

Portuguese as a Second Language (PL2) - Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM)

General Information

Context

In order to improve the educational success of the migrant students recently arrived in the Portuguese education system, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation has been implementing educational support policies regarding the acquisition of the Portuguese language, both as an object of study and as a language of schooling, by offering Portuguese as a second language (PL2) subject - Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM), in primary and lower secondary education as well as in scientific-humanistic courses, specialised artistic courses and VET courses of upper secondary education.

Goal

The aim is to ensure to all students whose mother tongue / language of schooling is not Portuguese equal access to the curriculum and educational success, regardless of their language, culture, social status, origin and age.

Curriculum

The migrant students placed at A1, A2 and B1 language proficiency levels, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) and its Companion Volume (2020), can benefit from PLNM lessons for the development of the Portuguese language and they follow a specific PL2 curriculum.

Level zero has also recently been created for students who are unfamiliar with the Portuguese language and alphabet.

The migrant students placed at B2 and C1 language proficiency levels follow the national Portuguese subject curriculum and can benefit from language support lessons. Furthermore, these students can also use dictionaries to support them during examinations of other school subjects.

Range

All public primary and secondary schools in the Portuguese education system offer these measures. Students who have recently arrived in Portugal have to undergo an initial process of sociolinguistic assessment and placement testing. Thus, it will be possible to ascertain if these students need to benefit from these measures.

Organisation

Schools provide PLNM classes to all newly arrived students placed at level zero and at A1, A2 and B1 language proficiency levels. Indeed, when it is possible to group at least 10 students, they attend PLNM subject lessons instead of Portuguese subject lessons. If such provision is not possible, students attend the PLNM subject in their classes, during the Portuguese subject lessons academic time, and they may benefit from additional language support lessons.

Along with parents/legal guardians, schools may also provide educational responses that facilitate access to curriculum through:

- a) Mobilisation of measures to support learning and inclusion.
- b) Adaptations both to the internal and external assessment processes.

Indeed, newly arrived students placed at level zero and at A1 and A2 language proficiency levels can be integrated into the curriculum progressively, by taking selected subjects and developing other teaching activities, according to their sociolinguistic profile and their school pathways.

Assessment

The students placed at level zero and at A1, A2 and B1 language proficiency levels can also benefit from specific assessment criteria in the PLNM subject, as well as PLNM final exams, according to their language proficiency level, instead of the Portuguese subject final exams.

Impact of the measure

The implementation of this educational measure should promote, directly or indirectly, the social integration of the migrant students and their families in the community.

Additional information

- Portuguese as a Second Language (PL2) web page:

<https://www.dge.mec.pt/portugues-lingua-nao-materna>

- Legislation

Decree-Law No. 54/2018, of the 6th July

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Ministerial Implementing Order No. 223-A/2018, of the 3rd August

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 226-A/2018, of the 7th August

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 229-A/2018, of the 14th August

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 232-A/2018, of the 20th August

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 235-A/2018, of the 23rd August

Law No. 116/2019, of the 13th September

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 65/2022, of the 1st February

Decree-Law No. 62/2023, of the 25th July

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 278/2023, of the 8th September

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 29/2025/1, of the 7th February

Ministerial Implementing Order No. 86/2025/1, of the 6th March

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