

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN BELARUS – 2018

Culture, teaching practices, professional duties,
working conditions, beliefs and professionalisation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is grateful to V.N. Golubovsky, Rector of RIPO, for support and cooperation throughout the research. The ETF is particularly grateful to all the teachers, instructors, principals and trainers who gave their time to complete the survey and to those stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed. Particular thanks go to E.L. Kasyanik, E.M. Kalitsky, O.A. Belyaeva and A.Kh. Shkliar, who drafted the report. Methodological development and analysis were carried out by Eva Jansova. The report was edited by Julian Stanley and Denise Loughran. Translation and communication support was provided by E.S. Abramovich and E.S. Rybchik.

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Further information relating to this research can be found in the annexes, which have been published separately: technical report, literature review, and research instruments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Continuing professional development (CPD) for vocational education and training (VET) teachers and trainers has been identified by the ETF as a key driver for the improvement of VET systems across all regions, for two reasons. Firstly, teachers and trainers are the most important input in the VET system, and secondly, they are critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, such as changes in organisations and curricula, and the development of work-based learning, technology and pedagogy.

The main objectives of the 2018 CPD survey are to:

- inform national policy makers about the conditions and needs of vocational teachers and help them to monitor implementation and change through a bottom-up and systemic approach;
- help policy makers to understand what is required to bring about improvements in the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of CPD, at the national level;
- address some of the factors that influence the effectiveness of teachers in more general terms, such as their motivation and career structure;
- benchmark the state of the professional teacher workforce against those in other countries.

This survey is part of an international, comparative survey that also includes Albania, Algeria, Kosovo¹, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia and Turkey.

Methodology

The methodology included:

- a desk review of documents and research publications about the current state of CPD of VET teachers and instructors;
- individual interviews with seven stakeholders responsible for policy making, formulation and implementation of activities relating to CPD for VET teachers and instructors; this enabled expansion and exploration of the information received based on the analysis of the normative legal documents and research findings;
- a survey of 1 934 VET teachers working in 105 technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions;
- a survey of 72 principals of technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions.

Some 45% of VET schools participated in the survey, with equal representation in terms of technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions, regional affiliation (Minsk and all regions are equally represented), and all profiles of specialist training. The survey presents a representative sample.

Findings

The issues and recommendations were discussed by policy makers and practitioners at a workshop in Minsk on 4 April 2019. The issues and recommendations in bold were judged to be of greatest priority and also most practicable to act upon.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence – hereinafter ‘Kosovo’.

Workforce

Most vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus are qualified as teachers and have bachelor's degrees. The majority have pedagogical training in the subjects they are teaching and have undergone teaching practice as part of their training. However, more than 30% say that their pedagogical training did not cover all or any of the subjects that they are teaching. Some 76% of teachers are full-time. Only 36% have permanent contracts. Vocational teachers in Belarus are relatively old – only 16% are below 30 – and 75% are female. Around 53% of specialist VET teachers have no working experience in the industry for which they are preparing recruits.

On average, VET teachers spend 25 hours a week on teaching, which is around 47% of the total number of working hours per week.

Issues	Recommendations
Half of VET teachers have little or no first-hand experience of working in the industry for which they are providing training.	There is a need to review qualification requirements for teachers and provide more professional internships for serving teachers.
Teachers are relatively old and mainly female.	The demographic composition of the workforce should be reviewed and the implications evaluated.

School governance

School principals have some influence over individual appointments and the curriculum offer but little influence over salaries and the school budget and workforce. They claim to involve teachers and stakeholders in decision making, although 78% say that they make the key decisions on their own. Social partners participate in 82% of school boards. The culture of schools is said by most principals to be collaborative, rather than very collaborative.

Around 86% of principals report that their effectiveness is either greatly or to some extent limited by shortages of budget and resources, while at least 50% see their effectiveness constrained by the lack of a career-based teachers' wage system, the lack of participation and support from parents or guardians, and a high workload and level of responsibility for their work. More than half report the lack of the necessary number of computers for training and internet access (51%).

Attendance, punctuality and disruptive or discriminatory behaviour are not seen as problematic. Some 93% of principals report job satisfaction in relation to their own role.

Issues	Recommendations
Principals have concerns about school budgeting.	There is a need to investigate why the school budget system is judged poorly, and to develop and consult on alternative models.
Effectiveness of schools is constrained by a lack of skilled and competent VET teachers and practical instructors.	Skills gaps need to be investigated. Changes in initial and continuing professional development should be planned in order to address the gaps.
Quality instruction is constrained by a lack of ICT (information and communications technology) equipment, software and internet access.	Needs should be identified and quantified and a plan developed to equip all VET providers with appropriate ICT resources, training and technical assistance.

Teaching and links to the workplace

The majority of vocational teachers apply advanced educational methods and technologies. Most classes have access to up-to-date equipment and adequate consumables. Digital technology is commonly used by teachers to prepare materials and as part of teaching and learning. However, 44% of teachers say that digital technologies are used only occasionally by students in their classes and only two-thirds of the respondents say that there is access to reliable and appropriate computer hardware and software in most classes.

Teachers say that students are, for the most part, well-motivated and that there are no behavioural problems. In general, teachers and principals are satisfied with their profession and their work. The majority report that they continue to learn and that they have the opportunity to progress in their career.

Issues	Recommendations
Most teachers have relatively little direct contact or cooperation with employers.	Effective mechanisms for cooperation between educational institutions and employers should be developed.
Only around one-third of vocational classes involve the use of digital educational technology by students.	Improvements are needed in access to digital educational resources and in teachers' skills in applying such resources.
Vocational teachers do not feel valued in Belarus.	There is a need to create opportunities for vocational teachers to gain recognition and rewards, for example through the career system or by giving them opportunities for development, creativity and leadership and reviewing salaries.

Policy and strategy

Belarus has a regulatory framework for teachers' professional development. There are strategies and programmes in place that aim to improve the quality and relevance of professional development.

Organisations and institutions

Responsibilities relating to initial and continuing professional development for teachers and instructors are clearly assigned. There are 11 specialist colleges dedicated to the training of instructors and 4 higher education institutions with responsibility for the training of teachers (at bachelor's or master's level). However, initial teacher education does not provide specialist training for many branches. The Republican Institute for Vocational Education (RIPO) is the main provider of CPD for teachers and instructors. It also sets standards, manages data, analyses needs and advises the ministry with respect to strategy. A specialist body collects data and schools have clear responsibilities for the CPD of their teachers. Regional authorities help to research needs and provide pedagogical expertise and training. Employers contribute by providing traineeships for teachers. On occasion, employers contribute to the design of some CPD programmes.

The participation of social partners in the provision or quality assurance of vocational teacher CPD is still very limited.

Issues	Recommendations
There is unmet demand from teachers for internships and CPD of teachers and instructors in the field of innovative technologies.	RIPO and regional authorities should work in partnership with enterprises to set up more internships for teachers addressing innovative technologies that match the needs of teachers and instructors. RIPO and regional authorities should access additional expertise to design and deliver CPD that addresses training needs, e.g. by upskilling trainers of trainers, working with industry and higher education.
There are no organisations authorised to provide formally recognised online CPD.	The ministry should develop norms and laws to assign responsibility and recognise online CPD.
VET institutions have little interest in participating in international projects and programmes.	RIPO and regional authorities should develop awareness of the opportunities for participating in international technical assistance programmes (projects) among vocational education institutions.
Rapid changes in production technologies mean that teachers and instructors are not fully competent in current techniques and work practices.	The ministry and RIPO should develop incentives to motivate social partners to cooperate in the field of improving the professional competence of teachers.
Initial training does not address professional or pedagogical competences relevant to some profiles or sectors.	The training gap should be assessed and, if justified, flexible modes developed to meet this need, for example by offering initial training partly in vocational providers.

Design and quality assurance

National priorities for CPD for vocational teachers and trainers are set at ministry level, taking into account national policies and analysis of information emerging from school evaluations. The ministry issues an annual letter that shapes the design and provision of CPD programmes for vocational teachers and instructors.

Funding for CPD for vocational teachers and instructors is assigned to RIPO and the regional methodological centres. The funding is used to design and provide CPD, which is provided free of charge to vocational schools, although schools pay for travel, food and accommodation for participating teachers.

It is not clear how effectively these processes work to identify and prioritise the most urgent training needs at the level of vocational schools. It is not clear how RIPO, donor organisations and the regional methodological centres coordinate their offer and how they provide new pedagogical and professional skills (as opposed to maintaining current ones).

Issues	Recommendations
The development of industrial and educational technologies is accelerating and creating new training needs that have not been addressed by the CPD system.	Teachers and instructors should be provided with industrial experience in the field of modern technologies and CPD to enable them to make use of digital technologies in education.
Online learning has the potential to increase the diversity, volume and personalisation of the CPD offering.	The share of educational programmes of advanced training implemented in distance learning needs to be increased.
The CPD offering does not always benefit from up-to-date information about teachers' training needs.	Training programmes should be developed on the basis of known needs.

CPD provision

Overall, 65% of vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus had participated in CPD over the past 12 months, below the OECD average of 85%. Only 64% of these participants benefited from 30 hours or more CPD. More positively, 59% of teachers and instructors report participating in CPD relating to their vocational specialism. Participation in CPD or training on employers' premises is reported by only 16% of teachers, while 49% of teachers and instructors say they independently make use of digital and online learning opportunities to support their own CPD.

CPD often takes the form of seminars – perhaps for 2 days within a 12-month period. Most teachers collaborate in their teaching, particularly with their peers.

Around 94% of principals say they have participated in courses, conferences or observational visits during the past 12 months, with 75% of them obtaining at least 30 hours of CPD.

Issues	Recommendations
Enterprises have relatively little involvement in the design or delivery of CPD and teachers and instructors only rarely update their skills and knowledge of their professional speciality.	Industry should be engaged in designing and providing CPD, for example by providing more internships for teachers.
Around one-third of teachers and instructors received no CPD in the past 12 months.	All vocational teachers and instructors should have the opportunity to participate in some relevant CPD each year.

School-based CPD

Schools are expected to organise professional development for their own teachers. Usually a deputy principal is responsible. It seems that as much CPD takes place in schools as outside of schools, but there is little information available on the quality or effectiveness of this CPD.

Mentoring takes place in most schools, and some mentors receive additional payment for their work. Mentoring appears to be limited to new teachers and only 24% of mentors have received training. Induction for new teachers is usual but not universal.

Feedback to teachers as a result of observation of their teaching or assessment of students is not a common practice. There is little feedback from external inspectors or from mentors or advisers.

Issues	Recommendations
The practice of providing expert feedback to teachers following observation and the assessment of students does not seem to be well developed.	Schools could be encouraged and supported to provide feedback to teachers and instructors. This might take the form of training and guidance.
Much of CPD is provided in schools but it is not clear how its quality is assured and how well adapted it is to needs.	Schools should be supported to evaluate and ensure the quality of the CPD they provide.
CPD provision is not always relevant to the professional development and career needs of teachers.	There is a need to strengthen communication between teachers, managers and methodologists within educational institutions who are working to meet the training needs of individuals, e.g. by developing individual training plans.

Relevance and impact of CPD

Overall, approximately 80% of vocational teachers and instructors believe that the CPD offer is relevant. Some 17.7% of teachers and 17% of principals identify the lack of relevant CPD as a barrier to participation. However, around one-third of those teachers who have received no training report unmet training needs in relation to particular topics.

Teachers report that most CPD has moderate or good impact upon their teaching. However, for some kinds of training, around 20% of participants report that it had little or no impact.

The impact of CPD nationally and in schools is assessed through feedback from those who participated in training and from their school principals. The mechanisms and tools for quality management of CPD require further improvement.

Issues	Recommendations
For some kinds of CPD, around 20% of participants report that it had little or no impact.	The processes by which needs are identified and teachers matched to programmes should be reviewed.
There is an unmet need for CPD to prepare teachers and instructors of special subjects in relation to new production technologies.	CPD should be designed and delivered to address these needs at VET centres of excellence. Additional internships should be provided for teachers and instructors. The government should enact legislation to permit RIPO, the centres of excellence and other bodies to carry out this work.
There is an unmet need for CPD to address the use of ICT.	There is a need to elaborate modular multilevel qualification upgrading programmes tailored to the needs of employees in the field of ICT.

