



Directorate-General for Education and Culture

**Structures of education,
vocational training and
adult education systems in Europe**

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**STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION,
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND
ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEMS
IN EUROPE**

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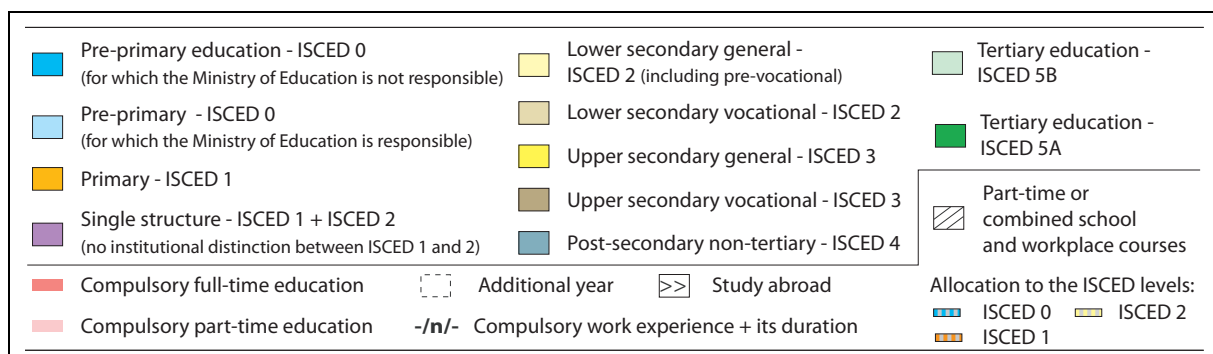
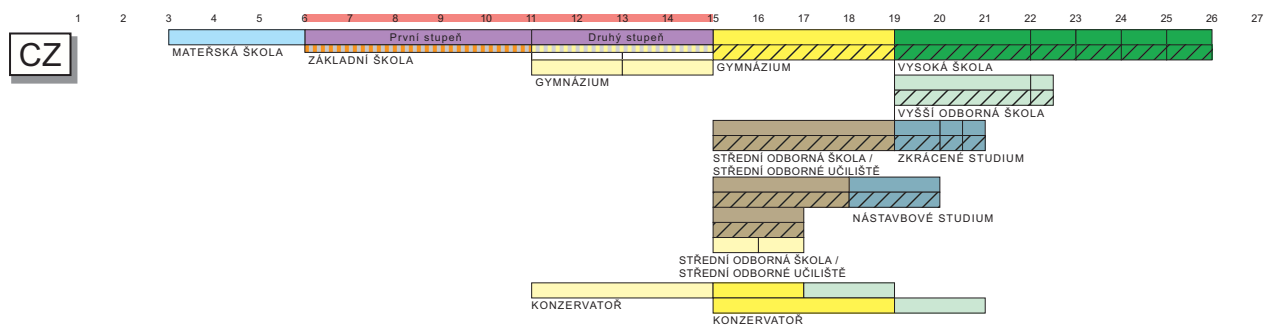
If you wish to have more detailed information on education systems in Europe, we warmly recommend that you consult the EURYBASE database (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and the CEDEFOP monographs (<http://www.cedefop.eu.int>)

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ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC 2005



Source: Eurydice.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Background

The Czech Republic came into existence when the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic split into two states in January 1993. It is still in the throes of the transformation from a socialist society with centralised administration and a planned economy to one operating according to the principles of a market economy and political pluralism, i.e. the process which was launched by the political revolution of November 1989. In 1995 the Czech Republic became a member of the OECD, in 2004 it became a member of the European Union.

In 2004, the Czech Republic had a population of 10,550 mil. and a total surface area of 78,866 square kilometres, giving it a population density of 131 inhabitants per square km. Demographic development is unfavourable due to the low birth-rate, however signs of stabilisation have appeared since 2003.

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy with a President elected by Parliament, which exercises legislative power. The Parliament is divided into two Chambers, an Assembly of Deputies and a Senate. Members are elected to the Assembly of Deputies under the proportional system and to the Senate under the majority system. Executive power is held by the National Government.

Public administration has passed an extensive reform. It is provided by state administration and self-government.

The territorial administration has two levels: municipalities that are basic self-government units, and higher territorial self-government units – regions (14). Regions were established in December 1997 with effect from 1 January 2000. They were gradually taking their responsibilities by the end of 2002.

The law sets special cases when self-government bodies can execute the state administration and when the self-government units are administration districts as well.

Municipalities and regions have double sphere of authority – independent, in its framework they execute allocated agenda including education, and transferred authority, in the framework of which they execute state administration.

Part of responsibilities that should be accessible to citizens was transferred to the so-called municipalities with an extended sphere of action (205).

The language of instruction is Czech. Pupils of ethnic minorities are guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue to an extent appropriate to the development of their ethnic community. Schools for national minorities can function up to the upper secondary school level. With the exception of the Poles, the minorities are scattered throughout the republic, which is why the only minority-language schools are Polish. There are 21 nursery schools, 23 basic schools and one general upper secondary school (*gymnázium*). There are also, three Czech-Polish upper secondary technical schools (2005) and one trilingual *gymnázium* (Czech-Polish-English).

The State is denominationally neutral, the freedom of religion is granted. The number of people practicing religion is low. 32% of inhabitants declare themselves as believers, 21 churches and religions societies are registered, over 83% believers belong to the Roman Catholic Church (over 26% of population), to two of the biggest Protestant Churches belong 7% believers (2.5% of population).

1.2 Basis of the school system: principles and legislation

The Constitution of the Czech Republic, adopted on 16 December 1992, provides a general legal framework for future legal development.

The rights of citizens and the obligations of the state with regard to education were laid down in Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (the constitutional law approved by the Federal Assembly of the

Czech and Slovak Federal Republic on 9 January 1991 and incorporated into the legal system of the Czech Republic).

Legislative authority belongs to the Parliament. A deputy, a group of deputies, the Senate, their Cabinet and a regional assembly may initiate new legislation. A Bill is submitted to the Cabinet for comments, passed by the Chamber of Deputies and then by the Senate.

1st January 2005 a new Education Act (No. 561/2004) On Pre-primary, Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Professional Education came into force. It replaced not only the previous School Act, but also the Act on School Establishments and the Act on State Administration and Self-government in Education. It sets principles and aims of education, two-level structure of educational programmes defining the aims to be attained, and the education system which has to implement them. The education system is composed of schools, which organise education according to framework educational programmes (see 1.3), and school facilities, which provide education and services complementing or supporting education at schools. The Act sets the rules to be followed in long-term objectives and annual reports through which the strategy of education policy both at national and regional levels is implemented and monitored. It stipulates the duration of compulsory schooling, entry requirements, organization of education and ending of the study for different educational levels. It redefines persons with special educational needs, giving preference to their integration into mainstream classes. The Act also regulates administration – the legal status of schools, their registration, financing, status and responsibilities of different levels of administration, e.g. municipalities, regions, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or other relevant ministries.

The Act No. 563/2004 on Educational Staff and on the Amendments of Several Acts (in force from 1 January 2005) regulates requirements for performance of educational staff duties, their in-service training and career scheme.

The Act (No. 306/1999) On Providing Subsidies to Private Schools and Pre-school and School Establishments replaced the previous government regulation of subsidies.

The Act on Institutional Education or Protective Education in School Provisions and on Preventive Educational Care (No. 109/2002) stipulates education of children and adolescents lacking proper family support or those with behavioural problems.

The Higher Education Act (No. 111/1998, amended several times) extended the non-university and private sectors of higher education. The majority of these are no longer state institutions (with the exception of military and police higher education institutions which are entirely state-funded) but public institutions (state-subsidised) that manage their own property.

In September 2005 the Government approved an Intention of the Act on Verification and Recognition of Continuing Education Outcomes.

1.3 Distribution of responsibilities for the organization and administration of the education and training system

State administration in education system is provided by heads of schools and school facilities, municipal authorities of municipalities with an extended sphere of action, regional authorities, the Czech School Inspectorate, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and other central institutions (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence etc.) in the case of schools and school facilities founded by them.

Self-government in education is performed by school councils, municipalities and regions.

The public administration was significantly decentralised between 2000-2002; the autonomy of institutions is gradually increasing at all educational levels.

Central level

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy*) is in charge of the majority of state administration activities concerned with education, prepares legislation and is responsible for the conception, state of art and development of the education system as a whole.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (further referred to as the Ministry of Education) prepares legislation for executive and operational activities. The Ministry of Education identifies central educational policy, develops overall strategy, it particularly develops and promulgates long-term development plans for education and the education system, submits them to the Government (each odd-numbered year). The first plan was developed in 2003.

It provides a methodological guidance and co-ordination of the long-term development objectives for education and education system at regional levels. Based on annual reports drawn up by regions it submits an annual report on state and development of education system to the Government.

The Ministry of Education sets the content of education. It formulates a National Educational Programme as a policy document developed in co-operation not only with experts in education but also with central trade union bodies, employers' representatives and regions. The National Educational Programme is submitted for discussion to the Government, which subsequently submits it for approval to both Parliament Chambers.

The Ministry of Education develops framework educational programmes for every educational level (up to upper secondary), for different fields at those levels and for language and basic art education. They define binding scopes of school education programmes. The Ministry accredits educational programmes for individual tertiary professional schools.

In the area of funding the Ministry of Education is responsible for the state financing policy in the education sphere (see 1.5).

In the terms of labour relations the Ministry of Education

- determines the workload of teachers;
- sets the professional and pedagogical competence of educational staff;
- sets principles for the forming of open competition commissions for selected educational posts;
- appoints and withdraws heads of institutions that are directly founded by it, the Chief School Inspector and on the latter's recommendation school inspectors.

The Ministry of Education has lost most of its establishing responsibilities. The Ministry retains control of a few dozen of provisions for institutional and preventive care. In some special cases it can be the organising body of some schools and directly administered organisations engaged in statistics, curricula, educational guidance, in-service training of teachers etc.

With regard to the obligation of the State to assure functioning, efficiency and coherence of the education system of the Czech Republic as a whole, the Ministry of Education maintains the Register of Schools and School Facilities of all organising bodies. Being recorded in the register means that the school is entitled to provide education in the chosen field and form and to get funds from corresponding public sources within the limit specified in the record. The maintenance of Register of nursery schools and some school facilities with local sphere of action is delegated to the regional level.

In higher education the Ministry of Education appoints the Board of Trustees of public higher education institutions (after a consultation with the head of higher education institution – *rektor*). It is responsible for registering the internal regulations of higher education institutions, which only become valid after registration. The Ministry of Education also evaluates long-term objectives of the educational, scientific, research, developmental, artistic and other creative activities of higher education institutions, discusses and evaluates the

long-term objectives of individual public higher education institutions and their updating. It allocates financial resources from the state budget and controls their use, and on the basis of the Accreditation Commission's advice decides on the accreditation of the study programmes of higher education institutions.

Regional level

Regions fully assumed their responsibilities on 1 January 2003. Regional representation headed by the governor is elected. The Regional Council appoints and withdraws the head of the educational department of the regional authority. The regional representative body always establishes a Committee for Education and Employment (*Výbor pro výchovu a vzdělávání*), which has at least five members.

Regional Authorities draw up, in compliance with the long-term objectives of education and development of the education system of the Czech Republic, their long-term objectives of education and development of the educational system of the respective region. The objectives are based on an analysis of the educational development, demographic expectation, labour market development and economical achievements in the region. They set goals for individual areas of education, the structure of education available, mainly the structure of individual educational fields, and their capacity. They also prepare a proposal for funding. The relevant Regional Council submits the part of long-term objectives concerning education provided by schools organised by the region in question to the respective Regional Assembly for its approval. Subsequently it submits it to the Ministry of Education for its opinion and only then (each odd-numbered year) the objectives are published. This procedure was followed for the first time in 2003.

The regional authority prepares and publishes annual reports on attained state and development of education system in the region.

Regions are the organising bodies of tertiary professional schools, upper secondary schools and school facilities for children with special educational needs, basic special schools, schools with the language of instruction of a national minority, language schools authorised to organise state language examination, basic art schools, and school facilities serving them including facilities for special interest education and other institutions.

The number of municipalities being rather high in the Czech Republic (some of them are very small), an intermediate element was introduced: the so-called municipalities with extended sphere of action. They fulfil some functions of the state administration for schools and school facilities founded by municipalities, especially in funding (see 1.5).

The regional interests at higher education level are expressed by the regional representatives in the Boards of Trustees of higher education institutions.

Local level

Municipalities form an important component of public administration (currently they do not execute the state administration). In the frame of self-government they are responsible for assuring the necessary conditions for compulsory school attendance and for pre.-primary education in the year preceding the compulsory school attendance. Municipalities or unions of municipalities establish and financially administer nursery schools and basic schools. In larger municipalities, they ensure that school meals are provided and that younger pupils are cared for outside school hours (with considerable financial assistance from the state).

School autonomy

The law gave all schools the status of independent legal entities and thus a higher level of autonomy. School heads are appointed by an organising body (municipality, region or the Ministry) on the basis of a competition. According to the new legislation they can be dismissed only for reasons stipulated by the law.

The school heads have full responsibility not only for the quality and efficiency of the educational process (including adjustment of educational programmes, choice of textbooks) but also for the financial management of the school, for appointing and dismissing teachers and for relations with the community and the public. For

reason of accessibility, some basic schools and other school facilities are established even for small numbers of pupils. Small schools did not aspire to be legal entities as they were not able to meet all requirements. That is why – and also due to the decreasing number of pupils – merging and joining of small schools may occur (of schools of the same as well as different educational levels). Minimal school and class size is set by law. Organising body may grant exceptions provided it is ready to bear the increased costs.

By law, a school's organising body has to establish the School Council (*školská rada*) thus enabling parents, pupils, staff, citizens and others to participate in the administration of schools.

Public higher education institutions gained autonomy at all levels of management. Self-government includes internal management of institutions, establishing self-government academic bodies, content and organization of study, labour relations and financing. It is exercised by the Academic Senate (representative body with at least one third and maximum half of students), the head of the higher education institution (*rektor*), the Academic (Art) Board and a Disciplinary Commission. Other bodies are Board of Trustees that takes care of public interests in the institution's activities and good management of the property, and a manager (*kvestor*). There are autonomous bodies even at the faculties, but these are not legal entities. Higher education institutions also have a representative body, the Higher Education Council, made up of representatives from the academic community.

State higher education institutions (University of Defence and Police Academy) are established by relevant ministries. Their autonomy is limited: they have not a Board of Trustees, they have no autonomy in salaries, their budget is linked to the budget of the relevant ministry. The University of Defence is not a legal entity.

1.4 Quality assurance

Maintenance of quality is reflected in the long-term objectives of education and development of education system and annual reports on state and development of education system (see 1.3).

The evaluation of schools and school facilities is carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*) – one of the key institutions of the state administration in education and an organisational unit of the state. According to the current legislation concerning the activity of ministries and central state administrative bodies, it falls within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. This central control body is responsible for monitoring activities in pre-primary, basic, upper secondary and tertiary education (with the exception of institutions of higher education) and school facilities. It is responsible for studying and evaluation of results of education, quality of professional and pedagogical management, working conditions, teaching materials and equipment for public legal auditing, the use of the funds from the state budget and monitoring the observance of generally binding regulations. The head of the Inspectorate is the Chief School Inspector (*ústřední školní inspektor*) appointed by the Minister of Education; starting from 2007 he/she will be subject to the Service Act. The Czech School Inspectorate comprises central office and inspectorates. Inspections are organised in accordance with the plan proposed by the Chief School Inspector and approved by the Minister of Education, or on the basis of complaints or other impetuses. Results of inspections are inspection or topic reports, control protocols and also the annual report comprising the summary evaluation of the education system. In 2004 there were 303 inspectors.

The new Education Act (and corresponding regulation) require schools to carry out self-evaluation at least once in two years which then constitutes the background for the evaluation and for the annual reports of the Czech School Inspectorate.

