



Structures of Education,
Vocational Training
and Adult Education
Systems in Europe

CZECH REPUBLIC

2003

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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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INTRODUCTION

Europe is characterised by a very wide variety of education and training systems. In order that this diversity should be fully appreciated, EURYDICE, the information network on education in Europe, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) regularly update a set of national monographs entitled *Structures of Education, Vocational Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*.

Descriptions relating to individual countries in turn include basic information on the administration and structure of their systems of education and initial vocational training at all levels (from pre-primary to tertiary). Also included are descriptions of initial vocational education and training in alternance and adult education and training within provision for lifelong learning. The initial and in-service training of teachers and their status are also considered.

The information is set out in accordance with a common structure to facilitate inter-country comparisons while ensuring that special features peculiar to each system are duly emphasised.

The description for each country is preceded by a diagram of its education system. Here again, the way the diagrams are presented has, as far as possible, been standardised so that common – and differing – features of the various systems can be more easily identified and compared.

The first chapter within each country section is devoted to a short presentation of the country concerned, together with the basic principles governing its education and training, the division of responsibilities and then more specific information (relating to administration, inspection, financing, private schooling and advisory bodies). The major reforms of education systems are also considered.

The other chapters deal in turn with pre-primary education, compulsory and post-compulsory education (general, technical and vocational provision entirely within schools). The way these chapters are structured depends on each national context. Where pre-primary education is not in reality separate from primary education, or where compulsory education spans different levels, no artificial division has been created. In the case of all countries, a brief description of the aims and structure of the level of education concerned is followed by further headings devoted to the curriculum, assessment, teachers and statistics.

Initial vocational education and training in alternance is the subject of a chapter in its own right. It includes all education and training for young people that is not essentially school-based, and thus covers for example apprenticeships based on the 'dual system' pattern, sandwich course training and any other initiatives and experiments with major elements of 'on-the-job' experience.

This is followed by a chapter on tertiary education, in which a summary description is supplemented by sections on admission, tuition fees, the academic year, courses, qualifications and assessment. The chapter includes any initiatives implemented as part of the Bologna process.

The last chapter deals with continuing education and training for adults (whether in or outside the labour market, employed or unemployed). It provides information on the political, legislative and financial framework of this kind of education, on the authorities concerned and their responsibilities, as well as on the general organisation of training for adults (types of institution, access requirements, programme objectives, the curriculum and quality assurance). There is also a brief description of guidance/counselling services, as well as of questions relating to assessment and accreditation including the recognition of non-formal kinds of learning.

The situation regarding teachers is dealt with in a specific section for each level of education discussed. Also provided are national statistics on the number of pupils, students, teachers and educational institutions and, where figures are available, on pupil or student/teacher ratios, attendance and attainment rates or, yet again, on the choice of branches of study or areas of specialisation.

The National Units in the EURYDICE Network have drafted the descriptions for their countries, each using the same proposed outline of content as a common framework. The information on initial vocational education and training in alternance, and on adult education has been prepared in close collaboration with members of the CEDEFOP REFER Network (in the case of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries) and the National Observatories of the European Training Foundation (ETF) in the case of the 12 candidate countries. We are extremely grateful to them and to all those who were involved in this project in the EURYDICE European Unit in Brussels, CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki, and the ETF in Turin for their invaluable contribution to this fundamental source of information which is vital to a better understanding of education and training systems in Europe.

Given the number of countries now covered ⁽¹⁾ and the amount of data available, the description of each system of education and training may be consulted solely electronically on the website of the EURYDICE Network (<http://www.eurydice.org>), which brings it to the attention of the largest possible number of people and enables it to be updated on a more regular basis.

Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter
Head of the EURYDICE
European Unit

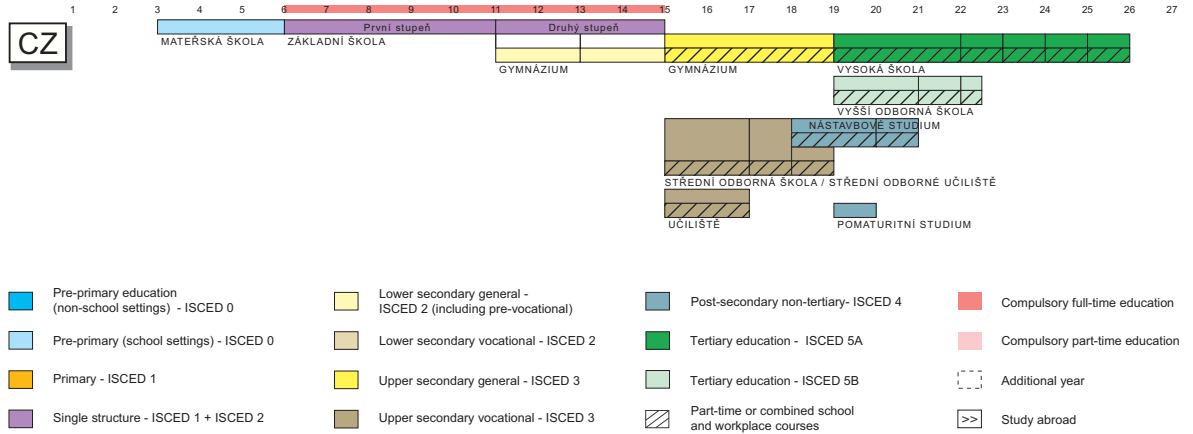
Johan van Rens
Director of CEDEFOP

Peter de Roij
Director of the ETF

June 2003

⁽¹⁾ The 30 European countries taking part in the EU Education Programme, Socrates.

Organisation of the education system in the Czech Republic, 2003/04



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.

On 1 March 2001, the Czech Republic had a population of 10,224 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 as a result of a low birth-rate.

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 assure settled matters, education among others, and transferred, in its framework they assure the 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 34 nursery schools, 27 basic schools, one special basic school, three upper secondary technical schools and one general upper secondary school (*gymnázium*).

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 education system: principles and legislation

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

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.

The current School Act (No. 29/1984) On Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary and Tertiary Technical Schools was many times amended. It sets the duration of compulsory schooling, kinds and types of schools; legal entity of schools, which gives them greater autonomy, etc. It stipulates entry requirements, organization of education and ending of the study for different educational levels.

The Law on School Establishments (No. 76/1978) concerns pre-primary education, education and training outside the school system, and special institutions providing support or professional services to schools and other educational establishments.

The Law on State Administration and Self-government in Education (No. 564/1990) concerns central administration and administration of all educational establishments except institutions of higher education. In connection with the continuing reform of public administration, the act was substantially amended. The resulting powers are described in Chapter 1.3.

The Act (No. 306/1999) On Providing Subsidies to Private Schools and Pre-school and School Establishments was added to those already existing, replacing the existing 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 who have behavioural problems.

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

A new Education Bill that should replace many current laws is under preparation. It is expected that a law on lifelong education and a law on educational staff will be prepared as well.

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

State administration in education system is provided by heads of schools and school provisions, 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 Interior, Ministry of Defence etc.) if it is set by a special legislation.

The municipalities, regions and school councils if they are established provide self-government in education system.

The public administration was significantly decentralized; 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 most state administration activities concerned with education and sets out the conditions for its development. It prepares corresponding legislation, carries out executive and operational activities, administers the register of schools and educational establishments. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (further the Ministry of Education) develops overall strategy, especially it prepares and publishes at least once in four years a long-term policy of development of education and the education system, which submits to the Government. It provides a methodological management and co-ordination of the long-term development plans for education and education system at the regional level (every two years). It submits an annual report on the state and development of education system to the Chamber of Deputies that is based on annual reports drawn up by the regions. 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;
- approves appointments and withdraws of heads of schools and educational establishments which come under control of the region.

The Ministry has lost most of its establishing responsibilities. The Ministry retains control of a few dozen of provisions for institutional

and preventive care and in-service training centres. In some special cases it can be the organising body of some schools and directly administered organisations engaged in statistics, curricula, educational guidance, etc.

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 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 took their responsibilities fully from 1 January 2003. Regional representation headed by the governor is elected; the regional officer will have the status of civil servants from 1 January 2004 when the Law on Service comes into force. 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. They have the right to express their opinion on matters, which are in the competency of regions, such as the network of schools and other educational establishments, fields of study, and training courses and their changes. They give suggestions for the improvement of schools, other establishments and possibly pre-school establishments governed by regions. They discuss the results of school and pre-school establishment's educational activities and fulfil other tasks entrusted to them by the representative body.