Recognition and incentivisation

The licensing system of educational institutions, the career promotion system and the low cost of training for teachers all encourage teachers to participate in CPD. One-fifth of the teachers who participated in the survey note that the barriers to their professional development are work schedule (19.7%) and the lack of time due to family or personal circumstances (21.5%). Diversification of the ways of providing CPD programmes (for example, wider use of online learning) as well as the recognition of competences obtained informally could help to overcome these barriers.

Issues	Recommendations
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of time is a barrier to participation in CPD.	A review is needed into whether CPD can be provided in more flexible ways, for example in schools and online.
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of incentives is a barrier to participation in CPD.	There should be a review of whether the current requalification system and career ladder are successfully incentivising CPD that corresponds to real training needs.

1. RATIONALE

Professional development of VET teachers and trainers has been identified by the ETF as a key driver for improving VET systems across all regions. Teachers are the most important input to VET systems as well as being critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, such as changes in organisations, curriculum and the development of work-based learning, technology and pedagogy. The main objectives of the CPD Survey 2018 are to:

- inform national policymakers about the condition and needs of vocational teachers and help them to monitor implementation and change through a bottom-up and systemic approach;
- help policymakers to understand what is required to improve the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of CPD at national level;
- address some of the factors that influence the effectiveness of teachers in more general terms, with regard to their motivation and career structure;
- benchmark the state of their professional teacher workforce against other countries.

In addition, the survey aims to:

- empower teachers and other stakeholders in the policy process while reporting their experience with professional development, impact on teaching quality and future needs;
- encourage international collaboration in policymaking;
- support the systematic use of data in policymaking.

This survey is part of an international comparative survey, which also includes Albania, Algeria, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia and Turkey.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology included:

- a desk review of documents and research publications on the current state of the CPD of VET teachers and trainers;
- interviews with seven stakeholders responsible for policy and for ensuring the implementation of activities related to the CPD of VET teachers and trainers;
- a survey of VET teachers working in 105 technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions;
- a survey of principals of technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions.

Literature review

The literature review made it possible to determine the main documents that govern the activity of the pedagogical staff in VET schools in Belarus, e.g. normative legal acts, state and sectoral programmes, reports on scientific research, reports on international projects and statistical books.

The literature review is presented in the Annex (published separately).

Interviews

The interviews were conducted between June and September 2018. The status of the interviewees was agreed upon with the country team.

The interviewees were represented by seven specialists:

- principal of technical vocational education institution;
- principal of secondary specialised education institution;
- principal of secondary specialised education institution that trains VET trainers;
- head of the Chair of Vocational Training and Pedagogy in the Belarusian National Technical University, which trains engineering teachers;
- head of the Chair of General and Professional Pedagogy in the Republican Institute for Vocational Education (RIPO), which carries out pedagogical retraining and qualification upgrading of the teaching staff of VET schools and develops occupational standards for VET school teachers;
- principal of Minsk City Training and Methodological Centre for Vocational Education, which establishes the regional staff policy in the field of vocational education;
- principal of the Centre for Staff Vocational Training of the JSC AMKODOR, a holding managing company.

Each of the respondents were questioned face-to-face. Each interview took about an hour. An oral interview made it possible to collect comprehensive detailed answers to the questionnaires. The content of the questionnaires was elaborated on the basis of the methodology suggested by the ETF.

Surveys

A national survey of the CPD conditions for principals and teachers in vocational education institutions was developed to collect information on the current situation and needs for the professional development of pedagogical staff in Belarus.

Two standard questionnaires were used in the survey: the first one for teachers and instructors, and the second one for principals of vocational education institutions.

The questionnaires provided by the ETF were discussed, translated and adapted to the national language and the local context. The questionnaires were developed by the ETF for international comparative studies. They are based on other international surveys, in particular, the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS).

Questionnaires and online survey methods were tested in June 2018 in five colleges. After testing, adjustments were made to the questionnaires.

At the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, 131 educational institutions were implementing vocational education programmes and 111 educational institutions were implementing secondary specialised education programmes in Belarus.

A total of 108 (45%) vocational education institutions participated in the survey, including, in roughly equal proportions, institutions implementing vocational and secondary specialised education programmes. Educational institutions were selected on the basis of two main criteria – geographical distribution (all regions and the city of Minsk are equally represented) and educational institution profile.

A total of 108 schools with a total number of 6 200 teaching employees were invited to participate; 105 technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions actively participated in the survey. The VET schools' profile is as follows: 22 agricultural schools; 18 polytechnic institutes; 10 art schools; 9 construction schools; 9 trade schools; 7 medical schools. Also included were schools with a pedagogical, mechanical engineering and electro-technical, service sector or light industry profile.

The questionnaire-based survey was carried out online among the selected VET schools. The survey was conducted in September 2018.

A total of 1,932 respondents participated in the survey of the teaching staff. Of these, 74% were teachers, 10% were VET trainers and 16% were other categories of teaching staff. Around 85% of the respondents successfully completed the whole questionnaire. Seventy-four principals participated in the survey of the management personnel. Around 90% of the respondents successfully completed the whole questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed online. Thus, the response rate of the survey was 31% of teachers and 69% of directors.

VET school representatives from six regions and Minsk city participated in the survey. The distribution from a regional perspective of teachers and principals is shown in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY REGIONS (%)

Region	Principals	Teachers
Brest region	18.3	21.6
Vitebsk region	15.5	11.5
Grodno region	11.3	12.4
Gomel region	16.9	16.2
Mogilev region	11.3	23.7
Minsk region	11.3	5.9
Minsk city	15.5	8.7

There are no significant regional differences from principals' responses. From teachers, most responses came from the Mogilev and Brest regions. The Minsk region had the lowest number of responses from both groups.

PART 1. THE CONTEXT: WORKFORCE, MANAGEMENT AND TEACHING IN SCHOOLS²

3. WORKFORCE

Age of teachers

Of the surveyed VET teachers, 56% are aged between 30 and 49 years old and 20% of them are aged between 50 and 59. Young people up to 29 years account for 17% of VET teachers; 7% of VET teachers are aged 60 or older.

This data reflects the age profile recorded in official statistical data. According to the statistical handbook entitled *Educational institutions of the Republic of Belarus, which implement educational programmes of secondary specialised education at the beginning of the 2018/2019 school year*, 50% of teachers are aged between 30 and 49 and 22% are aged between 50 and 59. Young teachers up to the age of 29 years account for 13% of the total number. Teachers over the age of 60 account for 15%³.

Length of teaching experience

Most VET teachers (78%) have more than five years of teaching experience; 32% have between 6 and 15 years of teaching experience, 30% have more than 16 years and 16% have more than 25 years.

Experience in current school

Approximately one-third of the respondents (30%) have been working in their current school for 5 years or less; around one-third of the teachers (35%) have between 6 and 15 years of work experience in their current school. One-fourth of the teachers who responded to the survey (24%) indicated that their work experience in their current school accounts for 16 to 25 years. Approximately one in ten VET teachers (11%) has been working in their current school for more than 25 years.

Work experience in the trade, profession or industry of the vocational branch taught

More than half of VET teachers (58%) do not have experience of working in the trade, profession or industry corresponding to the vocational subject they teach. Another 35% have experience of working in the trade for more than three years. The smallest group (8% of the total) are teachers with between one and three years of work experience in industry.

The survey included all those teachers who teach vocational students, both professional subjects directly connected with the future occupation of the students, as well as general educational subjects (e.g. literature, mathematics).

² Data presented are based on the results of the online survey. Data are unweighted and exclude missing values (i.e. refusals and do not know answers).

³ Thus, the oldest group of teachers is under represented in the survey responses.

Gender

In Belarus, women account for 75% of VET teachers with men accounting for 25%.

Role in the school

The overwhelming majority of respondents (74%) are teachers. Ten percent of respondents are practice coordinators, instructors or organisers of practical education. Five percent of the surveyed teachers indicated that they are head teachers or principals. Other roles are as follows: counsellors (0.5%), pedagogical advisers (0.8%), workshop or laboratory technicians (1%), teaching assistants (1%), other (9%).

Vocational sector or speciality

About 21% of respondents teach general subjects, e.g. languages and mathematics, science or social science, to vocational students.

Fourteen percent of VET teachers teach profiles related to the engineering sector. The other specialisations, in descending order of importance, are: information technology (10%); craftwork, fashion, art, design, film, media and creative (9%); construction (9%); agriculture, veterinary (8%); business, retail, law, economy, management, administration (7%); manufacturing, production, processing (6%); logistics, traffic, transportation (2%); health-related (including medicine), social protection (5%); hospitality, tourism, catering, travel (2%); beauty, hair, cosmetics (2%); mining, metallurgy (1%). The answer “other sectors” was chosen by 16% of respondents.

Initial training

Belarus has a well-developed teacher training system for the VET system.

Fifty-six percent of VET teachers indicated that they completed pedagogical training as part of their degree studies; 30% of respondents completed a separate pedagogical training, which was not part of a degree programme. Only 13% of current VET teachers report that they did not complete an initial pedagogical training before they started teaching.

Seventy-seven percent of respondents declared that the content of the subject they teach was covered during their formal education and training; 17% declared that it was partially covered and 6% declared that the content was not covered.

Regarding pedagogy and didactics, 68% declared it was covered, 17% declared that it was covered only for some of the subjects, while 16% responded that it was not covered. Thus, vocational teachers in Belarus, for the most part, have pedagogical preparation.

Most of the teachers gained teaching practice as part of their initial training: 67% gained teaching practice (work placement, internship or student teaching) for all the subjects taught; 21% gained teaching practice for some of the subjects taught.

Qualifications

Eighty-four percent of respondents indicated that they have a bachelor's degree or higher. Ninety percent of respondents confirmed that they are formally qualified as a teacher, instructor or practice coordinator.

Employment status

Seventy-six percent of VET teachers identified their current employment status as a full-time teacher. Twenty-four percent of respondents are employed as a teacher part-time. Thirty-six percent of VET teachers reported that they had permanent employment contracts. Forty-four percent said that they had fixed-term contracts that lasted more than one year while 20% said that they had fixed-term contracts lasting one year or less.

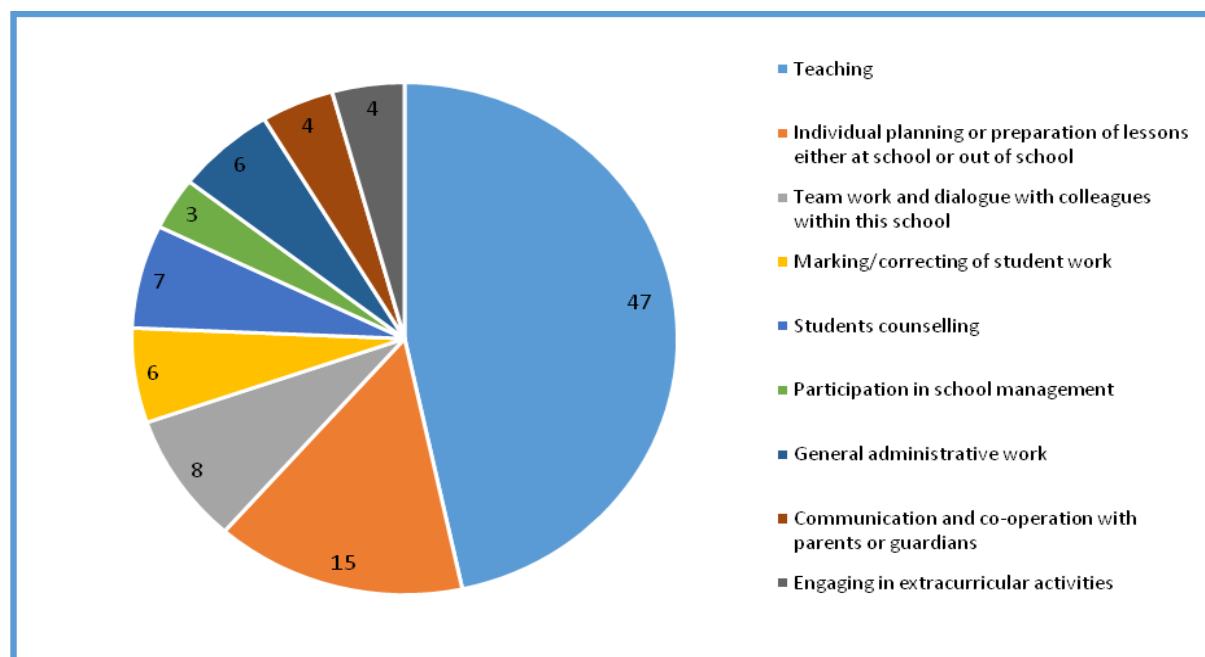
Membership of a trade union or professional association

Ninety-seven percent of respondents are members of a trade union and only 19% are members of a professional association for teachers.