The organising body can carry out evaluation of its schools and school facilities under criteria published in advance.

1.5 Financing

Expenditures on education in the Czech Republic come mainly from public funds.

In line with administrative responsibility, the major part of state funding comes from the budget of the Ministry of Education. Other funds are provided to the organising bodies of schools and school facilities: regions and municipalities from their budgets. Their incomes come from the taxes gathered usually at the central level and allocated to regions and municipalities according to given percentage. For financing of schools founded by church and private providers see 1.7.

Ministry of Education

- determines basic principles governing the funding of schools and school facilities,
- submits background information for the drawing up of the state budget,
- sets binding principles of allocation of financial sources within the education sector,
- allocates funds to schools and school facilities under its direct control or under the direct control of church,
- allocates through regions funds for institutions under the direct control of regions, as well as for schools run by other authorities,
- allocates funds beyond the set level to schools and school facilities run by all authorities, providing that they carry out a pilot verification of new forms and methods of teaching, as well as funds for development programmes announced by the Ministry of Education,
- checks the use of allocated funds.

Since 1992, the system of financing is on a "per capita" basis rather than according to the type of institution, most of the resources are allocated from the educational budget.

Financing of schools and school facilities founded by regions and municipalities

Capital expenditure of schools and school facilities and their running costs that are not direct educational costs is met by their organising bodies.

The Ministry of Education covers direct educational costs, especially for salaries of teachers and other staff and teaching aids. These resources are allocated through budgets of regions according to number of pupils and per capita amount. The Ministry sets the central per capita amounts for four age categories corresponding to individual educational levels: 3-5, 6-15, and 16-18, and 19-21 years.

Based on the principles and indicators specified by the Ministry of Education, regional authorities set the regional per capita amounts of direct educational costs per pupil depending on relevant educational programmes. In doing so they consider how Long-term objectives are met, how demanding educational programmes are etc. Regional per capita amounts include increased costs for persons with special educational needs. The regional authority directly allocates the sources (determined by multiplying the per capita amount by the number of pupils) to schools and school facilities of which it is an organising body and to basic schools and nursery schools of which the organising bodies are municipalities.

Textbooks (if approved) and other teaching materials are provided (lent) free of charge to pupils at basic schools. At secondary schools and at tertiary professional schools they are lent free of charge only to socially disadvantaged pupils.

All schools can also opt to make use of other sources of funding for the purchase of textbooks and teaching aids (sponsors, prospective employers, rental of rooms or sports facilities, etc.).

Financing of higher education institutions

According to the Higher Education Act of 1999, public higher education institutions are entitled to manage their own property although a substantial part of their activity is directly financed by the state.

Per capita funding has been introduced in this sector. For this purpose, study programmes are divided into seven groups according to the relative cost, with a cost coefficient between 1 and 5,9. The total sum allocated is reduced by a coefficient relating to the failure rate of students. Other qualitative aspects are also taken into account. According to special rules, higher education institutions are also given funds for research, catering and accommodation of students and capital expenditure. Since September 2005 accommodation subsidies go directly to commuting students, not to student hostels.

The income of higher education institutions comes from their property and from fees, and is mainly used for covering expenses of admission proceedings. The students pay for any extension of their studies beyond the standard time or if they wish to follow a second study programme. Students also pay for studying in a foreign language. Further income comes from lifelong learning programmes which are not studies in the sense of the Higher Education Act.

State higher education institutions are financed by their organising bodies – University of Defence by the Ministry of Defence and the Police Academy by the Ministry of the Interior.

For private higher education institutions see 1.7.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The highest advisory body at the national level is the Council of Economic and Social Agreement (*Rada hospodářské a sociální dohody*; tripartite: – government – employers – unions). In 2003 the Government Council for Human Resources Development was established (*Rada pro rozvoj lidských zdrojů*). It has also a tripartite representation participating in the preparation of policy documents on education and employment.

The Ministry of Education is assisted by several advisory bodies in deciding on the development of education and different levels of the educational system, recognition of educational institutions, economic issues, etc. Various interest groups – experts in particular areas (representatives of scientific branches, teachers, psychologists) and also trade unions, employees associations with nationwide authority, professional associations, regions, teachers' and parents' associations, etc. – are also represented. The Education Act specifies situations in which the opinion of interest groups is required. Sometimes other ministries have to be consulted.

The scope of activities of the institutions providing education-related services under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education is restricted.

The Research Institute of Education in Prague (*Výzkumný ústav pedagogický Praze*) focuses on the issues of concept, strategy in the development of general education including special pre-primary education, prepares draft versions of educational programmes, participates in forming evaluation criteria and instruments, and verifies the existing educational models.

The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (*Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání*) is a co-ordinating, consultative, expert and research institution concerned with secondary vocational/technical and tertiary professional education, co-ordination between education, labour market and career centres.

The Centre for the Study of Higher Education (*Centrum pro studium vysokého školství*) conducts comparative analytical studies of legislation, financing, structural development and evaluation of higher education in the Czech Republic and abroad. The Centre acts as the national centre for recognition of academic qualifications and is involved in a well-functioning distance education system.

The Institute for Educational-Psychological Guidance of the Czech Republic (*Institut pedagogicko-psychologického poradenství ČR*) provides support for educational guidance centres.

The Institute for Information on Education (*Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání*) collects, processes and provides information on education (statistics, analysis, surveys, prognoses). It represents the Czech Republic in international information networks in education. It also administers the main educational library, the Comenius National Library of Education (*Národní pedagogická knihovna Komenského*) and Centre for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (*Centrum pro hodnocení výsledků vzdělávání*). This Centre is an independent institution from 1 January 2006.

The National Institute for Children and Youth (*Národní institut dětí a mládeže MŠMT*) is concerned with research and the provision of educational, information and consultancy services related to leisure time activities of children and young people. It also provides support for gifted children and children with learning disabilities.

The National Institute for Further Education (*Národní institut pro další vzdělávání*) was established in 2004, having been transformed from pedagogical centres. It consists of thirteen regional stations and co-ordinates and organises courses of in-service training of teachers and school management. It will also play an important role in implementing framework educational programmes into schools.

A special consultative role is also played by Accreditation Commissions (*akreditační komise*): for tertiary professional education, for higher education and for in-service training of teachers. They work for the Ministry of Education and are appointed by the Minister.

Other advisory bodies operate in regions, such as regional councils for human resource development.

The School Council (*školská rada*) is an advisory body at the school level. It enables pupils, educational staff, the organising body (founder) and other persons (often representing employers) to participate in school governance.

1.7 Private schools

The amendment to the previous School Act of 1990 allowed the establishment of private and denominational schools. The role of private schools is to offer a range of educational options, corresponding to the interests of the pupils and the needs of the labour market, and to create a competitive environment throughout the education system. The Higher Education Act of 1998 enabled the establishment of private higher education institutions. There are only few denominational schools, none of them being a higher education institution.

Private schools and school facilities can be established by individuals or corporate bodies. No legal format is prescribed. Private schools have decision-making power within the framework of law.

In 2004/05 private and denominational schools made up 1.5% of all nursery schools and they accounted for 1.2% of the total number of children, 1.4% of all basic schools with 0.8% of pupils, 22.5% of schools at upper secondary level with 15% pupils and 33% of tertiary professional schools with 34% of students.

Private and denominational schools are free to charge fees, although denominational schools do not usually do so.

Denominational schools and school facilities receive funds to cover their running costs, which are based on the same funding formula as for public schools directly from the Ministry of Education.

Private schools receive a state contribution towards their running costs from the Ministry of Education through the regional authorities. Capital expenditures are covered from school fees and other private sources. In the overall resources the sources from the public budget prevail.

Subsidies can be granted to a private school either as a basic subsidy (as a certain percentage of the per capita funding of an analogous public institution) to which every institution in the network is entitled as long as it applies for it, or institutions may apply for an increased subsidy. Basic as well as increased percentage of subsidy is set down by law. The basic subsidies range from 80% for special schools, over 60% for nursery schools, basic schools, upper secondary and tertiary professional schools up to 50% for other schools and school facilities. According to an agreement between a school and its organising body (founder), the subsidy may be raised up to

90% of the appropriate per capita funding in the case of upper secondary and tertiary professional schools, and 100% in the case of basic and special schools. Certain conditions must be met to obtain an increased subsidy: an average or higher than average evaluation of the school's results by the Czech School Inspectorate, a positive approach by the municipality (if this is the school's organising body), the legal structure of a public benefit corporation or (in the case of another legal form) an obligation to invest the school's whole profit in education. The subsidy is provided by a real number of pupils in fields and forms of education put in the school register. (see 1.3.).

Evaluation of private and denominational schools is carried out by the Czech School Inspectorate under the same rules as in public schools.

Private higher education institutions started to be established after 1998 as rather small institutions. They have sprung up fast, at present outnumbering public higher education institutions (60% of institutions with 6.1% of students in 2004/05). They can apply for the state subsidy only if they are public benefit corporations or if before the state consent to be a private higher education institutions they were tertiary professional schools and they were allocated a subsidy. They can get the subsidy only to study programmes organised in a public interest.

2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Nursery schools (*mateřská škola*) have a long and special national tradition, influenced by the ideas of Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius) in the 17th century, among others. The beginning of institutional pre-school education dates back to 1832. The Education Act of 1869 already mentions pre-primary establishments. Soon, a distinction was made between day-care centres and pre-school educational institutions. Pre-primary education was incorporated into the education system in 1948. Quality of pre-primary education increased considerably in the post-war period. At the same time, however, it became an instrument for increasing the number of women in the country's work force, whilst enforcing the principles of collective education and weakening the influence of the family over the children's education.

After 1989, a lively debate developed over the role of nursery schools, their new role in the education system and their educational function. The personality-oriented model of pre-primary education was encouraged. Nursery schools contribute to an increase in social and cultural development of children and lay the foundations for their future education.

According to the new Education Act (No. 561/2004) nursery school is considered to be a type of school whereas before it was considered an educational establishment. Attendance is not compulsory, but 88.2% of children of relevant age group (3 to 6 year olds) attend them (data for the year 2004/05). In exceptional cases, where parents have no other alternative, it is possible to accept younger children, for whom municipalities otherwise set up day nurseries (*denní jesle*). Currently there are also older children (about 20%) whose attendance at basic school has been deferred, usually at their parents' request. Since there has been an increase in attendance during the year before the compulsory school attendance (municipalities are obliged to ensure a place), the number of unsettled applications, which used to be 1% in previous years, is now growing.

Municipalities can charge parents a contribution of up to 50% of the cost per child (except for educational costs). However, some municipalities do not impose this charge. Last school year of pre-primary education is free of charge. Parents contribute to meals, which are subsidised.

2.1 Organisation

Nursery schools are administered by municipalities or unions of municipalities, which also fund them (except for salaries and teaching aids). For the number of private and denominational nursery schools see 1.7.

Nursery schools are established as full-day (the majority) or half-day care centres; they can also be established as boarding facilities or facilities with an irregular attendance schedule.

Nursery schools are usually in separate buildings, where whole day service is expected (teaching, playing games, walk and rest (sleep) of children).

By 1 January 2003 all schools should have been legal entities. This change was later postponed and imposed again by the new Education Act, in force since 1 January 2005. As a result several nursery schools merged and even more often nursery schools merged with basic schools under one directorate.

A nursery school of an average size has 58.7 pupils (2004/2005). Classes are coeducational. They should have a minimum of 18 children (15 if there is only one class in a school) and a maximum of 24.

Classes may be organised according to age or, according to the degree of adaptability or progress. Alternatively, children may be put into groups with mixed ages and progress levels. The integration of children with physical disabilities into mainstream schools exists accounting for 2.4% of the age group. This refers mainly to children with speech impediments. In these cases, the fixed maximum number of children per class is reduced accordingly (between 12 and 19). The number of children attending nursery schools only in the morning is increasing.

Nursery schools are usually open 10 to 11 hours a day, and parents can use their services as needed. It is possible to intermit the service of one school during July and August for at least two weeks. The stay of children in another school can be ensured.

2.2 Programme of activities

In 2001 the Ministry of Education published The Framework Programme for Pre-primary Education. On the basis of this Programme nursery schools develop their own educational programme.

Parents can significantly influence the orientation of the programmes and participate in their implementation.

The pre-school education has the following main objectives: the child's development and its ability to learn, to enable the children to acquire the basic values on which our society is based, to become independent and able to express themselves as individuals in relation to their surroundings. It is possible to differentiate between different aspects of education according to the relations which a child gradually develops towards itself, other people and the world around it. The main components of the programme are spontaneous games and physical activities, including outdoor activities and games, walks and excursions. Sleep is also an important element of the routine. Personal development and socialisation are also supported by activities related to literary, artistic and moral education. All activities emphasise emotional involvement and encourage a spirit of participation. Nursery schools are moving towards internal differentiation and individualisation of their programmes. Foreign language teaching, swimming courses, artistic activity, speech therapy and programmes for gifted children are also offered. On the basis of the agreement between the Ministry of Education and IBM since 2002 some nursery schools have taken part in the programme for introduction of computers in schools (Kid Smart Early Learning Programme).

2.3 Assessment

Children are not assessed, but their development is evaluated by professionals. If any irregularities or problems occur during attendance the nursery school will, with the agreement of parents, provide educational, psychological or medical consultations and offer remedial and developmental programmes tailored to the child's individual needs.

For transition to compulsory education see introduction to the Chapter 3.

2.4 Teachers

Nursery school teachers obtain a full qualification from a four-year educational course with a final secondary leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) in secondary schools. Nursery school teachers can be also prepared in courses offered by faculties of education or tertiary professional schools.

One or two teachers care for the groups of children depending on the number of the children in the group and duration of the teaching.

The direct educational load of nursery school teachers is 31 hours per week. They usually work full-time. The direct educational load of a school head or a school head's deputy is reduced, depending on the school size. Virtually all employees of the nursery school are women, although the profession is open to both genders.

For in-service training see 4A.5.

2.5 Statistics 2004/05

Nursery schools: Schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

Pupils	280 487
Teachers	21 840
Schools	4 776
Pupil/teacher ratio	12.2
Pupil/class ratio	23.1

Source: IIE.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Before the year 1990/91 the compulsory school attendance was 10 years – 8 years of uniform education at basic school (*základní škola*), and at least two years at one of upper secondary schools (which were usually from two to four-year schools).

Following a decision of 1990 the length of the basic school attendance was prolonged to 9 years, and at the same time compulsory school attendance shortened to 9 years. Pupils could attend basic school, multi-year *gymnázium* or (until 1995) the first year of an upper secondary school. This meant a major change in the concept of uniform basic education and in the differentiation of institutions. In addition to the traditional 4-year *gymnázia* (upper secondary education) to which pupils proceed having completed basic school (see Chapter 4), it was possible to establish multi-year *gymnázia* aimed at providing more demanding education to more intellectually gifted pupils within their compulsory school attendance. In 1995 multi-year *gymnázia* were reduced to 8-year (lower and upper secondary education; on completion of year 5 of the basic school) and 6-year (on completion of year 7 of the basic school) *gymnázia*.

Since 1996/97 the length of the basic school equals the length of compulsory school attendance.

Children of compulsory school age (6 to 15 years) mostly attend basic schools. Pupils can, upon their parents' request and if they meet the admission requirements, complete their compulsory education beginning from the sixth or eighth grade at a multi-year *gymnázium* (see 3.2 and 4A.) or 8-year conservatoire (*konzervatoř*) (see 4D). Since 2005 pupils acquire the level of basic education, and obtain certificates with a supplement confirming that they have acquired the level of basic education (*základní vzdělání*), having successfully completed compulsory school education (educational programme of basic education).