The region prepares its educational policy and every two years (odd year) refines and publishes a long-term development plans for education and education system in its territory. It prepares and publishes annually the report on attained state. It starts from the long-term development plan of the Ministry of Education. The long-term development plan

and report is approved by the regional representative body.

Regions are the organising bodies of tertiary technical schools, upper secondary schools and establishments providing services for them, schools for children with special educational needs, schools and school establishments where the language of instruction is other than Czech, language schools, basic art schools, practical training centres, educational and psychological guidance centres, and other institutions. They appoint heads of schools they found, with the approval of the Ministry of Education.

As the Czech Republic has a high number of municipalities (some of them are very small), an intermediate element was set: the so called municipalities with extended sphere of action. They fulfil some functions of the state administration for schools and educational establishments founded by municipalities, especially in funding (see 1.5), documentation and registration.

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

Local level

The municipalities are in the frame of self-government responsible for creating the necessary conditions for compulsory attendance. They are an important component of public administration (they do not at present function for the state administration in education). They establish and financially administer pre-primary institutions 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). The heads of institutions founded by municipalities are appointed by a municipality on the basis of competition results with approval of the regional authority.

The municipality usually establishes an Education Commission (*Komise pro výchovu a vzdělávání*). In a municipality with more than five schools, this is compulsory. Two-fifths of the commission's members representing educational staff are from pre-primary institutions and basic schools.

School autonomy

The law gave all schools the status of independent legal entities and thus a higher level of autonomy. School heads were given full responsibility not only for the quality and efficiency of the educational process (including adjustment of educational programmes, choice of textbooks) but

gradually 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 educational establishments 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 the merging and joining of small schools occur. A minimal size of schools and classes is set by law, a superior body allows exceptions under conditions that the founder covers increased costs.

By law, a school's organising body may establish a School Council (*rada školy*) 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 a 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 for public interest 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 (military and police) are founded 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 military institutions are not legal entities.

1.4 Quality assurance

The Czech School Inspectorate (*Česká školní inspekce*) is one of the key institutions of the state administration in education. According to the current law on the activity of ministries and central state administrative bodies, it comes under 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 educational establishments. It is responsible for studying and assessing the results of education, the quality of professional and pedagogical management, working conditions, teaching materials and equipment, the efficiency with which the funds are used and observance of generally binding regulations. The overall evaluation of the education system is in the annual report of the Czech School Inspectorate. The head of the Inspectorate is the Chief School Inspector (*ústřední školní inspektor*) appointed by the Minister of Education. The Czech School Inspectorate comprises regional offices and district units. Inspectorates are organised by a territorial principle; inspection teams are composed on the basis of specializations of the school inspectors (*školní inspektor*). In 2002 there were 351 inspectors.

1.5 Financing

Expenditure on education in the Czech Republic comes mainly from public funds.

In line with administrative responsibility, the major part of state funding comes from the budget of the Ministry of Education, and other funds are provided to the organising bodies of schools: regions and municipalities from their budgets. Their incomes come from the taxes gathered usually at the central level and allocated to regions and municipalities by a percent. To date, about 80% comes from education budget and roughly 16-18% from the municipalities' budget (as the organising bodies of basic schools). The remaining small percentage is covered by other ministries, which fund some upper secondary schools and higher education institutions. The participation of the regions shows itself for the first time in 2003.

Ministry of Education

- determines basic principles governing the funding of schools and educational establishments,
- 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 institutions under its direct control and to denominational schools,
- allocates to regions funds earmarked for institutions under their direct control, as well as for schools run by other authorities,

- allocates funds beyond the set level to schools and educational establishments 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,
- sets terms for providing subsidies to private schools and educational establishments
- 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, providing a set amount per pupil/student for each educational level and the various types of study fields and types of education. This method has evolved during the period with more and more determinants and correcting factors being adopted, and so it has become more rigid. It mainly regulates the number and remuneration of employees. At present, most of the resources from the educational budget is allocated on this basis.

Financing of regional education

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

The Ministry of Education allocates financial resources to regions to teachers salaries and direct education costs according to the number of pupils and per capita amount. The regional authority allocates them to schools and other educational establishments it finds and to private schools directly. It allocates them to the basic schools and nursery schools on the basis of the breakdown of the budget prepared by the municipal authority of the municipality with extended sphere of action for schools in its district. Schools obtain the resources through budgets of the municipalities, their founder.

Textbooks (if approved) and other teaching materials are provided (lent) free of charge to pupils at basic schools. At secondary schools and at tertiary technical 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 were entitled to manage their own property

although a substantial part of their activity is directly financed by the state.

Per capita funding was introduced in this sector. For this purpose, study programmes are divided into six groups according to the relative cost, with a cost coefficient between 1 and 3.5. The total sum allocated is reduced by a coefficient relating to the failure rate of students and 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.

The income of those 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, and foreigners 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 – military schools by the Ministry of Education and the Police Academy by the Ministry of Interior.

Private higher education institutions can ask for a state subsidy only if they have a status of a public benefit corporation. Fees charged by private education institutions are not limited by law.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies

The system of advisory and consultative bodies is still under development. The Ministry of Education is assisted by several advisory bodies in the development of education and different levels of the educational system, recognition of educational institutions, economic questions, etc. Various interest groups – trade unions, employees associations, professional associations, teachers' and parents' associations, etc. – are also represented.

As an advisory body of the Ministry of Education the National Council for Education (*Národní rada pro vzdělávání*) was established in 1999.

Institutions providing education-related services under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education are as follows:

The Educational Research Institute in Prague (*Výzkumný ústav pedagogický v Praze*)

focuses on general and special educational needs, including pre-primary education.

The National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (*Národní ústav odborného vzdělávání*) is a co-ordinating, consultative, expert and research institution working on questions of secondary vocational/technical and tertiary technical education.

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 Institute for Educational-Psychological Guidance (*Institut pedagogicko-psychologického poradenství MŠMT*) provides support for educational guidance centres.

The Institute for Information on Education (*Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání*) collects, elaborates and provides information on education (statistics, analysis, documentation). It also administers the main educational library, the Comenius State Library of Education (*Státní pedagogická knihovna Komenského*).

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

The advisory bodies at the regional level start to be established.

1.7 Private sector

The amendment of the School Act of 1990 allowed the establishment of private schools.

It became possible to establish any kind of privately run school and educational establishment except higher education institutions, and any level of education.

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. Private schools have contributed particularly to the elimination of discrepancies between demand and supply of places. Initially, private schools could be established by individuals or corporate bodies and no legal format was prescribed. Amendments of

the School Act and Law on the State Administration and self-government in 1995 made the requirements for private schools more stringent: as of 1 July 1997 private schools must be legal entities and they must use their own name in all legal transactions. This means that they can no longer be established by a single individual. Private schools have decision-making power within the framework of the law.

Private basic schools make up 1.4% of all basic schools and they account for 0.6% of the total number of pupils; two fifths of private basic schools are denominational schools (2002/03).

The greatest boom has been in private upper secondary schools, mainly vocational ones. They have helped to meet the demand for education, but a demographic decline means that there is supply exceeds demand.. Here again, private schools play an important role, although denominational schools are important among *gymnázia*. Of the total sum of upper secondary schools there are 22% private ones, accounting for 14.4% of all pupils.

Among tertiary technical schools private and denominational schools represent 34% with 33% of all students studying at these schools.

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

Denominational schools receive funds to cover their running costs, which are based on the same funding formula as for public schools. Private schools receive a state contribution towards their running costs. 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 either as a basic component (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, and institutions may apply for an increased subsidy. Since 1999 these subsidies are not set down by government regulations but by law. They are set at 80% for special schools, over 60% for basic schools, upper secondary and tertiary technical schools and up to 50% for other schools and school establishments. According to an agreement between a school and Ministry of Education or a body entrusted by the Ministry, the subsidy may be raised to 90% of the appropriate per capita funding in the case of upper secondary and tertiary technical 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, observing the agreed number of pupils in given types of study (follow-up study and multi-year *gymnázium*).