Working hours

On average, VET teachers spend 25 hours a week on teaching, which is 47% of their total number of working hours. About a third of the remaining working hours (or 15% of the total working hours) are taken up by individual planning or preparation of lessons either at school or out of school. Communication with colleagues within this school and with parents or guardians accounts for 4% of working hours. The same time is given to counselling individual students or correcting student work. General administrative work, participation in school management and various extracurricular activities take up 13% of their time.

FIGURE 3.1 (AVERAGE) SHARE OF WORKING TIME SPENT ON SPECIFIC TASKS (% , N=936)



Conclusions

Most vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus are qualified teachers and have a bachelor's degree. For the most part, they have pedagogical training in the subjects they are teaching and teaching practice was included as part of their training. Seventy-six percent of teachers are full-time and they spend a little less than half their working hours teaching students. Only 36% have permanent contracts. However, more than 30% say that their pedagogical training did not cover all or any of the subjects that they teach. Vocational teachers in Belarus are relatively old: only 16% are below 30 and largely female, only 25% are male. Fifty-eight percent of specialist VET teachers have no work experience in the industry for which they are preparing recruits.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
Half of VET teachers have little or no first-hand experience of working in the industry for which they are providing training.	Review qualification requirements for teachers and provide more professional internships for serving teachers.
Teachers are relatively old and mainly female.	Review demographic composition of workforce and evaluate implications.

4. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Who is involved in school governance?

Most vocational schools (86%) are managed by a team that includes, as a rule, the director and his or her deputies, accountants, department heads, teachers, parents, students, representatives of public organisations and others. The director is primarily responsible for appointing or hiring teaching staff, as well as dismissing or suspending individual staff members. Establishing or changing salary levels in state educational institutions is mainly the responsibility of regional or state education authorities. State authorities are also mainly responsible for deciding on budget allocations within the school.

The management team of an educational institution has the primary responsibility for recruiting staff, enrolling students, conducting a disciplinary policy, creating comfortable conditions for the educational process, welfare and recreation, and the physical and spiritual development of students.

Responsibility for determining the composition of the courses offered and their content is distributed between government authorities and the management team of the educational institution. An educational standard, as well as a standard curriculum and standard training programmes for individual courses, are developed and approved (on the basis of a vocational qualification characteristic or professional standard) at national level.

The standard curriculum is adapted to the requirements of the learners or other participants in the educational process at the level of the vocational education institution by changing the content of the training or including new or additional topics in the curriculum.

What is the role of the principal?

Seventy-seven percent of school principals say that they often or very often deal with administrative issues, reporting and correcting deficiencies and omissions in the activities of the teaching staff; 98% take responsibility for external cooperation with partners and 86% report working with teachers on responsibility for educational outcomes. Principals were less likely to say that they addressed the issue of teachers' attendance or collaborated with teachers to solve classroom discipline problems.

Most school principals claim that all employees (98%), parents and guardians (92%) and students (98%) in their institutions have the opportunity to actively participate in school decisions. On the other hand, 81% of principals say that they prefer to make the most important decisions themselves. Almost all (98%) of the educational institutions surveyed have a governing board. The boards of all educational institutions include teachers, heads of departments, administrative staff, parents and guardians, students and trade unions. In most schools, representatives of enterprises, employer associations, the charity and other stakeholders are involved in the work of the boards.

What constrains the effectiveness of management?

According to 89% of principals, their effectiveness is either greatly (32%) or to some extent (56%) limited by an insufficient budget and a lack of resources. Other important constraints are the absence of a 'career-based teachers' wage system' (48%), as well as a lack of participation and support of parents or guardians (54%) and a high workload and high level of responsibility for their work (50%).

Sixty percent of principals state that a shortage of skilled teachers works against a high-quality educational process in their schools (to some extent or a lot) and 46% report a lack of practical instructors. Fifty-five percent cite an insufficient number of computers for training and 53% report a lack of educational software.

More positively, only 11% of principals report that student tardiness was a problem on a daily basis and only 8% say that unsanctioned absence was a concern on a daily basis. Vandalism or theft, fraud, physical or verbal violence, intimidation or verbal abuse of teachers are virtually non-existent. Furthermore, according to principals, teachers hardly ever arrive late and there are no cases of unjustified absence by teachers. Virtually no cases of discrimination of teachers based on gender, religion or ethnicity are reported.

Appraisal of teachers

Teachers are formally appraised by the school inspectorate, state bodies, school leadership and teachers. The main work of directly observing classroom teaching, appraising teachers' levels of professionalism, monitoring students' knowledge of individual courses or topics, analysing students' test scores and assessing portfolios is carried out by members of the management team. About 50% of teachers are appraised less than every two years.

According to 97% of principals, corrective measures, if necessary, are developed with the participation of teachers following the formal appraisal; 92% of principals say that a personal development plan is elaborated for each teacher. The majority of principals (74%) report that teachers can lose bonuses or salary increments if their performance is unsatisfactory. Only 10% of principals report that unsatisfactory performance led to dismissal or non-renewal of contract.

School culture

Ninety percent of principals claim that their school staff share a common set of beliefs about the mission of vocational education, while 79% say that there is a high level of cooperation between the school and the local community. Almost all principals (93%) claim that school staff have an open discussion about existing problems and difficulties, that there is mutual respect between colleagues (95%) and that relationships between teachers and students are good (92%).

Conclusions

School principals have some influence over individual appointments and the curriculum but little influence over salaries and the school budget and workforce. They claim to involve teachers and stakeholders in decision making, although 81% say they make the key decisions on their own. Social partners participate in 82% of school boards. The school climate is said to be collaborative, rather than very collaborative, by most principals.

A total of 89% of principals report that their effectiveness is either greatly or to some extent limited by an insufficient budget and a lack of resources. Almost 50% see their effectiveness constrained by the lack of 'a career-based teachers' wage system'; a lack of participation and support of parents or guardians and a high workload and high level of responsibility for their work. Sixty percent of principals state that a shortage of skilled teachers works against a high-quality educational process in their schools (to some extent or a lot) and 46% report a lack of instructors. More than half cite an insufficient number of computers for training and internet access (51%) or lack of educational software (53%).

Attendance, punctuality and disruptive or discriminatory behaviour are not seen as problematic. Ninety-three percent of principals report job satisfaction in relation to their own role.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendation
Principals have concerns about school budgeting.	Investigate reasons why the school budget system is judged poorly. Develop and consult on alternative models.
Effectiveness of schools is constrained by a lack of skilled and competent VET teachers and practical instructors.	Investigate skills gaps. Plan changes in initial and continuing professional development to address gaps.
Quality instruction is constrained by a lack of ICT equipment, software and internet.	Identify and quantify needs and develop plan to equip all VET providers with appropriate ICT resources, training and technical assistance.

5. APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LINKS TO THE WORKPLACE

This section provides a description of teachers' professional activity in technical vocational and secondary specialised education institutions.

Teaching

Teachers apply a broad range of methods and educational technologies, both traditional and student-centred. This is illustrated by the data compiled in Table 5.1. It is notable that the methodological box employed by teachers includes different active teaching methods, which are used depending on the aims and goals of specific lessons (as evidenced by the small number of such answers in all or almost all the lessons).

TABLE 5.1 HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU USE THE FOLLOWING TEACHING METHODS? (%)

	Never or almost never	Occasionally	Frequently	In all or nearly all lessons	N
I present a summary of recently learned content	17	46	26	11	1 391
Students work in small groups to come up with a joint solution to a problem or task	3	35	51	12	1 434
I give different work to the students who have difficulties learning and/or to those who can advance	2	21	56	20	1 446
I refer to a problem from work to show how knowledge or skills can be applied	9	25	43	23	1 407
I let students practise similar tasks until I know that every student has understood the subject matter	6	36	43	15	1 418
I check my students' exercise books or homework	6	20	45	28	1 428
Students use ICT for projects or class work	6	38	42	14	1 418
I demonstrate practical tasks to students who then carry out the same practical tasks	5	24	43	27	1 426
Students learn theory and also use that knowledge to solve practical problems within a lesson	2	19	47	32	1 416
I plan lessons so that when students learn new theory or knowledge they can also apply that theory or knowledge to work-like tasks (work practice)	2	13	48	38	1 423
I use digital technology to prepare or find instructional materials	5	22	45	28	1 421
I use video in my teaching	5	31	48	17	1 435

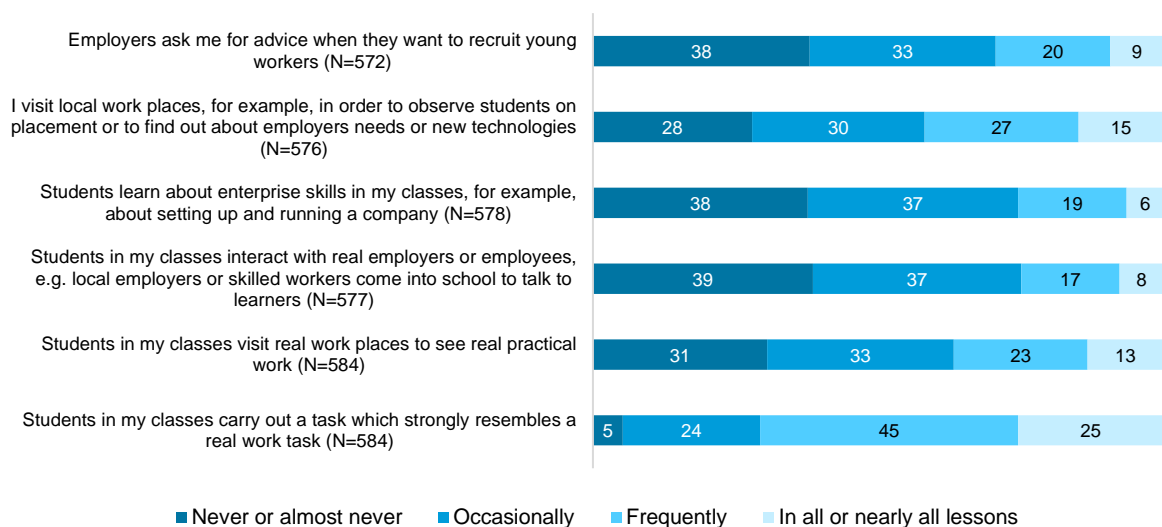
Teachers use active and interactive teaching methods. For example, 63% of teachers use group work frequently or regularly and 66% use case studies. Seventy-six percent of teachers differentiate tasks according to students' ability. A prominent place in pedagogy is given to practice: 70% of teachers expect students to repeat tasks to achieve mastery; 79% combine the study of theory with practical exercises during lessons; 86% combine the study of theory with vocational apprenticeship.

Digitalisation of the educational process determines the active application of information technologies both in the teaching process and in the preparatory process for the lessons: 56% of students use ICT during lessons, 73% use digital technologies when searching for training material, 65% of pedagogues use video in the teaching process.

Links to the workplace

The relationship between theoretical and practical training at school and work-based learning is an important aspect in ensuring a high quality of vocational training. The majority of VET teachers in Belarus design learning tasks that strongly resemble work tasks: 25% apply this approach during all lessons and 45% apply it quite often.

FIGURE 5.1 HOW WELL DO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL LEARNING AND THE WORKPLACE FOR YOUR STUDENTS? (%)



Cooperation with employers takes different forms: students visit real workplaces to see real practical work (36% visit frequently or consistently); students interact with real employers or employees within the framework of the educational institution (25% do so frequently or always); teachers visit local workplaces, for example, in order to observe students on placement or to find out about employers' needs or new technologies (43%). However, only 29% of employers ask for advice when they want to recruit young workers.