In September 1998 home tuition on experimental basis was approved. At the beginning of the experiment about 60 pupils of the first stage (primary level) were participating. Since 2005 this type of education has been codified by the new Education Act as individual tuition (*individuální vzdělávání*). It is the school head of the school providing compulsory education in which the pupil is enrolled that gives permission to organise this type of education. Only pupils in the first stage (primary level) can receive this tuition. In 2004/05 339 pupils were educated at home.

Basic schools accept pupils who have reached 6 years of age by 1 September of the year in question. Children turning 6 between the beginning of the school year and the end of the calendar year can be admitted if they are sufficiently mature, physically and mentally, and if their legal guardian applies for admission.

The maturity of pupils is examined during their enrolment to school pupils are evaluated. If a pupil is not considered mature enough to attend school he/she either continues to attend a nursery school or a preparatory class. From 1997 up to 2005 these classes were established in basic, nursery or special schools, since 2005 they have been established within basic schools only. These classes have fewer children, the child is given individual tuition and teachers can use the help of teacher's assistants. Around 2% of pupils enter compulsory education coming from these classes.

Basic school has two levels: the first stage now covers the first to fifth grade (ISCED 1), and the second stage the sixth to ninth grade (ISCED 2). In the first stage, all subjects are usually taught by a generalist teacher, while at the second stage, subjects are taught by teachers specialising in two subjects or, exceptionally, in one. Classes are coeducational.

Since 1990, basic schools have been established by municipalities. Nursery schools can be integrated into basic ones.

People have the right to basic education free of charge.

Pupils obtain textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education free of charge. Pupils of the first grade and in preparatory classes do not return the textbooks. Apart from textbooks they also get basic school aids according to a defined extent.

Parents contribute

- within the framework of curriculum to school aids of pupil, textbooks without approval of the Ministry of Education, courses outside the school campus (swimming, skating, skiing) and stays during which lessons take place in country environments;
- outside the curriculum to meals that are largely subsidised, to school clubs, special interest courses.

3.1 Organisation of the school

In order to ensure the accessibility of schools, there are schools with only the first stage (or exceptionally with only the second stage) in small municipalities (in 2004/2005 they made up 37.6% of all basic schools and 6.3% of all pupils). There are also schools with several grades in one class (only within the first stage) (31.4% of all schools with 4.0% of pupils).

School buildings are usually used for one shift per day. The school head decides on the availability of the school building (e.g. in the time after the lessons). Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. There are no classes at weekends. In addition to morning classes there are also afternoon classes once or twice a week.

The school year begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the following year. The main holiday is in July and August. There is a one-week holiday in spring, with other short holidays in the autumn, at Christmas, at Easter and at the end of the first semester. The dates of main holidays are laid down by a regulation, other holidays are specified by the Ministry of Education each year.

The optimal number of lessons per week is as follows:

1 st stage	2 nd stage
Year 1 – 20 lessons	Year 6 – 28 lessons
Year 2 – 22 lessons	Year 7 – 29 lessons
Year 3 – 23 lessons	Year 8 – 31 lessons
Year 4 – 24 lessons	Year 9 – 31 lessons
Year 5 – 25 lessons	

The number of lessons in individual years can differ by one hour (+,-). The number of hours within the second stage has been increased three times (in 2003, 2004 and 2005) in order to remove the difference between *gymnázium* and basic school.

A lesson lasts 45 minutes.

The maximum number of pupils per class is 30. If a class integrates pupils with special educational needs, the number is reduced; the minimum average number is 17. For schools with only the first stage the minimum average number of pupils per class is 10 for schools with one classroom, 12 for schools with two classrooms, 14 for schools with three classrooms and 15 for schools with four and more classrooms. The minimum average number of pupils in classes for minorities is 12, separate classes for these pupils must have at least 10 pupils. The national average of pupils per class was 21.4, per school 242 in 2004/05.

Pupils are divided into classes by age. At the first stage there can be classes with pupils of mixed age.

3.2 Curriculum

So far, the educational objectives of basic school have been specified in the Standard for Basic Education published in 1995 and complemented in 1997. The Standard for Basic Education defines the idea of a socially desirable form of compulsory basic education. It stipulates educational objectives and core subjects for specified educational areas. The course content for core subjects of the first stage is dealt with separately since this stage is relatively independent. The Basic Education Standard is a binding norm when designing educational programmes and serves as a criterion for the evaluation of educational results.

The educational objectives are defined

- at the cognitive level – pupils should acquire knowledge that is the basis of general culture, preparing the ground for communication and making use of stimuli encountered outside school;
- at the level of skills and competences – the ability to use acquired skills in real-life situations;
- at the level of values and attitudes – the basis is general moral values that are part of European traditions, the values on which a democratic society and its legal system depend and values that enable pupils to take responsibility for their own actions.

The teaching documents specify subjects and their timetabling and define content (syllabus).

The choice of teaching methods and teaching aids depends on the teacher.

Three educational programmes have been approved for the basic school:

- 'General School' – *Obecná škola* (1993) and 'Civic School' *Občanská škola* (1994), since 1997 these have been unified under the heading «General School» – *Obecná škola*,
- 'Basic School' *Základní škola* (1996),
- 'National School' *Národní škola* (1997).

All educational programmes have been designed for basic school as a whole and have comparable outputs at the end of the 1st stage of basic school, allowing pupils to continue in a different programme at the second stage, although schools are recommended to continue in the same programme throughout basic education since each of these educational programmes differs slightly in its educational nature. Schools most often use the *Základní škola* programme.

Timetable of the Educational Programme of the *Základní škola* (year 1-9) (valid since 1 September 2005)

Subject	Year									min. hours
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	
Czech Language	9	10	10	7	7	X	X	X	X	16
Foreign Language				3	3					12
Mathematics	4	5	5	5	5					16
Local environment	2	2	3							
Natural Sciences										
National History & Geography				3	4					
Chemistry										4
Physics										6
Biology										6
Geography										6
History										6
Civic Education						X	X	X	X	4
Family Education										4
Music	1	1	1							4
Art	1	1	1	4	4					6
Practical Subjects	1	1	1							4
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2					8
Optional Subjects										6
Disponible hours*						1	1	1	1	
Total number per week	20	22	23	24	25	28	29	31	31	119
Non-compulsory subjects										

X) The number of lessons for all subjects in years 6 to 9 is determined by the school head, ensuring that all subjects in the curriculum are taught in the given year. The minimum number of lessons per subject must be observed, as well as the stipulated number of lessons per week. It is up to the school head to decide on introducing an optional subject in 7 to 9 year.

* Disponible hours can be used:

a) in years 6, 8 and 9 to increase the number of hours of a subject integrated with another subject, to increase the number of hours of an optional subject or to enable pupils to take up another optional subject as an additional one (valid since 1 September 2003).

b) in year 7 just to increase the number of lessons of an optional subject or to introduce an optional subject.

In years 1 to 3, subjects may be taught in units, not necessarily full lessons, and different activities may be combined, while respecting the week teaching time for different subjects. According to the new Education Act this is now possible in all years.

The Czech language is a comprehensive subject in year 1; thenceforward it is divided into its constituents (language teaching, reading and literature education, essay training and in the first stage also learning to write). The number of lessons is determined by teachers.

In years 4 to 9, the school usually organises English or German lessons according to the pupils' interests and academic possibilities.

Optional subjects may be introduced in year 7, but must be included in years 8 and 9. Each optional subject is taught for at least one semester. They include second foreign language (the teaching of second language must already begin in year 7), conversation in a foreign language, computer science, technical education, technical

drawing, introduction to economics, accounting, social sciences, natural sciences, administrative services and home economics. This list of optional subjects may be extended by the school head in accordance with the facilities and staffing available at school and the interests of the pupils, as long as they observe the Basic Educational Standard.

As of year 1, non-compulsory subjects can be introduced in addition to the weekly lessons. The school head is free to decide on these subjects in consultation with teachers and also depending on the conditions of the school and pupils' interests.

In addition, the school head can differentiate teaching in some subjects or create classes (from the year 3) with increased number of hours in some subjects or group of subjects – music, art, mathematics, natural sciences, physical education, languages, information and computer science, or special classes (see 3.4).

The timetable of multi-year *gymnázia* differed from that of the second stage of basic school in certain subjects and the number of lessons per subject.

Teachers are free to choose methods and teaching procedure. The Ministry of Education grants or withdraws an approval of textbooks on the basis of an assessment as to whether they comply with educational objectives. Schools may also use other textbooks unless these are contrary to the educational objectives. School heads are responsible for the choice of textbooks.

However, it is possible to teach according to the existing educational programmes mentioned until the end of the school year 2011 (in year 5), 2010 (in year 9) at the latest.

Since 2005 the aims of basic education have been determined by the Education Act as follows: Pupils should acquire necessary learning strategies on the basis of which they should be motivated for life-long learning. They should learn how to think creatively and solve appropriate problems, effectively communicate and cooperate, protect their physical and mental health, creative values and the environment. They should learn how to be considerate and tolerant towards other people, different cultures and spiritual values, to recognise their abilities and real possibilities and to apply these together with knowledge and skills acquired in deciding on their life path and professional career.

The Education Act further sets two-level structure of educational programmes. Framework Educational Programmes specify the concrete objectives, form, length and compulsory content of education and some general conditions for their implementation as well as conditions for the education of pupils with special educational needs. In compliance with the Framework Educational Programme and school's conditions school head draws up a School Educational Programme.

The Framework Educational Programme for basic education was approved in August 2004. Within the scope of this Programme schools are to draw up their own School Educational Programmes and begin to follow them on 1 September 2007 starting with years 1 and 6. Schools, which have already prepared their Programmes can start to teach according to the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education from 1 September 2005.

Framework Educational Programme defines nine educational spheres formed by one or more educational areas, cross-section subjects and additional educational areas. For their implementation there are 118 hrs at the first stage and 112 hrs at the second stage. Mother tongue, mathematics and physical education are taught in all years. Foreign language teaching starts in year 3 (it can also start in year 1), the second foreign language is optional and is introduced in year 8 at the latest. School Educational Programme sets the subject matter distribution into individual years, its lay-out into subjects and curriculum. At the same time it is possible to create one or more subjects from one educational area or integrate the content of more educational areas into the so-called integrated subject.

3.3 Assessment/certification

All pupils are assessed continuously in individual subjects and at the end of every semester, when pupil's behaviour and overall learning outcomes are assessed, as well as their performance in each subject.

Rules for evaluation of pupils are set in compliance with the regulation by the School Educational Programme. The assessment must be unambiguous, comprehensible, comparable to the rules set in advance, factual and versatile. An individual approach to pupil is used. A five point scale marking, verbal assessment, scores (in per cent), pupils' ranking in class and others are used. The marking is used in almost all schools, but only less than one quarter of them limits to marking. Most often a combination of the above mentioned possibilities is used.

The continuous assessment reflects in the reports that pupils receive at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. Since 1990, the use of oral assessment has become widespread in many schools, after an agreement with parents, especially for younger classes, and was later officially authorised by the Ministry of Education in September 1993. According to the new Education Act the evaluation of results of education of a pupil included in a school report is expressed by marking, verbally, or by combination of both. This concerns both basic and upper secondary schools. In case of using marking pupils' knowledge is assessed on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (satisfactory) and 5 (fail). There is no final examination at the end of basic school, but in the last year of compulsory school attendance each school issues to its pupil a final evaluation stating how the pupil concerned has achieved the educational objectives stated by the law. This applies even in 5th or 7th year if the pupil fulfils his/her compulsory education at *gymnázium* or conservatory and continues his/her studies at these schools.

3.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

Pupils move up from one year to the next on the basis of their outcomes. If pupil fails in the overall assessment at the end of the year, he/she does not proceed to upper grade. Pupil proceeds to upper grade even if he/she already has repeated a year within one stage. On the other hand, it is possible based upon the request of parents and school guidance facility, to transfer an extraordinarily gifted pupil to a higher grade without completing the previous grade on condition that he/she takes and is successful in the examination covering the required syllabus of the grade the pupil has not completed.

The Czech compulsory school attendance is characterised by its low rate of failure. For a number of years an average number of pupils repeating a grade has been 1% (at the first stage the number is lower than at the second stage). An increasing number of pupils complete their compulsory school attendance before reaching the last year of basic school (for past four years it has been 5-6%). A number of these pupils continue their studies at secondary vocational schools where they gain a professional qualification. Only around 4% of population end their education at the ISCED 2 level.

Pupils with special educational needs can be integrated into regular classes, or a school head can (with the consent of regional authority) establish special classes. If required by the nature of the disability, pupils can be educated at special basic schools established by regions. Educational staff responsible for guidance services at schools are: advisors (*výchovní poradci*), school prevention methodologists (*školní metodici prevence*) and sometimes school psychologists or special educators (*speciální pedagogové*) who can be employed by the school. Their activities include assistance in the prevention of school failure, socially pathological phenomena, support to pupils with special educational needs and special talent and career guidance. Schools can cooperate with educational and psychological guidance services (*pedagogicko-psychologická poradna*) or (if integration of disabled children is involved) special educational centres (*speciálně pedagogické centrum*).

3.5 Teachers

Training for the teaching profession is provided by higher education institutions. It always includes practical experience of varying duration in schools; the study is ended by a thesis and a final state examination on the basis

of which students obtain a diploma and title. So far the study has been more often single structured. Nevertheless since 2002 two cycle structure has been introduced.

Teachers for the first stage of basic school gain a Master's degree after a four or five-year course, usually at faculties of education. The course includes general humanities subjects, the Czech language, mathematics, and pedagogical and psychological subjects. At some faculties students may specialise in e.g. music, art, physical education, or a foreign language.

Training of teachers for the second stage of basic school is similar as for teachers of general subjects at upper secondary schools – see the Chapter 4A.5.

At the first stage the teachers are generalists. At the second stage the teachers are specialists, usually qualified to teach two subjects.

The working conditions are ruled by the Labour Code. Teachers are recruited in open recruitment. If a teacher meets general and professional requirements the school head will sign a permanent contract with him/her.

The working week of all employees in the education sector is the same as that of all other employees in the Czech Republic, i.e. 40 hours. The working week of teachers is divided into teaching hours and hours required for activities related to the education process, i.e. preparing lessons, assessment of pupils/students, consultancy and guidance, supervision, informing parents of their children's progress, attending meetings, managing departments, libraries, collections, etc. The school head decides on the distribution of working hours.

The prescribed teaching load for teachers at both stages of basic school is 22 lessons per week.

The teaching load is reduced by one to five hours if a teacher also performs other activities, such as educational guidance. For school heads or their deputies, the amount is reduced depending on the size of the school.

For in-service training see 4A.5.

3.6 Statistics 2004/05

Compulsory education: schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

	Both stages including lower secondary classes of <i>gymnázium</i>	First stage	Second stage (total)	Second stage (basic school)	Second stage (lower secondary classes of <i>gymnázium</i>)
Pupils ¹	960 564 ¹	482 377	478 187 ¹	435 361	42 876
Teachers ²	57 817 ³	25 600	-	32 217	-
Schools	3 785 ⁴ 4 099 ⁵	3 780	2 676	2 362	314
Pupil/teacher ratio ¹	15.9 ⁶	17.3	18,8	12.3	13.5
Pupil/school ratio	234	128	179	184	136
Pupil/class ratio ⁶	21.4	20.3	-	22.8	

Source: IIE.

¹ Including pupils of the second stage age studying at conservatoires, not including pupils at special schools

² Full time teacher equivalent.

³ Only teachers of *základní školy* without special schools.

⁴ Not including *gymnázia*, conservatoires and special schools.

⁵ Including *gymnázia*, conservatoires without special schools.

⁶ Only *základní školy* without special schools.

4. POST-COMPULSORY GENERAL AND VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Upper secondary education is a considerably differentiated system guaranteeing education and vocational training for almost the entire population of young people following completion of compulsory school attendance and before taking up employment or continuing in higher education.

