
CASE STUDY

Requirements set for examiners sitting on examination committees in Regional Examination Boards (OKE) (vocational exams) Exemplar: Poland

Context and background

The Central Examination Board (CKE) and eight regional examination boards (OKE) are responsible for organizing external examinations confirming vocational qualifications. The external examination system is supervised by the Minister of Education. In the external examination system, all examinees solve the same problems to verify whether they have achieved the learning outcomes defined in the core curriculum. Exam results are rendered anonymously and assessed according to uniform criteria for the entire country. The examination consists of a written part (conducted in the form of a test) and a practical part. The exams are conducted only in centres possessing the necessary infrastructure to carry out the practical part of the examination. The practical part may be assessed by practitioners working in the field in which the exam is conducted. The external examinations at the OKE can confirm qualifications that are included in the Classification of Qualifications for the School System regardless the way of they have been acquired. The Central Examination Board (CKE) announces the calendar of the examinations and the examination standards. Regional Examination Boards (OKE) organise and conduct the examinations in their regions. The head of the OKE holds the register of examiners.

Students of vocational schools take the external examinations not at the end but during their educational cycle – every qualification is confirmed with a separate exam. After passing external exam(s) confirming vocational qualification(s), students obtain a relevant certificate. Each occupation comprises one to three qualifications. Only after passing exams confirming all qualifications required for a given occupation may a diploma confirming vocational qualifications be issued.

Also qualifications acquired outside the school system e.g. through vocational qualification courses for adults, any other non-formal education or apprenticeship can be confirmed by the external examinations at OKE on the condition that they are listed in the Classification of Qualifications for the School System.

Examination committees conducting vocational examinations report directly to the Regional Examination Boards (OKE). The head of the Regional Examination Board concludes an agreement with the head of the examination centre (e.g. school principal, employer or vocational course provider) where the practical part of the vocational examination will be held on its preparation and organisation. The practical part of the vocational examination is managed by examination committees (teams) appointed by the head of the examination centre one month prior to the planned date of the written part of the vocational examination.

Every examination committee is made up of three specially trained examiners entered on the list of examiners kept by the Regional Examination Board for a given occupation, selected from among persons proposed by the head of the Regional Examination Board. A candidate for an examiner must submit an application with the documents confirming fulfilment of the conditions regarding education and experience described below. Examiners who are teachers and instructors of practical vocational training and have had classes with the candidates during the final year of their instruction cannot sit on the examination committee. The tasks of the examination committee members include: observation and assessment of the examination tasks being performed by the candidates; filling in observation sheets and observation reports of the candidates; ensuring safety of the examination process; reporting any cases of: infringement of HES requirements; aided work; or disturbing the normal progress of the examination in a way that interferes with the work on the examination tasks by the remaining candidates; collecting the examination materials from the candidates; confirming

collecting such materials on the candidates' list using the agreed procedure; checking the completeness of the collected examination materials as well as the completeness and correctness of the records/entries made by the candidates; preparing the documentation concerning the progress of the practical part of the examination confirming vocational qualifications.

Description

Competences / qualifications required from OKE examiners

1. Education (please refer to the Country File)

- Examiners must have qualifications required for school teachers or an instructor of practical vocational training in the field in which the assessment or examination is held
- or must be academic teachers specialising in the discipline associated with the educational subjects covered by the relevant assessment or examination.
- In case of a representative of employers or an employers' organisation or a professional association or self-governing body –must have the qualifications of an instructor of practical vocational training. Further, all examiners must have full legal capacity to act; enjoy public rights; and have no penal or incapacitation proceedings pending against them.

2. Experience

- Examiners, who are teachers, must have at least three years of experience in teaching at a public school; a non-public school having the status of a public school; a teacher training college; a higher education institution, or have at least three years of experience in working at a position requiring teacher's qualifications; at a teacher in-service centre; a government administration authority; a school superintendent's office or another institution providing supervision of the teaching process, during the six years preceding the filing of the application for entry on the examiners list.
- Examiners who are representatives of employers or an employers' organisation or a professional association or self-governing body must have at least three years of experience in working in the occupation for which the examination is held, obtained during the six years preceding the filing of the application for entry into the examiners list.

