

## **Professional training in the defense sector**

### **Profesní příprava v rezortu Ministerstva obrany**

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#### **Abstract:**

Education is an important area of economic and social life. Professional education (vocational) is associated not only with all forms of education and training in the initial, formal education but also with the further education of adults. An important characteristics of further vocational education is the fact that it is realized during the active working life of an individual after completing the training for a profession in the initial education. is focused on preparation of an individual for effective performance of job-related work activities. That is the reason why employers are the decisive provider of this type of education. The training system is adapted to the needs of the armed forces, the latest military trends, and the needs of international organizations. Professional training is influenced by specific environments, by number of people and is realized in the environment of both resort and extra-curricular educational institutions, facilities and military departments. An important characteristics of the MoD's professional training is also the fact that training activities are intended for both professional and civilian employees. The MoD uses 110,000 planned professional requirements for the planning of the training activities of the above-mentioned personnel categories. Due to the number of MoD's employees, the military forces have been dealing with the wide range of professional requirements in the past years, causing lack of information support to the provision of vocational training. The basic requirement was the simplicity of the proposed solution while maintaining the coherence of individual processes.

#### **Key words:**

Information support, professional education, soldiers, training system of military personnel.

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## **Abstrakt:**

Vzdělávání je významnou oblastí ekonomického a společenského života. Profesní vzdělávání je spjato nejenom se všemi formami vzdělávání a přípravy v rámci počátečního, formálního vzdělávání ale také s dalším vzděláváním dospělých. Významnými charakteristikami dalšího profesního vzdělávání je skutečnost, že je realizováno v průběhu aktivního pracovního života jedince po ukončení přípravy na profesi v rámci počátečního vzdělávání. Další profesní vzdělávání je zaměřeno na přípravu jedince pro efektivní výkon pracovních činností spojených s pracovním místem a to je důvod, že rozhodujícím poskytovatelem uvedeného typu vzdělávání jsou zaměstnavatelské organizace. Systém přípravy je přizpůsobován požadavkům ozbrojených sil, nejnovějším trendům v oblasti vojenství, potřebám působení v mezinárodních organizacích. Profesní příprava je ovlivněna specifickým prostředím, počtem osob a je realizována v prostředí rezortních i mimorezortních vzdělávacích institucí, zařízení a vojenských útvarů. Významnou charakteristikou profesní přípravy rezortu MO je také skutečnost, že vzdělávací aktivity přípravy jsou určeny pro jak pro vojáky z povolání, tak pro občanské zaměstnance. Rezort využívá pro plánování vzdělávacích aktivit uvedených kategorií personálů 110.000 plánovaných odborných požadavků. Vzhledem k počtu příslušníků rezortu, velkému rozsahu odborných požadavků rezort v uplynulých letech řešil problematiku informační podpory zabezpečení profesní přípravy. Základním požadavkem byla jednoduchost navrženého řešení při dodržení provázanosti jednotlivých procesů.

## **Klíčová slova:**

Informační podpora, odborné vzdělávání, vojáci, systém přípravy vojenského personálu.

## **Introduction**

We live in the period when the changes in technology take place. These changes also affect the changes in human resource requirements in organizations. According to Ribarov (2015), the changes in the demands of generations of workers as well as individual workers can be observed and, therefore, personnel officers look for the possibilities to reconcile the needs of an organization and the needs of employees. Personnel management is evolving towards increasing interdisciplinarity, human resource management will also enhance the performance of organizations to the higher extent and will influence the processes of innovation and change. The education and development of workers are an integral part of labour efficiency management, the key objective of which is, as Koubek states, to improve the performance through developing an ability to work efficiently (2004).

Further professional education is associated with the macroeconomic and microeconomic spheres, business management and, therefore, its interconnection with the management and development of human resources is logical. According to Průcha and Veteška, professional education including further professional education can be defined as all forms of professional and vocational training during an active working life (2014). Employers are the most widespread providers of further professional education in the Czech Republic. According to Šerák, the dominance of the types of qualification-oriented education is so overwhelming that the demand for professional qualification is often identified with the demand for education to such an extent that there is a danger that the concept of education will be narrowed to the area of qualification only (2009). With regard to the fact that professional education is linked to economic effects and the environment is changing more dynamically, the need for further professional education is increasing, while the degree of tolerance of mistakes in the performance of workers is decreasing (Mužík, 2012).