Pupils attending upper secondary schools are generally aged 15 to 19 years. The starting age of study is set by the completion of compulsory education. A part of secondary schools (multi-year *gymnázia*) and conservatoires provide also programme of compulsory education and therefore even younger pupils attend them.

Participation of the age group 15–18 in education is not compulsory, nevertheless it was 90,5% in 2002/03.

The new Education Act reflects the development within secondary education. Its goal has been newly defined. Levels of education have been defined according to the length and types of educational programmes, not types of school. Secondary education is newly structured into three levels depending on the length of the programme. Most of the population attend secondary education completed by passing a final examination and attaining an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*) or passing a *maturitní zkouška* examination

Fundamentals covered by general subjects and theoretical part of vocational in four-year vocational education subjects have been reinforced. Thus education is no more divided into general (so called full secondary education – *úplné střední vzdělání*) and full secondary technical education (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*); both types are now considered "secondary education completed by a school-leaving certificate" (*střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*). The existing division of schools to secondary general schools (*gymnázium*), secondary technical schools (*střední odborná škola*) and secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště*) – which is also used in the statistics enclosed – has been preserved for the sake of continuity.

The goal of secondary education is to develop knowledge, skills and values attained within basic education in either broader general education or vocational education connected with general education. Secondary education creates conditions for fair personal, civilian and professional life and continuing education, independent acquisition of information and life-long learning.

Through successful completion of the relevant type and length of educational programme the following levels of education can be acquired in various types of secondary schools:

- a) secondary education – *střední vzdělání* (1-2 years) (ISCED 2C);
- b) secondary education completed by attaining an apprenticeship certificate (*střední vzdělání s výučním listem*) – two to three years (ISCED 3C) or a shortened study programme (1-1,5 year) for those having completed secondary education with *maturitní zkouška* examination (ISCED 4C);
- c) secondary education completed by a school-leaving examination (*střední vzdělání s maturitní zkouškou*). Study programmes are of various length, – e.g. after completing a four-year study (ISCED 3A) or, for those with an apprenticeship certificate, a two-year follow-up course (*návšobové studium*) (ISCED 4A) or possibly by a shortened study for those attaining secondary education completed with *maturitní zkouška* examination in other field of study (1-2 years) (ISCED 4A).

The length of the study corresponds to full-time study programmes. The same level of education can be also attained through other part-time forms of education (evening, distance, combined); in this case the study may be one year longer. Education attained in all forms is equal.

Governmental provisions specify courses in which the above mentioned educational levels can be attained.

One- to two-year courses are usually intended for special education or for those pupils who have not successfully completed basic school. Such courses prepare pupils for less demanding professions.

Courses completed by attaining apprenticeship are traditionally organised by secondary vocational schools (*střední odborná učiliště*).

Courses completed by a *maturitní zkouška* examination are mostly provided by secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy*), secondary general schools, (*gymnázium* or *lyceum* – technical, economical, pedagogical etc.) offering broader general vocational education.

Follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) are organised by secondary vocational or secondary technical schools provided the courses are completed by a *maturitní zkouška* examination.

The Education Act newly introduced shortened study (*zkrácené studium*) programmes for acquiring secondary education by attaining an apprenticeship certificate (for those with *maturitní zkouška* examination) or earned by attaining *maturitní zkouška* certificate (for those with an apprenticeship certificate).

The structural development of upper secondary education has been one of the most important changes in the Czech education system since 1989. In that year the ratio of pupils admitted to courses leading to the *maturitní zkouška* examination (which is a prerequisite for higher education) to those without this exam was around 40:60. By 1997, this ratio had reversed, in 2004/05 being around 64:36 in favour of courses completed with the *maturitní zkouška* examination. The position of technical and vocational education at the upper secondary level is still extremely high. Around 80% of population complete their upper secondary education at these schools.

Establishment of private and denominational schools has brought about an important change within this level of education (see 1.7).

Interest in other than full-time courses (earlier referred to as on-the-job courses – *studium při zaměstnání*) has fallen considerably since 1989 because of availability of full time courses. In 2003/04 6.18% of all pupils studied in other forms of study. The exception is follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*), which have increased in number, around one half of the learners attending other than a full-time study.

Classes are coeducational (except for physical education lessons). Nonetheless, some courses are attended solely by girls (e.g. pre-primary teacher training) and others by boys (e.g. metallurgy), even though both girls and boys can be accepted.

Responsibility for creating curricula still lies with the Ministry of Education. It entrusts this task to the relevant bodies, coordinates their work and approves the final documents. Informal groups of teachers, teacher organisations and independent professional associations have all contributed to innovations in the existing curricula and the creation of new ones. Documents, most of which are prepared in institutes of educational research, are discussed in representative commissions made up of professionals from higher education institutions, research institutes, and schools. Non-formal groups of teachers, teachers' organisation and independent professional association also contribute to the innovations and design of new curricula.

The autonomy, which the schools have acquired, allows considerable variation in the concepts of educational approaches and permits the creation of an individual profile of the school, taking into consideration regional needs and the interests of the pupils.

Pupils are not grouped according to their achievements in education.

Pupils buy the textbooks themselves. Schools operate libraries with a limited stock of textbooks that can be lent to pupils from the low-income families.

The use of teaching documents and textbooks for subjects is under responsibility of a teacher with approval of the school head.

The choice of teaching methods, materials and aids depends on the teacher; the ICT and courseware is used more and more often.

School head decides on the availability of the school building.

The education is free of charge. The fees are paid only at private schools.

Parents contribute to different courses organised outside the campus (e.g. swimming, skiing courses). They also contribute to meals taken in the school catering facilities (which are subsidised) and extracurricular courses.

Successful completion of compulsory school attendance (or possibly completion of basic education without completing compulsory school attendance) and meeting the entrance requirements (usually including entrance examination) are prerequisites for admission to upper secondary schools. For admission to multi-year *gymnázium* see 4A.4.

Pupils may apply to one secondary school of their choice. Pupils and their parents may consult teachers, or educational advisors within the schools or in educational and psychological guidance centres, when making their decision. Basic schools confirm the pupils' results on the application forms and since 2005/2006 enclose his/her final report. If entrance examinations form part of admission process, pupils sit for written and oral entrance examinations administered by the school they are applying to. A school may also examine pupil's special gifts or talents. The exam content and form is determined by a school head of secondary school on the basis of and within the Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education with reference to the individual educational profile of schools.

Basic school outcomes expressed in certificates and reports and entrance examination results, if such an examination is included (e.g. taken in Czech and mathematics, in a foreign language or, in the case of artistic and sports schools, in a subject relevant to the alleged talent), and other abilities, knowledge and further pupil's qualities or sometimes also the results of psychological tests are the criteria on which a pupil is accepted or rejected. The decision as to how many pupils in total are accepted, and which ones in particular, lies with the school head. An appeal against this decision may be made to the head of the appropriate education department of the regional authority. To fill up unoccupied places the school head may announce other unlimited number of rounds of enrolment proceeding. Starting from the second round pupils can submit their applications for arbitrary number of schools.

Regulations permit a pupil to change field of education in school and to transfer from one type of upper secondary school to another. The decision rests with the school head of the school, which the pupil applies for. Differential examination may be required and ordered by the school head to which the pupil wishes to be transferred.

4A *Gymnázia* (secondary general schools)

The aim of study at *gymnázium* is to provide pupils with broad educational background and key competences, which they will further cultivate in life-long learning process. It prepares students for study at higher education institutions or other tertiary school facilities, or, possibly for some professions, which require a wider cultural basis.

In addition to general courses, there are 12 fields of study at *gymnázia* (for example languages, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, physical education etc.) with special focus on these subjects in the curriculum (see 4A.2). However, generally oriented *gymnázia* prevail.

Gymnázia may offer 4-year courses for pupils at the age of 15 (after completing the compulsory school attendance) 6-year courses for pupils at the age of 13 who ended 7th grade or 8-year courses for pupils at the age of 11 who ended the 5th grade, often within one and the same school. Six-year *gymnázia* as a rule offer some or all subjects taught in a foreign language.

Gymnázia can be public, private and denominational. At public *gymnázia* education is free of charge, private and denominational schools can charge fees.

The number of pupils completing *gymnázia* in the years 1996 to 2004 was between 19000 and 23000 representing 18-21% of all school leavers of full-time courses. The average number of pupils per school ranges from 208 per a private school to 339 per denominational school or to 460 per public school, i.e. 415 pupils per school in general (2004/05). Over half of all pupils complete their education at a multi-year *gymnázium*. The majority of pupils continue their studies at higher education institutions or other institutions.

4A.1 Organisation of the school

Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. There are no classes at weekends. Classes are taught in both mornings and afternoons. A lesson lasts 45 minutes. The Ministry of Education stipulates a minimum 80 of pupils per school and maximum of 30 pupils per class, minimum average number of pupils per class is 17. Classes are mostly organised according to age; classes in optional subjects may be organised based on the pupils' interests and taught in groups regardless of age. Part or all of instruction in selected subjects may be carried out in smaller groups. This is the case primarily when the instruction is of the «learning by doing» type. Foreign languages are always taught in smaller groups with 9-23 pupils. The school year at *gymnázium* is distributed in a similar way as in basic school – see 3.1.

4A.2 Curriculum

A *Gymnázium* Educational Standard was laid down in 1996. It determines the school educational objectives in 7 areas, in which the core curriculum is then set. The Standard serves as a basis for the preparation of timetables, curriculum and evaluation criteria. The lower classes of multi-year *gymnázia* follow the Standard for Basic Education.

The curricula for four- and eight-year *gymnázium* were set down in 1999. The curriculum for six-year *gymnázium* is derived from the eight-year one. These curricula are valid until Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports approves the Framework Educational Programmes for the higher level of *gymnázium* education. Since 2004 these Programmes have been piloted in 16 schools. Two years after the approval of these Programmes, schools are obliged to introduce them. Since 2007 the Framework Educational Programme for basic education will become binding for the lower level of *gymnázium* education.

The timetable of *gymnázium* lays out the subjects and the number of lessons per week. Of the total lessons per week, the majority are set so as to allow for the implementation of the specific *gymnázium* education. The remaining lessons (the number of which increases as pupils progress in their studies) are determined by school heads.

Timetable of *gymnázium* (valid since 1 September 1999)

Number of lessons per week in Years 1 to 4				
	1	2	3	4
Czech language and literature	3	3	3	3
Foreign language 1	3	3	3	3
Foreign language 2	3	3	3	3
Latin	R	R	R	R
Basics of social sciences	1	1	2	2
History	2	2	2	R
Geography	2	2	R	R
Mathematics	3	3	2	2
Descriptive geometry	R	R	R	R

Number of lessons per week in Years 1 to 4				
Physics	2	2	2	R
Chemistry	2	2	2	R
Biology/geology	2	2	2	R
Information and computer technology	2	R	R	R
Aesthetic education	2	2	R	R
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Optional subject 1	R	R	2	2
Optional subject 2		R	2	2
Optional subject 3			R	2
Optional subject 4				R
Total of set lessons	29	27	27	21
Lessons added by school head (R)	2	4	4	10
Total	31	31	31	31
Non-compulsory subjects				

The number of lessons represents a minimum, to which the school head can add further lessons up to a set maximum. The letter "R" in this curriculum indicates that the inclusion of this subject in the teaching in the given year and the number of lessons is to be decided by the school head, but the total should not drop below the minimum number of lessons set for the given year, nor below the total minimum number of lessons set for a subject within the whole four-year study plan.

Foreign languages (English, German, French, Russian and Italian) are selected according to pupils' interests and the potentialities of individual schools; classes can be divided into groups for all lessons. In case of the Czech language lessons the class can be divided into groups for at least one lesson per week.

In mathematics, at least one lesson should be practicum. The school head can also allocate part of natural science lessons for practicum.

Physical education includes a week's skiing in the first year and a week's sports course usually in the third year.

If Latin or descriptive geometry is included in the curriculum, it can be included as an individual subject in the *maturitní zkouška* examination but must meet the conditions laid down by the Ministry of Education.

Subjects included under aesthetic education are music and art. Pupils choose one of these in the first and second year.

Optional subjects 1, 2 and 3 are usually a continuation of the respective compulsory subjects at an advanced level (discussion, practicum, conversation in a foreign language, etc.). In this sense they form a unit with the compulsory subject and are therefore not independent subjects for the *maturitní zkouška* examination. A maximum of 3 lessons is allocated to optional subject 4.

The choice of optional and non-compulsory subjects is decided by the school head who is expected to take into account the pupils' interests, the conditions in the school and the needs of the region. The school head is responsible for the curricula and syllabuses. For lessons in optional and non-compulsory subjects, groups may consist of pupils from different classes and years.

The school's profile is formed either through lessons – the content of which falls within the responsibility of the school head – or by a focus on some of the 12 fields of education, such as mathematics, mathematics and physics,

natural science, information and computer technology, aesthetic subjects, living languages, classical languages, selected subjects taught in foreign language, humanities subjects, and physical education and sports training. General conditions, profiling subjects (from a common timetable) and recommended content of these profiling subjects are set for each field of education. The school prepares its own curriculum based on its profile and submits it to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for approval (this arrangement remains valid until the new Framework Educational Programme is approved). The physical education and sports specialisations have special conditions and are controlled by the Ministry of Education directly.

4A.3 Assessment/certification

Gymnázia use both continuous assessment and final examinations of pupils in different subjects. Pupils obtain a certificate after the first semester and at the end of the school year.

Continuous assessment is up to the teachers of the particular subjects, who determine the ways in which pupils are assessed and the content of the examination, which must however be in line with the curriculum.

There are no exams at the end of a year or any standardised national testing of pupils' performance. A pupil's outcomes in individual years are assessed on the same scale as at basic school (see 3.3).

Studies in *gymnázia* end with the *maturitní zkouška* exam. The exam may be taken only if the pupil has successfully completed the final year of school. The *maturitní zkouška* examination consists of two compulsory subjects (the Czech language and literature and a foreign language) and two optional subjects. The examination includes a written and an oral part. The school determines the content of the *maturitní zkouška* examination, no specific requirements are set externally.

A *maturitní zkouška* certificate is issued by the school on a prescribed form and documents the passing of the *maturitní zkouška* exam. It is issued with a supplement confirming the acquired level of education.

The passing of the *maturitní zkouška* is a prerequisite for admission to a higher education institution or a tertiary professional school.

The new Education Act changes substantially the organisation of *maturitní zkouška* examination. It will consist of common and profile parts. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is responsible for the centrally prepared, standardised common part for all graduates. It will consist of three exams, namely the examination of the Czech language, examination of a foreign language, (both written and oral parts) and the examination of an optional subject (only written part). A pupil will take an optional examination in mathematics, civic education, natural and technical education or information technology. The school is responsible for the profile part of the exam. It will consist of three compulsory and at most four non-compulsory subjects. The school head will specify the range of subjects, the range of the non-compulsory subjects will also be specified by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The form (writing a thesis and its defence, oral examination, written examination, practical examination or a combination of these) of the exam will be set by the entity specifying the range. The school-leaving examination will begin to be organised in the above described way in the school year 2007/08.

4A.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

Pupils at *gymnázium* move up to the upper grades on the basis of their school results. The school head decides if an unsuccessful pupil can repeat the year.

The lower levels of multi-year *gymnázia* ensure compulsory school attendance. Pupils are not obliged to continue their studies having completed compulsory school attendance. In order to be admitted to the higher levels of *gymnázium* pupils must pass an entrance examination but they can also apply for another secondary school.

School leavers usually continue to study, but they also have a relatively good prospect at the labour market.

They can study at tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) – see 6A or at higher educational institutions (*vyšoké školy*) – see 6B. Early educational guidance provided by the school or by a network of educational and

psychological guidance services helps the pupils to make their choice. Information on study opportunities is offered by schools, institutions and by the Centre for the Study Higher Education (*Centrum pro studium vysokého školství*) in Prague.

