

CZECH REPUBLIC

Tertiary vocational schools (*vyšší odborná škola* – ISCED 5B) were approved as a new channel of post-secondary education in 1992/93. Their status was bolstered by an amendment to the School Act in June 1995 that recognized them as an essential part of the education system. Many schools of this type currently exist at an upper secondary level and are considered a fundamental part of tertiary education. However, they are governed by the Education Act rather than the Higher Education Act. Non-university higher education institutions were instituted by the Higher Education Act in 1998. Some tertiary professional schools have acquired this status. The amendment to the Higher Education Act and the new Education Act (2004) will merge some of these types of institutions starting in 2005.

Technical and professional higher institutions (*střední odborná škola, střední odborná učiliště*) also offer non-tertiary post-secondary education courses (*nástavbové studium*) at the ISCED 4 level. Article 2 of the Education Act allows schools of different educational levels, types and orientations to merge into a single institution. In 80% of cases, the higher level professional schools (*vyšší odborné školy*) share a common organization with these schools.

Providers	<i>Vyšší odborná škola/ Nástavbové studium</i> Regions
Length	<i>Vyšší odborná škola</i> Courses last between 2 and 3 and a half years. Longer courses include a longer practical traineeship in the workplace. Studies are available full or part-time. Part-time courses include an additional year. <i>Nástavbové studium</i> Courses last 2 or 3 years, full-time or part-time.
Admission requirements	<i>Vyšší odborná škola</i> Admission requirements are the same as those for university entrance: an upper secondary education leaving certificate at the end of 4 years of upper secondary education (<i>maturitní vysvědčení</i>). School heads have the authority to decide whether to require an entrance exam and to determine its contents. <i>Nástavbové studium</i> Admission requirements to these courses include passing a final exam in the subject area of study chosen in vocational upper secondary school.
Main features	<i>Vyšší odborná škola</i> Tertiary vocational education develops and expands knowledge and skills acquired in upper secondary school in general and vocational areas. The study areas are generally identical to those of technical upper secondary schools (<i>střední odborné školy</i>) and were introduced to respond to increasing demand from the work market. <i>Nástavbové studium</i> There is no age limit for entrance to courses. Generally, students are at least 18 years old and often enter after many years of practice and work experience.
Standards and specialization	<i>Vyšší odborná škola</i> No educational standard or other methodologies for tertiary vocational education (<i>vyšší odborné vzdělání</i>) were set. Each school prepares its curriculum which must be approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports. The distribution of time between teaching general disciplines, basic vocational disciplines and specific professional disciplines is split at approximately 20, 40 and 30 hours each. The number of weekly lessons set for full-time courses is between 26 and 33, including both compulsory and compulsory optional subjects. An essential part of this type of course is the practical traineeship in a company, which may be as long as a year, during which the students work on a written

	<p>assignment and a project assigned jointly by their school and the company. Schools work closely with their regions and the business world. Individuals with practical skills, from outside of the schools, often work as consultants or as members of consulting bodies.</p> <p>Teaching methods are similar to those of higher education institutions. Teaching is organized in classes, seminars, practical exercise, workshops and in-the-job training.</p> <p>In 2003, there were over 180 professional areas, the most popular of which were economics, medicine, electronics, Act and pedagogy.</p> <p><i>Nástavbové studium</i></p> <p>There are 54 areas of specialization that correspond to study areas in the vocational upper secondary institutions for general disciplines and vocational theoretical disciplines.</p>
Certification	<p><i>Vyšší odborná škola</i></p> <p>Each school sets its own methods for students' assessment, which are approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, as determined by Act. Evaluation standards establish an evaluation scale (usually a four-point scale) and evaluation methods: exams and requirements to fulfill, with or without evaluation.</p> <p>Regulations also determine the choice of evaluation in specific disciplines. Academic regulations also establish details for organizing the retaking of exams, including deadlines to fulfill course obligations during a term (4 months) or a year.</p> <p>Studies end with an <i>absolutorium</i>, a final exam consisting of a theoretical exam in a vocational discipline and a foreign language in addition to a defence of a thesis. The curriculum sets the number and composition of the professional disciplines within which the exam must be taken.</p> <p>A practical skills test may be part of the written assignment. The school head sets the exam contents and time while the thesis subject is set at least six months before the <i>absolutorium</i> exams. The <i>absolutorium</i> exams are evaluated on a four-level scale: excellent, very good, good and insufficient. Individual evaluators suggest grades.</p> <p>The assignment grade is given by the work supervisor. Final evaluation is based on the results of the <i>absolutorium</i>, and is organized on a three-level scale (passed with honors, passed, not passed).</p> <p>After having successfully passed the <i>absolutorium</i>, the graduates from higher vocational schools are considered specialists with a diploma (<i>diplomo vaný specialista</i>) and are entitled to use the initials <i>DiS</i> after their last name.</p> <p><i>Nástavbové studium</i></p> <p>Students complete the <i>maturitní zkouška</i> certificate after passing the exam and after two full- or part-time years of study.</p>
Further opportunities	<p><i>Vyšší odborná škola/ Nástavbové studium</i></p> <p>Tertiary professional schools provide qualifications needed to enter the relevant professions that do not require a university degree.</p>