

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT NSA "V. LEVSKI" AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT. Postgraduate studies at the NSA "Vassil Levski" is an essential element of the system for education and qualification of personnel in the field of physical education, sport and related activities. In this sense, the report examines in detail the types and forms of postgraduate training provided by the Academy's Postgraduate Studies Center, including the types of studies for acquiring vocational qualifications, other specializations and short-term courses, courses for acquiring qualification credits by physical education teachers with their thematic directions, etc. Essential elements of the technology, the curricula and programs of these specializations and courses are shown, including the requirements for participation in them. The problem is discussed not only from an educational but also from a legislative, labor and professional point of view. The way the text is being presented is not only informative, but it has also an educational and motivational character. This is why some statistics are included in it. Some options provided by the postgraduate studies for career development in perspective are also presented.

Keywords: postgraduate studies, vocational qualification, specializations, courses, career development, curricula and programs

СЛЕДДИПЛОМНОТО ОБУЧЕНИЕ В НСА "В. ЛЕВСКИ" КАТО ВЪЗМОЖНОСТ ЗА ПРОФЕСИОНАЛНА КВАЛИФИКАЦИЯ И КАРИЕРНО РАЗВИТИЕ

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РЕЗЮМЕ. Следдипломното обучение в НСА „Васил Левски“ е съществен елемент от системата за подготовка и квалификация на кадри в областта на физическото възпитание, спорта и на свързаните с тях дейности. В този смисъл докладът разглежда подробно видовете и формите на следдипломно обучение, които предоставя Центърът за следдипломна квалификация в Академията. В т. ч. са включени видовете обучения за придобиване на професионални квалификации, други специализации и краткосрочни курсове, курсове за придобиване на квалификационни кредити от учители по физическо възпитание с техните тематични направления и пр. Посочват се съществени елементи от технологията и от учебните планове и програми на тези специализации и курсове, включително изискванията за участие в тях. Проблемът е разгледан не само от образователна, но и от законово-нормативна и трудово-професионална гледна точка. Стилът на поднасяне на текста не носи само информативен характер, но има и образователно-мотивационен характер. Ето защо в него са включени и някои статистически данни. Посочени са също някои възможности, които предоставя следдипломното обучение за кариерно развитие в перспектива.

Ключови думи: следдипломно обучение, професионална квалификация, специализации, курсове, кариерно развитие, учебни планове и програми

Introduction

Postgraduate training at the NSA "Vassil Levski" is an essential element of the system for training and qualification of personnel in the field of physical education, sports, kinesitherapy and related activities. This is due to both the legal framework and the fact that the Sports Academy has accreditation for training in the following professional fields: 1.3 "Pedagogy training in ... (physical education)", 7.6 "Sport", 7.4 "Public health" 7.5 "Health Care". The Postgraduate Studies Center (PSC) is an educational-scientific unit at the NSA "V. Levski". It was created on the basis of a decision of the Academic Council of 18.09.1992. It is managed by a person, elected by the Academic Council (AC) and appointed by the Rector. The Center has established a Scientific-Academic Council of qualified teachers, which discusses and adopts curricula and programs, teaching aids, themes of educational and scientific works and other materials, decides on the specific conditions and the technology of the postgraduate training. By a decision of the AC of April 2, 2015, a new Regulation on the

Structure and Activity of the PSC was adopted, which allows it to better relate to the legislative changes and the increasing competitiveness of the sports-educational market in the country. In previous publications (Tzolov and Tzolova, 2016; Tzolov, Gavrilov and Tzolova, 2017; Tzolova, 2017) we looked at the opportunities for obtaining Bachelor's and post-graduate degrees in sports, focusing more on teacher's qualification in physical education. Due to the importance of the problem, its social and educational significance, we have made it a priority to explore the analysis by examining in detail the types and forms of post-graduate training provided by the PSC at the Academy, including the types of training for acquiring professional qualifications, other specializations and short-term courses, courses for acquiring qualification credits from physical education teachers with their thematic directions, etc. The problem is addressed not only from the educational but also by the labor-professional and legal-normative point of view through the prism of several basic normative documents that have a direct relation to the qualification in sports - Higher Education Act (HEA), Vocational Education Act and Law on

Pre-school and School Education, Law on Physical Education and Sports, National Classifier of Occupations and Positions in Bulgaria and Ordinance No. 2 on Professional Qualification and Qualification of Sport-pedagogical Personnel [2-8].

The training for acquiring coach qualification has the largest share in the activity of the PSC, which can be more than 60 types of sports. The specialized normative act, which regulates it, is Ordinance No. 2 on the professional qualification and qualification of sports pedagogical staff [5]. There are five levels categorized in it, respectively instructor, assistant coach, coach, senior coach and head coach. The first two are for people with high school diploma, and the next three are for people with Bachelor's degree, and a Master's degree is required for senior coach.

