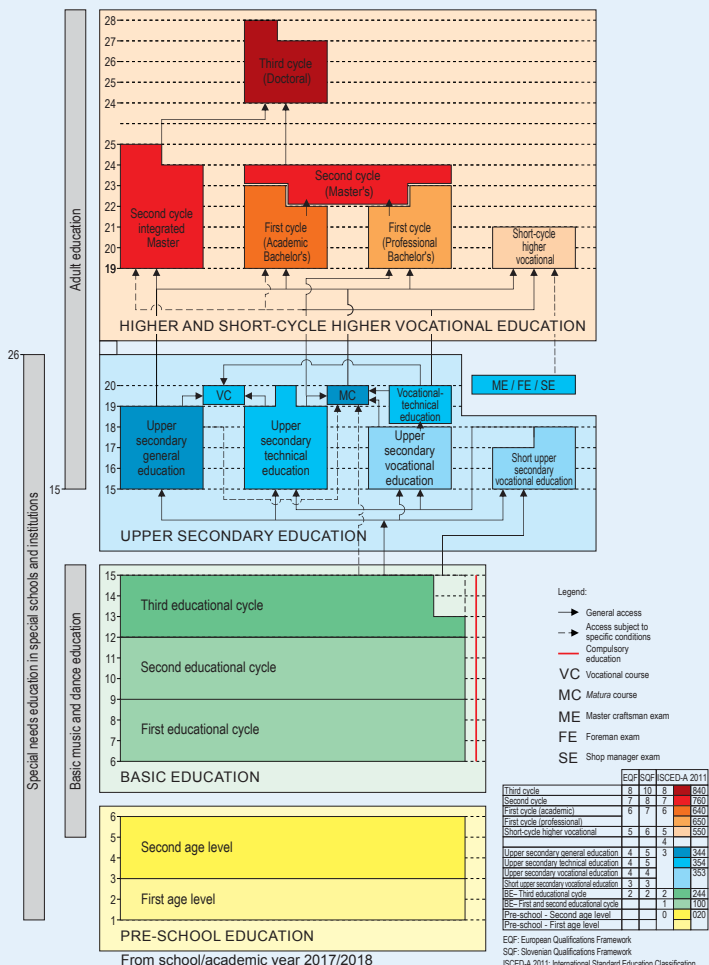


THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

in the Republic of Slovenia

2023/24

STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA



ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

The primary goal of the education system in Slovenia is to provide optimal development of the individual, irrespective of gender, social and cultural background, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or physical and mental disability. The Slovenian education system strives to promote lifelong learning, critical thinking, creativity and social and cultural integration.

The education system is organised mainly as a public service rendered by public and private institutions and private providers holding a concession who implement officially recognised or accredited programmes. Domestic and non-domestic natural or legal persons may set up private kindergartens or upper secondary schools and higher education institutions.

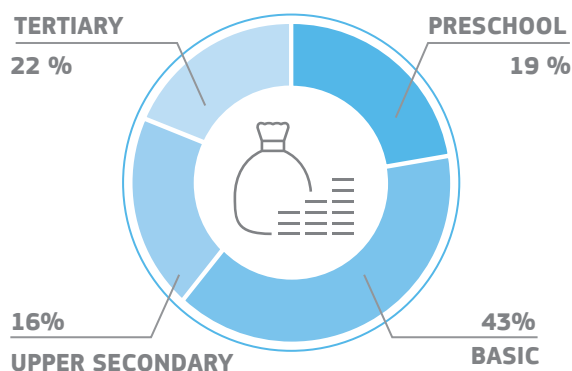
The medium of instruction is Slovenian. The Italian and Hungarian national communities enjoy the right to pursue education in their respective languages in ethnically mixed areas.

FUNDING

Preschool education is funded by municipalities, payments by parents, and other sources. Basic education is funded by both the municipality and the state, as well as from other sources. The same applies to adult education. Public upper secondary schools, short-cycle higher vocational colleges, higher education institutions, educational institutions for SEN children and residence halls for upper secondary and tertiary students, as well as supporting professional institutes in education are founded and financed by the state.