3. Role in assessment

The examiners, in the presence of the team overseeing the practical part, and applying the assessment criteria developed by the Central Examination Board for a given vocational examination, fill in the assessment sheets of the candidates. The examiners mainly assess the following:

- Quality of the final result: product, service or documentation – whether they fulfil the requirements laid down in the task provided in the examination sheet;
- Quality of the indirect result, if its assessment directly affects the assessment of the final result and cannot be made after the completion of the examination task;
- Manner of completing the examination task – whether it complies with HES regulations; methodologies and techniques relevant for a given examination task.

4. Training for candidates for examiners

Successful completion of a 30-hour training for candidates for examiners organised by the Regional Examination Board, which ended with an exam checking the knowledge of procedures for organising and grading assessments and examinations, is the necessary condition for being enlisted as an OKE examiner. The training is obligatory for all candidates, no matter whether they are teachers, practical training instructors or employer representatives.

5. Competences covered within the training

Examiners acquire competences in four thematic blocks (Announcement of the Minister of National Education of 13 August 2015), comprising:

- Block 1: the examination confirming vocational qualifications in the grading and assessing system (knowledge of the applicable grading and assessing system; using the regulations concerning grading and assessing; knowledge of tests developed by the Central Examination Board and the Regional Examination Boards; knowledge of the role and function of the exam in the overall examination system; knowledge of the structure and form of the exam); understanding the role and tasks of employers related to the exam; understanding the role and tasks of the school; establishment, or employers associated with communicating information about the exam, preparation for the exam, communicating the results of the exam.
- Practical test during the examination (knowledge of the regulations underpinning the preparation of the practical test; knowledge of the core vocational curriculum underpinning the organisation of the examination and distinguishing between specific components of its structure; identification of the set of skills verified by individual types of the examination tasks; understanding the process of designing and improving the examination sheets).
- Ethical and moral aspects (knowledge of ethical principles; identification of factors affecting the overall result and comparability of grading and assessing the results of the examination tasks completed during the practical part by the examiners).
- Evaluation of the results of the examination tasks in the practical part (identification of skills tested in the practical part of the examination for a given qualification, defined in the core vocational curriculum underpinning the organisation of the examination; knowledge of the principles of evaluating the results of the examination task in the practical part; assessing the quality of the final results; the quality of the indirect results and the manner of completing the task by the candidates; using the procedures related to exam organisation).
- All the above mentioned competences have to be included in the framework plans for examiner training prepared by each regional examination board.

Summarising, persons who, in addition to the required level of education and experience, have successfully completed the training for examiners and hold a certificate confirming their entry on the list of examiners kept by the Regional Examination Board can act as examiners. An examiner is a person whose main task is to assess all the activities performed during a given vocational task by the candidate.

Impact/effectiveness

The external vocational exams were introduced in 2004 in order to ensure more transparency and comparativeness of the diplomas. Before that the education in vocational school ended with an internal vocational exam carried out by the teachers and practical training instructors in the particular school. External exams mean standardised examination requirements and assessment criteria, examiners prepared in the same way all over the country and therefore more objective assessment. Qualification certificates and vocational diplomas issued by regional examination boards are higher evaluated by employers than the ones issued by schools in the past.

Future development

Any plans of changes to the system of external vocational examinations are not known now.

References

H. Sitko, Egzamin potwierdzający kwalifikacje w zawodzie – krok po kroku. Poradnik opracowany w ramach projektu szkoła zawodowa szkołą pozytywnego wyboru, KOWEziU, Warsaw 2013.

Legislative basis

- Act on the Education System of 7 September 1991 (Journals of Laws Dziennik Ustaw: 2016 items 1943, 1954, 1985 and 2169, and 2017 item 60)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 21 April 2009 on framework training for candidates for examiners, procedures for keeping lists of examiners and for their entering on the list and striking off (Journals of Laws Dziennik Ustaw 2014 item 468 as amended)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 27 April 2015 on detailed conditions and procedures relating to the organisation of examinations confirming vocational qualifications (Journal of Laws Dziennik Ustaw 2015 item 673)
- Announcement of the Minister of National Education of 13 August 2015 on the publication of a consolidated version of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education on framework training for candidates for examiners, procedures for keeping examiner records and for their entering on the list and striking off, item. 1305, Warsaw, 4 September 2015
- Act of 26 January 1982 – the Teacher’s Charter (Journals of Laws Dziennik Ustaw: 2016 item 1379, and 2017 item 60).