Work-based learning

The curriculum and programmes specify that students should undergo practical learning in school workshops under teachers' supervision. When asked about this, 66% of teachers reported that work-

based learning comprised over 10% of the total curriculum, 6% said it accounted for less than 10% and 28% of teachers stated that some of their students have workplaces.

Behaviour and motivation of students

The majority of teachers state that during many (52%) and almost all lessons (27%) students are rather highly motivated. Consequently, teachers do not need to wait for the students to calm down during most of the lessons (98%). Similarly, the students do not disrupt the classes a lot of the time (98%). Therefore, in most cases, teachers work with motivated students. Most teachers (93%) say that they enjoy their work.

Curriculum

The national educational standard and the standard curriculum form the basis for planning teaching. A mandatory requirement for approving the educational and curricular documentation in a profile is that it meets the needs of employers and other stakeholders. However, a school can decide itself to change up to 30% of the curriculum, taking into account regional interests and the needs of core enterprises.

Most of the respondents (86%) replied that they use the state educational standard and standard curriculum and training programmes for disciplines in the teaching process. Seventy-five percent develop a teaching process plan for different topics and modules over the course of the year. Seventy percent of VET teachers always develop a detailed plan for their lessons. The majority of the respondents (81%) always take account of the needs of employers when planning their teaching.

Educational resources

The survey results show that 63% of teachers believe that students have full access to relevant training materials for all or almost all of the lessons and only 11% of students do not have access or have limited access to relevant resources.

Almost half the teachers (49%) say that all their classes are adequately equipped while 35% say that most of their classes are appropriately equipped. Similar proportions (49% and 33%, respectively) report that classes have access to adequate consumables.

According to 37% of respondents, access to computer equipment and software is usual for all their classes; 36% note that digital technologies in the classroom are almost always available to them. At the same time, a third of teachers note that their classes do not have access to the internet. It is noteworthy that 47% of respondents believe that students never use a digital learning environment while 20% state that they only sometimes use it.

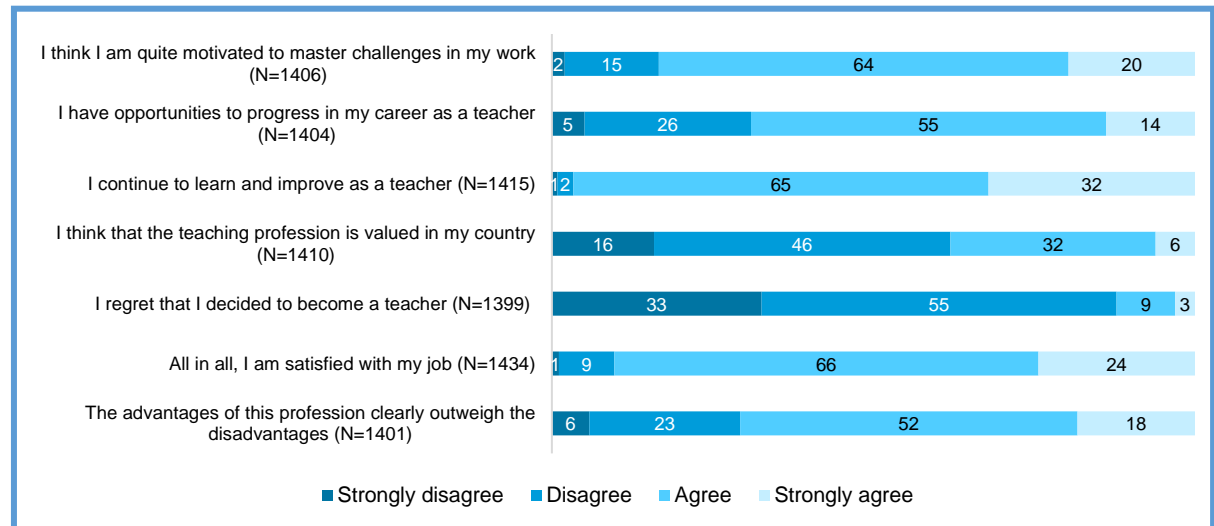
Assessment

In terms of pedagogical activity, teachers in vocational schools use various methods for assessing students' competencies. Teachers mostly use independently developed assessment tools in all or nearly all lessons (53% of respondents); 35% of respondents often use them. The quality of work performed by the students during the lesson is promptly assessed (56%). Standardised tests (51%), mutual assessment of students in groups (50%) and oral questioning (42%) are also often used in lessons. Fifty-three percent of respondents indicate that they use special educational tasks for students who need additional training.

Career and job satisfaction

Qualitative indicators of job satisfaction are represented in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2 HOW STRONGLY DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT YOUR JOB? (%)



In general, teachers are satisfied with their profession (90%) and are motivated to solve basic pedagogical issues (64% of respondents agree with this statement; 20% share the view completely). Almost all (97%) agree that they continue to learn professionally and 69% say that they have the opportunity to develop their careers as teachers (only 14% strongly agree).

Only 12% of respondents say that they regret becoming a teacher and 70% say that the advantages of this profession clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

However, attention should be drawn to the fact that the majority of teachers believe that the pedagogical profession is not valued in Belarus (46% of respondents agree with this statement and 16% strongly agree with it) and only a third (38%) of teachers believe that the profession is valued in society.

Quite a high level of job satisfaction is expressed by principals – 74% of principals are satisfied with their profession, 21% are strongly satisfied.

- Respondents like to work in their educational institution (47% agree with this statement and 51% strongly agree with it).
- They are not ready to work in another educational institution whenever possible (47% agree with this statement and 47% strongly agree with it).
- They can recommend their educational institution as a good place to work (55% agree with this statement and 45% strongly agree with it).
- The majority of principals would not change their position if it was possible to change it (56% agree with this statement and 28% strongly agree with it).
- They are satisfied with the results of their work (79% agree with this statement and 10% strongly agree with it).

It should also be noted that the majority of principals consider that the advantages of their profession outweigh the disadvantages (53.4% agree with this statement and 32% strongly agree with it) and that

the teaching profession is valued in society (54% agree with this statement and 15% strongly agree with it). A third of principals (31%) believe that the teaching profession is not valued in society.

Conclusions

The majority of vocational teachers apply advanced educational methods and technologies. For example, group methods are often or constantly used by 63% of teachers and case studies by 66%. Teaching is often practice-oriented and differentiated.

Most classes have access to up-to-date equipment and adequate consumables. Digital technology is commonly used by teachers to prepare materials and as part of teaching and learning. However, 44% of teachers say that digital technologies are used only occasionally by students in their classes and only two-thirds of the respondents say that there is access to reliable and appropriate computer hardware and software in nearly all classes. A third of the teachers note the lack of access to the internet to support learning in their subject. Only 12% of students use a digital learning environment, e.g. Moodle.

Most teachers report that they frequently or always connect practice to theory and get students to learn through work-like tasks. Practical training should occupy 40% of the curriculum but this is based on school workshops rather than the workplace. Only a minority of teachers and learners have regular contact with employers. In order to enhance the quality of vocational education, it is necessary to improve the methods and forms of direct cooperation between teachers and employers.

Teachers say that students are, for the most part, well motivated and that there are no behavioural problems. In planning and designing lessons, teachers use national educational standards and standard educational and curricular documentation but most also design their own programmes and lesson plans, adapting national standards to the needs of their students.

In general, teachers and principals are satisfied with their profession and their work. The majority report that they continue to learn and that they have the possibility of progressing in their career. However, according to the majority of teachers and a third of principals, teachers are not greatly respected in Belarus.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
Most teachers have relatively little direct contact or cooperation with employers.	Develop effective mechanisms for cooperation between educational institutions and employers.
Only around one-third of vocational classes involve the use of digital educational technology by students.	Create a digital educational environment in educational institutions, and above all, provide network access in the classes. Improve teachers' skills in applying digital educational resources.
Vocational teachers do not feel valued in Belarus.	Create opportunities for vocational teachers to gain recognition and rewards, for example, through the career system or by giving them opportunities for development, creativity and leadership.

PART 2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

6. POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Belarus has a regulatory and normative system and a published strategy defining the framework and the priorities in the field of CPD of VET teachers and mechanisms for their implementation.

Legislation and strategy relating to CPD

The Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education of 13 January 2011 No 243–3 defines the requirements for teachers, their rights and obligations, and restrictions on pedagogical activity.

The Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of 28 April 2001 No 53 (On Approval of the Qualification Reference Book of Employees' Positions) describes the duties and qualification requirements for teaching staff of VET institutions.

The regulation on CPD for management personnel and specialists establishes:

- a time frame to obtain additional adult education;
- professional development of all VET teachers at least once every five years (the duration of training shall be at least 72 hours);
- requirements for pedagogical staff providing CPD for employees⁴.

The long-term objectives of the workforce policy of the vocational education system in the Republic of Belarus (hereafter referred to as Belarus unless referring to a decree or resolution) are reflected in the document entitled *Conceptual approaches to the development of the education system of the Republic of Belarus for 2020 and a perspective up to 2030*⁵. The main tasks are the introduction of innovative technologies, distance learning, the transition to modular educational programmes in the training of teachers and the introduction of online learning.

The priorities to improve the system of pedagogical (engineering and pedagogical) education in modern socio-economic conditions, as well as the possibilities of improving its social efficiency, are outlined in the 'Concept of pedagogical education development for 2015–2020', approved by Decree of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus No 156 of 25 February 2015.

Policy implementation

The national and sectoral programmes constitute the mechanism for implementing the adopted strategy.

The Education and Youth Policy state programme for 2016–2020, approved by the Council of Ministers' Resolution of 28 March 2016 No 250, establishes sources of funding, key indicators of training, professional development and retraining of teachers in vocational education institutions,

⁴ Approved by Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 15 July 2011 No 954, 'About single questions of additional education of adults'.

⁵ Approved by Decree No 742 of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus of 29 November 2017.

mechanisms for improving the professional competence of teachers and instructors based on WorldSkills International standards and internships abroad.

The sectoral programme of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus (Personnel 2018–2025), approved by the Decree of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus of 29 November 2017 No 754, defines the main measures to improve the staffing of the education system, including the VET education system:

- creation of a sectoral qualification framework and a sectoral qualification council;
- development and implementation of a professional standard for vocational teachers;
- updating of the content of educational programmes for training VET teachers;
- implementation of joint training programmes for teachers with client organisations;
- internships for teaching staff abroad;
- introduction of modern educational technologies.

Specific development goals and objectives are specified in the documents listed above. Development programmes (e.g. Education and Youth Policy, Personnel) are normally elaborated for five years. Previous objectives are analysed and the implementation of previous programmes and concepts is reviewed.

Every year, the Ministry of Education analyses the implementation of the benchmarks of the programme. The achievements and the need to adjust the activities are analysed. Since these results are interim, they are not yet publicly available. The results of the entire programme will be published.

Conclusions

Belarus has a regulatory framework for the professional development of teachers. There are strategies and programmes in place which aim to improve the quality and relevance of professional development.

Conditions, advancements and problem areas in the CPD of teachers and principals are periodically systematically analysed and evaluated at national level, taking into account changing requirements to pedagogical activity imposed by the labour market, society, pedagogical and technological advancements, successful experience and the real needs of certain categories of workers.

The results of this analysis form the basis for the development of normative documents and programmes, which include the enhancement of conditions and creation of new opportunities and incentives for professional growth.

The main focus of CPD is to enhance the interaction of vocational education institutions and enterprises for which qualified staff are trained.

7. ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING CPD FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS

Belarus has developed an integrated system for the provision of CPD at national and local levels.

Ministry of Education in Belarus

The Ministry of Education in Belarus defines the policy and strategy for personnel development, including CPD of vocational teachers. This entails the:

- development of norms and laws regulating the training and professional development system;
- development and approval of state and sectoral programmes that relate to staffing issues in institutions of vocational and secondary specialised education (e.g. Education and Youth Policy (state programme), Personnel 2018–2025 (sectoral programme), the concept for the digital transformation of education);
- coordination of the development of professional standards for teachers in educational institutions;
- approval of educational standards and model curricula for training and retraining of principals and teachers in vocational and secondary specialised education institutions, as well as educational standards for teacher training;
- approval of admission quotas for initial education of teachers in special secondary education (training of instructors), higher education (training of teachers of engineering) and additional adult education (retraining of instructors, teachers and principals; professional development of all teaching staff);
- licensing of educational activities;
- definition of policies and requirements for certification of teaching staff;
- monitoring and control of the quality assurance of the educational process.