The professional training of soldiers within the Ministry of Defence is a partial subsystem of further professional education of adults in the Czech Republic. The conceptual documents of the Ministry of Defence define professional training as a purposeful activity, which rests in providing and acquiring the knowledge and skills as well as developing the abilities required for duty performance of a soldier (2011). Further professional training in the conditions of the Ministry of Defence is influenced by a specific environment and, is implemented in the environment of the departmental and non-departmental

educational institutions and facilities. It is divided into general training, training for line of duty and specific professional training of individual military occupational specialties.

## **History**

The MoD in 2013 dealt with the urgent need to ensure the organization of vocational training, mainly organized at the Headquarters of Training - the Military Academy in Vyskov (VeV – VA). At that time, the Joint Forces Command, ensuring coordination of the majority of the capacity of these training courses, was abolished.

At the same time, Personnel Information Department of the Personnel Agency of Czech Armed Forces (AP ACR) worked hard to complete the specification of the Information System of Service and Personnel (ISSP) tools modifications, so that the department could use the already delivered but inadequate and so unused system of training support. Gradual development and adaptations have resulted in complex and full system capabilities for routine deployment in 2014.

By establishing cooperation with the VeV - VA in Vyskov, in early 2015, the system was deployed to full-fledged operation at the training courses of this facility. This training facility achieves an annual amount of 10,000 vocational courses graduates. This has made it possible to fine-tune the entire system under operating conditions. The MOD has been able to fully implement the comprehensive system of management of vocational training, which is integrated into the existing personnel information system ISSP of the department. Where possible, making comparisons with other national and international systems of information support of vocational training, if any available for such purpose, they are far from achieving such efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of this system.

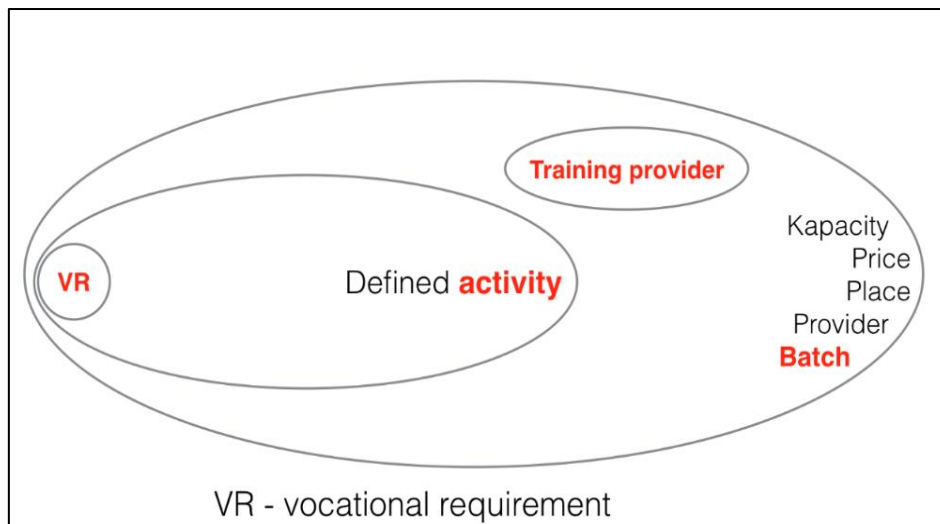
## **Basic principle and supported activities**

The basic principle of this concept is maximum simplicity and complexity whilst concept is respecting the interconnection of individual processes and their activities to maximize the saving of human labor. Basically it could be define as custom build process oriented information system.

The electronic catalogs are the base of the system. The first one is a catalog of vocational requirements that represent basic knowledge, ability and skills. The catalog has long been built on the basis of the requirements of the employees to record the certificates obtained from the vocational courses. All requirements are define from the real status of existing training occasions. The definition itself is the basic bit of comparable information which could be used for requirements planning, training execution and evidence of achievement of vocational training requirements.

