

Master Craftsman Exam Pilot

In November 2017, the National Institute for Education launched a four-year national pilot project with a goal to develop a system of master craftsman qualifications and master craftsman exams in the Czech Republic. The exam will provide recognition of master craftsmanship, thus contributing to quality improvement of further education and training in the area of crafts. Qualification and assessment standards, frameworks for the exam assignments, curricula and textbooks of training programmes for various crafts will be tested, and respective methodologies developed. The project is co-financed by the European Union.

Craftsmen with defined prior qualifications and at least five-year long practice in the given field will be eligible to apply for the exam. The exam will be composed of the three following parts:

- A top “master work” will be performed proving excellent field related practical skills.
- Knowledge of the whole field will be tested, including problem solving, quality assurance, etc.
- The ability to manage a business will be tested, including related entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

The following benefits are expected from the introduction of master craftsman exam:

- **Opportunity for professional development of craftsmen in their field.** While graduates of most other secondary schools can further develop their field related vocational skills at higher levels, craftsmen (graduates of secondary vocational programmes with VET certificate) have no such opportunity so far (the available follow-up programmes do not develop craftsman skills). The master exam could offer a new goal for them, topping up their professional education and training, achieving the qualification level of EQF 5.
- **Consumer protection.** It will enhance the opportunities for customers to select a professional who will be able to guarantee the highest quality of work.
- **Making the market more transparent.** It will promote awareness of customers (including announcers of public tenders) about the quality services provided by master craftsmen.
- **European compatibility and recognition.** A master craftsman qualification has to be compatible within the EU and as such it will increase the chance for the master craftsmen to get employment abroad (the standard of the master craftsman exam will be a part of Europass and the qualification will be referenced to the EQF).
- **Crafts esteem.** By increasing the overall craftsman work quality „threshold“ and promoting good image of crafts it will thus increase the interest of youth and their parents in craftsman education and training.

Professional associations, crafts, vocational schools, will be the main institutions participating in the system, with Chamber of Commerce playing an umbrella role. They will appoint respected professionals as members of examining committees. The master craftsmen qualification will be also linked to the National **Register** of Qualifications, currently existing system of qualifications and related standards enabling recognition and validation of skills.