The Department of Education Quality Control has been established and is successfully operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for monitoring and controlling the training quality of instructors and teachers in institutions of secondary specialised, higher and additional adult education. One of the main criteria in the licensing and accreditation of profiles is the capacity of staff. This department evaluates the compliance of principals and teaching staff with the requirements of qualification profiles and other regulations.

Regional education authorities (and the Education Committee of Minsk)

These authorities coordinate the activities of the education, sports and tourism departments of the regional executive committees, and resolve regional education issues in cooperation with them. The main tasks of regional education authorities are: implementing state policy in the field of education (including vocational education); implementing state personnel policy in the field of education; identifying, synthesising and sharing good pedagogical practice in new training and education technologies; organising scientific and methodological project appraisals to improve the educational process.

Regional education authorities (and the Education Committee of Minsk) manage the implementation of national action plans by education providers. They administer salaries and, in Minsk, collect data relating to participation in CPD by general teachers. They oversee the work of the regional methodological centres.

RIPO

RIPO is a multifunctional educational institution providing strategic, scientific, methodological and personnel support for the vocational education system in Belarus.

In the field of CPD, RIPO:

- analyses the main trends and issues in professional development and forecasts the development of vocational, specialised secondary education and additional adult education systems;
- conducts basic and applied scientific research, including in the field of CPD of teaching staff;
- develops professional standards for vocational school teachers and heads of vocational education institutions;
- elaborates proposals for drafts of regulatory legal acts governing the functioning of vocational education, specialised secondary education and additional adult education systems;
- develops and updates educational standards in the field of secondary specialised education for the training and retraining of instructors and teachers;
- develops and implements curricula for the professional development of principals and teachers in vocational and secondary specialised education institutions;
- provides scientific and methodological support for the certification of teaching staff in the vocational education system; organises and conducts the qualification examination for the certification of teaching staff;
- maintains and analyses electronic databases: professional education personnel and the reserve for senior managers.

In accordance with the legislation of Belarus, the function of CPD of all categories of VET teachers is assigned to RIPO. Teachers of special disciplines and instructors can improve their pedagogical and digital skills mainly through CPD offered by RIPO. Retraining of teaching staff of VET and secondary special education institutions, who have no pedagogical education, is also carried out by RIPO. In the implementation of educational programmes for advanced training and retraining, RIPO cooperates with the leading colleges of the republic, centres of excellence and enterprises. RIPO employs approximately 250 staff, of which 172 are experts.

State educational institution: Republican Institute of Higher School

This institution provides scientific and methodological support for the design of educational standards and educational and curricular documentation of higher educational programmes for the training and professional development of teachers in vocational education institutions.

Main information and analytical centre of the Ministry of Education

This body has the following responsibilities:

- identification of strategies for the development and implementation of information technology and telecommunications in the education system of Belarus;
- development and publication of annual reviews, including information about the workforce of the vocational education system;
- development and publication of educational and methodological materials, elaboration of the software focusing on the use of information resources and telecommunications in the educational process and scientific research.

Regional methodological centres of vocational education (including centres operating under the auspices of educational development institutions)

Regional methodological centres of vocational education are responsible for:

- analysing vocational education teaching and methodological resources at regional level (and in Minsk), major trends and development issues in the VET system and the specialised secondary education system in the region;
- providing methodological assistance to vocational education institutions (including teachers) in the region in the area of scientific and methodological support for the educational process;
- participating (together with RIPO, educational development institution) in the implementation of educational programmes for professional development and of internships for teaching staff of VET and specialised secondary education institutions;
- analysing and determining the need for professional development and retraining of teachers in VET and specialised secondary education institutions in the region (Minsk);
- identifying, reviewing, synthesising and disseminating positive pedagogical experience and implementing of development measures for pedagogical creativity.

The regional methodological centres work closely with RIPO to provide training in the regions. Every year, RIPO conducts about 20% of educational programmes for advanced training in the regions. The regional methodological centre contributes some training expertise and knowledge of local training needs. Regional methodological centres vary in size but most employ 10 to 20 people. The leading specialists in the regional methodological centres are actively involved in implementing the content of these courses and reflecting the regional aspects of the development of vocational education.

Secondary specialised education, higher education, additional adult education, providing training for teaching staff in vocational education institutions

The system of continuing engineering and pedagogical education in Belarus includes:

- secondary specialised engineering and pedagogical education;
- higher engineering and pedagogical education;
- postgraduate education;
- additional adult education.

Secondary specialised engineering and pedagogical education

Eleven colleges offer three- or four-year programmes to prepare instructors to work in vocational and specialised secondary schools. College graduates receive qualifications by sector (e.g. engineering, metallurgy, energy, transport, light industry, automation, construction, agriculture, catering, hairdressing) and the qualification 'master of industrial training'.

Graduates of colleges can work as instructors in vocational and secondary specialised education institutions; they also have the opportunity to obtain higher education on a fast-track basis.

Higher engineering and pedagogical education

A two-stage system of pedagogical staff training is implemented at the level of higher pedagogical education: specialists and instructors. The first stage (four years of training) produces trained specialists who have fundamental and specialist knowledge as well as pedagogical and technical skills in line with

the training profiles. They can work in educational institutions at all levels. However, universities currently only offer programmes to train teachers in the more popular specialisations. In institutions of higher education, participants can obtain the qualification 'engineer-teacher' in nine fields, i.e. mechanical engineering, radio electronics, power engineering, woodworking, construction, agro-engineering, computer science, economics and management and road transport. Teachers are currently not trained in areas such as communications, forestry, printing, chemical, mining or geodesy).

This means that schools must either recruit other teachers for other branches directly from industry (in which case they will lack pedagogical training) or arrange for a programme to be taught by a teacher with a 'related' specialisation.

The second stage of higher education – master's degree programme (one to two years) – focuses on skills and knowledge of educational research, scientific and innovative activities. Alternatively, there is a practice-oriented, managerial master's, aimed at preparing school principals.

Higher education institutions also train psychologists, special needs teachers and educators for vocational education institutions.

The professional development of teachers (instructors) for physical culture is carried out in the Belarusian State University of Physical Culture; teachers of general education disciplines can improve their skills at regional institutes of educational development and the Academy of Postgraduate Education.

Additional adult education

CPD (for non-teachers) is carried out in additional adult education institutions

Enterprises

Some enterprises offer internships to teachers.

VET and special secondary educational institutions

Schools have a responsibility for the professional development of their teaching staff and they issue certificates to recognise this CPD. This is dealt with in Chapter 10.

Centres of excellence

Centres of excellence are vocational education institutions with additional responsibilities. In 2018, 43 centres of excellence operated in Belarus. In partnership with RIPO, they provide professional development of instructors and teachers of special disciplines.

Belarusian Trade Union Workers for Education and Science

This association:

- protects the professional, labour and socio-economic rights and legal interests of teachers;
- seeks to improve the welfare and living standards of members of the trade union;
- ensures the protection of the right of trade union members to work, to get a job, to upgrade their skills and to receive fair and timely remuneration;
- promotes health protection and the creation of healthy and safe working conditions;
- participates in the development of draft legislative acts and sectoral regulatory documents governing labour and social relations;

- controls the practical implementation of priorities recognised under the law in the field of education and science.

Other

International organisations support the professional development of teachers through advice, funding and training activities. For example, the ETF holds workshops for representatives of educational institutions, including VET and special secondary educational institutions. VET institutions (teachers) take part in international technical assistance and mobility projects such as Erasmus + and MOST.

Recently, the professional development of teachers and masters of instruction has been carried out on the basis of standards developed by WorldSkills International. Teachers have the opportunity to undergo internships internationally.

Conclusions

Responsibilities relating to the initial and continuing professional development of teachers and instructors are clearly assigned. The ministry plays a role in formulating strategy. There are 11 specialist colleges dedicated to the training of instructors and 4 higher education institutions with responsibility for the training of teachers (at bachelor's or master's level). However, initial teacher education does not provide specialist training for many industries. RIPO is the main provider of CPD for teachers and instructors and it also sets standards, manages data and analyses needs. A specialist body collects data and schools have clear responsibilities for the CPD of their teachers. Regional authorities help to research needs and provide pedagogical expertise and training. Employers contribute by providing traineeships for teachers. On occasion, employers help to design some CPD programmes. The design of some programmes takes into account standards developed by WorldSkills International.

However, the social partners still play a very limited role in identifying the qualification requirements for teachers with regard to their industrial training, quality assurance, implementation of practical training programmes and the organisation of internships in an industrial production environment.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
There is unmet demand from teachers for internships and CPD of teachers and instructors in the field of innovative technologies.	RIPO and regional authorities should work in partnership with enterprises to set up more internships for teachers that address innovative technologies which match the needs of teachers and instructors. RIPO and regional authorities should access additional expertise to design and deliver CPD that addresses training needs, e.g. by upskilling trainers of trainers, working with industry, higher education.
There are no organisations authorised to provide online CPD that is formally recognised.	The ministry should develop norms and laws to assign responsibility and recognise online CPD.
VET institutions have little interest in participating in international projects and programmes.	RIPO and regional authorities should develop awareness of the opportunities for participating in international technical assistance programmes (projects) among vocational education institutions.
Rapid changes in production technologies mean that teachers and instructors are not fully competent in current techniques and work practices.	The ministry and RIPO should develop incentives to motivate social partners to cooperate in the field of improving the professional competence of teachers.
Initial training does not address professional or pedagogical competencies relevant to some profiles or sectors.	Assess the training gap and, if justified, develop flexible modes to meet this need, for example, initial training partly in vocational providers.

8. DESIGN, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND FUNDING

Identifying training needs

Two methods are used to identify training needs and determine priorities.

- National training needs and priorities are defined in relation to national policies and translated into programmes which are then delivered (top-down).
- The individual training needs of teachers are identified and they inform CPD provision (bottom-up).

Both of these methods are used in the development of a strategy at national level and the practical organisation of CPD at the level of schools and CPD providers. In the first case, five-year state programmes for the development of vocational education are developed. The programme objectives, mechanisms for their implementation, financing and professional development are defined. Issues relating to the quality and quantity of the vocational teacher workforce are considered at meetings of the Board of the Ministry of Education. These meetings inform the 'letter for the new school year', which is sent to all educational institutions. This letter contains recommendations for personnel development in accordance with national priorities.

Thus, the letter entitled 'By the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year' contains a special section – No 5 Improvement of professional competence of educational institutions' employees – which explains the changes in the rules for certification of VET employees for assignment of the first and highest categories.

At the board meeting, general issues regarding pedagogical professional development at national level and issues of staffing vocational education institutions are considered. Specific proposals for improving the quality of training of teachers and instructors are then developed by RIPO.

The scientific and methodological centre within each regional centre and in the city of Minsk develops training activities in line with these national priorities. In addition, RIPO provides a list of CPD programmes that they have designed in the light of national priorities. Every year, RIPO offers over 40 different CPD courses for VET principals and teachers, the theme and the content of which are constantly updated. Thus, for the 2018/19 academic year, taking into account the development priorities and actual requests of teachers, six fundamentally new programmes (15%) were developed and the courses most in demand were updated. RIPO is also responsible for maintaining a national database of the vocational teacher and instructor workforce. This database records information about qualifications, education, CPD and work experience.

Training needs analysis at school level is linked to the cycle of internal and external evaluation that relates to institutions and programmes and results in accreditation. Evaluation must take place at least once every five years. Institutions are expected to carry out self-evaluation, following a nationally defined methodology. External evaluation results in the development of an institutional development plan, which will include a workforce development plan. Demand for training is driven by the legal requirement that all teachers and instructors participate in 72 hours of training every five years.

Funding

The national state budget for education provides for the cost of CPD. Relevant budgetary funds are allocated to those republican and regional organisations that have received a license and are accredited to implement the relevant educational programmes. Such organisations include RIPO, the Academy of Postgraduate Education and regional institutes for the development of education. As a result, they provide CPD to vocational education schools for free.

The schools pay teachers' travel, food and accommodation expenses from their own budget. Private schools pay all expenses, including CPD, from their own budget.