The second one is a catalog of vocational training activities, which describes and details of all types of courses, seminars, trainings, exams, etc., which the MOD uses, either within its own training facilities or from external providers.

There is a connection while the activity defines, besides other elements, the vocational requirements acquired by the graduation. A batch is a defined basic activity with vocational requirement extended of information about provider, time, place and capacity.



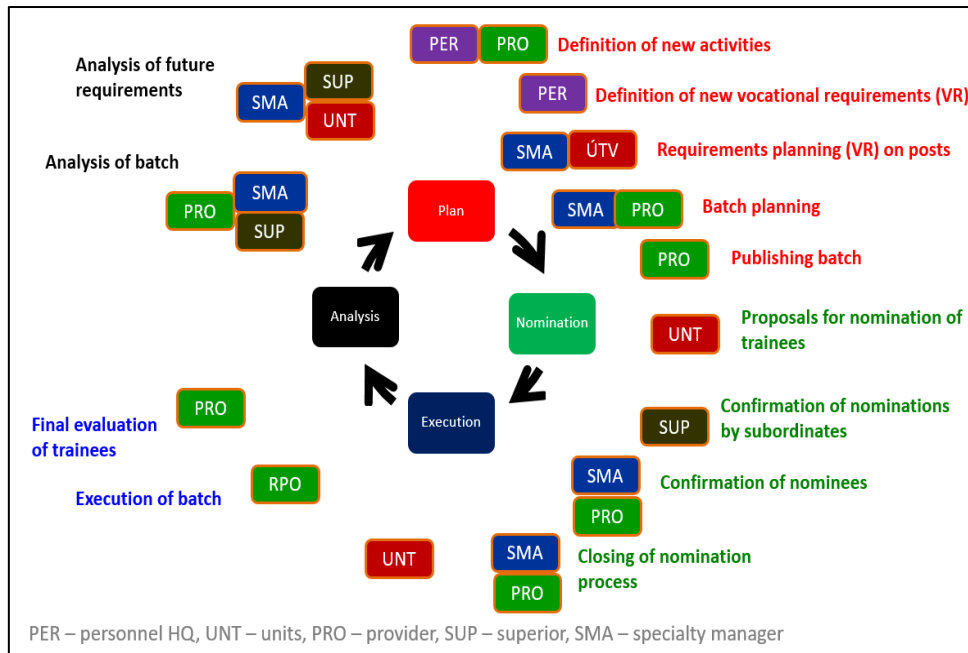
**Picture 1: Structure of data types and logical links of vocational requirements, vocational training activities and their batches**

Source: authors

Based on these central managed catalogs, extended ISSP applications can:

- plan the vocational requirements within the definition of individual systemized posts in the structure of the Armed Forces,
- plan individual batches of vocational training activities for an arbitrary period of time,
- offering individual batches to The Armed Forces in real time,
- allowed units to nominate their personnel with supporting justification and notices without sending paperwork including requests for an accommodation,
- allow subordinates and career field managers, where appropriate, add their recommendations or concurrence to the nominees,
- allowed providers or career field managers to close nominations for these batches with a selection of participants from proposed nominees with the possibility to add their own joiners with automatic announcement of the result to the respective unit,
- collect information of nominees results in the form of accompanying comments ( score point of examination etc.),
- prematurely terminate or replace trainees with the announcement to respective unit,
- let providers to evaluate successful graduates with the possibility of generating certificates with a unique registration number and automatically filing the result of the trainee into electronic personnel record of ISSP,
- compare vocational requirements plan on post with current knowledge, skills, and ability recorded as gained vocational requirement of incumbent on that post,
- provide all users statistical and analytical tools for assessment of the training status and future requirements in order to plan further activities in future, tools that are managed by provide the MoD.

The vocational training information support system is integrated into standard ISSP applications and is taking advantage of most of their broad infrastructure. The contact center for each unit is the personnel department of the respective unit. The active or passive use of these tools is provided to personnel managers, career field managers, military experts, training providers, staff, senior officers, security managers and, last but not least, a separate role for anybody interested on such a topic allowing them to view batches and the progress of training. This represents about 1500 system users who can manage about 30,000 employees of all types.