4A.5 Teachers

Initial training

Teachers of general subjects in lower and upper secondary education are specialists (usually in two subjects) and obtain their qualifications through four- or five-year Master's degree courses. These are provided by faculties of education usually in concurrent courses in the given field of study or pedagogy. Teacher training at other faculties (of philosophy, natural sciences, mathematics/physics, information sciences, physical education and sports) can be concurrent or consecutive.

Concurrent higher education study lasts three years in Bachelor's degree courses for graduates in other fields than pedagogy or two years in lifelong learning courses.

Teachers of technical subjects gain Master's degrees from specialised higher education institutions (technical universities, agricultural universities, faculties of medicine, universities of economics, theology and fine arts, etc.) and usually gain their teaching qualification concurrently.

Teachers of practical training (*učitelé praktického vyučování*) and teachers of vocational training (*učitelé odborného výcviku*) can acquire the same professional qualifications as teachers of technical subjects. They may be also tertiary professional school or upper secondary school leavers holding *maturitní zkouška* certificate. If this is the case they have to achieve their teaching qualification concurrently. The teachers of vocational training must have an apprenticeship certificate in the relevant field of study.

For recruitment see 3.5.

At upper secondary schools many external teachers are employed, they are usually contracted on a temporary basis.

In-service training

The Act on Educational Staff stipulates an obligation of in-service training of teachers, but does not prescribe any particular form. In-service training renews, supplements or strengthens qualification, extends it or it may also enable its acquisition. A school head organises in-service training in accordance with a plan, which is laid down after preceding negotiations with a relevant trade union body. It is necessary to take into account the study interest of the educational staff, the school needs and budget. In-service training is organised by higher education institutions, institutions of in-service training of teachers and at other facilities on the basis of accreditation granted by the Ministry of Education (in such a case a certificate is issued to a participant). Teachers may prefer the option of self-study. If this is the case they are entitled to 12 working days off for study in the school year. The regulation of the Ministry of Education stipulates types of in-service training and the education staff career system.

The recently established National Institute for Further Education (*Národní institut pro další vzdělávání*) has replaced the network of Education Centres (*Pedagogická centra*). It consists of a centre and thirteen regional stations. The central activity of the Institute is planning and organisation of educational courses, implementation of governmental priorities in in-service training, and development of national projects financially supported from the European Social Fund. Scientific societies, guidance facilities, professional associations and various private organisations also participate in in-service training. Higher education institutions offer refresher training courses for teachers returning to the profession after a long interval, qualification training courses providing upgrading of educational qualifications, specialised course, and educational studies for graduates from non-teacher training faculties.

Teachers' working hours

The direct teaching load for teachers at the upper secondary level is 21 lessons per week for teacher of general and technical subjects (*učitel všeobecně vzdělávacích předmětů* and *učitel odborných předmětů*) 21-25 lessons for teacher of practical training (*učitel praktického vyučování*) and 25-35 lessons for teachers of vocational training (*učitel odborného výcviku*).

For working conditions see 3.5.

4B *Střední odborné školy* (secondary technical schools))

Schools of this type were founded on Czech territory as early as the 19th century in the same way as in Austria and Hungary. Many of them have a long tradition. Due to historical developments their programmes have sometimes rather narrow specialisation. Some of the schools retain this tradition and serve large geographic regions or, they even take pupils from all over the country. Most of them, however, offer a wider range of courses, in terms of both subjects as well as educational levels.

These schools were intended to provide an education with an intermediate level of qualifications on the assumption that these students would move directly into the labour market. The education was geared towards developing the ability to apply acquired technical knowledge and skills in practice.

Secondary technical schools traditionally offer four-year courses completed with the *maturitní zkouška* examination, providing pupils with what has been labelled until now "full secondary technical education" (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*). According to the new Education Act this type of education is labelled "secondary education with a school leaving (*maturitní zkouška*) examination" (similar to education at *gymnázium*). This has been supported by gradual expansion of general education and by deepening the theoretical basis for technical subjects.

After 1990, short two- or three-year courses were introduced, which were less demanding with respect to pupils' qualifications (especially in the Commercial Schools). They differ from the vocational courses at the secondary vocational schools (see 4C) training pupils for simple administrative and organisational activities. They end with a final exam providing secondary education previously labelled "secondary vocational education" (*střední odborné vzdělání*). Current Government regulation concerning the system of educational fields introduces only one- or two-year courses at this level. Three-year courses in progress will cease to exist after their whole cycle has been finished. Secondary education (*střední vzdělání*) does not provide right to continue studies at higher education institutions.

Secondary technical schools organise two year follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*), leading to the *maturitní zkouška* examination, mostly for pupils who have completed upper secondary vocational schools with an apprenticeship certificate. These courses have been earlier mostly offered by secondary vocational schools (*střední odborná učiliště*).

The Education Act reintroduces, although in a slightly different form, shortened studies (*zkrácené studium*) to acquire secondary education completed by a *maturitní zkouška* examination. They are intended for those who have already acquired secondary education with *maturitní zkouška* examination in other fields of study. This study may last 1 to 2 years in the full time form.

Entry requirements for upper secondary technical school – see introduction to Chapter 4, information on fees – see the Chapter 4A.

Secondary technical schools can be public, private and denominational. At public schools education is free of charge, private and denominational schools can charge fees.

In 2004/2005 there were 804, secondary technical schools 588 of which were public, 208 private and 16 denominational. The average number of pupils per school was 258.

4B.1 Organisation of the school

The average number of lessons in one week is 33, each lesson being 45 minutes. A practical training lesson lasts 60 minutes. The structure of school year is the same as for other levels of education (see 3.1).

4B.2 Curriculum

On 1 January 1998 the Standard of Vocational Education and Training came into effect as the first step towards the reform of the current system. It comprises three components: 1) general education – common subjects relating to the social-cultural function of education, 2) key competences (in communication, personal, problem solving, information and communication technology usage), 3) basic technical education.

The Standard specifies special requirements:

- for levels of education attained,
- for all fields of study (e.g. machinery, electrotechnics, agriculture, etc.).

Frameworks educational programmes, on which a two-stage curriculum will be based, started to be developed in 2001. In 2004 pilot versions were prepared for 29 fields of study covering around 60% of secondary technical and vocational school population. The bases of profession requirements are being prepared by the Integrated Information System of Standard Jobs, which falls within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and which should ensure that the requirements for each profession are comparable with those of the European Union.

Education in secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy*) will be based on curricular documentation approved by the Ministry of Education until Framework educational programmes are implemented. School heads are, however, allowed to adjust these requirements to the needs of their individual schools. As long as they observe some given rules, they can change the curriculum for up to 10% of the total number of lessons and for up to 30% for individual subjects. Schools may develop their own curricula, which can be used having been approved by the Ministry of Education. Curricula include general subjects (the Czech language and literature, a foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, civic education, history and physical education) and vocational subjects, the selection of which depends on the relevant field of study. The vocational subjects include various practical or laboratory tasks. The curriculum also includes work placement in companies or various other institutions, the duration of which depends on the relevant field of study. The ratio of general to vocational subjects varies according to the study field and the year of study. It runs at around 40:60 in favour of vocational subjects.

The inclusion of work placements in the curriculum of secondary technical schools makes it possible to establish relationships between pupils and employers which may have some impact on future decisions relating to jobs.

Traditional teaching methods still prevail, although new methodology is being sought to adapt the instruction to the varying ability of pupils and to stress the amount of independent work performed by pupils during instruction and training. Instruction takes place in classrooms, specially equipped classrooms or laboratories.

Example of a curriculum for secondary technical school

Narrow field of study: Electronics

Specialisation: Light-current electrotechnics (valid since 1999/2000)

Full-time and part-time study

	Full-time study	Part-time study
Subject category and names	Total number of lessons	Total number of lessons
	130 – 132	1040
1. General education	58 – 59	350
Basic	52	350
Czech language and literature	10	90
Foreign language	12	100
Mathematics	12	100
Civic education	3	20
History	2	0
Physics	3	40
Chemistry	2	0
Physical education	8	0
Optional	6 – 7	0
2. Technical	72 – 73	690
Basic	46	405
Technical drawing	3	20
Basics of electrotechnics	7	50
Electronics	4	60
Electrotechnology	2	25
Computer technology	5	40
Electrotechnical measurement	9	100
Economics	3	30
Digital technique	2	20
Microprocessor technology	2	60
Practical training	9	0
Optional	26 – 27	285

Comments on the timetable

- The above timetable is a framework and does not show how individual subjects are distributed over different years. The school has to divide the timetable into four years in accordance with the specific conditions and set principles. Such a timetable is valid for pupils throughout their whole study. It aims to adapt a school leaver's profile according to school conditions, requirements of a region, development of the field/specialisation and the pupils' interests and abilities. The school can also use the timetable recommended below, worked up according to the curricular documentation.
- Subjects assigned as basic and the number of lessons devoted to them represents the minimum, i.e. the compulsory fundamentals of the study of light-current electrotechnics, which are compulsory for all schools.
- The number of lessons for basic subjects is taken as a minimum. The school head will decide how to use optional subjects and increase the number of basic lessons with respect to the desired profile of a school leaver. The completed timetable is included into the compulsory school documentation. Co-ordination between different subjects in terms of time and content is required. The number of lessons per week must not be exceeded.

- The school head can modify the curriculum of subjects in the timetable up to 30% of their content taking in consideration new technologies, modernisation of the specialisation, region's conditions and requirements of social partners.
- For teaching of general educational subjects the curriculum for secondary technical schools is used.
- Pupils usually continue to study the foreign language they studied at basic school.
- Non-compulsory subjects and their content are developed by subject commissions and approved by the school head. Pupil can take no more than two subjects in one year, or three if one of them is physical education or driving.
- Optional subjects can be grouped into a block of subjects reflecting the specialisation, which can be stated in the school's documentation and certificate. When they are not part of the teaching documentation worked up by particular subject commissions and approved by the school head, the curricula of optional subjects are part of a school's compulsory documentation.
- The timetable does not indicate the amount of practicum, which is allocated by the nature of each particular subject. The class is split into groups during practicum according to the valid safety and health protection regulations. If these do not specify the size of groups, this is set by the school head according to the regulations of the Ministry of Education and depending on the school's financial possibilities.
- Practical training subjects include three weeks of continuous practical training split into two years, usually in the second and third year. Pupils do this continuous practical training in companies in workplaces, which have a contract with school.
- Within its time reserves, the school can organise a one-week skiing course and a course of sports and touristic activities in the first to third year. The total duration of these courses must not exceed two weeks.
- Part-time education follows the part-time education timetable and the full-time education curriculum. Thematic programmes are approved by the school head. The number of teaching hours can be adjusted by up to 10%. At the end of each semester there is an examination from each subject. There can be a maximum of three exams in one day.
- During part-time education, the school guarantees the pupils one week for obtaining practical skills, especially in electrotechnical measurements.
- Pupils studying part-time who do not have experience in the specialisation studied or in a related one are obliged, after consultation with the school, to do four weeks of practical training during their studies. This enables them to obtain the basic relevant technical skills.

Bellow is a recommended timetable showing a possible distribution of subjects. This timetable is not binding and is used if a school has not developed its own timetable.

Recommended timetableLight-current electrotechnics
Full-time education

Subject categories and names	Number of lessons in year per week				Total
	1.	2.	3.	4.	
1. General educational					
Basic	19	16	11	12	58
Czech language and literature	3	2	2	3	10
Foreign language	3	3	3	3	12
Civic education	-	1	1	1	3
History	2	1	-	-	3
Mathematics	5	4	3	3	15
Physics	2	2	-	-	4
Chemistry	2	1	-	-	3
Physical education	2	2	2	2	8
2. Technical					
Basic	13	17	10	8	48
Technical drawing	3	-	-	-	3
Basics of electrotechnics	4	3	-	-	7
Electronics	-	4	-	-	4
Computer technology	3	2	-	-	5
Electrotechnology	-	2	-	-	2
Electrotechnical measurement	-	-	4	5	9
Economics	-	-	-	3	3
Digital technology	-	3	-	-	3
Microprocessor technology			3		3
Practical training	3	3	3	-	9
Optional	-	-	12	12	24
Total number of lessons	32	33	33	32	130

Examples of optional subjects:

Subject names	Number of lessons in year per week				Total
	1.	2.	3.	4.	
Electronics	-	-	2	2	4
Electronic computers	-	-	4	5	9
Automatisation	-	-	2	3	5
Heavy-current equipment	-	-	2	-	2
Automation training	-	-	2	2	4
Total number of lessons per week	-	-	1	1	24
			2	2	

Summary of utilisation of weeks from September to July

Activity/year	1.	2.	3.	4.
Education according to timetable	34	34	34	30
Technical practice		2	2	
Final examination				2
Time reserve	6	4	4	5
Total number of weeks	40	40	40	37

Summary of inclusion of key skills

Areas of education	I	II	III	IV	V
Czech language and literature	xxx	xxx			xx
Foreign language	xxx	xxx			xx
Mathematics			xxx	xxx	
Civic education	xx		xxx		xxx
History	xx				
Physics			xxx	xxx	xxx
Chemistry			xxx	xxx	
Physical education	xx	xx			
Technical drawing	xxx		xxx		
Basics of electrotechnics			xxx	xxx	xx
Electronics			xxx	xxx	xxx
Electrotechnology			xx		xx
Computer technology	xxx		xxx	xxx	xxx
Electrotechnical measurement	xx	xx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Economics	xx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx
Digital technology			xxx	xxx	xxx
Microprocessor technology			xxx	xxx	xxx
Practical training	xx	xx	xxx	xx	xx

- I - communication skills
- II - personal and interpersonal skills
- III - ability to solve problems and problem situations
- IV - numerical application
- V - ability to use information technology and work with information

4B.3 Assessment/certification

Secondary schools use both continuous assessment and final examinations of pupils. See Chapter 4A.3.

Most of study fields at secondary technical schools last four years and are completed by the *maturitní zkouška* examination. It) consists of examinations in the Czech language and literature, in one optional subject and in various vocational subjects. The vocational part includes a theoretical and a practical examination. Having passed this examination the pupils receive a *maturitní zkouška* certificate. For information on *maturitní zkouška* examination according to the new Education Act see 4A.3.

In courses lasting less than four years pupils must pass the final *závěrečná zkouška* examination see 4C.3.

All final examinations are taken in front of an examination board.

Employers recognise the certificates as evidence of the relevant professional qualifications.

4B.4 Progression/guidance/ transition arrangements

School leavers of *střední odborná škola* who completed their study with *maturitní zkouška* and gained the full secondary technical education can continue their education at higher education institutions or tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborná škola*). Pupils from one- and two- or according to the previous School Act three-year study courses enter the labour market.

For conditions of transition to upper years, for education at upper level and guidance see 4A.4.

4B.5 Teachers

See 4A.5

4C Střední odborná učiliště (secondary vocational schools)

These training institutions are historically associated with different forms of practice-oriented apprentice training which was accompanied, to a limited extent, by general education. These institutions were later replaced by so-called apprentice schools, whose status was however not equivalent to that of the selective schools (*gymnázia*, secondary technical schools). After the World War Two, the status of such schools rose to rank equally alongside other upper secondary schools. They were run by companies and after 1990 they came under the control of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and from 2001 regions.

The participation of companies in vocational training, particularly at school level, is developing. To improve their educational programmes, the schools are collaborating with Labour Offices, local enterprises, trade unions, professional associations and the Chambers of Commerce. Business interest in vocational training is also manifesting itself in the fact that some enterprises are once again establishing their own (private) secondary vocational schools or organising vocational training in their premises. The participation of businesses in the financing of vocational training is, however, very limited. It is characteristic of vocational education that pupils are not trained to work for a specific company. Generally, interest in these types of study has decreased in favour of fields of study completed by *maturitní zkouška* examination.

