

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL TEACHERS



SERBIA

Serbia has an elaborate policy framework related to the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers.

CPD is explicitly recognised as a requirement for the licensing of vocational teachers; quantitative targets are in place supported by processes for planning, funding and monitoring. The national catalogue of CPD for Serbian teachers contains many general programmes which have value for vocational teachers, and 62 programmes for vocational subjects. The overall volume of CPD for vocational teachers is above average for the region.

Only 4% of vocational teachers received no CPD in the last 12 months – better than the OECD average of 10%.

Performance with respect to distribution and duration is less strong: 66% of vocational teachers obtained some CPD out of school over the last 12 months (25% received more than 30 hours) whilst 84% obtained some in-school CPD (30% more than 30 hours). Younger and less experienced vocational teachers, in general, accessed less CPD than their older and more experienced colleagues. Much of this CPD had a general methodological or pedagogical character.

Some 46% of vocational teachers received no CPD related to their vocational specialism.

To meet these challenges there should be more and closer cooperation between relevant ministries and national bodies to ensure that the different elements of the Serbian strategy are complementary. There is also a need to develop closer cooperation with employers.

Policy should have a greater focus on the distinctive needs of vocational teachers, particularly in the areas of initial education, licensing and CPD.

Funding of CPD was an issue of concern. There should be an examination and exchange of good practices in the use of training budgets at school level. In the meanwhile, requirements for CPD and licensing should take into account actual rather than aspirational funding.

The research revealed that there is scope to improve the design and delivery of CPD for vocational teachers in Serbia. More stakeholders need to be included in the process of selecting topics, the procedure for the accreditation of providers needs to be reformed, providers need to improve their training skills, and a system of monitoring needs to be established.

There is a particular need to improve the process by which CPD is assigned to individual teachers. Currently this process reflects formal requirements but neglects real professional development needs.

Selected recommendations

1. Support and fund regional centres for professional development.
2. Ensure relevance of the professional development offer by keeping the accreditation process open, and encouraging provision that connects with the economy and with new technologies and pedagogies.
3. Explore ways of enhancing the role of vocational schools in shaping CPD so that provision is linked to school priorities.