**Picture 2: Cycle of individual activities of information support processes for vocational training**

Source: authors

### The benefits of this solution

For the first time in history, the MoD has been able to extensively record accomplished vocational requirements as an employee knowledge, ability and skills and then analyze this information. This has never been successful, especially for a large amount of this information. For the sake of mind, the new system within three years of full-fledged traffic was able to record 250,000 accomplished vocational requirements of MoD personnel, counting all soldiers, state employees and civilians, in strange of 30.000 employees.

For the first time in history, the MoD maintains comprehensive catalogs of defined vocational requirements and vocational training activities that can be used in other fields among MoD. This allows us, in particular, create analyses of the status and possible corrections of further periods of such a training in order to improve the nomenclature, the content of individual courses, their associate vocational requirements and, above all, the completeness of their offer. The Vocational Requirements Catalog now has 3,500 records, and this is far from the end state. The definition of Training Activities is close to thousands of records.

One of the major advantages is the comprehensive offer of all the batches of vocational training activities in a single tool, with a direct link to the possibility of their immediate request for a particular person. In 2016, for example, the system handled 3,432 batches. For the three quarters of 2017, it is already 3,099 batches. Moreover the filling rate improves and the effectivity of the vocational training is better as well.

All processed batches are immediately available for the preparation of the training plan for the next period in the format in which the department requests submission of the documents to these plans. In addition, all traffic of batches is done in real-time on all about 150 contact points where the number of registered contributing users reaches level of 1.500.

An advantage is undoubtedly the automatic filing of results by recorded accomplished vocational requirements to each graduates trainee without any need to require the registration of the results with respective personal managers. Instead, they initially only enter the nomination request with appropriate justification.

Another advantage is the direct connection to personnel registration information files of ISSP and the possibility of immediate use of the result for other personnel related decision-making processes of

the career management of all soldiers. This is mainly typical for the tools of data processing outputs, which the department has the possibility to create by their own. With the help of these tools, for example, the process of implementation of these activities has been completely digitalized (included certificates, forms, confirmation, justifications etc.). A single hard copy of paper printouts within the process should not be produced.

An advantage is also the connection of vocational requirements on posts with achieved vocational requirements of posted employees based on condition of consistently defined vocational requirements catalog. In addition, the plan allows division of planned vocational requirements into mandatory requirements and recommended requirements. By doing so we can set priorities for further vocational training. The MoD uses row planning at about 40,000 posts of 110,000 planned vocational requirements.

### **Disadvantages and possible solutions**

Of course, some disadvantages can also be identified. With such a large amount of information being processed, there is a considerable need for a data control and a data revision. The field of catalogs and their administration is especially painful. The project still needs a review of the definition of the vocational requirements for correction of duplicates and irregularities. An insignificant problem is the lack of legislative system anchoring in the internal standards of the department, which creates considerable demands on maintaining the system in operation. Professional IT experts, in central management of this system, are essential in order to maintain all the tools and functions. Beside the flexibility, named as an advantage, we have to admit the challenge to find and sustain such experts, while there is a high demand for them in private sector.

Another disadvantage is the complexity of system management and, above all, user training and instruction sharing with users as they are composed in very heterogeneous and numerous teams from different organizational levels. In the case of personnel managers, everything is coordinated and organized in the framework of central management. For other users it is very challenging and sometimes even unrealistic.

All the drawbacks are so far eliminated by the determination, enthusiasm and dedication of resent system management and administration.

### **Conclusion**

The MOD has been able to develop and successfully operate a comprehensive process information system for vocational training that has been fully integrated into ISSP. For the first time in history, the records of the knowledge, abilities and skills of all employees of MoD and their subsequent evaluation were successfully recorded. Above all, the ability to analyze real training needs is a huge advantage over previous years.

The ability to further develop and operate this system will be fully dependent on the ability of the MOD to create optimal conditions for the system and sufficient human expertise to maintain and further development of this system.

Compared with the available information on the status of the information support of vocational training in some alliance countries, state administration and commercial companies, this system is quite unique. All other systems, if even available, are far from being such capable, flexible and able to manage information process support of this type of vocational training.

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