Under current legislation, secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště*) are obliged to train pupils for a vocational qualification required in professions where two- or three-year education accomplished by attaining apprenticeship certificate is prescribed. Pupils are admitted to the first year of study provided they finished compulsory school attendance (15-year olds). Training is completed by a final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*), which does not entitle pupils to enter post-secondary education. In addition, secondary vocational school (as secondary schools) are authorised to train pupils in four-year courses provided these are recorded in the Register of Schools and Schools Facilities. In such cases the four-year training leads to a *maturitní zkouška* examination and does entitle the pupil to enter a higher education institution or tertiary professional school. Secondary vocational schools authorised to offer secondary education completed by a *maturitní zkouška* examination also offer follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*). This enables pupils with secondary education completed by attaining apprenticeship certificate to obtain secondary education completed by a *maturitní zkouška* examination and to apply for a tertiary professional school or a higher education institution. Around 90% of secondary vocational school pupils have recently taken their follow-up courses at secondary vocational schools.

Secondary vocational schools newly organise shorten study programme for those having completed secondary education with *maturitní zkouška* examination. It can last 1-to 1,5 year in the full time form.

Secondary vocational schools can be public (about 91% of pupils), private (about 11% of pupils) and denominational (insignificant). At public schools education is free of charge, private and denominational schools can charge fees.

The average number of pupils per school is 342 (full time education, 2004/2005).

4C.1 Organisation of the school

The average number of lessons in one week is 33. For theoretical subjects one lesson is 45 minutes long; for practical training it is 60 minutes long. For information about school year see 3.1.

In terms of organisation, the majority of secondary vocational schools offer both theoretical and practical aspects of training. In addition to secondary vocational schools, which offer only theoretical instruction, there are independently organised practical training centres (*středisko praktického vyučování*), which are usually located within enterprises.

4C.2 Curriculum

The formulation of the vocational education curriculum and its present changes were explained in 4B.2.

The curricula include general subjects (Czech language and literature, a foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, civic education, and physical education) and vocational subjects which are selected and allocated depending on the specific nature of the course, and the skills to be taught. The proportion of time allocated to general subjects, vocational subjects and practical training varies from year to year. Three-year training courses devote 30 to 35% of teaching time to general subjects, 20 to 30% to theoretical vocational subjects and 35 to 45% to practical training. Four-year study courses use the following ratio: 40:30:30. Follow-up courses for graduates of three-year courses completed by an apprenticeship certificate are based on a ratio of 45:55.

Traditional teaching methods still prevail in secondary vocational schools, but new methodology is seeking to adapt the instruction better to the varying abilities of the pupils. Theoretical education takes place in classrooms. When a foreign language is taught, pupils of one class are divided into groups. For practical training pupils are divided into groups. For each specialisation the size of groups is determined by a government decree, taking into account the nature of the activity and occupational safety requirements. Practical training takes place mostly in training workshops or in company workshops and offices. Depending on the nature of the course, it may also take place in laboratories or other specially equipped classrooms. This refers especially to four-year courses.

Example of a curriculum for secondary vocational school

Narrow field of vocational study: Metal machining, Machining works
Specialisation: Metal machining (valid since 2000/2001)
Three-year full-time study

Subject categories and names	Number of lessons in year per week			Total
	1.	2.	3.	
A. Compulsory				
a) Basic				
Czech language and literature	2	2	2	6
Foreign language	2	2	2	6
Civic education	1	1	1	3
Mathematics	2-4	2	2	6-8
Physics	2-4	2-3	-	4-6
Computing	0-3	0-3	-	2-4
Basics of ecology and chemistry	2	-	-	2
Physical education	2	1	1	4
Economics	-	-	2-4	2-4
Technical documentation	2-4	1-3	0-1	4-6
Engineering technology	1-3	1-2	-	2-4

Subject categories and names	Number of lessons in year per week			Total
	1.	2.	3.	
Engineering	0-2	1-3	0-2	4-6
* Technology	2-3	2-4	2-4	8-11
* Practical training	6-12	14-17.5	14-17.5	34-45
b) Optional	-	0-4	0-6	0-10
Total number of lessons per week	max. 33	max. 33	max. 33	max. 99
<u>B. Non-compulsory</u>				

Examples of non-compulsory subjects:

Aesthetic education, conversation in a foreign language, second foreign language, multicultural coexistence, mathematics practicum, physics practicum, physical education, family education, man and the environment, psychology of work, computer technology, administration technique, and road safety education.

Comments on timetable:

- General educational subjects are taught according to the valid curricula for 3-year courses at upper secondary vocational schools issued by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education in Prague.
- During the theoretical training the number of physical education lessons cannot drop under two lessons per week. It is recommended to include two lessons of physical education even in weeks in which pupils are on practical training. These lessons are not included in the total number of weekly lessons in a particular year (it is possible to exceed the maximum given in the timetable).
- The teaching of integrated subjects – basics of ecology and chemistry – is provided according to the valid curricula of individual subjects the school adapts appropriately.
- The school can modify the timetables of compulsory subjects by up to 10% of the total number of lessons in a particular year. The modification must not eliminate any basic compulsory subject nor exceed the total number of lessons per week set by the timetable.
- The school can modify the subject matter in the curriculum by up to 30% to include new knowledge resulting from developments in science and technology, current issues concerning the transition to a market economy and better adaptation of the subject matter to individual companies. It is possible to move subject matters between years, especially in practical training, in accordance with the instructions given in curricular documents.
- The structure and content of subjects designated by an asterisk (*) reflects the profiles of graduates. The school can decide the aims and curricula of education in the third year. A curriculum approved by the school head has to be designed for these subjects. Such a curriculum is included in the compulsory school documentation.
- Optional subject or subjects are determined by the school head, who may decide that the time devoted to the category of optional subjects (or part of it) will be used to increase the number of lessons of basic subjects. The content of the optional subjects must be consistent with the graduate profile and with the overall direction of their training. The school prepares the curriculum for optional subjects (it can use the curricula included in the teaching documents of another specialisation). The curriculum approved by the school head is included in the school compulsory documentation.

- The school head is responsible for the inclusion and structure of optional subjects. The curricula of non-compulsory subjects are developed by the school (or a school can adopt appropriate curricula from other educational programmes) and approved by the school head. Apart from the subjects mentioned other suitable ones can be offered depending on the nature of the specialisation. Pupil can take up to three non-compulsory subjects, provided one of them is physical education.

From the first to third year the school can organise a skiing course and a sports course. The total length of the courses cannot exceed two weeks for this period.

4C.3 Assessment/certification

Secondary schools use both continuous assessment and final examinations of pupils. See Chapter 4A.3.

In four-year courses and in courses designated as follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) for graduates of three-year courses completed with an apprenticeship certificate, the pupils sit for the *maturitní zkouška* examination. For other courses pupils must pass the final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*).

The final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*) is of a vocational nature and pupils must demonstrate how well prepared they are to perform the relevant skills and occupations. In case of secondary education courses completed with an apprenticeship certificate the exam consists of a written, an oral and a practical part of practical training. Upon successful passing of the final examination the pupils receive a final examination certificate (*vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce*) and an apprenticeship certificate (*výuční list*). In case of secondary education courses (not completed by an apprenticeship certificate) the final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*) consists of a practical exam from vocational subjects and theoretical exam from vocational subjects. Pupils obtain a certificate *vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce*.

The *maturitní zkouška* examination after four-year courses is similar to that at secondary technical schools (see 4B.3). In the follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) the *maturitní zkouška* has the same form as in other fields of study at secondary technical schools.

4C.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

School leavers of secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště*) should enter the labour market. Pupils of four year study programmes who completed their studies with *maturitní zkouška* can continue their education at higher education institutions or tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborná škola*). Pupils from shorter courses with an apprenticeship certificate enter the labour market or they can upgrade their qualifications in follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*), and pass the *maturitní zkouška* examination.

For conditions of transition to upper years, for education at upper level and guidance see 4A.4.

4C.5 Teachers

See 4A.5

4D Konzervatoře (Conservatoire)

Conservatoires (*konzervatoř*) are special types of schools, which provide general education and prepare pupils for the performance of demanding artistic or combined artistic and pedagogical activities in such fields of study as music, dance, singing, and drama. Courses last either 6 years (admitting pupils after completing the compulsory school education) or, in the case of dance field of study, 8 years (pupils who successfully completed 5 years of basic school). In lower grades the conservatories must ensure compulsory school attendance. Admission proceedings consist in proving the talent in a test.

Pupils at conservatories are taught individually or in groups.

Education is usually completed by passing an *absolutorium* examination. Pupils may complete education by a *maturitní zkouška* examination, however, not earlier than after the fourth year, and in dance after the eighth year. Pupils thus achieve either secondary education completed by *maturitní zkouška* (3A) or tertiary professional education from conservatories or both.

Absolutorium is a comprehensive professional examination consisting of a theoretical examination in vocational subjects specified by a Framework Educational Programme, an examination in a foreign language, a thesis and its defence, and a performance in one or two principal artistic branches, or an examination in artistic and pedagogical training. If a pupil completes conservatory without passing a *maturitní zkouška* examination, he/she must sit for a final examination in front of an Examination Board (*komisionální zkouška*) prior to the *absolutorium* exam. The final examination is composed of an exam in the Czech language and literature, for a six-year course also in the history of the field studied. Having successfully passed the *absolutorium* examination, the pupil is awarded a certificate on *absolutorium*.

4.6 Statistics 2004/2005

Admission to upper secondary schools

Upper secondary schools	Percentage of pupils admitted from population (%)	
	before 1989	in 2004
<i>Gymnázia</i>	13-15	19.4
Secondary technical schools	23-30	44.4
Secondary vocational schools	55-60	39.2

*) including appropriate years of multi-year *gymnázia*

Upper secondary schools: schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios; full-time study

	Gymnázium (only upper secondary classes)	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Secondary schools total
Pupils ¹	99 927	207 339	175 975	483 241
Teachers ²	10 993	19 041	9 810	39 637
Trainers ² and craftmasters	(-)	(-)	11 481	11 481
Schools ¹	345	804	514	1 659
Pupil ¹ /teacher ratio ²	13 ³	11	17.9	12.2
Pupil ¹ /class ratio	27.9 ³	26.4	24.1	25.9

¹ Including full-time study without special school pupils.

² Full-time equivalent of teachers and trainers

(both for full-time and part time studies).

³ Including lower secondary classes at *gymnázia*.

(-) Not available.

Source: IIE

5. INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Initial vocational training is an integral part of upper secondary education. All relevant information is to be found in Chapter 4C.

6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

Traditionally, higher education institutions (*vyšoké školy*) provide tertiary education of ISCED 5A and 6 levels; they can be of university and non-university types. For detailed description see chapter 6B.

Tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) have been included into tertiary education relatively recently; they are more focused on providing students with practically oriented qualifications of ISCED 5B level. For further description see chapter 6A.

In 2004/05 school year 57% of pupils who had completed secondary education with *maturitní zkouška* examination in the previous year were admitted to tertiary education (that is 34% of all 19-year olds), 81% of whom entered higher education institutions, 16% entered tertiary professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) and 16% enrolled in both the types of tertiary education.

6A Tertiary professional education

Tertiary professional schools were introduced in the 1992/93 school year on an experimental basis and since 1995 they have been included into the educational system. Their aim was to cover the gap in qualification needs between secondary and tertiary education. At that time tertiary education consisted only of single structured long programmes of higher education. These schools have mostly been attached to secondary technical schools and they still form a single legal entity with them. Only one fifth of them are independent entities. Tertiary professional education has been regulated by the same Education Act (No. 561/2004) as basic and secondary education, the Decree on Tertiary Professional Education (No. 10/2005) dealing with further particulars.

Educational programmes at these schools (originally lasting between 2 and 3.5 years) last according to the new Education Act 3 years in a full-time study, medical courses 3.5 years including practical training.

An average of students per school is 147.

6A.1 Admission requirements

Only applicants with completed secondary education with *maturitní zkouška* examination (former full-secondary or full-secondary technical education) are admitted. They are usually 19-years old. The school head decides on whether there will be an entrance examination and on its content.

An applicant can skip a year or more provided his/her previous education has been acknowledged.

6A.2 Fees/Financial support for students

Tertiary professional schools including those established by the state can charge fees. The fee limit is determined by the Decree on Tertiary Professional Education and depends on how financially demanding each particular field of study is. For most of the fields of study the charge is 3000 CZK, for the least demanding ones 2500 CZK, on the other hand for other specified fields it ranges between from 4000 to 5000 CZK. The fees are payable in two instalments.

The school head may reduce individual student's fee up to 50% of the set amount.

6A.3 Organisation of the school

The school year is divided into a winter and a summer term, made-up of 40 weeks of teaching, 6 weeks of examination period and 2 weeks of time reserve. A lesson lasts 45 minutes, a practical training session lasts 60 minutes. It is possible to organise courses, practical training and examination during the school holidays, however school holidays must not be shorter than four weeks.

A consultation lesson lasts 45 minutes in all forms of education.

Students are placed into groups independently of their level, sex or age. For theoretical education students are organised in study groups formed according to study fields (the lowest number of students in a group is 10, in artistic fields 6, the highest number is 40); as far as the size of groups for practical training is concerned workplace conditions have to be taken into account.

6A.4 Curriculum

Each school prepares its own educational programme. It contains goals, form, length and content of education, its conditions, organisation, course of education, its completion, profile of a graduate and employment possibilities. A school must produce evidence that it will be able to implement the educational programme, among others it has to provide evidence of co-operation with experts and provide estimate of the number of admitted applicants. As of 1 January 2005 programmes must be accredited (i.e. since the new Education Act has come into force). Accreditation is granted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the basis of an opinion of the Accreditation Commission for tertiary professional education. (Curricular documents prepared in accordance with the legal provision effective before 1 January 2005 will remain valid till 2008). Programme accreditation enables schools to enrol and educate students based on the educational programme. The educational programme has to be taken into account when assessing the students as well as when evaluating the school and also when allocating financial resources from the state budget.

The content of education is organised in areas corresponding to various subjects or other comprehensive units of the syllabus, e.g. modules. These units are divided into compulsory, compulsory optional, and optional subjects. The number of lessons is defined by the curriculum.

Theoretical part of the study programme has the form of lectures, seminars, consultations, practicum and excursions.

Practical training in the relevant field is a substantial part of this type of study. It can be organised on the premises of the school or, based on the contract, in work places owned by corporations or individuals.

Present development shows convergence of both the types of tertiary education. The organisation of study is similar to university study; the emphasis is on individual work. In cooperation with higher education institutions tertiary professional schools also provide Bachelor's degree study programmes.

6A.5 Assessment/certification

Forms of assessment are set by the Decree on Tertiary Professional Education. They include continuous assessment, system of credits, graded credits and examinations. Each school chooses the form to be applied to particular subjects and in individual school-terms. This information is included in the educational programme. Standards students have to meet during the study and standards of the examination have to be made available before the course begins. A credit is granted if the student meets all the requirements. The credit granted is recorded together with the date and the examiner's signature in the student's book. In addition to the fulfilment of standards, graded credits as well as examinations assess the level of performance. A four-level assessment scale is used. In the case of the second re-sit, if there are doubts concerning the appropriacy of assessment or in the

case of transfer of students the examination is always taken in front of an examination board. Educational results of students are recorded in his/ her student's book.

Tertiary professional education ends with an *absolutorium*, an examination consisting of a theoretical exam in vocational subjects (at most three subjects), an exam in a foreign language and defence of a thesis. A thesis may be written and defended by several students; however each student shall be evaluated individually. A thesis and its defence may also contain a part examining practical skills.

The school head announces the date for *absolutorium* within the time range set by the Decree. The school head also appoints examination board members. The chair of the examination board is appointed by a regional authority.

The thesis topic has to be assigned at least six months before the *absolutorium* examination.

A four- point assessment scale is used in the *absolutorium* exams: excellent, very good, good and fail. Individual examiners suggest the marks. The mark of the thesis is suggested by the thesis supervisor. Based on the results achieved in the *absolutorium*, the final overall assessment is carried out using a three-point scale (pass with distinction, pass and fail).