Conclusions

National priorities for CPD for vocational teachers and trainers are set at ministerial level. They take account of national policies and analyses of information emerging from school evaluations. The ministry issues an annual letter, which shapes the design and provision of CPD programmes for vocational teachers and instructors offered by the regional methodological centres of vocational education and, nationally, by RIPO.

Funding for CPD for vocational teachers and instructors is assigned to RIPO and the regional methodological centres. The funding is used to design and provide CPD, which is provided free of charge to vocational schools although schools pay for travel, food and accommodation for participating teachers.

It is not clear how effectively these processes work to identify and prioritise the most urgent training needs at vocational school level. It is not clear how RIPO, donor organisations and the regional methodological centres coordinate their offerings and how they provide new pedagogical and professional skills (as opposed to maintaining current ones). It is reported that teachers lack the professional development needed to enable them to address the challenges and opportunities of new educational and industrial technologies, in particular those associated with Industry 4.0. Some of these training needs in the future may be met through internships in enterprises and organisations, in scientific laboratories and centres of excellence both in Belarus and abroad. Online learning may also prove to be a tool to address these training needs. More generally, it is recognised by stakeholders that CPD should be more diverse and more responsive to the needs of individual teachers, instructors and schools.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
The development of industrial and educational technologies is accelerating and an inert system of CPD exists in vocational education institutions.	Provide teachers and instructors with industrial experience in the field of modern technologies and CPD to enable them to make use of digital technologies in education.
Online learning has the potential to increase the diversity, volume and personalisation of the CPD offering.	Increase the share of educational programmes of advanced training implemented in distance learning.
The CPD offering does not always benefit from up-to-date information about teachers' training needs.	Develop training programmes on the basis of known needs.

9. VOLUME, MODE AND TYPE OF CPD PROVISION BY PROVIDERS OTHER THAN VET SCHOOLS

Information from providers

Catalogues of CPD programmes are publicly available on RIPO's website and on the websites of other educational institutions. RIPO offers more than 30 professional development programmes for VET teachers and instructors for 2019.

Information about the total number of training events provided and the number of participants is collected by the Ministry of Education, RIPO and the regional educational and methodological centres of vocational education. Records are maintained by the Main Information and Analytical Centre of the Ministry of Education. In 2018, 2 991 executive employees and specialists in educational institutions across Belarus were trained in the programme for professional development (duration of 72 hours); 83 instructors were trained in retraining programmes on the basis of specialised secondary education (duration of 1 year); 555 teachers were trained in retraining programmes on the basis of higher education (duration of 2 years).

Participation in CPD

According to the survey, 67% of vocational teachers and instructors participated in some kind of CPD in the last 12 months. More than two-thirds of them (70%) reported that they had participated in some kind of conference or seminar and 59% said that they had participated in CPD relevant to their vocational speciality. Over half (53%) were able to observe teaching in other schools. However, only 16% benefited from CPD on business premises or training in firms and the survey indicates that relatively little professional development takes place through industry placements in Belarus.

It is impressive that almost half (48%) of vocational teachers and instructors are already using online and digital learning independently for CPD. There is currently relatively little online provision by Belarussian CPD providers so teachers must be accessing other material. Only 17% of teachers and instructors are involved in CPD that leads to formal qualifications, such as part-time postgraduate qualifications.

TABLE 9.1 SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF CPD (IN-SERVICE TRAINING) OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS

	%	N
In-service training out of school	49	1 464
In-service training in school	49	1 424
In-service training in and out of school (combined)	67	1 478
Professional development	59	1 347
Education conferences or seminars	70	1 435
Observation visits to other schools	53	1 407
Observation visits or in-service training courses that took place on business premises	16	1 379
Online learning or video tutorials	48	1 411
Study as part of a formal qualification	17	1 361
Total	89	1 217

How many hours of CPD?

Teachers who participated in in-service training in and out of school during the last 12 months spent an average of 59 hours in professional development. Of those teachers who engaged in CPD, 64% spent at least 30 hours on CPD. Of the 59% who engaged in CPD relating to their professional speciality, 50% spent at least 30 hours on CPD. Although the majority of teachers attended conferences or visited other schools, they did so only for an average of about 16 hours.

TABLE 9.2 HOURS SPENT ON THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF CPD (IN-SERVICE TRAINING) OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS

	Average number of hours	% of respondents with 30 hours or more	N
In-service training in and out of school (combined)	59	64	901
Professional development	75	50	791
Education conferences or seminars	16	12	1 003
Observation visits to other schools	17	12	751
Observation visits or in-service training courses that took place on business premises	28	33	215
Online learning or video tutorials	35	28	683
Study as part of a formal qualification	89	59	235

Note: Values calculated only for those who participated in the specific training.

Participation by age and by teaching experience

The share of VET teachers who participated in professional development during the last 12 months is almost the same across different age groups and across groups of teachers with different lengths of teaching activity.

It is perhaps surprising that 60% of teachers and instructors under the age of 29 participated in CPD compared to 69% of those aged 50 to 59. Among teachers with less than five years' service, the proportion of those who took part in CPD is 63% whereas 70% of teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience participated to CPD.

The number of hours of participation differs noticeably. The share of those who spent 60 hours or more during the year is lowest in the age group of 60 years and older (30%) and highest in the age group up to 29 years (44%).

Participation in CPD by institution size

Participation to CPD is highest among those who work in average-sized institutions: 69% in institutions with 21 to 40 people and 75% in institutions with between 41 and 60 teachers. In small institutions (up to 29 teachers) and large institutions (more than 60 teachers), the share of those who took part in CPD is lower: 63% and 68%, respectively.

Participation in CPD by region

The survey suggests that participation in CPD varies by region. Participation in professional development of at least 30 hours (both inside and/or outside their educational institution) during the last 12 months ranged from 55% (Grodno region) to 71% (Minsk).

TABLE 9.3 PARTICIPATION OF TEACHERS IN IN-SERVICE TRAINING (INSIDE AND/OR OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL) OF AT LEAST 30 HOURS BY REGION (%)

	%	N
Brest region	65	196
Vitebsk region	66	108
Grodno region	55	98
Gomel region	59	163
Mogilev region	69	210
Minsk region	59	34
Minsk	71	92
Total	64	901

Note: Values calculated only for those who participated in the specific training.

Payment for CPD

Eighty percent of respondents reported that they did not spend their personal funds on participation in CPD; 15% of respondents paid a part of the cost of participation in CPD, 5% of respondents paid the full cost of CPD.

Type of CPD

A minority of vocational teachers and instructors participated in collaborative forms of CPD over the last 12 months: 29% engaged in peer observation or mentoring; 38% communicated regularly with a network of other teachers. This suggests that formal seminars are still the predominant mode of CPD. However, 69% of teachers and instructors said that they participated in collaborative or individual research.

Table 9.4 shows the most frequent topics covered by CPD (for those who participated in CPD). These were: methods of student evaluation and assessment practices; ICT skills for teaching; approaches to individualised learning; new technologies in the workplace; pedagogical competencies in teaching own subject field(s), including giving feedback to learners.

A small percentage of respondents participated in professional development activities on the following topics: teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting; approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work; and teaching students with special needs.

TABLE 9.4 SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN CPD ACTIVITIES ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS (%)

	%	N
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field(s)	77	1 425
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field(s), including giving feedback to learners	83	1 388
Knowledge of the curriculum	81	1 407
Student evaluation and assessment practices	86	1 381
ICT skills for teaching	85	1 387
Student behaviour and classroom management	82	1 364
Approaches to individualised learning	85	1 378
Teaching students with special needs	66	1 342
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	52	1 334
Teaching cross-curricular skills	73	1 347
Approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work	62	1 336
New technologies in the workplace	83	1 383
Student career guidance and counselling	71	1 344
Updating my professional knowledge and skills in relation to current practice in the workplace	80	1 356
Addressing the issues of learners at risk of early leaving and learner dropout	78	1 358

CPD of principals

The results of the principals' survey show a high level of participation in CPD: 94% of principals participated actively in courses, conferences or observational visits during the last 12 months. Moreover, the majority of respondents (75%) spent more than 30 hours a year on participating in such CPD activities.

Every second principal who took part in the survey reported that he or she had spent more than 30 hours a year participating in the work of a professional network, mentoring or in a research activity. In total, 74% of respondents were involved in these activities.

A large majority (83%) of respondents noted that they had taken part in other, unidentified, activities aimed at their professional development.

Conclusions

Overall, 67% of vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus participated in CPD over the last 12 months. This is below the OECD average of 85%. Only 64% of these participants benefited from 30 hours or more of CPD. More positively, 59% of teachers and instructors reported participating in CPD relating to their vocational speciality. Only 16% of respondents participated in CPD or training on employers' premises. On the other hand, 48% of teachers and instructors independently make use of digital and online learning opportunities to support their own CPD. School size and region may somehow influence teachers' and instructors' access to CPD.

CPD often takes the form of seminars – perhaps for two days over the course of 12 months. Most teachers collaborate in their teaching, particularly with their peers.

Most principals (94%) participated in courses, conferences or observational visits during the last 12 months, of which 75% spent at least 30 hours on CPD.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
Enterprises have relatively little involvement in the design or delivery of CPD and teachers and instructors only rarely update their skills and knowledge of their professional speciality.	Industry should be engaged in designing and providing CPD, for example, by providing more internships for teachers.
Around one-third of teachers and instructors received no CPD in the last 12 months.	All vocational teachers and instructors should have the opportunity to participate in some relevant CPD each year.

10. SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Responsibilities of the school

Each educational institution develops a strategic operational development plan (for three to five years). Each plan contains sections reflecting the organisation of collective and individual professional development of teachers. The needs for the development of teaching staff are defined, taking into account:

- a SWOT analysis of the external and internal environment;
- the development of the educational institution;
- new specialties or profiles;
- the introduction of new pedagogical competencies;
- the adoption of modern educational technologies and training tools.

The plan sets deadlines and identifies resources and people responsible for its execution. The principals and deputy principals of the educational institutions are responsible for planning and organising CPD of employees. One of the deputy principals is usually responsible for coordinating CPD. In some leading educational institutions (engaged in experimental or innovative activities), there are special positions of deputy director for educational and methodological work and methodologist.

The training plan should be executed through a combination of external and internal training. External training includes courses and advanced training; internships; excursions; and seminars. Internal training includes mentoring; attendance at colleagues' lessons; demonstration lessons; and practical sessions delivered within the school.

External programmes are usually provided free of charge. However, the school is expected to pay for accommodation, travel and living expenses. Internal training should be financed from the school's own budget. In practice, it seems that constraints exist: 49% of teachers reported that they participated in CPD in their schools over the last 12 months (the same percentage that participated in CPD out of school).

Induction programmes

Induction is a form of training carried out by schools to prepare new staff to work in that organisation. Two-thirds (68%) of teachers and instructors started their professional activities with some kind of induction programme. However, 52% of respondents had informal inductions and 54% had purely administrative inductions. According to principals, induction programmes are offered to all new teachers in 67% of educational institutions and only to teachers new to teaching in 33% of educational institutions.

Induction for new teachers may include mentoring by experienced teachers (in 96% of cases), courses or seminars (81%), scheduled meetings with the principal and/or teaching colleagues (87%) are included in the implementation of induction programmes. In addition, in some cases, there is a system of peer review (43%); networking/virtual communities (28%); collaboration with other schools (58%); team teaching (together with more experienced teachers) (87%); and a system of diaries, journals and portfolios to facilitate learning and reflection.

Mentoring

In 84% of educational institutions, there is a mentoring system to which all teachers have access. Mentoring is recognised as part of the quality management standards of the educational institution. In 84% of schools, the mentor's main subject field(s) is/are the same as that of the teacher being mentored. Mentors may be remunerated, depending on their impact, from the financial stimulation fund. One-quarter (25%) of teachers and instructors are currently being mentored, while 31% say they have acted as a mentor for at least one month. Only 25% say they have received training to act as a mentor.

Collaboration

The survey provides evidence that the majority of vocational teachers and instructors do collaborate professionally. Almost three-quarters (73%) reported planned discussions about teaching with their colleagues in the last month and 76% reported informal discussions about teaching. Planned discussions with managers or advisers were less common – 39% of teachers reported having them.

Feedback for teachers in schools

Teachers do not seem to receive feedback from observation very frequently in Belarus although most teachers say that they have received feedback at some stage. Thirty-eight percent of teachers and instructors have received feedback from their principals; 40% have received it from other teachers, but only 8% have received feedback from people outside their school. Feedback for teachers following the assessment of students is at much the same level.