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 were established on account of the Higher Education Act of 1998. In 2002/03 there were 27, 21 of which register students. They can apply for the state subsidy only if they are a public benefit corporation.

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. 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 by new legislation (Act no. 390/1991 and a subsequent decree in the same year). Nursery schools must contribute to an increase in the level of socio-cultural care for children and lay the foundations for their future education.

Nursery schools form part of the educational system. Attendance is not compulsory, but 87% of children attend them (data for the year 2002/03), with attendance increasing in the last year of pre-school education. The basic age group of children attending nursery schools is 3- to 6-year-olds. 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 the parent's request. Fewer than 1% applications for nursery places are not met.

Classes are coeducational.

The schools with less than 100 pupils prevail (92% in the school year 2002/03). Some schools are attached to the *základní škola*. Their number increased in 2002 (see 2.1.)

According to the 1993 regulations, municipalities can charge parents a financial contribution of up to 30% of the cost per child. They contribute to meals that are subsidised. However, some municipalities do not impose this charge.

2.1 Organisation

Nursery schools are administered mainly by municipalities, which also fund them (except for salaries and teaching aids). There are an insignificant number of private and denominational nursery schools.

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 supposed (teaching, playing games, walk and rest (sleep) of children).

An amendment to the Law on the State Administration and Self-government obliged all schools to become legal entities from 1 January 2003. This resulted in many cases in merging of several nursery schools and even more often nursery schools and basic schools under one directorate.

Classes should have a minimum of 15 children and a maximum of 20, but this maximum is currently being exceeded. Decisions on class sizes are taken by school heads after consultation with the school's organising body.

Classes may be organised according to age, according to the degree of adaptability or progress, or alternatively children may be put into groups with mixed ages and progress levels. The integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools exists accounting for 2.4% of the age group, mainly children with speech impediments. In these cases, the fixed maximum number of children per class is reduced accordingly. 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 them according to their needs. It is possible to break 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 a Framework Programme for Pre-primary Education. The nursery schools will develop out their own educational programme on the basis of the Framework Programme and verify and adjust it during 2002/03. This programme will be binding after a new Education Bill will come into force.

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 acquire the basic values on which our society is based, to become independent and able to express itself as an individual in relation to its surroundings. It is possible to differentiate between different aspects of education according to the relations which the 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 some nursery schools take 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. In case of irregularities or problems 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 course with a final secondary leaving examination (*maturitní zkouška*) in secondary pedagogical schools (*střední pedagogická škola*). There is also the possibility of a three-year Bachelor's or four- to five-year Master's degree course at faculties of education or at a tertiary technical school.

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.

Since 1 September 1999, the workload for nursery school teachers has been decreased to 31 hours per week. They usually work full-time. Virtually all employees of the school are women, although the profession is open to both sexes.

For in-service training see 4A.4.

2.5 Statistics 2002/03

Nursery schools: Schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

Pupils	278 859
Teachers	22 332
Schools	5 558
Pupil/teacher ratio	12.5
Pupil/class ratio	22.3

Source: IIE.

3. COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Before the year 1990/91 the compulsory school attendance was 10 years – 8 years of basic school (*základní škola*), two years at some upper secondary schools. Between 1990/91 and 1995/96 the compulsory school attendance was 9 years, pupils could attend basic school, multi-year *gymnázium* or the first year of an upper secondary school. 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, which aim to provide pupils with a general basic education. Pupils can, on their parents' request and if they meet the admission requirements, complete their compulsory education from the sixth or eighth grade at a *gymnázium* (see 3.2 and 4A.). School attendance is compulsory. In September 1998 a five-year experiment in home tuition was approved by the Ministry of Education. At the beginning of the experiment about 60 pupils of the first stage were participating. In 2002/03 this increased to around 250 pupils.

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 schools are managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; the execution of the state administration is on the regional level.

Since 1990, basic schools have been under the responsibility of municipalities. A 1995 amendment to the School Act shifted the division between the primary and secondary school levels: the first stage now covers the first to fifth grade, and the second stage the sixth to ninth grade. Classes are coeducational. 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.

For the sake of accessibility, small municipalities may have basic schools with only the first stage (primary education) and exceptionally with only the second stage (lower secondary education) (1 503 schools

accounting for 12.0% of pupils of the first stage). Schools may also have only a few classes, in which several years are taught together (1 410 schools with 9.7% of pupils of the first stage including special classes, these account for 5.0% of all pupils of basic school).

People have the right to basic education free of charge.

In the extent set by the Government the pupils obtain textbooks and basic school aids free of charge.

Parents contribute

- in the framework of curriculum to personal aids of pupil, textbooks without approval of the Ministry of Education, courses outside the school campus (swimming, skating, skiing), school in the countryside;
- outside the curriculum to meals that are largely subsidised, to school clubs, extracurricular courses, parents associations.

Most of basic schools have less than 250 pupils (50-60% – 2002/03), nearly two fifth have less than 100 pupils. Some nursery schools are attached to basic schools (see 2.1).

3.1 Organisation of the school

The school year begins on 1 September and ends on 31 August of the next 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 holidays are laid down by the Ministry of Education each year.

The total number of compulsory lessons per week at basic school must be

- from 112 to 115 lessons (114 lessons is optimal) over the 5 years of the 1st stage;
- from 113 to 116 lessons (115 lessons is optimal) over the 4 years of the 2nd stage.

The number of lessons in individual years can be one lesson above or below the

optimal number of lessons per week, as follows:

1 st stage	2 nd stage
Year 1 – 20 lessons	Year 6 – 27 lessons
Year 2 – 22 lessons	Year 7 – 28 lessons
Year 3 – 23 lessons	Year 8 – 30 lessons
Year 4 – 24 lessons	Year 9 – 30 lessons
Year 5 – 25 lessons	

School buildings are usually used for one shift per day. The school head decides on the accessibility of the school building (e.g. after the instruction). Pupils attend school from Monday to Friday. There are no classes at weekends. In addition to morning classes they also have afternoon classes once or twice a week. A lesson lasts 45 minutes. The maximum number of pupils per class is 30 with the exception to multicultural classes, classes with integrated pupils with special needs. The national average of pupils per class is 21,5, per school 251 (2002/03). Pupils are divided into classes by age. In school with low number of classes the pupils are of mixed age.

3.2 Curriculum

The educational objectives of basic school (*základní škola*) are specified in the Standard for Basic Education published in 1995 and in the Complement to the Standard for Basic Education from 1997. The Framework Education Programme for Basic Education started to be debated in 2001. This programme should be the basis of the school curriculum. It defines the idea of a socially desirable form of compulsory basic education. The Basic Education Standard stipulates educational objectives and core subjects for specified educational areas. The course content for core subjects of the 1st stage is dealt with separately since the 1st 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 competency i.e. the ability to use acquired skills in real-

life situations;

- at level of the 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 educational programme specifies subjects and their timetable and defines content (syllabus); teaching methods are usually suggested as well.

The choice of teaching methods and teaching aid 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 the 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 character. Schools most often use the *Základní škola* programme.

Timetable of the Educational Programme of the *Základní škola* (year 1-9)

(valid since 1 September 1998)

Subject	Year									min. hours
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	
Czech Language	9	10	10	7	7	R	R	R	R	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						R	R	R	R	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
Disposable hours*								1	1	2
Total number per week	20	22	23	24	25	27	28	31	31	117
Non-compulsory subjects										

* Disposable hours can be used to increase the number of hours for a subject integrated with other subject, increase the number of hours for an optional subject or to include an optional subject for a pupil (valid since 1 September 2003).

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.

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

Since 1 September 1998, the number of lessons for all subjects (marked R) and their organisation in years 6 to 9 is determined by the school head in agreement with the teachers so that all subjects in the curriculum are taught in the given year. The minimum number of lessons per subject must to be respected, as well as the stipulated number of lessons per week.

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 foreign languages, conversation in a foreign language, computer science, technical education, technical drawing, introduction to economics, geography, 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 the 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 the teachers and according to 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).

