

## **IMPROVING PERFORMANCES OF TEACHING STAFF IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE STATUS OF PERMANENT TEACHER IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Education of teaching staff is improved by various forms and programmes in line with current educational requirements, needs of the labour market and the society based on knowledge and continuous learning. Educational reform implies a very good education in accordance with the evolution of different learning disciplines, education cycles and lines of study as well as the needs and interests shown in improvement of different categories of teaching staff. This study presents the most important results on improving performances of teaching staff in Dâmbovița County with a view to obtaining the status of permanent teacher in the pre-university education. The data were obtained following analysis of the relating regulation, reports and studies on organizing and conducting the national examination to acquire permanent teacher certification and the results obtained in the examination session in 2016, session which brings forth changes both in the structure of the competition programmes and in the specialization bibliography. All these were used to outline an overview of the debutant teachers' performances and to identify measures necessary to take towards adapting continuous learning courses to newly-created situations.*

**KEYWORDS:** *competences, improvement, performance, permanent teacher certification, teaching staff*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** *J24, M53.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The permanent teacher certification in education is acquired for one of the disciplines which the teacher can teach, in accordance with the Summary of the Educational Disciplines, Domains and Specializations (listed on the degree(s) held by the candidate), as well as the tests applicable for including the teaching staff in pre-university education.

As of 2013, the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (MESC) decided that the minimum mark to pass the national examination to acquire permanent teacher certification is 8 instead of 7.

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Another ground-breaking decision was to allow the one-year-seniority teaching debutants to participate to this national examination.

According to Law regarding National Education, teaching staff who pass the examination acquire the title of practice-licensed teachers in pre-university education. The persons who fail in this examination the first time may participate to maximum two more sessions, provided that they practice teaching one more school year prior to taking each of these two examinations. Should they fail in all three sessions, teaching staff may be employed in the national pre-university system for definite times only, having the status of debutant teachers?

## 2. RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

Improvement of teaching staff represents a priority in reforming the educational system, considering the fact that the teaching staff forming system has seen a slower development compared to other elements of the reform: curriculum and education, assessment and management. There is most times a rupture between initial education and continuous education, although there should exist a permanent interaction between these two dimensions, interaction based on coherent educational policies. The single criterion establishing the congruity and the logical and scientific implication between initial education and continuous education is the credit transfer system.

According to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research Edict no. 5558\_2015 regarding approval of curricula for the permanent teacher certification examination as of the session in 2016, new curricula have been approved for the national examination for 153 disciplines; these themes are significantly different in comparison with previous ones. Table 1 highlights this aspect:

**Table 1. Curricula for the permanent teacher certification examination**

<b>Themes of curricula 2016</b>	<b>Weights</b>	<b>Themes of curricula 2012-2015</b>	<b>Weights</b>
Contents for forming scientific competences	approx. 60%	Contents for forming scientific competences	approx. 30%
Contents for forming teaching competences, including methods and school applications in the domain	approx. 30%	Contents for forming teaching competences, including methods and school applications in the domain	approx. 60%
Contents for other types of competences useful to teaching staff – key competences	approx. 10%	Contents for other types of competences useful to teaching staff – key competences	approx. 10%

*Source:* new curricula for permanent teacher certification national examination

The written test of the national examination is taken by mass education teachers and special education teachers, high-education coaches and medical teaching staff in specialization discipline, methods to teach it, pedagogy and psychological elements of education.

Weight of the specialization competences to the detriment of the didactical ones was increased by the National Specialization Committee, since it is of paramount importance, in the current society, to master a volume of continuously updating knowledge and therefore better adapt to the needs of the labour market and the knowledge-based society.

## 2.1. Materials and methods

The investigative endeavour regarding the actions to improve the teaching staff's competences required to sit for the permanent teacher certification examination made use of a complex research strategy combining both quantitative and qualitative investigating methods. See below the set of methods and techniques used to collect information and the aim for which they were used. The statistics of the teaching staff who sat for the permanent teacher certification examination, teacher who had minimum one year seniority in teaching between 2013 and 2016, are indicated in the table presented below (information found on the site of The Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research - MNESR):

**Table 2. Statistics of teaching staff who sat for the permanent teacher certification examination**

Year	Number of candidates registered	Number of valid candidates	Number of candidates present	Number of candidates who completed the test
2013	8567	7889	7400	6651
2014	10764	9917	9196	7819
2015	10297	9385	6844	6829
2016	9738	8964	6209	6196

Source: MNESR (2016), MNESR (2015), MNESR (2014), MNESR (2013)

## 2.2. The objectives of the study were:

- Presentation of the Regulations regarding organization and conduct of national examination.
- Assessment of competences of teaching staff who acquire the status of permanent teacher in education
- Identification of the actions to take in order to improve the teaching staff's competences.
- Increase of graduation percentage in relation to national examination for permanent teacher certification in education.