An annual survey of employee satisfaction with professional development is conducted to identify the needs of individual teachers. A survey on the provision of methodological assistance is also conducted. Quality management specialists and the deputy principal of educational and methodological work analyse the surveys.

Conclusions

Schools are expected to organise professional development for their own teachers. A deputy principal is usually responsible and this CPD may take different forms. It seems that CPD that takes place in the school is as important quantitatively as CPD outside of the school but we do not know much about the actual practice, quality or effectiveness of this CPD. It is doubtful whether schools can independently provide CPD to meet certain kinds of training needs, for example, to address new technical and instructional technologies.

Mentoring takes place in most schools. Mentors may receive additional payment for their work. However, mentoring appears to be limited to new teachers and only 25% of mentors have received training. Induction for new teachers is usual but not universal. Formal induction is not common for experienced teachers who change schools.

Feedback to teachers as a result of observation of their teaching or assessment of students does not seem to be a common practice. There is little feedback from external inspectors, mentors or advisers. This means that perhaps half of teachers and instructors do not get the chance to improve their teaching in the light of feedback; without feedback it is difficult to offer more individualised forms of CPD.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
The practice of providing expert feedback to teachers in the light of observation and the assessment of students does not seem to be well developed.	Schools could be encouraged and supported to provide feedback to teachers and instructors. This might take the form of training and guidance.
Much of CPD is provided in schools but it is not clear how this is quality assured and how well adapted it is to needs.	Support schools to evaluate and ensure the quality of the CPD they provide.
CPD provision is not always relevant to the professional development needs and career needs of teachers.	Strengthen communication between teachers, managers and methodologists within educational institutions who are working to meet the training needs of individuals, e.g. by developing individual training plans.

11. RELEVANCE AND IMPACT OF CPD

Matching teachers to programmes

The Ministry of Education approves admission quotas and budgets for CPD programmes provided by RIPO. It is up to the regional boards of education to set budgets for regional institutions of education. Schools are provided with admission quotas and a catalogue of specific programmes at the beginning of the year. A teacher submits an application for CPD with the support of his or her school principal. According to the legislation, a teacher should undertake CPD at least once every five years. The choice of programme depends upon the preferences of the teacher, the needs of the school and what is in the catalogue. A key role in the choice of the qualification upgrading directions is given to schools. In addition, a teacher can also request an internship if supported by his or her principal. Schools decide on the premises for internships in enterprises so that their teachers can master innovative sectoral technologies. Generally, core enterprises and school partners provide premises for the internship.

How relevant is the CPD offering?

Only about 18% of vocational teachers and instructors report that there is no relevant CPD available for them, which suggests that most of them believe that the offering is relevant. Respondents who did not receive training on the above topics were asked to evaluate their need for specific kinds of training. Around one-third of non-participants reported a moderate or high need for CPD relating to a proposed list of topics (see Table 11.1). This suggests that there is a gap between training needs and training places. New technologies in the workplace and ICT skills for teaching were topics particularly in demand by more than 50% of non-participants.

What impact did training have?

Respondents were asked to evaluate the impact of specific topics of CPD on their teaching. Teachers and instructors rated the impact of CPD relatively highly in relation to: knowledge of the curriculum; student evaluation and assessment practices; updating professional knowledge and skills in relation to current practice in the workplace; teaching my subject field(s), including giving feedback to learners; ICT skills for teaching; and approaches to individualised learning. The topics of CPD that had less impact were: approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work; teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting; and student career guidance and counselling.

TABLE 11.1 RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN SPECIFIC TRAINING BY THE LEVEL OF NEED FOR SUCH TRAINING (%)

	No/low need	Moderate/high need	N
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field(s)	68	32	313
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field(s), including giving feedback to learners	69	31	229
Knowledge of the curriculum	84	16	255
Student evaluation and assessment practices	74	26	185
ICT skills for teaching	46	54	200
Student behaviour and classroom management	77	23	236
Approaches to individualised learning	64	36	205
Teaching students with special needs	68	32	449
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	68	32	623
Teaching cross-curricular skills	64	36	344
Approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work	65	35	498
New technologies in the workplace	42	58	215
Student career guidance and counselling	68	32	381
Updating my professional knowledge and skills in relation to current practice in the workplace	69	31	265
Addressing the issues of learners at risk of early leaving and learner dropout	77	23	288

TABLE 11.2 IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ON TEACHING BY THE FOLLOWING TOPICS (%)

	No/limited impact	Moderate/major impact	Don't know	N
Knowledge and understanding of my subject field(s)	17	75	8	1 101
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field(s), including giving feedback to learners	17	76	8	1 154
Knowledge of the curriculum	15	80	6	1 143
Student evaluation and assessment practices	17	78	5	1 188
ICT skills for teaching	17	76	7	1 179
Student behaviour and classroom management	21	72	7	1 119
Approaches to individualised learning	19	76	5	1 167
Teaching students with special needs	23	62	15	879
Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting	25	50	25	691
Teaching cross-curricular skills	21	67	12	984
Approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work	28	55	17	822
New technologies in the workplace	18	75	6	1 154
Student career guidance and counselling	24	66	11	948
Updating my professional knowledge and skills in relation to current practice in the workplace	16	77	7	1 082
Addressing the issues of learners at risk of early leaving and learner dropout	21	70	9	1 057

Note: Values refer only to those who have participated in the specific training.

In each school, a senior teacher has responsibility for reviewing how CPD can contribute to improving the school as part of the school development plan (over one to five years). Once training has been completed, feedback is collected to measure satisfaction.

Professional standards

The main professional duties, qualifications requirements and knowledge, and skills of teaching employees in VET educational institutions in Belarus are defined in *On Approval of the Employees Qualification Handbook* (Resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection No 53 of 28 April 2001). This handbook informs the development of educational standards for initial teacher education and retraining and the design of CPD.

However, a professional standard for VET teachers is currently under development in Belarus and its approval is planned for 2020. Approval and introduction of professional standards for VET teachers will promote content updating of the educational standards of VET teachers' training and retraining, improvement of the qualification upgrading programmes, and updating of teaching qualifications requirements.

Conclusions

Overall, approximately 80% of vocational teachers and instructors believe that the CPD offering is relevant. However, around one-third of those who did not participate in particular kinds of training said they had training needs relating to particular topics and were not able to access that training.

Teachers report that most CPD has a moderate or good impact upon their teaching. However, for some kinds of training, around 20% of participants report that it had little or no impact. A possible explanation is that these teachers did not engage in the most appropriate CPD.

The impact of CPD nationally and in schools is assessed through feedback from those who participated in training and from their school principals.

The mechanisms and tools for quality management of CPD require further improvement.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
For some kinds of CPD, around 20% of participants reported that it had little or no impact.	Review process by which teachers are matched to programmes.
There is an unmet need for CPD to prepare teachers and instructors of special subjects in relation to new production technologies.	Design and deliver CPD that addresses these needs at VET centres of excellence. Provide additional internships for teachers and instructors. Enact legislation to permit RIPO, the centres of excellence and other bodies to carry out this work.
There is an unmet need for CPD to address the use of ICT.	Elaborate modular multilevel qualification upgrading programmes tailored to the needs of employees in the field of ICT.
Production technologies are rapidly changing with the result that the skills needed by teachers and instructors are renewed.	Devise incentives to engage social partners in cooperation to enhance the professional competencies of teaching staff.

12. RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVISATION

How is CPD recorded?

Recognition of CPD is set out in the Resolution of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus of 27 July 2011 No 194, 'On the documents on education, applications to them, gold, silver medals and documents on training'. For example, successful completion of an educational retraining programme is confirmed by a diploma; completion of an educational advanced training programme is confirmed by a certificate of professional development. Teachers who participate in an educational internship receive a certificate of internship and training courses are confirmed by a certificate.

According to the Code on Education, educational retraining programmes are considered to be additional adult education. Higher or secondary specialised education is necessary to be enrolled in the educational retraining programmes for executive employees and specialists.

Educational retraining programmes for executive employees and specialists with higher education have a duration of at least 1 000 training hours (normally, they last about two years). Educational retraining programmes for executive employees and specialists with secondary specialised education have a duration of at least 600 training hours (normally, they last less than a year).

Institutions that implement these programmes must have a licence to do so. These programmes are implemented by additional adult education institutions, which have special authorisation (a licence) to implement a specific educational programme.

At national level, the CPD of teaching staff is one of the criteria used to assess the quality of a VET school. Documents confirming the participation of teachers in CPD are necessary for successful certification and licensing. CPD can also enable entry to the teaching profession for those who do not have an initial pedagogic qualification. Documents confirming the participation of teachers in CPD are a prerequisite for their access to the attestation procedure for assigning career levels.

Minimum requirements

Official duties and qualification requirements for pedagogical employees of VET institutions were established by the Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of 28 April 2001 No 53, 'On approval of the qualification reference book of employees' positions'.

Higher education, corresponding to pedagogical activity, or higher education corresponding to an academic discipline or retraining in the fields of 'pedagogy' or 'pedagogy, professional education' is required to be a teacher.

Higher (special secondary) education corresponding to pedagogical activity, or higher (special secondary) education corresponding to specialties in educational institutions, and retraining in the specialty 'vocational training' are required to be an instructor.

In addition, the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 15 July 2011 No 954, 'On certain issues of additional adult education', obliges principals of vocational schools to provide employees with professional development as necessary, but at least once every five years. The duration of such an educational programme may not be less than 36 hours.

Career ladder

Pedagogical qualifications and regular participation in professional development are prerequisites for assigning qualification categories to teachers.

According to the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 23 August 2014 No 818, 'On some issues of increasing wages to certain categories of employees of the education system', teachers who gain additional qualification categories receive additional allowances. There are also allowances for principals who successfully ensure professional development for their staff.

A dissertation is required to enable teachers to progress to higher grades.

Barriers to take-up of CPD

Almost all the teachers who took part in the survey (94%) deny lack of interest in participating in professional development as a barrier to participating. Other barriers, according to the respondents, exist to approximately the same extent. The largest number of respondents (23% of the total number) agree that there is a lack of incentives for participating in such activities. Sixteen percent of respondents noted the lack of support from their employer (school).

TABLE 12.1 DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS CONCERNING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS) (%)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N
I do not have the prerequisites (e.g. qualifications, experience, seniority)	34.54	47.55	14.29	3.62	1 407
Professional development is too expensive/unaffordable	19.27	61.25	17.17	2.31	1 427
There is a lack of support from my employer (school)	26.28	57.77	12.65	3.30	1 423
Professional development conflicts with my work schedule	18.92	61.39	16.53	3.16	1 422
I do not have time because of family or personal responsibilities	17.92	60.58	19.68	1.83	1 423
There is no relevant professional development offered	15.85	66.40	15.64	2.11	1 375
There are no incentives for participating in such activities	20.37	56.64	19.02	3.97	1 409
I am not interested in any professional development	43.74	50.25	4.46	1.56	1 413

In general, the principals of schools expressed appreciation for the improved accessibility to CPD. The vast majority of respondents deny the existence of barriers such as the lack of prerequisites (e.g. qualifications, experience and seniority), lack of support from employer (school) or lack of time because of family or personal responsibilities.

In the opinion of principals, the main barrier to their participation in CPD is the lack of relevant professional development offered: 17% of respondents agreed with this statement.

TABLE 12.2 DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS CONCERNING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PRINCIPALS) (%)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I do not have the prerequisites (e.g. qualifications, experience, seniority)	56.72	40.30	2.99	0.00
Professional development is too expensive / unaffordable	28.36	65.67	5.97	0.00
There is a lack of support from my employer (school)	31.34	67.16	1.49	0.00
Professional development conflicts with my work schedule	20.90	71.64	7.46	0.00
I do not have time because of family or personal responsibilities	26.87	70.15	2.99	0.00
There is no relevant professional development offered	19.40	62.69	14.93	2.99
There are no incentives for participating in such activities	31.34	59.70	8.96	0.00

Conclusions

The licensing of educational institutions, the requirements in terms of education and formal qualifications of teachers, the relationship between career promotion and salary, and the low cost of training for teachers all work to encourage teachers to participate in CPD.