A major change in the concept of basic education was the decision in the 1990 School Act to establish *gymnázia* offering more than 4 years of education. In addition to the traditional 4-year *gymnázia* (upper secondary education) to which pupils move after completing basic school (see Chapter 4), the 1995 amendment to the School Act established multi-year *gymnázia* that aimed to provide more demanding education for more able pupils during their compulsory school attendance. It established 8-year (lower and upper secondary education; on completion of year 5 of the basic school) and with 6-year (on completion of year 7 of the basic school) *gymnázia*, the latter usually teaching some subjects in a foreign language.

The timetables of multi-year *gymnázia* may differ from that of the second stage of basic school, in certain subjects and the number of lessons per subject.

Between 1990 and 1994, the existing system for the publishing and use of textbooks and teaching aids for basic schools and upper secondary schools was developed. The Ministry of Education currently leaves the production of textbooks to independent publishers, who offer their publications to schools via the market. However, the Ministry has retained its control over the content of textbooks and the methods they use by assessing their quality and issuing written notes of approval, which permit schools to purchase them from centrally allocated funds. It is left to schools to decide which textbooks

to use for which subject (including those without ministerial approval).

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 results are evaluated, as well as their performance in each subject.

Pupils' knowledge is assessed by a teacher on the basis of written and oral work and homework on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (very good), 3 (good), 4 (satisfactory) and 5 (fail). An individual approach to pupil 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. Around 8% of teachers at the first stage of basic school use this type of assessment. There is no final examination at the end of basic school.

3.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

Pupils move up from one year to the next on the basis of their results. The school head decides if a pupil who fails has to repeat the year.

The Czech compulsory school attendance is characterised by its low rate of failure. In 2002/03 1.00% of pupils repeated a year at the first stage and 1.19% at the second stage, i.e. 1.05% for the two stages (not including special schools). Only 0.66% of pupils complete their compulsory school attendance before reaching the last year of basic school (0.75% when special schools are taken into account). More than 90% of pupils who pass the ninth year go on to study at upper secondary school.

Prerequisites for admission at upper secondary school are successful completion of basic school and meeting the entrance requirements (usually including an entrance examination organised by the school). Schools take into account the pupil's results from the basic school.

The school head can establish special classes (*speciální třídy*) for pupils with learning disabilities, physically or mentally handicapped pupils or for pupils with speech disorders, and if appropriate, classes specialised (*specializované třídy*) for pupils with specific learning or behavioural developmental disorders. For pupils temporarily retarded the school head can establish compensating classes (*vyrovnávací třídy*).

Pupils who leave the basic school without having passed all years can continue at *učiliště* where they gain vocational qualification.

In the field of guidance at basic schools there are advisors (*výchovní poradci*). School can cooperate with educational guidance centre or create a function of school psychologist.

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.

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. Students may specialise in music, arts, physical education, or a foreign language.

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

At the first stage the teachers are generalists, sometimes only some subjects (physical education, music, foreign languages, etc.), are taught by specialised teachers. 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 they meet general and professional requirements the school head concludes the permanent contract.

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 teaching load is reduced by one to three hours if a teacher also provides other activities, such as educational guidance. For school heads or their deputies, the amount depends on the type, level and size of the school.

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

For in-service training see 4A.4.

3.6 Statistics 2002/03

Compulsory education: schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

	Both stages including lower secondary classes at <i>gymnázium</i>	First stage	Second stage (total)	Second stage (basic school)	Second stage (lower secondary classes of <i>gymnázium</i>)
Pupils	1 036 379 ¹	544 554	491 417 ¹	449 576	41 841
Teachers	61 082.9 ³	28 130.4	-	32 925.5	-
Schools	3 961 ⁴ 4 272 ⁵	3 956	2 763	2 457	306
Pupil/teacher ratio ¹	16.3 ⁶	19.4 ⁶	-	13.6 ⁶	-
Pupil/class ratio	21.5 ⁶	20.6 ⁶	-	22.6 ⁶	-

Source: IIE.

¹ Including pupils of the second stage age studying at conservatoires, without 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 multi-structured but internally coordinated 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. The participation of the age group 15–18 in education was in 2002/03 90,5%.

The task of post-compulsory upper secondary schools is twofold: to prepare pupils for employment or for activities within the national economy, administration, culture, the arts or other areas of life, or to prepare pupils to continue their studies in higher education.

Secondary schools are divided into Secondary General Schools, Secondary Technical Schools and Secondary Vocational Schools, with some overlapping between them.

Secondary General Schools (*gymnázium*), are named in keeping with central European tradition. Study at the *gymnázium* ends with a final examination (*maturitní zkouška*), success in which means that the pupil has completed “full secondary education” (*úplné střední vzdělání*) (ISCED 3A).

Secondary Technical Schools (*střední odborná škola*). The majority of pupils complete their 4-year studies with the *maturitní zkouška* and have then completed “full secondary technical education” (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 3A). A few courses are taught over 3 years ending with a final examination, and pupils attain “secondary vocational education” (*střední odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 3C). Conservatoires (*konzervatoře*) represent a special kind of secondary technical schools, ending with an *absolutorium* examination and providing “full secondary technical education” (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*), and “tertiary technical education” (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 5B).

Secondary Vocational Schools (*střední odborné učiliště*) mainly offer “vocational courses” (*učební obory*) for skilled manual

occupations and end with a final examination. Courses last for 3 or sometimes 2 years, providing “secondary vocational education” (*střední odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 3C). Schools of this type also offer some of their pupils 4-year courses ending with the *maturitní zkouška*. The level of education that they attain is thus “full secondary technical education” (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 3A).

Pupils with “secondary vocational education” can attend 2-year “follow-up study courses” (*nástavbové studium*) to attain “full secondary technical education” (ISCED 4A). These courses are organised by Secondary Vocational and Secondary Technical Schools.

Some alternative educational structures have appeared for technical/vocational education, e.g. Integrated Secondary Schools (*integrované střední školy*) offering fields of study from both secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools, Centres of Vocational Training (*centra odborné přípravy*), which function as upper vocational schools, and centres for retraining, and finally *Lyceums* (technical, economic and pedagogical) combining technical and general education.

In 1995 new educational institutions were established – tertiary technical schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) that provide tertiary technical education (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*) (ISCED 5B). See more details in 4D.

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 stabilised at around 60:40 in favour of courses ending with the *maturitní zkouška* examination. The position of technical and vocational education at the upper secondary level is still extremely high – around 85% of population complete upper secondary education.

Creation of private and denominational schools brought important change of this level of education (see 1.7).

Education at secondary schools may be either full-time study (92%) or in courses for adults (evening, correspondence, and external), which have the same curriculum but are usually one year longer than the full time ones (8%). Full-time and adult education are formally considered to be of equal value, but interest in the latter has fallen considerably since 1989, with the exception of follow-up studies (*nástavbové studium*), which have increased. However, around one half of the learners do not complete their studies, leading the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to entrain doubts about the quality of the studies and so substantially reduce the number of those admitted in 1999.

Classes are coeducational (as a rule with the exception of physical education).

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 and development, 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 their educational achievement.

Pupils buy the textbooks themselves. At schools there exist libraries with a limited stock of textbooks that can be lend to the 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 and aids depends on the teacher; the ICT and courseware is used more and more often. The school heads decides on the availability of the school building.

The education is free of charge. The fees are paid only at tertiary technical schools, private and public.

Parents contribute to different courses organised out side the campus (e.g. swimming, ski courses). They contribute also to the school meals (which is subsidised), extracurricular courses and parents' association.

Prerequisites for admission at upper secondary school are successful completion of basic school and meeting of the entrance requirements (usually including an entrance examination).

Pupils may apply to one or more upper secondary schools 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 form and may also write an assessment of their special talents. Pupils undergo written and oral entrance examinations at the school they applied to. The exam content is determined by the secondary school on the basis of the basic school curriculum and its own educational profile. The results of the entrance examinations (usually in Czech and mathematics, but sometimes also in a foreign language or, in art or sports schools, in relation to the relevant talents) and basic school reports or possibly 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.

Regulations permit a pupil to change course and to transfer from one type of upper secondary school to another. In each case, the decision rests with the school head and the pupil must nearly always take an entrance examination.

4A GYMNÁZIA (SECONDARY GENERAL SCHOOLS)

The objective of the *gymnázium* is to prepare students for study at higher education institutions or possibly to for some professions which require a wider cultural basis.