### 2.3. Documentary Analysis

Relating regulations, reports and studies on the organization and conduct of national examination for the permanent teacher certification in education have been analyzed, namely: ORDER No. 5287 of September 23 2015 regarding amendment and supplement of Methodology applicable to organization and conduct of national examination for the permanent teacher certification in education; Framework Methodology regarding organization and conduct of national examination for the permanent teacher certification in education; curricula applicable to national examination for the permanent teacher certification in education. The objectives of the documents analysis were collection of information with regards to organization and conduct of national examination for the permanent teacher certification in education, collation of information obtained through creation of a database on the manner to acquire the status of permanent teacher certification and formulation of hypotheses to trigger other research methods.

### 2.4. Quantitative Research regarding Improving Performances of Teaching Staff in order to obtain the Status of Permanent Teacher

The research on how performance of teaching staff may be improved towards their acquisition of the permanent teacher status relied on the following hypotheses:

- Courses conducted with a view to obtaining permanent teacher certification status are partially adapted to the needs of debutant teaching staff's formation.
- Competences aimed by formation courses are not always reached.
- Increased interest of teaching staff in attending formation courses conducted to help them obtain permanent teacher certification status is determined by passing the permanent teacher certification examination and acquisition of the title of practice-licensed teachers in pre-university education.

**The study** targets the results obtained by the teaching staff in Dâmbovița County in the permanent teacher certification examination, school year 2015 – 2016, as shown by the table below:

**Table 3. The results obtained by the teaching staff in Dâmbovița County**

<b>Number of candidates registered on 15.12.2015</b>	<b>Number of candidates who obtained marks in the permanent teacher certification examination in 2016</b>	<b>Number of candidates who failed</b>	<b>Number of candidates who graduated</b>
245	169	55	114

Source: <http://definitivat.edu.ro>

## 2.5. Nationwide Results

In the school year 2015–2016, 9,738 candidates registered to sit for the permanent teacher certification examination. Following verification of the documents submitted within County School Inspectorates, a number of 8,964 teachers were accepted to sit for the national examination. The cumulative compliance with the three requirements provided by methodology enabled them to take the written test. These three requirements were: a minimum-one-year specialization teaching internship, “Good” or “Very Good” scores for the current school year and minimum average 8 upon special inspections carried out in class during the school year.

6,532 candidates obtained average 10 (ten) upon inspections carried out in classes for the domain of the position targeted. The results obtained by teaching staff in pre-university education in the past 4 years are indicated below:

**Table 4. The results obtained by teaching staff in pre-university education in the past 4 years**

<b>Number of candidates who completed the permanent teacher certification examination</b>	<b>Year/ results</b>	<b>Ratio of marks over 8</b>	<b>Candidates who obtained between 8 and 10</b>	<b>Candidates who obtained 10</b>
6,651	2013	51.26%	3,409	32
7,819	2014	63.35%	4,953	57
6,829	2015	49.25%	3,363	20
6,196	2016	69.08%	4,280	39

*Source:* The Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research (2016)

The ratio of marks over 8 obtained by candidates who sat for the written test of the national examination for permanent teacher certification in pre-university (session 2016) is higher by nearly 20 percent compared to the one in 2015.

## 2.6. Countywide Results

The ratio of marks over 8 obtained by candidates in Dâmbovița County who sat for the written test of the national examination for permanent teacher certification in pre-university (session 2016) is higher by nearly 21.5 percent compared to the one in 2015, as one can see from the table below:

**Table 5. The ratio of marks over 8 obtained by candidates in Dâmbovița County**

<b>Number of candidates who completed the permanent teacher certification examination</b>	<b>Year/ results</b>	<b>Ratio of marks over 8</b>	<b>Candidates who obtained between 8 and 10</b>	<b>Candidates who obtained 10</b>
185	2015	45.94%	85	0
169	2016	67.45%	114	0

Source: <http://definitivat.edu.ro>

According to the methodology applicable to the examination organization and conduct, candidates who obtain over 8 in both written test and inspection in class acquire the right to practice as teachers in pre-university education.