In 2023, public expenditure on formal education stood at to 5.1% of GDP or €3 286 M. 92.5% went directly to educational institutions, while 7.5% was spent on public transfers to households and other private entities. (Source: SURS)

Expenditure on educational institutions by level of education, 2023



PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Preschool education is not compulsory. It is open to children of eleven months to six years or compulsory school age. It is provided by public and private kindergartens. Where necessary, the network of public kindergartens is complemented by private kindergartens that hold a concession. Childcare services may also be provided by registered child-minders. Kindergartens are unified institutional settings. They provide education and care for all preschool children. The right to admission is universal for all children.

Goals and aims of preschool education

- Develop skills and abilities to:
 - understand and appreciate oneself and others,
 - debate and resolve issues, appreciate diversity and cooperate or interact in a group,
 - recognise emotions and have the emotional experience and expression.
- Foster curiosity, exploratory spirit, imagination and intuition, as well as develop critical thinking.
- Nurture language development for effective and creative use of speech, also reading and writing at a later stage.
- Cultivate appreciation of artistic works and the artistic expression.

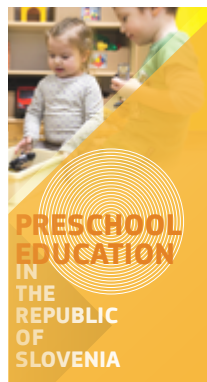
Participation

In the 2023/24 school year, preschool education was provided in 988 settings at 108 public and 97 private kindergartens, and at 209 school-based kindergartens. There were 85.5% of all children aged 1 to 6 years enrolled in kindergartens (84 522 children). 94% of enrolled children attended public kindergartens. (Source: SURS)

Programme

Preschool education is provided in two age groups: children aged 1 to 3 and children aged 3 to school age. Kindergartens may implement full-day, half-day and shorter programmes. Programmes encompass education, care and meals.

The core national programming document is the Kindergarten curriculum. It defines the preschool education in kindergartens as part of the education system and so under the auspices of the ministry responsible for education.





BASIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

Children start the compulsory 9-year basic school at the age of 6. The compulsory basic school is a single structure of primary and lower secondary general education or three educational cycles. Basic education is taught by generalist teachers and by specialist subject teachers.

Public basic schools are set up by local communities. All children get a place at a school in their respective catchment area. Parents may enrol their children in a school outside their catchment area, in a private school or even decide to home school their child.

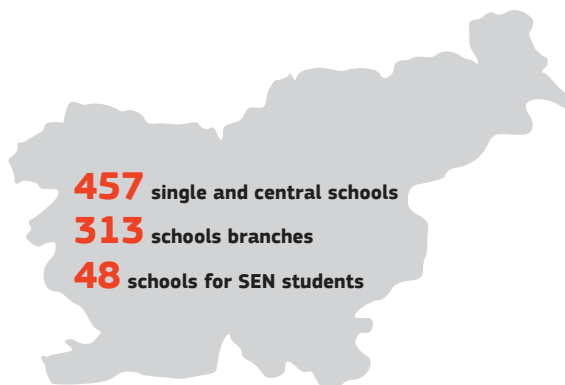


Majority of students attend public basic schools. In school year 2023/24, 196 371 students were enrolled in basic school program with regular and adapted curriculum. About 1% of students attended private basic schools providing the officially recognised basic school programmes. (Source: SURS)

Widespread network

The widespread network of public schools and settings of school branches gives access to basic education provision. 457 basic schools deliver the mainstream educational programme, and 48 specialised basic schools – special units at mainstream schools as well as specialised institutions for SEN students – deliver the adapted educational programme (under 2% of basic school students).

Basic school network, school year 2023/24



Source: Ministry of Education

Goals of basic school education

Among other provide students the opportunities to:

- acquire knowledge and develop skills consistent with their abilities and interests,
- foster personal development,
- develop the ability for lifelong learning and continuous education,
- foster the sense of belonging to one state, national identity, and cultural heritage, as well as educate about common cultural values,
- educate about respecting human rights, understanding diversity and teach tolerance,
- develop skills of communicating in Slovenian and foreign languages,
- educate for sustainable development, for taking responsibility for one's actions, one's health, other people, and the environment,
- develop entrepreneurial skills, inventiveness, and creativity.