In addition to general courses, *gymnázia* offer studies into 12 specialisations (for example languages, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, physical education

etc., which stress these subjects in the curriculum (see 4A.2). However, general courses prevail.

Gymnázia may offer 4-year courses for pupils at the age of 15 years (after completing the compulsory school attendance) 6-year courses for pupils at the age of 13 years who ended 7th grade or 8-year courses for pupils at the age of 11 years who ended the 5th grade, often within one and the same school. Exclusively 4-year courses are provided in the 8% of the *gymnázia*. The initial years of 6 or 8-year courses cover the last years of compulsory schooling, six-year *gymnázia* generally 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 2002 was between 19 000 and 23 000 that represents 18-20% of all school leavers of full time courses. The average number of pupils per school goes from 207 per a private school via 344 per denominational school to 456 per public school, e.g. 414 pupils per school in general (2002/03). Almost half of all pupils at a multi-year *gymnázium* complete their course and the majority of pupils continue their studies at higher education institutions or other post-secondary 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 stipulates a maximum of 30 pupils per class. Classes are mostly organised according to age levels; classes in optional subjects may be organised 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. 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's 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 develops a new concept of *gymnázium* education, including a basic curriculum.

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
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 are selected according to pupils' interests and the potential of particular schools (from English, German, French, Russian and Italian). 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 consist of exercises. The school head can also designate apart a number of science lessons for practical work.

The physical education course 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 or second year.

Optional subjects 1, 2 and 3 are usually a continuation of the respective compulsory subjects at an advanced level (discussion, practical work, 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 final 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 can be decided by the school head competency or by some of the 12 specialised study areas, such as mathematics, mathematics and physics, natural science, information and computer technology, aesthetic subjects, living languages, classical languages, selected subjects taught in foreign language (usually the six-year *gymnázia*), 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 specialisation. The school works out its own curriculum on this basis and submits it to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for approval. The physical education and sports specialisations have special conditions and are controlled by the Ministry 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 national testing of pupils' performance. A pupil's achievement in a particular subject assessed on a five-point scale as at the 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 (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 and no specific requirements are set externally. Some changes in the *maturitní zkouška* examination structure and organisation are being prepared.

A *maturitní zkouška* certificate is issued by the school on a prescribed form and documents the passing of the *maturitní zkouška* exam.

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

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 has to repeat the year.

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

They can study at tertiary technical schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) or at higher educational institutions (*vysoké školy*) – see 4D and 6B1. Early educational guidance provided by the school or by a network of educational and psychological guidance centres helps the pupils with their choice. Information on study opportunities offers schools and institutions and 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 available at faculties of education, philosophy, natural sciences, mathematics/physics, information sciences, physical education and sport. Teacher training can be concurrent or consecutive. When the training is concurrent, it generally begins after the second year of study and usually lasts for three to four semesters. Teachers of technical subjects in secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools 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 (usually 2-year pedagogical course).

For recruitment see 3.5.

At upper secondary schools many external teachers are employed, they usually have a temporary contract.

In-service training

The law stipulates an obligation of in-service training of teachers, but does not prescribe any particular format. Teachers may prefer the option of self-study and participation in training is voluntary. The system of in-service training collapsed in 1991 and the Ministry of Education is currently preparing a new concept.

The Ministry is at present responsible for 14 Education Centres (*Pedagogická centra*) and one for the Polish minority which offer further teacher training, support services, and information and library services. Higher education institutions offer further and refresher training. Scientific societies, professional associations and various private organisations also participate in further training.

There are also various types of further teacher training: induction course for teachers at the start of their career, refresher training 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. 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.

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 work force. The education was geared towards developing the ability to apply acquired technical knowledge and skills in practice. It gradually came to incorporate more general subjects and to offer a deeper theoretical knowledge of technical subjects.

Secondary technical schools (*střední odborné školy*) used to have a very narrow specialisation originating in their historical developments. Some of them continue in this trend and serve large regions or even take

pupils from all over the country. Most, however, offer a wider range of courses, in terms both of subjects and of final level.

Secondary technical schools traditionally offer four-year courses ending with the *maturitní zkouška* examination and pupils obtain "full secondary technical education" (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*). These schools accept pupils who ended compulsory school attendance (age 15). 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) in that they train pupils for simple administrative and organisational activities. They provide secondary vocational education and do not offer the *maturitní zkouška* or the right to continue studies at higher education institutions. Two- to three-year follow-up courses, leading to the *maturitní zkouška* examination, mostly for pupils who have completed upper secondary vocational schools, are generally taught in these schools.

A special category of secondary technical schools are Conservatoires (*konzervatoř*) of music, drama or dance. Unlike other secondary schools, they offer six- to eight-year courses (they accept pupils at the age of 11 and 13 respectively) and go beyond the secondary level. They provide full secondary technical education (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*) and tertiary technical education (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*) and end with an *absolutorium* examination. Conservatoires in lower classes assure compulsory school attendance.

After ending the compulsory school attendance education is not compulsory at any type of upper secondary school.

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

Secondary technical schools used to offer one- to three-year post-secondary courses for pupils qualifying from the *gymnázia* (aiming to obtain a full secondary technical education and be more successful in the labour market), as well as for those from secondary technical schools (aiming to re-qualify in a different area, or to update an existing qualification or possibly to secure even more specialised training). These courses were abolished by the 1995 amendment of the School Act and new level was introduced – tertiary technical education (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*)(ISCED 5B) "provided by tertiary technical schools" (*vyšší odborné školy*) (see 4D).

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

Number of secondary technical schools in 2002/03 was 813, 595 of which were public, 202 private and 16 denominational. The average number of pupils per school was 244.

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.

4B.2 Curriculum

On 1 January 1998 the Standard of Vocational Education and Training came into effect as a first step towards reform of the current system. It comprises three parts: 1/ general education – common subjects relating to the social-cultural function of education, 2/ key competencies, 3/ basic technical education.

The Standard's requirements are defined separately:

- for levels of education attained, i.e. upper secondary technical – *střední odborné* (ISCED 3C) and full upper secondary technical – *úplné střední odborné* (ISCED 3A)
- for all thematic areas of study, i.e. for 21 narrow fields of study (e.g. machinery, electrotechnics, agriculture, etc.).

For these thematic areas, frameworks educational programmes were worked out and put forward for a public discussion. The frameworks educational programmes will be the basis for a two-stage curriculum which will in turn be the basis of the curriculum of schools. The bases of the profession requirements are being gradually prepared in the Integrated Information System of Standard Jobs which is being prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and should ensure that the requirements for each profession are comparable with those of the European Union.

Instruction (*střední odborné školy*) is based on curricular documentation approved by the Ministry of Education. School heads are

however allowed to adjust these requirements to the needs of their school. 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 after approval by the Ministry of Education. Curricula include general subjects (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 employment 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 at the same time to strengthen the educational effect of teaching and stress the amount of independent work by pupils during instruction. Instruction takes place in classrooms, specially equipped classroom or laboratories. Instruction in conservatoires (*konzervatoř*) may be either individual or in groups.

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	Total number	Total number
and names	of lessons	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 subject is 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 a school's conditions, the region's requirements, development of the specialisation and the pupil's interests and abilities. The school can also use the timetable recommended below, worked up according to the teaching 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 graduate. The completed timetable is a part of the compulsory school documentation. There must be co-ordination between different subjects in terms of time and content. The number of lessons per week cannot 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 school head. Pupil can take no more than two subjects in one year, or three if one of them is sport or driving.
- Optional subjects can be formed 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 practical work, which is given by the nature of each particular subject. The class is split into groups during practical work 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 ski course and a

sport and tourist course in the first to third year. The total duration of these courses cannot 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 4 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 timetable

Light-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	-	-	12	12	24

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 Chapters 3.3. and 4A.3.

The final examination for three-year courses (*závěrečná zkouška*) is vocational in nature and pupils must prove their ability to perform the relevant occupational tasks. In vocational subjects there is a theoretical and a practical

examination. The school head sets the topics which are allocated to pupils by a draw. If pupils fail one part of the exam, they are allowed to retake it. If they fail both parts, there is a possibility to retake the whole examination once. On passing the exam the pupil receives a certificate.