However, the effectiveness of these incentives is lower for teachers who have reached pre-retirement and retirement age (28% of the total number), who, as a rule, already have the necessary educational and formal qualifications and the highest allowances for seniority and qualification category.

One-fifth of the teachers who participated in the survey noted that the barriers to their professional development are work schedule (19.7%) and the lack of time due to family or personal circumstances (21.5%). Diversifying the ways in which CPD programmes are provided (e.g. greater use of online learning) and providing recognition for competencies obtained informally may reduce these barriers.

One in six of the survey participants (18% of teachers and 18% of principals) identified the lack of relevant professional development as a barrier to participation. This indicates the need to improve the process by which needs are identified and appropriate provision is assigned to individuals.

Main issues and recommendations

Main issues	Recommendations
Approximately one in six teachers and principals say that the lack of relevant CPD is a barrier to their participation.	Improve the effectiveness of methods to identify training needs and match CPD offerings to those most in need.
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of time is a barrier to participation in CPD.	Review whether CPD may be provided in more flexible ways, for example, in schools and online.
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of incentives is a barrier to participation in CPD.	Review whether the current requalification system and career ladder is successfully incentivising CPD that corresponds to real training needs.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The issues and recommendations were discussed by policy makers and practitioners at a workshop in Minsk on 4 April 2019. The issues and recommendations in bold in the tables below were deemed by the workshop participants to be of greatest priority and also most feasible for action.

Workforce

Most vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus are qualified as teachers and have bachelor's degrees. The majority have pedagogical training in the subjects they are teaching and have undergone teaching practice as part of their training. However, more than 30% say that their pedagogical training did not cover all or any of the subjects that they are teaching. Some 76% of teachers are full-time. Only 36% have permanent contracts. Vocational teachers in Belarus are relatively old – only 16% are below 30 – and 75% are female. Around 53% of specialist VET teachers have no working experience in the industry for which they are preparing recruits.

On average, VET teachers spend 25 hours a week teaching, which is around 47% of the total number of working hours per week.

Main issues	Recommendations
Half of VET teachers have little or no first-hand experience of working in the industry for which they are providing training.	There is a need to review qualification requirements for teachers and provide more professional internships for serving teachers.
Teachers are relatively old and mainly female.	The demographic composition of the workforce should be reviewed and the implications evaluated.

School governance

School principals have some influence over individual appointments and the curriculum offer but little influence over salaries and the school budget and workforce. They claim to involve teachers and stakeholders in decision making although 78% say that they make the key decisions on their own. Social partners participate in 82% of school boards. The culture of schools is said to be collaborative by most principals, rather than very collaborative.

Around 86% of principals report that their effectiveness is either greatly or to some extent limited by shortages of budget and resources, while at least 50% see their effectiveness constrained by the lack of a career-based teachers' wage system, the lack of participation and support from parents or guardians, and a high workload and level of responsibility for their work. More than half report the lack of the necessary number of computers for training and internet access (51%).

Attendance, punctuality and disruptive or discriminatory behaviour are not seen as problematic. Some 93% of principals report job satisfaction in relation to their own role.

Main issues	Recommendations
Principals have concerns about school budgeting.	There is a need to investigate why the school budget system is judged poorly, and to develop and consult on alternative models.
Effectiveness of schools is constrained by a lack of skilled and competent VET teachers and practical instructors.	Skills gaps need to be investigated. Changes in initial and continuing professional development should be planned in order to address gaps.
Quality instruction is constrained by a lack of ICT equipment, software and internet access.	Needs should be identify and quantified and a plan developed to equip all VET providers with appropriate ICT resources, training and technical assistance.

Teaching and links to the workplace

The majority of vocational teachers apply advanced educational methods and technologies. Most classes have access to up-to-date equipment and adequate consumables. Digital technology is commonly used by teachers to prepare materials and as part of teaching and learning. However, 44% of teachers say that digital technologies are used only occasionally by students in their classes and only two-thirds of the respondents say that there is access to reliable and appropriate computer hardware and software in most classes.

Teachers say that students are, for the most part, well-motivated and that there are no behavioural problems. In general, teachers and principals are satisfied with their profession and their work. The majority report that they continue to learn and that they have the opportunity to progress in their career.

Main issues	Recommendations
Most teachers have relatively little direct contact or cooperation with employers.	Effective mechanisms for cooperation between educational institutions and employers should be developed.
Only around one-third of vocational classes involve the use of digital educational technology by students.	Improvements are needed in access to digital educational resources and in teachers' skills in applying such resources.
Vocational teachers do not feel valued in Belarus.	There is a need to create opportunities for vocational teachers to gain recognition and rewards, for example through the career system or by giving them opportunities for development, creativity and leadership and reviewing salaries.

Policy and strategy

Belarus has a regulatory framework for teachers' professional development. There are strategies and programmes in place that aim to improve the quality and relevance of professional development.

Organisations and institutions

Responsibilities relating to initial and continuing professional development for teachers and instructors are clearly assigned. There are 11 specialist colleges dedicated to the training of instructors and 4 higher education institutions with responsibility for the training of teachers (at bachelor's or master's level). However, initial teacher education does not provide specialist training for many branches. RIPO is the main provider of CPD for teachers and instructors. It also sets standards, manages data, analyses needs and advises the ministry with respect to strategy. A specialist body collects data and schools have clear responsibilities for the CPD of their teachers. Regional authorities help to research

needs and provide pedagogical expertise and training. Employers contribute by providing traineeships for teachers. On occasion, employers contribute to the design of some CPD programmes.

The participation of social partners in the provision or quality assurance of vocational teacher CPD is still very limited.

Main issues	Recommendations
There is unmet demand from teachers for internships and CPD of teachers and instructors in the field of innovative technologies.	RIPO and regional authorities should work in partnership with enterprises to set up more internships for teachers addressing innovative technologies that match the needs of teachers and instructors. RIPO and regional authorities should access additional expertise to design and deliver CPD that addresses training needs, e.g. by upskilling trainers of trainers, working with industry and higher education.
There are no organisations authorised to provide formally recognised online CPD.	The ministry should develop norms and laws to assign responsibility and recognise online CPD.
VET institutions have little interest in participating in international projects and programmes.	RIPO and regional authorities should develop awareness of the opportunities for participating in international technical assistance programmes (projects) among vocational education institutions.
Rapid changes in production technologies mean that teachers and instructors are not fully competent in current techniques and work practices.	The ministry and RIPO should develop incentives to motivate social partners to cooperate in the field of improving the professional competence of teachers.
Initial training does not address professional or pedagogical competences relevant to some profiles or sectors.	The training gap should be assessed and, if justified, flexible modes developed to meet this need, for example by offering initial training partly in vocational providers.

Design and quality assurance

National priorities for CPD for vocational teachers and trainers are set at ministry level, taking into account national policies and analysis of information emerging from school evaluations. The ministry issues an annual letter that shapes the design and provision of CPD programmes for vocational teachers and instructors.

Funding for CPD for vocational teachers and instructors is assigned to RIPO and the regional methodological centres. The funding is used to design and provide CPD, which is provided free of charge to vocational schools, although schools pay for travel, food and accommodation for participating teachers.

It is not clear how effectively these processes work to identify and prioritise the most urgent training needs at the level of vocational schools. It is not clear how RIPO, donor organisations and the regional methodological centres coordinate their offer and how they provide new pedagogical and professional skills (as opposed to maintaining current ones).

Main issues	Recommendations
The development of industrial and educational technologies is accelerating and creating new training needs to which the CPD system has not responded.	Teachers and instructors should be provided with industrial experience in the field of modern technologies and CPD to enable them to make use of digital technologies in education.

Online learning has the potential to increase the diversity, volume and personalisation of the CPD offering.	The share of educational programmes of advanced training implemented in distance learning needs to be increased.
The CPD offering does not always benefit from up-to-date information about teachers' training needs.	Training programmes should be developed on the basis of known needs.

CPD provision

Overall, 65% of vocational teachers and instructors in Belarus had participated in CPD over the past 12 months, below the OECD average of 85%. Only 64% of these participants benefited from 30 hours or more of CPD. More positively, 59% of teachers and instructors report participating in CPD relating to their vocational specialism. Participation in CPD or training on employers' premises is reported by only 16% of teachers, while 49% of teachers and instructors say they independently make use of digital and online learning opportunities to support their own CPD.

CPD often takes the form of seminars – perhaps for 2 days within a 12-month period. Most teachers collaborate in their teaching, particularly with their peers.

Around 94% of principals say they have participated in courses, conferences or observational visits during the past 12 months, with 75% of them obtaining at least 30 hours of CPD.

Main issues	Recommendations
Enterprises have relatively little involvement in the design or delivery of CPD and teachers and instructors only rarely update their skills and knowledge of their professional specialisation.	Industry should be engaged in designing and providing CPD, for example by providing more internships for teachers.
Around one-third of teachers and instructors received no CPD in the past 12 months.	All vocational teachers and instructors should have the opportunity to participate in some relevant CPD each year.

School-based CPD

Schools are expected to organise professional development for their own teachers. Usually a deputy principal is responsible. It seems that as much CPD takes place in schools as outside of schools, but there is little information available on its quality or effectiveness.

Mentoring takes place in most schools, and some mentors receive additional payment for their work. Mentoring appears to be limited to new teachers and only 24% of mentors have received training. Induction for new teachers is usual but not universal.

Feedback to teachers as a result of observation of their teaching or assessment of students is not a common practice. There is little feedback from external inspectors or from mentors or advisers.

Main issues	Recommendations
The practice of providing expert feedback to teachers following observation and the assessment of students does not seem to be well developed.	Schools could be encouraged and supported to provide feedback to teachers and instructors. This might take the form of training and guidance.
Much of CPD is provided in schools but it is not clear how its quality is assured and how well adapted it is to needs.	Schools should be supported to evaluate and ensure the quality of the CPD they provide.
CPD provision is not always relevant to the professional development needs and career needs of teachers.	There is a need to strengthen communication between teachers, managers and methodologists within educational institutions who are working to meet the training needs of individuals, for example by developing individual training plans.

Relevance and impact of CPD

Overall, approximately 80% of vocational teachers and instructors believe that the CPD offer is relevant. Some 17.7% of teachers and 17% of principals identify the lack of relevant professional development as a barrier to participation. However, around one-third of those teachers who have received no training report unmet training needs in relation to particular topics.

Teachers report that most CPD has moderate or good impact upon their teaching. However, for some kinds of training, around 20% of participants report that it had little or no impact.

The impact of CPD nationally and in schools is assessed through feedback from those who participated in training and from their school principals. The mechanisms and tools for quality management of CPD require further improvement.

Main issues	Recommendations
For some kinds of CPD, around 20% of participants report that it had little or no impact.	The processes by which needs are identified and teachers are matched to programmes should be reviewed.
There is an unmet need for CPD to prepare teachers and instructors of special subjects in relation to new production technologies.	CPD should be designed and delivered to address these needs at VET centres of excellence. Additional internships should be provided for teachers and instructors. The government should enact legislation to permit RIPO, the centres of excellence and other bodies to carry out this work.
There is an unmet need for CPD to address the use of ICT.	There is a need to elaborate modular multilevel qualification upgrading programmes tailored to the needs of employees in the field of ICT.

Recognition and incentivisation

The licensing system of educational institutions, the career promotion system and the low cost of training for teachers all encourage teachers to participate in CPD. One-fifth of the teachers who participated in the survey note that the barriers to their professional development are work schedule (19.7%) and the lack of time due to family or personal circumstances (21.5%). Diversification of the ways of providing CPD programmes (for example, wider use of online learning) as well as the recognition of competences obtained informally could help to overcome these barriers.

Main issues	Recommendations
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of time is a barrier to participation in CPD.	A review is needed into whether CPD can be provided in more flexible ways, for example in schools and online.
More than one in five teachers say that a lack of incentives is a barrier to participation in CPD.	There should be a review of whether the current requalification system and career ladder are successfully incentivising CPD that corresponds to real training needs.

ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuing professional development
ICT	Information and communications technology
RIPO	Republican Institute for Vocational Education
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
VET	Vocational education and training

Where to find out more

Website

www.etf.europa.eu

ETF Open Space

<https://openspace.etf.europa.eu>

Twitter

[@etfeuropa](https://twitter.com/etfeuropa)

Facebook

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