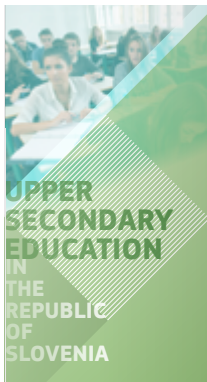
Comprehensive programme

The basic school programme is specified by the timetable and curricula of compulsory and optional subjects, as well as by guidelines and educational concepts that define other methods of working with children, cross-curricular contents and other documents to guide the work of the education staff. Along with compulsory and compulsory optional subjects, class discussion periods and days of activities (cultural, sports, technical, science days), all basic schools undertake activities of the extended programme.

Assessment

In grades 1 and 2, teachers assess the progress of students with descriptive marks. From grade 3 onwards, teachers evaluate the achievement of standards of knowledge and start to assess knowledge with numerical marks.

Students sit compulsory national external assessment at the end of grades 3, 6 and 9. Results are additional information about the level of students' knowledge.



UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Upon completion of compulsory basic education, students – typically aged 15 – may choose to continue their education at the upper secondary level at a school and a programme of their own choice. This takes two to five years to complete. Schools may limit enrolment if the number of candidates exceeds their capacity.

The system of upper secondary education is centralised.

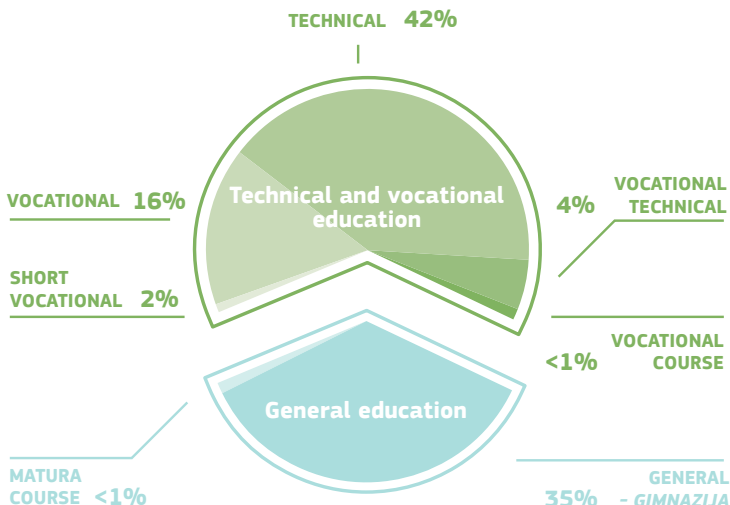
Public upper secondary schools may operate as standalone institutions or as organisational units of large school centres.



In the 2023/24 school year, upper secondary educational programmes were provided by 141 public schools or school centres, 6 private schools and 6 public educational institutions for children with special educational needs. These programmes were attended by 80 685 students in 2023/24. (Source: Ministry of Education, SURS)

Upper secondary education is structured as general and as vocational and technical education.