The final examination for four-year courses (*maturitní zkouška*) consists of examinations in Czech language and literature, in one optional subject and in various vocational subjects. The vocational part includes a theoretical and a practical examination. On passing this examination the pupils receive a *maturitní zkouška* certificate.

The *absolutorium* in Conservatoires (*konzervatoř*) is a comprehensive examination in which pupils prove the degree to which they have acquired the knowledge and skills set out in the curriculum, the level of their performance of their specific artistic activity and their qualification for a pedagogical career in the relevant field. Pupils obtain a certificate after passing the *absolutorium* examination.

All 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 ended the study with *maturitní zkouška* and gained the full secondary technical education can continue their education at higher education institutions or tertiary technical schools (*vyšší odborná škola*). Pupils from two or three year study enter the labour market. They can progress to the tertiary level of education only if they upgrade their qualification and pass the *maturitní zkouška* examination.

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

4B.5 Teachers

See 4A.4.

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 businesses 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 Chamber 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 on their premises. The participation of businesses in the financing of vocational training is, however, very limited. A typical feature of vocational education is the increase in the number of pupils whose training is fully covered from the state budget and they are not trained for a specific company..

Under current legislation, secondary vocational schools (*střední odborné učiliště*) are obliged to train pupils for a vocational qualification defined in the official list of occupations. Two- or three-year training is completed with a final examination and pupils attain "secondary vocational education" (*střední odborné vzdělání*), which does not entitle them to enter post-secondary education. In addition, secondary vocational school are authorised to train pupils "in subjects of general education related to certain skilled trades and certain technical engineering activities of a practical nature". 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 post-secondary technical school. The secondary vocational school has become an integral part of upper secondary education and has grown closer to the secondary technical school in the way it

operates. Secondary vocational schools also offer follow-up courses, which enables pupils with secondary vocational education to obtain "full secondary technical education" (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*) and thus to enter a tertiary school or higher education institution. Around 90% of secondary vocational school pupils take their follow-up courses at secondary vocational schools.

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*), and practical training workplaces (*pracoviště praktického vyučování*), which are usually located within enterprises.

Střední odborná učiliště can be public (about 90% of applicants), private (about 10% of applicants) 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 324 (full time education).

4C.1 Organisation of the school

The average number of lessons in one week is 33. For theoretical subjects one lesson is 45 minutes; for practical training it is 60 minutes.

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 training courses at secondary vocational school 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 students. 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 of 6 to 17. 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 rooms. That is the case especially on 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
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
B. Non-compulsory				

Examples of non-compulsory subjects:

Aesthetic education, conversation in foreign language, a second foreign language,

multicultural coexistence, mathematics exercises, physics practicals, sport, family education, man and the environment, psychology of work, computer technology, administration technique, road safety education.

Comments to the timetable:

- General educational subjects are taught according to the valid curricula for 3-year vocational specialisations 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 that 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 instruction given in part five of the teaching documentation.
- 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. For this part of the subject it is necessary to work out a curriculum which is approved by the school head and then becomes a part of the compulsory school teaching 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 elaborates the curriculum for optional subjects (it can use the curricula from the teaching documents of another specialisation). The curriculum is approved by the school head and after approval it becomes a part of the school's 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 sport.
- From the first to third year the school can organise a ski 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 Chapters 3.3. and 4A.3.

Final assessment of pupils on two-year and three-year courses takes the form of a final examination (*závěrečná zkouška*). On four-year courses and on courses designated as follow-up studies for graduates of three-year courses, the pupils sit the *maturitní 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. The exam consists of a written, an oral and a practical part. The topics are set by the school head of the secondary vocational school. Upon successful passing of the final examination the pupils receive a certificate called a *výuční list*.

The *maturitní zkouška* after four-year courses is similar to that at secondary technical schools (see 4B.3). In the follow-up courses (*nástavbové studium*) for graduates of three-year courses the practical component is not included.

4C.4 Progression/guidance/transition arrangements

School leavers of *střední odborné učiliště* should enter the labour market. Pupils of four year study who ended the study with *maturitní zkouška* and gained the full secondary technical education can continue their education at higher education institutions or tertiary technical schools (*vyšší odborná škola*). Pupils from two or three year study enter the labour market. They can progress to the tertiary level of education only if they upgrade their qualification, 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 VYŠŠÍ ODBORNÉ ŠKOLY (TERTIARY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS)

Tertiary technical schools were introduced in the 1992/93 school year on an experimental basis. Their position and status was then strengthened by the June 1995 amendment to the School Act (for basic, upper secondary and tertiary technical education), which made them a recognised part of the country's education system. These schools mostly developed out of secondary technical schools and form a single legal entity with them.

Their aim is to provide pupils with a technical qualification at tertiary level, appropriate for middle or higher-level management positions, or to extend qualification already obtained.

These schools offer courses lasting between 2 and 3.5 years. The longest courses involve practical training in the form of work-placements of more than 3 months in length. Tertiary technical schools are free to charge fees, even at public schools.

Pupils may be admitted to these schools if

they have completed full secondary education (*úplné střední vzdělání*) in a *gymnázium* or full secondary technical education (*úplné střední odborné vzdělání*). The school head decides on whether there will be an entrance examination and on its possible content.

Average number of pupils in full time study is 138 per school.

4D.1 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 examination period and 2 weeks of time reserve. A lesson lasts 45 minutes, a practical training session lasts 60 minutes. Part-time adult education courses comprise between 90 and 110 tuition periods per school year, lasting 60 minutes each.

Pupils are not divided according to ability or age or sex. Theoretical instruction takes place in classes formed on the basis of a specialised subject area. Practical training is given in groups, the size of which depends on the conditions at the relevant workplace. Studies can be offered on a full-time or part-time basis.

4D.2 Curriculum

No educational standard or other methodology has been prepared for post-secondary technical education (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*). Each school prepares its own curriculum, which must be approved by the Ministry of Education. The law lays down rules for the allocation of time between general subjects, basic vocational subjects and specific vocational subjects in a ratio of roughly 20:40:30. The number of lessons per week on full-time courses is between 26 and 33, including compulsory subjects and compulsory options. A substantial component of this type of course is practical training in companies, which may take up to one year and during which the students work on a written assignment or a project jointly assigned by their school and the respective company. Schools are in good contact with their regions and economic sector. People from outside the school, with practical knowledge, often work as consultants or members of advisory boards, which are controlled by legislation relating upper secondary schools.

Teaching methods are similar to those at higher education institutions. The instruction consists of lectures and seminars, practical exercises, laboratory work and work placements.

4D.3 Assessment/certification

Each school sets out the ways of assessing and marking the performance of pupils in its assessment regulations, which are approved by the Ministry of Education as required by law. The assessment regulations provide for an assessment scale (most often a four-point one) and the methods of assessment: an examination, required assignments, with or without assessment. The regulations also stipulate the choice of assessment in a particular subject. Furthermore, school regulations set out details for the organisation of re-sit examinations including deadlines for fulfilling various obligations in a term or a school year.

The studies end with an *absolutorium*, an examination consisting of a theoretical exam in vocational subjects, an exam in a foreign language and a written assignment and its defence. The number and composition of vocational subjects in which the exam has to be taken is set out in the curriculum. Proof of practical skills may be part of the defence of the written assignment. The content and timing of the examinations is set by the school head, while the topic for the written assignment is fixed at least six months before the *absolutorium* exams take place.

The assessment scale used in the *absolutorium* exams consists of four levels: excellent, very good, good and fail. The individual assessors suggest the marks. The paper is marked by the supervisor of the work. Based on the results achieved in the *absolutorium*, the final assessment is on a three-level scale (pass with distinction, pass, fail).

Upon successful passing of the *absolutorium* the graduate of a tertiary technical school attained the tertiary technical education (*vyšší odborné vzdělání*) and are designed *diplomovaný specialista* ("specialist with a diploma") – and can use the letters DiS. after their name.

4D.4 Progression/guidance/ transition arrangements

The method of promoting pupils to a higher year is set down in the school regulations. It is primarily based on setting deadlines for pupils' assignments. A year is successfully completed when all requirements are met by the end of the school year on 31 August. Pupils are not allowed to progress to a higher year if they fail to meet the prescribed number of examinations or other set tasks, seminars, required attendance in compulsory and option subjects. Pupils may generally repeat a year only once during their studies. They may be expelled from the school if they grossly violate school regulations or generally binding legal regulations. The school head decides upon expulsion based on a resolution of the school's pedagogical council.

