

The vocational examination

The vocational examination (fully entitled “the examination confirming vocational qualifications”) is an external examination, not obligatory, conducted by the Regional Examination Boards. This examination makes it possible to assess the level of abilities and knowledge specified in the attainment standards which form the basis of conducting the examination confirming vocational qualifications for a particular profession. It is conducted for graduates of: basic vocational schools, technical secondary schools, supplementary technical secondary schools and post secondary schools.

All candidates throughout the country take the examination on the same day fixed by the Director of the Central Examination Board and attempt the same tasks also fixed by the Director of the Central Examination Board.

The vocational examination is conducted in two stages: written and practical. The written part of the examination is conducted in the form of a test (uniform throughout the country) and consists of two parts. In the first part, the candidates attempt 50 items checking knowledge and abilities appropriate for a particular profession, in the second one there are 20 items checking knowledge and abilities connected with employment and running a business. The written exam takes 120 minutes. The answers are assessed electronically. The result is settled by the Regional Examination Boards based on a point score obtained from answer sheets.

The practical stage consist of carrying out random examination tasks checking practical abilities required in a particular profession. The examination tasks are selected by the Central Examination Boards. The practical stage of the examination takes 180 - 240 minutes (depending on the profession). The examination team assesses the performance of the task. The head of the examination team is authorised by the Director of the Regional Examination Board. The head and the remaining members of the examination team must be trained examiners.

The vocational examination can be conducted in a school authorised by the Director of the Regional Examination Board, in a practical education centre, in a further education centre or at the employer’s (the practical stage).

The vocational examination is not obligatory. To pass the examination it is necessary to score at least 50% of points in the first part of the written stage, at least 30% of points in the second part and at least 75% of points in the practical stage. A graduate, who has passed the vocational examination, receives a diploma confirming vocational qualifications issued by the Regional Examination Board.

The description of the examination material for each profession, criteria of assessment, forms and conditions of conducting the examination with sample materials are included in the Syllabuses published by the Central Examination Board no later than 31th August in the year preceding the date of examination.

The vocational examination replaces the examination of vocational education and the examination of vocational preparation conducted up to now. It was introduced in 2004 for graduates of basic vocational schools, technical secondary schools, supplementary technical secondary schools and post secondary schools according to the following schedule:

- For graduates of basic vocational schools – 2004 (two years of vocational education), 2005 (three years of vocational education),
- For graduates of technical secondary schools – 2006
- For graduates of supplementary technical secondary schools – 2007
- For graduates of post secondary schools – 2006-2008