According to the HEA and in accordance with Ordinance No 2, the coaching qualification at the Center can be acquired by people holding a Bachelor's degree or those who will acquire a Bachelor's degree in the course of the specialization. The training for acquisition of this qualification for the various sports is 18 months (3 semesters) and is completed on a specialized curriculum with a course of 60 ETCS (1,800 academic hours). The curriculum includes 19 disciplines, of which 2 are electives (Figure 1).

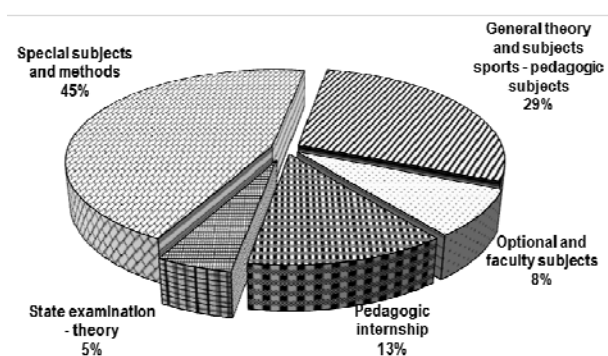


Fig. 1 Structure of the curriculum in PSC for acquiring coaching qualification (in %), a total of 60 ECTS

They provide an opportunity for learners to master knowledge of the type of sport and a number of aspects of socio-pedagogical and psychological, medical-biological, biomechanical and managerial sport knowledge.

Among the most preferred coaching qualifications are those related to yoga, karate, boxing and kickboxing, basketball, swimming, tennis, etc.

Qualified coaches can work in the system of physical education and sport as coaches, whose functions are clearly reflected in the above-mentioned Ordinance No. 2 (Art. 11), namely:

1. planning, organizing and conducting training in sports clubs;
2. participate in the organization of competitions of the athletes;
3. conduct the training process with athletes from national teams under the control of a senior or chief coach;
4. raise the level of knowledge and decision-making skills necessary for self-fulfillment of his/her professional activity;
5. participate in the selection of athletes for the national teams;
6. organize the timely passage of competitors through periodic and pre-competitive medical examinations, monitors and is

- responsible for compliance with the Ordinance on Doping Control in Training and Competitive Activities;
7. apply safety measures to athletes during training sessions, sports events and sporting activities;
8. encourage compliance with the rules of sportsmanship and fair play ("fair play");
9. assist and encourage assistant coaches and instructors to improve their knowledge and skills.

However, it is a problem that coaching qualifications (this also applies to other qualifications) cannot be acquired by people with high school diplomas as they receive it under another law [2]. This has led to the paradox that the PSC cannot qualify students with high school diplomas, although the Academy has much better opportunities, resources and lecturers than a Vocational Training Center for example. That is why people with high school diplomas also have the opportunity to improve their knowledge of sports in short-term courses or long-term specializations with the graduates, but without the corresponding coaching qualifications. These persons are trained in two specialized curricula, complying with Ordinance No. 2 (Art. 4 and Art. 5), and they are not qualified, but only have the capacity to work respectively as instructor and assistant coach.

Another good opportunity, which provides the PSC for acquiring professional qualification and respectively for work-professional realization, is related to the sport management profession. The education and qualification activity of sports management in the PSC with students who graduated with other majors started in 1990. The graduate school for sports managers was then set up at the Center. Subsequently, it ceased its activity and, in accordance with the regulations in the post-graduate training conditions, sports management acquires long-term specialization status for obtaining the "Sports Manager" qualification. Specialization is taught for three semesters in a specialized curriculum and is primarily intended for people who have acquired (or who will acquire) in the course of their studies a higher education degree as a "Sports coach", "Teacher of Physical Education", "Kinesitherapist" or another sports qualification. The curriculum includes the study of specialized and general theoretical disciplines plus management practice. The training includes 60 ETCS (750 hours of audience work and 1050 hours of self-employment) and ends with a state examination in the specialty or defense of a diploma thesis. The ratio of the specialized management disciplines to the general theoretical ones is shown in Figure 2

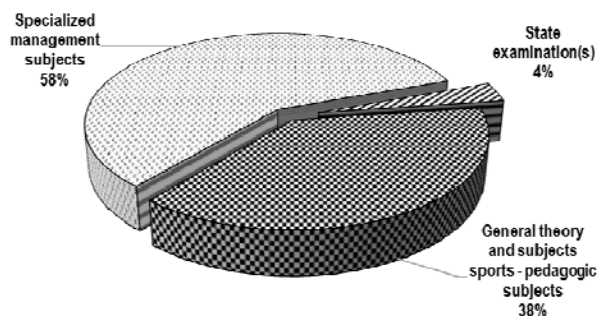


Fig. 2 Structure of the curriculum in the PSC for the acquisition of a sports management qualification, a total of 60 ECTS (in %)

Students who have acquired professional qualification "Sports manager" mostly establish themselves as managers in: fitness and spa centers, sports clubs and federations, sports goods companies, sport and recreational services and sports-entertainment events, state and municipal administrations, etc.