Enrolment in upper secondary education by programmes, 2023/24

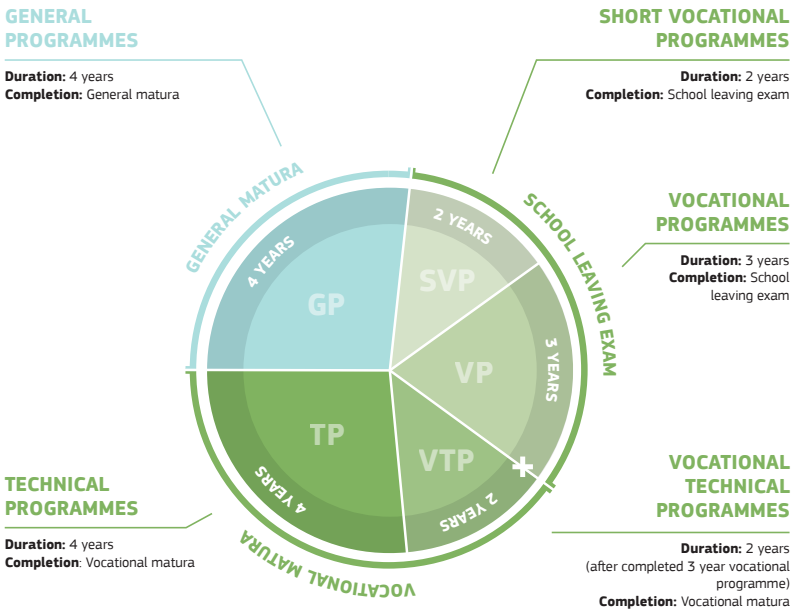


The main goals of upper secondary education:

- to make it possible for everyone to obtain a general educational qualification and an occupation,
- to allow the largest possible share of population the attainment of the highest possible level of creativity and educational qualification,
- to facilitate the inclusion in the European labour market.

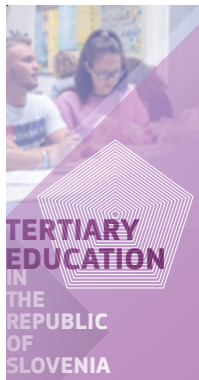
Types of programmes

Tracking of students in Slovenia only begins in upper secondary education.



The upper secondary educational qualification is awarded only after passing the final examination that grants also the right to enrol in higher levels:

- General *matura*
- Vocational *matura*
- School leaving exam



TERTIARY EDUCATION

The tertiary education includes short-cycle higher vocational education and higher education. Both subsystems are interrelated and linked by a system of quality assurance, progression from lower to higher levels, and institutional and programme compatibility, in part.

Higher education institutions are autonomous.

The top objectives of tertiary education are quality, employability and mobility in Europe and the world, fair access, and diversity of institutions and study programmes.



National higher education programme 2030 priorities are digitalisation, funding, internationalisation, means of social development, quality.

There were 80 648 students enrolled in tertiary education in the academic year 2023/24. (Source: SURS)

Students pursue **the short-cycle higher vocational education** at higher vocational colleges. These two-year practice-orientated programmes aim to meet the needs of economy and to equip students with competences by vocational and professional standards. The graduates learn skills to manage, plan and oversee work processes.

Students pursue all three cycles of **higher education** at universities and independent higher education institutions. In the first study cycle, students enrol on professional or academic undergraduate study programmes. The second and third study cycle are postgraduate, and include Master's, Integrated Master's, and PhD study programmes respectively.

The most common **enrolment requirement** for short cycle and undergraduate study programmes is the certificate in general *matura* or vocational *matura*. In case of a cap on places, the selection criteria extend to include the candidate's *matura* results and learning outcomes of the last two years of upper-secondary school, or even the learning outcomes in specific subjects.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education comprises the education, training and learning of individuals who have fulfilled the legal compulsory education obligation (specific number of years spent in the basic programme) and wish to acquire, update, expand and deepen their knowledge, and do not have the status of a regular basic school or upper secondary school student. A wide variety of programmes and training providers are available within the adult education system in Slovenia.

Adults who wish to acquire basic educational qualification take lessons of the basic school programme for adults.

Adults who wish to acquire upper secondary educational qualification may enrol in regular upper secondary education programmes with special organisational adjustments for adults.

Non-formal education may be of a professional nature, i.e. further training and educational pathways in connection with job promotion or of a general nature aimed at personal development. Study clubs and independent learning centres constitute an important type of non-formal education. Many adults in Slovenia are involved in occasional self-learning.

The Slovenian qualification framework (SOK) is a unified system of qualifications reached with the educational, vocational or supplementary qualification of the Republic of Slovenia.

Slovenia has developed a system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and established the national vocational qualification system for recognising competencies on the labour market. The national vocational qualifications are developed from vocational standards, namely at the request of employers.