## 2.7. Discussions:

In order to improve performances in the national examinations and with a view to preparing teaching staff for the permanent teacher certification/debutant teachers examination, the Teaching Staff Resource Centre in Dâmbovița organized between 2015 and 2016 continuous learning courses as follows:

**Table 6. Continuous learning courses organized by the Teaching Staff Resource Centre in Dâmbovița**

<b>No</b>	<b>No of candidates registered</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>No of hours</b>
1.	39	Physical Education	30
2.	31	Pre-school Education	24
3.	55	Primary Education	40
4.	32	Modern Languages	40
5.	16	Vocational and Technical Education	40
6.	23	Romanian Language, Mathematics, Religion	40
7.	42	Biology, Chemistry, Civics, Musical Education, Arts, Physics, Geography, Computer Science, Special Education, History, Music, Psychology	30

Source: Casa Corpului Didactic Dâmbovița (2016)

During these courses, the experienced trainers of the Teaching Staff Resource Centre organized theoretical and practical activities starting from the new curriculum approved for the permanent teacher certification examination. Assessment was conducted on portfolio basis and teaching staff provided proof of their learning activities carried out in class and during this course.

The impact of the continuous learning programmes through Teaching Staff Resource Centre on the performances of the candidates who obtained marks in the permanent teacher certification examination is presented in the table below:

**Table 7. The impact of the continuous learning programmes**

Candidates registered - Discipline	Absent	Candidates who obtained marks	Participants who attended the continuous learning programme and obtained over 8	Participants who attended the continuous learning programme and failed	Participants who passed without attending the Teaching Staff Resource Centre training programme	Participants who failed without attending the Teaching Staff Resource Centre training programme
28/Physical Education	10	18	12	6	0	0
42/Pre-school Education	6	36	16	3	12	5
47/Primary Education	16	31	8	14	3	6
32/Modern Languages	13	19	9	5	3	2
5/Vocational and Technical Education	3	2	2	0	0	0
17/Romanian Language	2	15	10	0	3	2
16/Mathematics	1	15	5	2	6	2
3/Biology	0	3	3	0	0	0
1/Chemistry	0	1	0	1	0	0
1/ Civics	1	0	0	0	0	0
3/Psycho-pedagogical Counselling	0	3	1	0	2	0
8/Musical Education	2	6	2	0	4	2
2/Arts	0	2	0	1	0	1
3/Physics	1	2	1	1	0	0
3/Geography	3	3	1	0	2	0
2/Computer Science	1	1	1	0	0	0
3/History	0	3	2	0	1	0
8/Psychology	4	4	3	1	0	0
4/Entrepreneurial Education	1	3	1	1	1	0

Source: <http://definitivat.edu.ro>

As one may observe, the favourable results have been mainly obtained by participants attending the training programmes conducted by the Teaching Staff Resource Centre. However, there are some disciplines where the number of candidates rejected is rather high, irrespective of their participation to such courses. The disciplines under discussion require a reviewing of the curriculum and assessment by the Teaching Staff Resource Centre trainers so as to improve future performances.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The increase of the specialization competences weights to the detriment of the didactical competences triggered better results of the candidates, especially if one takes account of the fact that most of them are young university graduates, fresh debutants. The didactical master's degree does not substitute the experience accrued through development of specialization and pedagogical competences or competences in the methodology of teaching the discipline by actually teaching in front of the class. The didactical maturity is the result of the teacher's capacity to adapt to the current facts in the educational system, to different personalities and attitudes of the pupils and to reflect on the diversity and challenges of the society nowadays.

There is a considerable difference between teaching staff who register for national examinations and the ones who actually sit for the permanent teacher certification examination. The possibility to sit for such examination on three different sessions, within 5 years, enables such postponement, providing that the legislation in force is observed. The statistics of the teaching staff in Dâmbovița County who participated to the permanent teacher certification examination, depending on the number of certification sessions and results obtained in 2016, are indicated below.

**Table 8. Candidates who obtained marks in the permanent teacher certification examination**

Number of candidates who obtained marks in the permanent teacher certification examination	First Participation		Second Participation		Last Participation	
	passed	failed	passed	failed	passed	failed
169	68	24	34	23	11	9

Source: <http://definitivat.edu.ro>

As one may see the 9 teachers rejected in their last chance to acquire the permanent teacher certification and therefore work as permanent teachers in the pre-university education will be employed as debutant teachers for definite time in school year 2016-2017.

The expectations of the community concerning the teaching staff's competences are great. There emerge new roles of the teacher in the modern society: resourceful person, instructor and adviser towards documentation and information, supporter of transdisciplinary, expert in learning situations introduced to pupils, researcher with innovation valences in discipline didactics, assessor of the learning progress of each pupil, responsible and organizer of interpersonal relations established in school environment and intermediary of relations with community.



In order to improve results obtained in continuous learning of teaching staff one has to rethink formation programmes and differentiated adaptation depending on the situation. The providers of formation, accredited by the law, have to meet teaching staff's needs and therefore offer performing programmes, adapted to newness and knowledge.

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