School leavers can find the employment at the labour market. They can upgrade their qualification at higher education institutions under the same conditions as leavers of upper secondary school ending with *maturitní zkouška* examination.

4D.5 Teachers

See 4A.4.

4.6 Statistics 2002/2003

Admission to upper secondary schools

Upper secondary schools (including special schools)	Percentage of pupils admitted from population (%)	
	before 1989	in 2002
<i>Gymnázia</i>	13-15	19.3
Secondary technical schools	23-30	40.7
Secondary vocational schools	55-60	40.0

Upper secondary schools: schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

	<i>Gymnázium</i> (only upper secondary classes)	Secondary technical schools	Secondary vocational schools	Secondary Schools total
Pupils ¹	99 439	197 910	182 055	479 404
Teachers ²	10 869	18 146	10 026	39 041
Trainers ² and craftmasters	(-)	(-)	11 843	11 843
Schools ¹	343	813	862	1 718
Pupil ¹ /teacher ratio ²	-	10.9	18.1	-
Pupil ¹ /class ratio	27.6 ³	26.5	24	25.7

¹ full-time pupils only

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

Tertiary technical schools: schools, pupils, teachers and corresponding ratios

	Tertiary technical schools
Pupils ¹	22 858
Pupils total	27 584
Teachers ²	2 086
Study groups ¹	1 167
Schools ¹	164
Schools total	166
Pupil ¹ /teacher ratio ²	11
Pupil ¹ /study group ratio ¹	19.6

Source: IIE

¹ full-time pupils only

² full-time equivalent of teachers and trainers (both for full-time and part time studies)

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. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions come under the Higher Education Act (No. 111/1998) and its most recent amendments (Act No. 210/2000 and 147/2001). Their activities are also affected by internal regulations related to the Act. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports maintain a register of internal regulations of higher education institutions. Eight of the regulations assessed by the Higher Education Act are compulsory for every public higher education institution; a school's statute can request others. Other details on higher education administration see 1.3, part School Autonomy.

The law divides the higher education institutions into two types – university type that provides all study programmes, and non-university type that offer usually only Bachelor's programmes. Due to the historical development all existing higher education institutions of university type and all accredited Bachelor's programmes provide education of ISCED 5A level. For more details see 6B.

A type of institution called *vyšší odborné školy* (tertiary technical schools) that provides education of ISCED level 5B was developed at upper secondary schools. Both types of these schools often form one entity. Education is regulated by the School Act that is why these schools are included in the chapter 4D. The current development shows a convergence of both types of tertiary education: tertiary technical schools started to organise, in co-operation with higher education institutions, Bachelor's study programmes.

6A Non-university education

See 4D.

6B University tertiary education

So far, university study prevails in tertiary education in the Czech Republic. In 2002 82,7% of all applicants to tertiary education enrolled in higher education institutions. They

provide general and vocational education.

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.

Four institutions of higher education are still state institutions – three military schools and one Police Academy. They are controlled by the relevant Ministries (Defence and Interior).

Private higher education institutions began to emerge shortly after the law came into force. Private schools can only function as legal entities after the Ministry of Education's approval and on the basis of the Accreditation Commission's recommendation. 27 private institutions of higher education had been registered up to 13 October 2002, 21 of them register students. Twelve of these institutions have the status of a public benefit corporation. Higher education institution organises accredited study programmes and programmes of lifelong education.

Bachelor's study programme is focused on professional training and for study in the Master's study programme. This study lasts 3–4 years. This study programme prevails at private institutions.

Master's study programme is aimed at getting theoretical knowledge based on today's scientific findings, research and development, at mastering their application and developing creative skills. This study programme follows up the Bachelor's one – the standard length is 1–3 years. In cases when the character of the study programme requires it the accreditation can be granted to the Master's programme that does not follow the Bachelor's one. In this case it lasts 4–6 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. The typical duration of study is 3 years.

The standard study programme can last 3 years at least and 7 years at most. The law does not lie down any duration for any particular study field.

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 the structure of higher education according to study fields see 6.7.

6B.1 Admission requirements

The minimum requirement for entering higher education institution is "full secondary" (*úplně střední*) or "full secondary technical" (*úplně střední odborné*) education. The requirement for admission to a Master's programme following on from 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.

Of those admitted to higher education institutions, 48% have completed the *gymnázium*, 47% secondary technical schools and 5% secondary vocational schools with "full secondary technical education" (data from 2002/03). As a result of the rise in the number of applications, higher education institutions are still able to meet only around 56% of the demand for places. In 2002/03 around 36% of 19-year olds entered institutions of higher education

Students may apply for admission to several faculties. Decision on the number of admissions to studies and particular admission proceedings (upper secondary school evaluation, approval of credits from previous studies, etc.) are up to the higher education institution. The admission proceedings usually include an entrance examination, in particular a written test, oral examination or both. If the number of applicants who fulfil the given conditions is higher than the maximum number that can be admitted, then the best are selected.

Foreigners must prove in the admission proceedings that they fulfil the same requirements as the Czech students.

6B.2 Fees/Financial support for students

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

- for administration of admission proceedings;
- for prolonging the duration of study above the settled limit;
- for the study of other 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.

Foreign students that come to study under international agreements, study at higher education institutions under the same conditions as the Czech students. If foreign students are taught in language 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 head of the institution (*rector*) 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, with three levels depending on income and four levels depending on the child's age. If the family's income is three times the minimum for subsistence, then the family does not receive any allowance. On the other hand, if the family's income is less than 1.6 times the minimum, then in addition to the child's allowance, the family also receives a further social allowance.

Students get reduced transport tickets, meals in students' cafeterias and accommodation in halls of residence or other educational establishments are provided for subsidised prices.

Students can be given a grant based on merit or social and other grounds according to the grant regulations of the relevant institution.

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.

Although the academic year is decided by each institution, it usually begins on 1 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 branches 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.

Branches of study are divided up into core fields of study, which are enumerated in an approved list that applies nation-wide. At higher education institutions there exist about 155 core fields of study.

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 important professors and scientists. Within the accreditation process decisions are also taken on authorisation to

award academic titles. The Accreditation Commission also carries out the evaluation of faculties in the individual specialisations.

In accordance with the Declaration of Bologna, support is given to the development of Bachelor's programmes and to the greatest possible transferability of study (amendment of the Higher Education Act No. 147/2001).

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, but attendance at seminars usually is. The format 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 assignments, work on seminars and annual project work is becoming increasingly important.

Students have to pay for their books.

In addition to the accredited study programmes, institutions of higher education 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), with a fourth level which represents failure. In some institutions studies are assessed by a system of granting credits. The credit system provides for recognition of the completed parts of studies and thus contributes 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 the state *rigorózní zkouška* and they are awarded the title doctor of medicine (MUDr.) or doctor of veterinary medicine (MVDr.). All titles are used in front of the person's name.

The holders of the *magistr* titles can take a further state examination, the *rigorózní zkouška*, which includes the defence of a thesis, the *rigorózní práce*. Successful candidates 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 enter the labour market easily or in the case Bachelor's and Master's programmes can continue in 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.

Numbers of applicants of doctoral studies are not considered satisfactory and the graduate rate is low.

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

6.6 Teachers

Academics are those employees of the institution of higher education who carry out both educational and scientific work, as well as research, development, artistic or other

creative activity, e.g. professors, associated professors, specialised assistants, lecturers 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.

There is no special pedagogical training for teachers at higher education institution. Career development is set by the internal regulations of the higher education institutions. The title of *docent* (associate professors) is awarded by the rector following a *habilitation* procedure in which the scientific or artistic qualifications of the applicant are tested, 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.

The teaching obligation of various categories of teachers is not defined in higher education.

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 higher education institution's internal regulations. Professors make up around 9% of faculty staff and associated 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 associated 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. Further education is part of self-motivation and is connected with the career.