BASIC MUSIC AND DANCE EDUCATION

Slovenia has a well-developed system of non-compulsory basic music and ballet education. It is provided outside mainstream formal education and, students may attend school simultaneously. It is provided by public and private music and ballet schools; they may also organise other music and dance activities. They cater for preschool children, basic school students, upper secondary school students, tertiary students and adults, as well. Candidates are required to pass an entrance aptitude test.

Schools established by local communities and private providers allow students to gain artistic experience, encourage students to perform solo, set up chamber music groups and orchestras and dance groups.

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

The education of children with special educational needs (SEN children) is based on the principle of equal opportunity, whilst taking into account the diversity of children's needs, inclusion, parental involvement, individualised method of work, as well as all other conditions to ensure the best development of the individual child. The education of SEN children is provided exclusively as a public service, namely at public kindergartens, schools, specialised public schools or public institutions. The government provides officially recognised education programmes from the preschool level to the end of upper secondary education.

Programmes of all types and stages of education with the adapted implementation and additional professional assistance are provided at kindergartens and schools in mainstream classes. The education programmes for children with emotional and behavioural problems are provided only by public institutions for the education of SEN children.

Children are placed in education programmes by taking into consideration their physical, cognitive, emotional, social and health-related needs. Furthermore, their attained level of development is taken into account as well as their learning abilities, achievement of knowledge standards and further development outlook in light of their handicaps, impairments or disabilities.

EDUCATION STAFF

Education staff at kindergartens and schools that provide officially recognised education programmes include preschool teachers, preschool teacher assistants, teachers, counsellors, school librarians and other education staff. Both public and private kindergartens and schools shall ensure that their education staff is adequately qualified, that is they have a perfect command of Slovenian (and/or the language of the relevant ethnic minority); hold a relevant educational qualification and they have passed the professional examination.

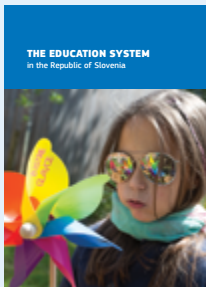
All education staff shall hold a relevant pedagogical-andragogical educational qualification (from bachelor's degree for preschool teachers to doctorate of science for full professor at higher education), while education staff in education of SEN children shall hold special pedagogical educational qualification.

There are two pathways to a teaching qualification: under a concurrent model (in parallel with the subject of instruction) or under a consecutive model.

Education and other staff in public kindergartens, schools, higher education institutions, and other institutions have the status of public servants. Policies concerning salaries, employment relationships and retirement are uniform for the entire country. Education staff continues with their professional education and training throughout their career, and successfully completed programmes of continuous professional development are a prerequisite for any promotion to higher professional titles.

Head teachers manage public kindergartens and schools. They assume two roles: that of a pedagogical leader and that of an executive manager. They need to have a headship license. Public adult education organisations are managed by a director. A university is managed and represented by a rector.

Kindergartens and schools may employ accountants and administrative assistants. They also employ cleaning staff and a caretaker to do the technical, maintenance and other housekeeping related work. Upper secondary schools employ a maintenance keeper for IT and other computer equipment, and at kindergartens, there is a laundress. Kindergartens and schools employ cooks to prepare food, and kindergartens employ a cook assistant, as well.



QUALITY ASSURANCE

The school inspectorate supervises the regularity or legality of management and education activities at public and private institutions. It carries out regular and extraordinary inspections and examines legal, organisational and other administrative procedures.

Kindergartens and schools carry out regular self-evaluations.

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is responsible to monitor the process of quality assessment and assurance in vocational and technical education. At the end of upper secondary education, students in technical education take vocational *matura* and students in *gimnazija* take general *matura*.

The Quality and evaluation council is a body appointed by the minister of education to cater for the coordination of evaluation programmes in preschool education, basic school education, and upper secondary education; it reports to the minister.

In tertiary education, internal evaluation is the responsibility of higher vocational colleges and higher education institutions, and external evaluation of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) has the main role in external evaluation.

Information on the enrolment of children and students, employees, institutions and programme structure is collected and administered by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURSTAT).

The education system in the Republic of Slovenia 2023/24

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