Having passed the *absolutorium* examination the graduate accomplished tertiary professional education, which is certified by the *Absolutorium* certificate and the diploma of a graduate of a tertiary professional school. The graduates are awarded a degree "qualified specialist" (*diplomovaný specialista*) and abbreviated as "DiS" and written after his/her name.

6A.6 Progression/guidance/transfer arrangements

A student who has successfully met the requirements specified by the accredited educational programme for a relevant grade proceeds to a higher grade. Having considered the student's study results a school head may permit a student, who has not met the requirements to repeat the grade.

During his/her studies at tertiary professional school a student can upon his/her request transfer to another tertiary professional school, change educational field or intermit studies for a period of no longer than 2 years. It is up to the school head of the school to which the student applies to decide on his/ her transfer.

A school head may recognise comprehensive background education achieved by a student provided that it is documented with a relevant certificate. The school head may recognise partial education of a student provided he/she can prove that no more than 10 years have elapsed since its completion, or provided it is evidenced by examination.

School leavers find the employment in various labour market fields. They can upgrade their qualifications at higher education institutions under the same conditions as those leaving upper secondary schools completed with *maturitní zkouška* examination. The Amendment to the Higher Education Act (of 2004) has facilitated the transition from tertiary professional schools to higher educational institutions; differential entrance requirements can be set by higher education institutions for applicants who completed accredited educational programme or its part at a tertiary professional school.

6A.7 Teachers

The Act on Educational Staff introduced a new category of teachers "*učitel vyšší odborné školy*" (teacher of tertiary professional school). Whereas pedagogical qualification is not required for these teachers, the other prerequisites for performing their educational activities have to be the same as for secondary school teachers – see 4A.5.

6A.8 Statistics

Tertiary professional schools: number of schools, students, teachers and relative data, 2004/2005

	Tertiary professional schools
Students	25 033
Students total	29 674
Teachers ²	2 260
Study groups ¹	1 167
Schools ¹	164
Schools total	170
Student/teacher ratio ²	11,1

Source: ÚIV.

¹ Only full-time students.

² Full-time teacher equivalent (teachers for all education forms).

6B Higher education

Higher education institutions come under the Higher Education Act (No. 111/1998) and its amendments. Their activities are also subject to the internal regulations related to the Act. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports maintains a register of internal regulations of higher education institutions. Whereas eight of the regulations defined by the Higher Education Act are compulsory for every public higher education institution; the others may be defined by individual school statutes. For more details on higher education administration see 1.3, part School Autonomy.

By law higher education institutions are of two types – university type providing all levels of study programmes, and non-university type usually offering only Bachelor's degree programmes. Due to the historical development all existing higher education institutions established before the Higher Education Act came into force are university type institutions. Recently established higher education institutions have been accredited as non-university types. This refers to all private institutions as well as to the first newly established public institution "College of Polytechnics Jihlava" (*Vysoká škola polytechnická Jihlava*).

All accredited Bachelor's degree study programmes provide education of ISCED 5A level, i.e. education which enables students to continue in follow-up Master's degree study programmes.

An institutional structure of higher education institutions has changed as a result of the Law 111/1998. Most of the state institutions of higher education gained the status of public institutions. There are 24 of them and all are universities. They can be established or cancelled only by a law.

University of Defence (*Universita obrany*), which came into existence on 1 January 2004 through the merging of three military schools, and the Police Academy are still state institutions. They are controlled by the relevant Ministries (Defence and the Interior).

Private higher education institutions began to emerge shortly after the law came into force. They have often developed from private tertiary professional schools. Private schools can only function as legal entities having obtained the approval of the Ministry of Education which is provided based on the recommendation of the Accreditation Commission. Thirty-nine private institutions of higher education were registered to date 23 November 2005. Sixteen of these institutions have the status of a public benefit corporation.

Higher education institutions organise accredited study programmes and programmes of lifelong education.

Bachelor's study programmes are focused on professional training and provide a basis for studies in Master's study programmes. The study lasts 3–4 years. Bachelor's degree study programmes prevail at private institutions.

Master's study programmes are aimed at providing theoretical knowledge based on latest scientific findings, research and development, at mastering their applications and on developing creative skills. These study programmes are follow-ups of the Bachelor's ones. Their standard length is 1–3 years. If the character of the study programme requires so, accreditation can be granted to a Master's degree programme (4–6 year long), which is not a follow-up of a Bachelor's one. The standard study programme lasts at least three and at most seven years.

A Doctoral study programme can follow after the completion of a Master's programme. It is aimed at scientific work, independent creative activity in the area of research and development or at independent theoretical and creative skills in art. It is offered solely in the university type of study. It lasts 3–4 years.

The law does not lay down the length of study for any particular study field.

In compliance with the implementation of the Bologna process principles the expansion of Bachelor's degree programmes is encouraged as well as the highest possible transferability of study. The three-cycle structure of the study has been fully introduced at most university type higher education institutions.

In addition to their study programmes, all higher education institutions carry out other activities such as research, development, artistic work, possibly other creative activities, and also organise lifelong learning.

For more details on the structure of higher education according to study fields see 6B.7.

6B.1 Admission requirements

The minimum requirement for admission to higher education institution is secondary education completed with the *maturitní zkouška* examination (previously "full secondary" – *úplné střední* or "full secondary technical" – *úplné střední odborné* education). The requirement for admission to a Master's programme following on a Bachelor's programme is successful completion of the Bachelor's programme. The requirements for admission to a Doctoral programme is successful completion of a Master's programme.

Students may apply for admission to several faculties. Each higher education institution decides on the number of enrolled students and on specific admission proceedings (upper secondary school results, approval of credits from previous studies of other fields of study or of tertiary professional school, etc.). The admission proceedings usually include an entrance examination, in particular written test, oral examination or both. If the number of applicants who meet the conditions is higher than the maximum number which can be enrolled, applicants are rank ordered based on the examination results.

In the admission proceedings foreigners must meet the same requirements as the Czech students.

According to the Amendment to the Higher Education Act (of 2001) a higher education institution can accept up to 60% of the credits earned in accredited lifelong learning programmes provided the applicant becomes its student as defined by the Higher Education Act.

6B.2 Fees/Financial support for students

In accordance with law, higher education of Czech citizens is free of charge, with the following exceptions:

- fees for administration of admission proceedings;
- fees for prolonging the duration of study above the settled limit;
- fees for the study of an additional study programme.

The base for fees is 5% of the average running cost per student paid to the institutions by the Ministry of Education from the state budget in a calendar year.

- Public institutions can set a registration fee, which can amount to a maximum of 20% of the base.
- If the actual period of study exceeds the standard duration for Bachelor's or Master's studies by one year, then the student is charged a minimum of 1/4 of the base for every month started.
- If a holder of a Bachelor's or Master's degree wishes to take another Bachelor's or Master's study programme, the student can be charged the full base for each year (this is not the case if it concerns concurrent study programmes).

Some fees will increase from 1 January 2006).

Foreign students study at higher education institutions under the same conditions as the Czech students. If foreign students are taught in languages other than Czech they can be charged special fees set by the relevant institution.

Private institutions of higher education can fix their own fees. The law does not set any limit on fees.

The head of the institution (*rektor*) may reduce the fees, exempt a student from paying them or defer payment with regard to a student's achievements or social situation.

The family of a child in education and training receives the allowances until that child reaches the age of 26. Allowances for children are not provided comprehensively, but on the basis of the family income. If the family's income is three times the subsistence minimum, then the family does not receive any allowance. On the other hand, if the family income is less than 1.6 fold of subsistence minimum, then, in addition to the child's allowance, the family also receives social allowance.

Students are subsidised for transport costs. Until recently, meals in students' cafeterias and accommodation in halls of residence or other facilities were provided at subsidised prices. Since 2005/06 the subsidy is not allocated to hostels, but the higher education institution allocates the amounts calculated according to the ministerial rules and specified by its internal regulations to students in the form of contributions for accommodation.

Students can be given a grant based on merit or social and other grounds according to the grant regulations of the relevant institution. In Doctoral study programmes students receive a monthly grant ranging from 5000 to 10000 CZK.

6B.3 Academic Year

The academic year lasts 12 months; the start is fixed by the head of the higher education institution (*rektor*). Courses are divided into semesters, years or blocks, which are composed of a period of teaching, an examination period and vacation.

The structure of the academic year is decided by each institution, it usually begins in September and is divided into two semesters: winter and summer, with a five-week examination period after each semester. The summer vacation is in July and August.

6B.4 Courses

Study programmes are developed and submitted for accreditation by an institution of higher education or other institution, which wants to carry it out in collaboration with the higher education institution. Programmes may be for Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral studies and may be full-time, distance or a combination of both. Each study programme is further divided into specialisations, including the graduates profile for each specialisation, the subjects studied, rules for the creation of the curriculum, the standard length of study, conditions for the fulfilment and completion of study, and its relation to other types of programmes.

The classification of fields of study corresponds essentially with the traditional classification of scientific fields, e.g. humanities, social sciences, science, medicine, education and teacher training, mathematics, computer science,

engineering, economics, agriculture, military and police sciences, arts and architecture, physical education and sport.

Fields of study are divided according to an approved list of the Classification of Core Fields that applies nationwide. There are about 155 core fields of study at higher education institutions.

Study programmes have to be accredited. The accreditation is granted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports based on a statement issued by the Accreditation Commission. The Commission was established by the government and its members are prominent professors and scientists. Within the accreditation process decisions are also taken on authorisation to award academic titles. The Accreditation Commission also carries out evaluation of faculties in the individual specialisations.

Teaching on Bachelor's and Master's programmes rests on two main methods – lectures and seminars. Doctoral studies run according to an individual study scheme under a tutor's guidance.

Attendance at lectures is not compulsory whereas attendance at seminars usually is. The forms of the students' work reflects the subject and the orientation of study. There may be, for example, seminars, laboratory work, field observation, work in clinics for students of medicine, observations in schools for future teachers, videoconferences, instruction using information networks, etc. Individual work with students in tutorials or group consultations or in the form of written seminar and annual assignments, project work is becoming increasingly important.

Students have to pay for their books.

In addition to the accredited study programmes, higher education institutions also offer lifelong education programmes which may be free of charge or on a fee paying basis. These programmes are aimed at individual professions or interests. See also 7.5.3.

6B.5 Assessment/qualifications

The frequency and methods of assessing students' achievements differ according to the field of study. In some cases a system of partial examinations taken after each semester has been introduced, in other cases one comprehensive examination after each completed part of studies is prescribed, mostly at the end of a certain module. Performance in examinations and in the defence of the thesis is graded (normally on a three-point scale), the fourth level representing failure. In some institutions students are assessed by means of credits. The credit system has been encouraged since it enables recognition of the completed parts of studies, thus contributing to transferability within the system.

Bachelor's degree studies end with a final state examination and the defence of a thesis. The academic title obtained is *bakalář* (Bc.) or *bakalář umění* (BcA.).

Master's degree studies end with a state examination and the defence of a thesis. The academic title awarded is *magistr* (Mgr.), *magistr umění* (MgA.), *inženýr* (Ing.), *inženýr architekt* (Ing.arch.) Students of medicine and veterinary medicine and hygiene are the exception. They finish their studies with rigorous state examination – *rigorózní zkouška* – and they are awarded the title doctor of medicine (MUDr.), dentist (MDDr.), or doctor of veterinary medicine (MVDr.). All titles are used in front of the name.

Having been awarded the academic title *magistr* students can sit for rigorous state examination *rigorózní zkouška* which includes the defence of a thesis – *rigorózní práce*. Those who have passed the exam and successfully defended the thesis are awarded the title of *doktor*; the abbreviation differing according to the field of study (JUDr., PhDr., RNDr., PharmDr., ThDr., for catholic theology the title – licentiate – ThLic.) and is put in front of the person's name.

Doctoral studies finish with a state doctoral examination and defence of a thesis. The title for all fields of study is *doktor* (Ph.D.) with the exception of theology, where the title *doktor teologie* (Th.D.) is awarded. Both titles are used after the name.

Successful graduates of all programmes can either enter the labour market or, in the case Bachelor's and Master's programmes, can continue their studies.

Upon completion of lifelong learning courses students obtain a certificate from the institution of higher education. For more information see 7.5.

A not entirely saturated labour market has been the reason why over 80% of graduates have not had, as yet, difficulties getting jobs. The best situation is for medicine, social and natural sciences graduates, the worse for veterinary, agricultural and technical fields of study graduates.

Unemployment among higher education graduates is distinctively lower than among graduates of other education levels. Most graduates find employment in the field they have studied. Doctors show the highest percentage working in their field, civil engineers and above all teachers the lowest. This can be explained primarily by the unsatisfactory pay conditions in education sector. Due to rising skill requirements the labour market is starting to recruit higher education institution graduates where until recently only secondary education was required.

In the nearest future the unemployment of higher education graduates is expected. This leads to the increased interest of management of higher education institutions in direct cooperation with economic sphere.

Continuing education is for the higher education graduates a common part of their working life.

6B.6 Teachers

Academics are those employees of the institutions of higher education who carry out both educational and scientific work, as well as research, development, artistic or other creative activity, e.g. professors (*professor*), associated professors (*docent*), specialised assistants (*odborný asistent*), assistant (*asistent*), lecturers (*lektor*) and academics involved in science, research and development. Other specialists who are not members of the higher education institution's staff can also teach in these institutions. Institution's internal regulations define the position of visiting professors.

The law does not prescribe any special pedagogical training for academics. Career development is specified by the internal institutional regulations. The title of *docent* (associate professors) is awarded by the *rektor* following a *habilitation* procedure in which the scientific or artistic qualifications of the applicant are examined, partly on the basis of their *habilitation* dissertation. Professors are appointed in a specific field by the President of the Republic on the recommendation of the higher education institution's council, submitted through the Minister of Education. Higher education institutions must be authorised to carry out *habilitation* procedures or appointment procedures (in the case of professorship). This authorisation is liable to accreditation by the Ministry of Education.

Professors make up around 11% of faculty staff and associate professors approximately 34% (2003). The structure of qualifications rises slowly and the average age is also decreasing slowly.

There is no set teaching load for various categories of teachers within higher education. It is determined by the direct superior in accord with internal institutional regulations.

The working conditions of (all) teachers are ruled by the Labour Code. Teachers are employed and appointed on the basis of a competitive procedure. Details of vacant posts are set by the internal regulations of the relevant higher institution. Professors make up around 9% of faculty staff and associate professors approximately 24%. The structure of qualifications is stable and the average age is rising constantly.

Types of employment contracts are the same as for other employees. Very often professors and associate professors have permanent contracts; other academic staff usually have temporary contracts.

The obligation of academic staff to further educate themselves is not defined explicitly in the Higher Education Act. Continuing education is part of self-motivation and is connected with the career.

6B.7 Statistics 2004/05

Number of students

	Students Czech citizens	Students foreigners	Total Czech citizens and foreigners	Teachers full-time equivalents
total	279 800	18 396	298 196	14 622.8
full-time study Bachelor's, Master's	205 673	14 208	219 881	(-)
full-time study Doctoral	10 553	986	11 539	(-)
part-time* study Bachelor's, Master's	50 899	2 388	53 287	(-)
part*-time study Doctoral	12 675	814	13 489	(-)

*Part-time study may be either distance or combined.

Teachers-academics only in public institutions of higher education.

(-) Not available.

Number of higher education institutions

Public	24
State	2
Private	39

Number of graduates (2004)

Institutions total*	39 764
Public and private(Czech citizens)	37 394
Public and private (foreigners)	2 173
Military and police	1 235

*All study programmes.