The third qualification gained in the PSC, which is of considerable interest, is the teacher's qualification. The vocational qualification "Teacher of physical education" is regulated by several normative documents - Higher Education Act, Preschool and School Education Act, Ordinance on the State Requirements for Teacher Education and Ordinance No. 12 on the Status and Professional Development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists.

Under the postgraduate studies at the NSA, teacher's training can be acquired by people with a Bachelor's degree. They are trained in a two-year (4-semester) part-time specialization in a specialized curriculum and study programs. The training corresponds to the current ordinance, reflecting the requirements for acquiring a teacher's qualification. It includes a course of 60 ECTS - 1800 academic hours plus, incl. hours for preparation of national exams - theory and practice, Fig. 3). The total number of disciplines studied is 30, including "Pre-graduate Pedagogical Practice".

The acquired qualification "Teacher of Physical Education" provides the opportunity to study also in the higher educational-qualification degree "Master", with major "Physical education". There are 12 specializations in this Master's program.

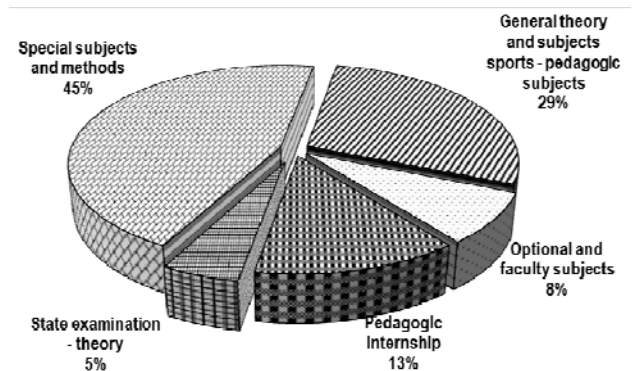


Fig. 3. Structure of the curriculum in the PSC at the NSA for acquiring teacher qualification, a total of 60 ECTS (in %).

An essential element in the qualification process of physical education teachers is their continuing education. This is regulated by the Law on Pre-school and School Education, and by Regulation №12 on the status and professional development of teachers, principals and other pedagogical specialists. In Art. 221 (3) of the Act stipulates that pedagogical specialists are required to increase their qualifications on an annual basis in order to improve the quality of their work and the quality of the preparation for students. The following article states that this must be done with a minimum of 48 academic hours (3 qualifying credits) for each attestation period, i.e. four years. Considering these requirements, the PSC at the NSA "V. Levski" has developed and approved more than 20 syllabuses with one and two qualification credits for physical education teachers. The themes of these trainings, which are being actively conducted, is extremely varied. In addition to the training, it should be clarified that, on the basis of the level of qualification attained, pedagogical specialists can acquire

professional qualification degrees, each of which has certain requirements. The NSA "V. Levski" has developed for them a system and technology for awarding the five professional-qualification degrees of teachers.

To the above-mentioned professional qualifications can be added one more - "Methodist of Physical Training in the Ministry of the Interior and Aerospace", as well as a one-year specialization in "Sports Journalism", however, the interest has decreased in recent years for the last one and there are currently no trainings.

The PSC also hosts a number of short-term courses that do not provide professional qualifications, but provide opportunities for graduates, more or less, to establish themselves on the labor market. Among the most preferred ones are several courses for acquiring instructor skills, respectively "Bodybuilding and fitness", "Aerobics and calanetics", "Swimming" and "Equestrian sport". There is also high interest in massage classes - "Classic, East Asian and Anti-Cellulite Massage" and "Massage Reflexology".

Conclusion

The Postgraduate Studies Center at NSA "V. Levski" offers different types and forms of training in the field of physical education, sports, kinesitherapy and related activities. In this way, both students and graduates of the Sports Academy, as well as people with other education, can acquire a new professional qualification or qualification, which extends their knowledge and opportunities for professional establishment. The training at the Center is done through a wide range of methods and tools, which include lectures, seminars, consultations, discussions, modern presentations, internships and more. Every graduate of a particular specialization or course receives a corresponding certificate of professional qualification or certificate, which allows him/her to work in the respective field. The interest in the training and the opportunities offered by the Centre is demonstrated by the fact that during the last years an average of 800 to 1200 students have been training at the PSC.

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