and school level as well as more the more productive use of funds.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Ministry of Education and Science did not ensure the consistent implementation of teacher development policy and failed to create an effective system for developing the qualification of teachers because of the following reasons:
 - 1.1. It failed to systematically update and pass the necessary legislation with regard to teacher qualification development, it did not assess the impact of teacher qualification development or plan for any tools to measure this impact, it did not provide comprehensive regulation for qualification development programmes (both national and institutional) and their implementation, assess demand or ensure that the implementation of these programmes is monitored (Subsection 1.1., 1.2, and 1.3);
 - 1.2. It did not establish any plans for how qualification development should be coordinated with the other measures of teacher and school support indicated in the Law on Education (consulting, assessment of school performance, external assessments) and the results of national as well as international student achievement assessments (national school-leaving exams, basic education achievement tests, standardised tests, OECD, PISA, TIMSS, etc.) (Subsection 1.4);
 - 1.3. It allocated funding for teacher qualification development (based on municipal data, 4,447.4 thousand euros in education vouchers were used for developing the qualification of general education teachers in 2012–2014; based on data provided by the Ministry of Education, during this same period, 66,110 thousand euros were used to implement EU-funded projects for 2007–2013) without evaluating demand, establishing priority areas or collecting exact data on the funds and financial sources used for this purpose, programmes and establishments conducting qualification development activity (Subsection 1.5.)
2. The process of teacher development is not organised with sufficient efficiency because:
 - 2.1. While teacher development is planned and demand for development is still being established, accredited teacher development establishments and schools use different methods as well as tools and assess different kinds of data (Subsection 2.1).
 - 2.2. Research data shows that teachers opt for the most ineffective ways of improving their qualification, i.e., one-day or 6-hour events (about 60% of all events attended by teachers). According to specialists, such a short-term method for qualification development does not provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to acquire new competencies, effectively build on existing ones or measure their effect on the results produce as an teacher (Subsection 2.2).
 - 2.3. Accredited teacher development establishments evaluate the effectiveness of qualification development programmes and their influence on teacher performance by using methods that are not sufficiently effective (evaluating them based on

comments from participants and lecturers). The usefulness of these events and feedback, which could provide information and help implement qualification development more effectively, are not always evaluated (Subsection 2.3.).

2.4. Schools do not evaluate the application of the competencies teachers acquire during development events in practice for improving the quality of the education students receive, and not all schools associate teacher development with educational results (Subsection 2.3.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Education and Science:

1. Ensure the effective implementation of teacher qualification development and national qualification development priorities by systematically establishing mid-term and long-term national priorities in this area and measures for implementing them (Conclusion 1.1.)
2. Ensure the purposeful implementation of teacher qualification development by allocating funding based on established demand for qualification development and priorities (Conclusion 1.3.).
3. Effectively increase the professionalism of teachers by recommending the most effective forms of qualification development (Conclusion 2.2.)
4. In order to ensure the more effective organisation of teacher qualification development:
 - 4.1. Establish plans for how teacher qualification development can be coordinated with the other measures of teacher and school support indicated in the Law on Education (consulting, self-assessment of school performance, external assessments, creating the conditions necessary for teachers to develop their qualifications) (Conclusion 1.2.);
 - 4.2. Determine how national and international student achievement assessments and other test results can be used (Conclusion 1.2.).
5. In order to ensure evidence-based decision-making:
 - 5.1. assess the impact of teacher qualification development at the national, municipal and school level (Conclusion 1.1.);
 - 5.2. approve tools that could help evaluate this impact at the national, municipal and school level (conclusions 1.1., 2.3. and 2.4.).
6. Ensure the quality of qualification development services for teachers by making sure that only establishments accredited for conducting teacher qualification development provide the said services when implementing EU structural fund projects (Conclusion 1.3.).
7. Ensure the purposeful and results-oriented implementation of teacher qualification development programmes by defining in more detail the nature of teacher development programmes (national, institutional, etc.), their implementation and monitoring process, as well as evaluating demand for them (Conclusion 1.1).

8. Ensure that the legal framework regulating the development of teachers' qualifications reflects practices in reality by revising said legal acts (Conclusion 1.1.).

Measures and time frames for the implementation of the recommendations are presented in Annex 1, 'Plan for Implementing Recommendations'.