Higher education students according to fields of study (full-time study, all study programmes) (2004/05)

Field of study	%
science, mathematics	8.9
engineering	27.2
agriculture, forestry and veterinary science	3.9
medicine, dental studies, pharmacy	7.8
economics, business	18.9
social science and humanities	14.1
law	5.2
education and teacher training	11.5
art	2.4
military and defence	0.1
Total	100.0

Source: IIE.

7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

7.1 Policy and legislative framework

Vocational and special interest education of adults has a long tradition, and in some professions the system is very well developed. The Czech Republic has never had legal provision for adult education as a whole. A draft Act on Continuing Education is being prepared. Legislative intent of Continuing Education Act was approved by the Government in September 2005 as the Act on the Verification and Recognition of Continuing Education Outcomes.

The current legislation consists of the following acts.

1. The Education Act and the Higher Education Act, which specify the forms which adult education (or lifelong learning) may take at various educational levels);
2. Regulations related to work performance: the Labour Code, the Employment Law and related regulation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on accreditation of training facilities providing retraining for job seekers;
3. Regulations specifying qualification requirements for non-manual professions: e.g. acts on territorial units administration, on courts and judges, on tax advisers, etc. These regulations often define institutions, which organise training or examinations. One of these regulations is the Act on Educational Staff which among others specifies terms of in-service training and its accreditation.
4. On the basis of the Act on Technical Standards and the Act on State Supervision, regulations concerning professional skills and qualification requirements, regular in-service training and re-examination of employees have been developed. These regulations also anticipate the establishment of special institution for education and certification;
5. The Trade Licensing Act, which regulates provision of education on a commercial basis does not stipulate any special requirements, however, retraining programmes have to be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, or, in the case of education covered in points 3 and 4, by the relevant ministries: Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, etc. or other responsible authorities.

According to the Labour Code, employees are obliged to maintain and improve their qualifications. An employer is entitled to require an employee to participate in courses. If employees are transferred to different types of jobs, the employer is obliged to train them.

The new Employment Act, which takes into account and reflects EU legislation, was approved in May 2004. It came into effect in October 2004. It defines state employment policy, its subjects and tools. The framework of pro-active employment policy includes measures for the development of human resources, e.g. training courses, retraining, information and guidance.

The new Education Act (valid from 1 January 2005) has already been drawn in view of the life-long learning: It:

- newly defines other than full-time education,
- strengthens the role of follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*),
- introduces shortened forms of study to attain apprenticeship certificate or to attain secondary education completed by *maturitní zkouška* examination (providing a second chance for the applicants who find it difficult to be placed on the labour market),
- introduces recognition of previously completed education (including informal education) which is in compliance with EU recommendations;

- enables to acquire a level of education without having completed a study at a secondary or tertiary professional school,
- enables continuing education in courses which do not provide a recognised level of education.

7.2 Management/organisations involved

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has overall responsibility for education, including adult education. Other than full-time forms of study which lead towards a specific level of education fall completely within the responsibility of this Ministry. Adult education at higher educational institutions, i.e. distance studies or a combination of distance and full time studies, and also lifelong learning programmes including the University of the Third Age, fall within the responsibility of higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports outlines the general framework of continuing education and supports its development mainly through an effort to restructure educational programmes and through financing development programmes. Its specific sphere of action covers the area of retraining where the Ministry is an accreditation body for retraining programmes.

Regions establish councils for education, training and employment. One of their objectives is to establish links between the world of education and the world of work. Regions also establish regional centres for lifelong learning sometimes composed of a network of upper secondary and tertiary professional schools providing adult education services.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs guarantees the state employment policy. It is the organising body of Labour Offices which, among others, provide guidance and information services related to vocational training and continuing education, organise retraining of job seekers, co-finance retraining (including subsistence during retraining), and encourage development of job opportunities through which school leavers could gain professional experience and young job seekers could gain qualifications.

In 2003, the Ministry of Informatics in partnership with the private sector launched the National Programme of Computer Literacy. The programme has been focused on the general public without previous ICT experience. The courses started in the mid-2004.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade strives to increase the competitiveness of industry. This involves support for the introduction of new technologies, including retraining of employees.

The Ministry for Regional Development promotes the implementation of all educational initiatives at regional or local levels.

Other ministries are responsible for vocational training in regulated professions within their respective sectors.

The provision of educational services on a commercial basis is not controlled by any regulatory body. The only exceptions are institutions wishing to provide recognised continuing vocational training (which have to apply for accreditation to an authorised body, e.g. the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) and institutions providing approved language courses (which apply for accreditation to the Ministry of Education).

The Government Council for Human Resources Development was established on 3 March 2003 as a standing advisory, initiating and co-ordinating body of the Government of the Czech Republic in the area of strategic management of human resources including adult education. The Council is chaired by the Vice Prime minister responsible for economics. Membership being based on the tripartite principle, the Council is made up in equal proportion of representatives of state administration and self-government, employers' unions and trade unions. The Council establishes committees and working groups.

Social partners have been active in education for a relatively short time, approximately since 1996. The three most important organisations are: the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (*Svaz dopravy a průmyslu České republiky*), the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic (*Hospodářská komora České republiky*) and the

Bohemian and Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (*Českomoravská konfederace odborových svazů*). Their main sphere is vocational training, both initial and, even more importantly, continuing training. These organisations aim to change the economic environment in order to encourage companies to take an interest in education.

7.3 Funding

Adult education through which a relevant education level is reached may be organised at upper secondary and tertiary professional schools in other than the full-time (daily) study. It is financed by the Ministry of Education by means of regional authorities. Funds are allocated to regional authorities on the basis of the number of pupils and national per capita amounts – see chapter 1.5. According to set rules regions establish their own regional per capita amounts for every type and form of education in agreement with their long-term objectives, taking into account registered activities of individual schools. The only exceptions are courses in which adults can complete basic education when, as a rule, the costs of the study are fully covered by the community bearing general responsibility for basic education.

Retraining is financed from various sources. Unemployed people registered as job seekers are entitled to attend such courses fully funded by Labour Offices (from the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, namely from contributions of companies, employees and self-employed people earmarked for the state employment policy). Other participants have to bear the cost themselves. Labour Offices share the costs of retraining courses organised by institutions for their employees.

Financing of company level educational activities is the responsibility of the employer. Employers usually offer fully funded training and provide employees with paid leaves if the increase in their qualification complies with the employers' needs. Employers and employees can also agree on terms of co-financing.

Special interest education activities are fully funded by the participants. Prices are based on free market principles.

Employers can include expenses of continuing education and retraining of employees provided by institutions other than the employer, as well as expenses on operation of their educational facilities, in their costs, provided it is not up to state administration body to cover them. However, the current financial incentives are considered to be insufficient both for providers and participants in education.

7.4 Human resources

Teachers participating in education of adults in schools and institutions need not have any special training for teaching adults. Topics related to adult education are usually included into in-service training of teachers. Specialists in adult education are prepared at two departments of Czech universities; however they have been mostly employed in personnel management.

Qualifications of trainers and instructors working for commercial institutions as well as the quality of teaching in these institutions are rarely monitored.

7.5 Organisation

7.5.1 Types of training institutions

Adult education takes place in:

- schools (basic, upper secondary, tertiary professional and higher education institutions) and other educational institutions;

- organisations – (enterprises, institutions, state administration bodies) providing education primarily for their own employees by means of their own education institutions or trainers, or by hiring services of other institutions;
- non-profit organisations: organisations from education sector, professional organisations, foundations, churches, trade unions, political parties;
- commercial educational institutions. Schools can also organise educational courses on a commercial basis.

7.5.2 Access requirements

Admission requirements to other forms of studies providing courses for adults leading towards the attainment of a defined level of education are usually identical to those for full-time study. It also refers to applicants who have completed their previous education abroad. Admission requirements for other types of education depend on the kind and level of the course in question.

7.5.3 Objectives of the programmes

Courses organised by schools and other educational institutions are primarily aimed at providing students with qualifications.

Retraining courses organised within the active employment policy and accredited by the Ministry of Education aim at increasing employability of job seekers and groups threatened with unemployment.

Schools

Schools primarily organise coherent adult education programmes, providing a certain level of education through other than full-time forms of studies. These programmes at upper secondary and tertiary professional levels are mostly provided in fields for which also full-time programmes exist. Follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) are organised in other than full-time study forms. So is the newly established shortened form of study for acquiring secondary education completed either by attaining an apprenticeship certificate or by *maturitní zkouška* examination (see chapter 4).

For those who have completed compulsory school attendance requirements but have not completed basic education, both basic schools and secondary schools can organise courses aimed at completing basic education.

The educational objectives in all forms of education are identical.

All schools can also organise various continuing education courses, including retraining. However, these are not recorded in the statistics and are provided on a commercial basis.

Adult education is also organised by basic art schools – *základní umělecké školy* (however, special interest education activities, are mostly intended for basic and upper secondary school pupils) and language schools authorised to organise state language examinations – *jazykové školy s právem jazykové zkoušky* (both special interest education activities and and qualification courses).

Higher educational institutions

Higher educational institutions provide adults with the opportunity to study in all types of study programmes, either in the form of distance learning or combined distance and full-time study.

Higher education institutions can provide lifelong learning courses in addition to their regular study programmes. Courses can be offered free or for fees, and can be career-related or for personal development (e.g. the University of the Third Age). The specific conditions for lifelong learning are set by the internal regulations of each institution. In keeping with the Higher Education Act, participants in lifelong education are not considered to be university students.

The National Network of Distance Education has been formed under the support of the PHARE programme. It consists of National Centre for Distance Education at the Centre for Higher Education Studies in Prague and four other centres: the Technical University in Liberec, the Technical University in Brno, and Palacký University in Olomouc as well as at J.A. Comenius Academy in Prague.

Profit and non-profit non-school institutions

Education provided by enterprises and, non-profit or commercial organisations includes courses of various types, subjects, levels and duration. Courses are offered depending on current supply and demand. Therefore, it is impossible to give a general description of admission requirements, educational objectives, the content and methods of education, assessment or certification.

In general, the most frequently offered courses are those in foreign languages, ICT, management and accounting.

7.5.4 Main principles of the organisation of time and venue

Adult education at secondary or tertiary professional levels is usually organised in part-time forms of education, namely in:

- evening courses (*večerní*)- ranging from 10 to 18 lessons a week in the afternoon or evening
- distant study (*dálkové*) – self-learning supported by consultation in the scope of 200 – 220 consultation hours in a school year
- distant courses (*distanční*)- self-learning mainly via information technologies, which could be supported by individual consultation (e-learning)
- combination of study forms (*kombinované*)- education using full-time and one of the forms of education mentioned above.

Higher education institutions organise distant forms and a combination of forms of studies for adults.

The study can take one year longer than in a full-time form.

Organisation, duration and venue of qualification, retraining and special interest courses are determined by the institution, which provides them. To a certain extent, institutions can take into account needs of participants.

7.5.5 Curriculum

Curriculum documents for other than full-time study programmes are a modification of the full-time curriculum documents. They are developed by the respective institutions.

School head can partially recognise education achieved by a learner prior to his present study if it is evidenced by a document on such education or if the learner proves his knowledge in an examination.

The content of continuing nonformal adult education is prepared by the programme organisers: a company prepares a programme for its employees according to their or its needs, a commercial or other institution prepares it in compliance with the demand of individuals or enterprises, which order courses for their employees.

Teaching methods are not markedly different from those used in full-time courses with analogical content, however self-study forms a substantial part of the educational process.

The significant innovation of content and methods has occurred especially in language courses, which to a certain extent follow the methods and techniques common abroad (departure from linguistic approach and emphasis on communicative competences).

Information and communication technologies are gaining ground both in formal and nonformal adult education.

7.5.6 Quality assurance

Schools of all levels except for higher education institutions are evaluated through the Czech School Inspectorate. The other institutions are neither evaluated nor sufficiently monitored.

There are two approaches which have recently prevailed in the promotion of quality assurance, particularly in the area of managerial education:

- a) increasing number of institutions applies ISO 9000 international standards. They aim to acquire the ISO 9001 certificate – the evidence of standard quality of their services;
- b) associations of educational and consulting firms stipulate their own set of requirements, usually inspired by the Total Quality Management approach.

7.6 Guidance/counselling services

There are no special legislative measures for guidance services for adults in educational system. However, within the framework of the State information policy, the Government authorised the Ministry of Education to participate in the development of an information system on educational opportunities not only for children and youth, but also for adults.

Labour Offices, which fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, provide guidance services in the area of continuing education, especially retraining.

There are also private counselling services.

The Internet Database of Continuing Education – DAT – was established in 2001. Providers of educational services put data concerning their activities in the Database. Users can search out courses according to chosen criteria. The Database encompasses also retraining courses arranged by Labour Offices.

7.7 Assessment, accreditation and recognition

Having passed prescribed examinations, graduates of other than full-time study at upper secondary or tertiary professional schools, or higher educational institutions receive a certificate or a degree of the same validity as those in full-time study.

Attainment on adult education courses within lifelong learning at higher educational institutions is recognised by certificates. Since 2001 it has been possible for higher educational institutions to acknowledge credits gained in lifelong education programmes. If successful graduates of these programmes become students of accredited study programmes, higher education institution may acknowledge credits up to the amount of 60% of the credits necessary to obtain the higher education diploma.

A system of state recognised qualifications in the area of continuing vocational education and training does not exist. The only exceptions are examination systems of some professional organizations, e.g. the Auditors' Chamber or the Chamber of Tax Advisers.

A general system of accreditation of institutions has not yet been developed. Nevertheless, some continuing education courses have to be accredited by:

- the Ministry of Education: courses of in-service training of teachers and other educational staff, courses (mainly language ones), which make families of pupils eligible for allowances, and retraining courses;
- another departmental body if departmental (certificated) education or training (doctors, medical staff, technicians) is involved.

7.8 Statistics

Adult education (combined) for each level of education (2004/05)

Level of education	Number of learners	% of students total
<i>Gymnázium</i> (upper secondary classes)	864	0.6
Secondary technical schools (including follow-up studies)	17 532	7.8
Secondary vocational schools	17 414	9.0
Tertiary professional school	4 641	15.6
Bachelor's + Master's study programmes	53 287	19.5
Doctoral programmes	13 489	53.9
Continuing education at higher educational institutions	41 083	X
Remedial courses to complement education from		
basic schools (<i>základní škola</i>)	524	x
remedial schools (<i>zvláštní škola</i>)	58	x
auxiliary schools (<i>pomocná škola</i>)	180	x

Source: IIE.

Participation in retraining courses (2002)

Number of people enrolled in retraining courses		% of unemployed total	
Total	Women	Total	Women
36 015	21 366	7.5	8.8

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Percentage of employed people participating in continuing education from the employed total (%)

	Percentage of participants in continuing education from the employed total		
	total	men	women
total	6.4	5.9	7.1
15-19	6.6	5.5	7.6
20-24	7.9	5.7	10.7
25-29	8.4	7.4	10.0
30-34	7.4	8.1	6.4
35-39	6.5	5.7	7.5
40-44	6.0	5.5	6.6
45-49	5.6	5.2	6.0
50-54	4.5	4.4	4.6
55-59	5.0	4.5	5.9
60-64	4.2	3.9	6.3
65+	4.9	4.0	7.0

Source: Labour Force Sample Survey – Annual Averages, Czech Statistical Office.

Number of people participating in continuing education by economic status in 2002 (in thousands)

	Total	Employed*)	Pensioners	Others
Total	340.7	295.2	29.5	16.0
Men	168.9	153.6	11.8	3.5
Women	171.8	141.6	17.7	12.5

*) Including women on maternity leave.

Source: Labour Force Sample Survey – Annual Averages, Czech Statistical Office.

Report on the sample survey of labour force carried out by the Czech Statistical Office using EUROSTAT methodology (first half of 2003)

Participation of the age group 15+ in %	2003
in formal education	10.9
in non-formal education	10.7
in informal education	20.6

Participation among age group 15-64 makes up 37,2% (man 38,3%; woman 36,1%).

Source: Czech Statistical Office.