6.7 Statistics 2002/03

Number of students

	Students Czech citizens	Students foreigners	Total Czech citizens and foreigners	Teachers full-time equivalents
total	236 678	12 078	248 756	13 846.1
full-time study Bachelor's, Master's	180 669	9 941	190 610	(-)
full-time study Doctoral	8 247	753	9 000	(-)
part-time* study Bachelor's, Master's	36 449	605	37 054	(-)
part*-time study Doctoral	11 313	779	12 092	(-)

* 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	4
Private	27*

* Data from 13 October 2002

Number of graduates (2002)

Institutions total*	31 327
Public and private (Czech citizens)	30 646
Public and private (foreigners)	681
Military and police	1 048

*all study programmes

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

Field of study	%
science, mathematics	8.9
engineering	28.4
agriculture, forestry and veterinary science	3.8
medicine, dental studies, pharmacy	7.5
economics, business	18.8
social science and humanities	12.5
law	5.5
education and teacher training	12.1
art	2.3
military and defence	0.2
Total	100.0

Source: IIE.

7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

7.1 Policy and legislative framework

The Czech Republic has never had legal provision for adult education as a whole. An Act on Lifelong Education is being prepared, but has not yet been debated in Parliament.

The current legislation consists of older regulations with less wide-ranging legal implications and of various new laws and decrees. Four types of regulations can be distinguished:

1. The School Act and the Higher Education Act, which specify the forms that adult education may take at various educational levels (including the attainment of basic education);
2. Regulations related to work performance: the Labour Code, the Employment Law and related regulations about further conditions concerning retraining of job applicants and employees;
3. The Law on Technical Standards and the Law on State Supervision, which serve as the basis for the regulations on professional skills and qualification requirements, regular in-service training and re-examination;
4. The Commercial Code, which regulates provision of education on a profit basis. No special requirements are needed, but retraining programmes must have accreditation from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

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

7.2 Management/organisations involved

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has overall responsibility for education, including adult education. Adult education provided by upper secondary schools and other educational institutions in part-time study (*studium při zaměstnání*) falls under the responsibility of relevant departments of the Ministry of Education, adult education at higher educational institutions, i.e. distance learning, lifelong learning, including the University of the Third Age, falls under the responsibility of the institutions of higher education.

Retraining is administered by Labour Offices, which are responsible to the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. However, the institutions, which offer it must be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The provision of educational services on a profit basis is not controlled by any regulating body. The only exceptions are institutions intending to provide recognized further vocational training (which have to apply for accreditation to an authorised body) 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, initiative and co-ordinating body of the Government of the Czech Republic in the area of strategic management of human resources including adult education. A member of the Government responsible for the human resources chairs the Council, which is made up of representatives of state administration and self-government, employers' unions and trade unions in the same proportion based on the tripartite principle. The Council establishes committees and working groups.

Social partners have only been active in education for a short time, approximately since 1996. Three organisations are the most important: the Confederation of Industry of

the Czech Republic, the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic and the Bohemian and Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions. Their main sphere is vocational training, both initial and, even more importantly, further training. These organisations aim to change the economic environment in order to encourage companies to take an interest in education.

7.3 Funding

For people in employment, adult education may be organised at schools in other than the full-time study. In such cases it is financed by the Ministry of Education through regional authorities based on a certain percentage of the average cost per pupil in full-time studies in the particular school and study field. The only exceptions are courses in which adults can complete basic education. In this case, the costs of the study are usually fully covered by communities.

Retraining is financed by various sources. Unemployed people registered as job seekers are entitled to attend such sessions 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. If an institution organises retraining sessions for its employees, the costs are covered in collaboration with Labour Offices. About 30% of all retraining is thus funded by Labour Offices, 40% by course participants and around 27% by employers, the rest is from other sources.

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

Personal development education is fully funded by the course participants and prices are based on free market principles.

Expenses on further education make approximately 0.15% of total household expenditures. Expenses of business sphere represent 1.13% of total labour cost (the Czech Statistical Office survey from 1999). Expenses on education and (re)training of employees provided by other institutions as well as expenses on operation of educational facilities can be included by employers in their cost, in case that there is not a

responsible 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 working in schools and institutions of adult education need not any special training for teaching adults. Subject matters concerning adult education tend to be a part of in-service teacher training. Specialists in adult education are prepared at two departments of Czech universities; however they have been mostly employed in personnel management.

Qualifications of lecturers and instructors working for profit-based institutions as well as quality of teaching in these institutions are monitored only exceptionally.

7.5 Organisation

7.5.1 Types of training institutions

Adult education takes place in:

- schools (mainly upper secondary) and other educational institutions;
- higher educational institutions
- organisations – providing education primarily for their own employees: enterprises, institutions, state administration bodies;
- non-profit organisations: foundations, churches, trade unions, political parties;
- profit-based educational institutions; schools can also organise educational courses on a profit basis.

7.5.2 Access requirements

Admission requirements for part-time study, which enables adults to achieve a defined level of education, are usually identical to those for full-time study. It applies even in case, that applicants had completed their previous education abroad. The only exceptions are medical courses, which will only accept people who have finished a related study programme or unqualified employees of health services who want to obtain qualifications or finish their studies.

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 organise primarily part-time studies, which usually represent coherent adult education providing certain level of education. The studies are provided at the upper secondary and post-secondary technical levels for most specialisations and vocational courses that exist in full-time form. Follow-up studies are organised as part-time study (*studium při zaměstnání*), too.

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 of adult education are identical to those of full-time education.

Secondary technical and vocational 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.

School institutions

Educational institutions, which organise adult education include art schools (special-interest education, mainly for basic and upper secondary level leavers) and state language schools (special-interest 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 educational 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 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 the J.A. Comenius Academy in Prague.

Non-school profit and non-profit institutions

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

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

7.5.4 Main principles of the organisation of time and venue

Timetables for part-time study in its various forms (i.e. at upper secondary school it may be external, distance, evening or combined) are modifications of the full-time study timetables. The duration of study is usually longer by one year.

For the participants whose entry level of education is higher than required, the duration of study is decided by the school head, based on the learner's documented previous education.

Independent study plays an important role in adult education. The main element that distinguishes different forms of studies is the amount of independent work required from students. Learners also apply their professional experience in their studies.

Depending on the requirements of specific educational specialisations, sessions that provide practical skills training can form part of the study programme.

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

Curricula for part-time study are modifications of the full-time study curricula. They are developed by the same institutions.

Content of further adult education is prepared by its organizer: a firm prepares it for its employees according to their or its needs, a commercial or other institution prepares it in compliance with demand of individuals or enterprises, which order courses for their employees.

Teaching methods are not markedly different from those used in analogical courses of full-time study, but independent study forms a substantial part of educational process.

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

Information and communication technologies are gaining ground both in school and non-school adult education.

7.5.6 Quality assurance

Schools on all levels and school institutions are evaluated through the Czech School Inspectorate. The other institutions are not only evaluated but also sufficiently monitored.

Two ways of quality assurance have been just asserted, particularly in 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 legislative measures for guidance services for adults in educational system. However, the Government charged the Ministry of Education with collaboration in development of an information system on educational opportunities not only for children and youth, but also for adults as well in the framework of the State information policy.

Within the province of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Labour offices provide guidance services in the area of further education, especially retraining.

There are also private counselling services.

The Internet Database of Continuing Education – DAT was established in 2001. The providers of educational services put data about their activities into 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

Graduates of part-time study at upper secondary or post-secondary technical schools, or combined studies at higher educational institutions receive after passing prescribed examinations a certificate or a degree with 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. From 2001 higher educational institutions may recognise credits from lifelong education programmes for successful graduates of these programmes who become students of accredited study programmes, for up to 60% of the credits necessary to obtain the higher education diploma.

A system of state recognized qualifications in the area of further 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 been created. Nevertheless, some further education courses have to be accredited by:

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

7.8 Statistics 2002/03

Adult education (combined) for each level of education

Level of education	Number of learners	% of students total
Gymnázium (upper secondary classes)	789	0.8
Secondary technical schools	15 072	7.1
Secondary vocational schools	13 960	7.1
Tertiary technical school	4 726	17.1
Bachelor's + Master's study programmes	37 054	16.3
Doctoral programmes	12 092	58.8
Continuing education at higher educational institutions	29 837	-
Distance learning	7 596	-
Remedial courses to complement education from		
basic schools	784	-
auxiliary schools	84	-
remedial schools	174	-

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 further education from the total number of employed (%)

	Percentage of participants in further education from the total number of employed		
	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 further 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.