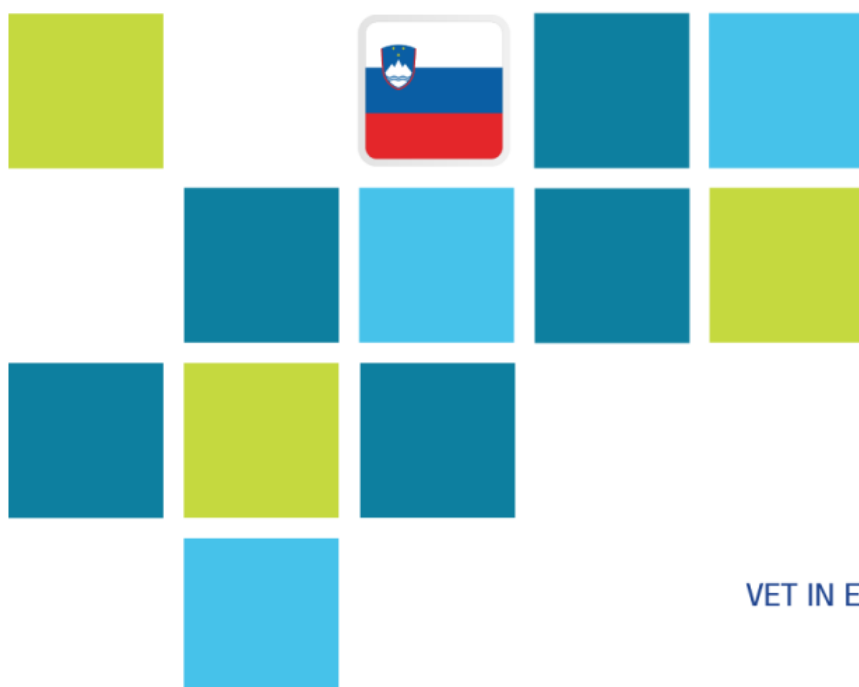

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

SLOVENIA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



VET IN EUROPE 2023

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 - Vocational bridging programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (poklicni tečaj, PT).
 - Master craftsman, foreman and shop manager exams (mojstrski, delovodski ali poslovodni izpiti) at EQF level 4, ISCED 354. Each exam is under the auspices of the individual chamber that organises the exams. Candidates study independently, though preparatory courses may be prepared due to market demand and literature may be also offered..
 - Higher Vocational programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (višje strokovno izobraževanje, VSI).
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements

Formal vocational education and training (VET) in Slovenia starts at upper secondary level and is provided mainly by public schools that are founded and financed by the State. The education and labour ministries share responsibility for preparing legislation, financing, and adopting VET programmes, standards and qualifications. While the education ministry deals with VET at systemic level, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) is responsible for VET at the practical level; it monitors and guides the development of VET and provides in-service teacher training and VET curricula. The CPI also acts as a link between ministries, schools and social partners.

VET programmes

After completing compulsory basic education, learners can enrol in the following upper secondary programmes:

- technical upper secondary programmes (ISCED 354, EQF 4): 4-year programmes that consist of 40% of general subjects and at least 8 weeks of in-company work-based learning (15% WBL). After vocational matura (*poklicna matura*) learners can enter the labour market or enrol in tertiary education.
- vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 4): 3-year labour-market-oriented programmes with two paths:
 - school-based path: approximately 20% (at least 24 weeks) of the programme is undertaken at an employer (in-company training) and the rest at the school (consisting of general subjects and professional modules);
 - apprenticeship path: a minimum 50% of the programme is undertaken at an employer (in-company training), while at least 40% is delivered in school;
- after final exams (*zaključni izpit*), students from both school and apprenticeship paths can enter the labour market or enrol in 2-year vocational technical education programmes at ISCED 354 (EQF 4) that lead to vocational matura;
- short vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 3): 2-year programmes that qualify learners for less demanding occupations (at assistant level) or continuing education in vocational programmes.

Graduates with a vocational matura can enrol in 2-year higher vocational programmes (ISCED 554, EQF 5) or first-cycle professional education (ISCED 655, EQF 6) and, after successful participation in an additional entry examination, also in first-cycle academic education (ISCED 645, EQF 6).

Higher vocational programmes are practice-oriented and include 40% of work-based learning in companies. These were developed to meet the needs of the economy, as they train graduates for managing, planning and controlling work processes. In 2022/2023, 12.49% of all tertiary students enrolled into higher VET schools.

Adult learning and CVET

Adults can enrol in the same formal VET programmes as young people. Adults can also participate in continuing VET, offered by public and private providers; regulation of provision of most of these programmes is not covered by legislation. Many activities to support adult education are organised by adult education centres.

According to the most recent data available, in the school year 2021/22 14 225 adults participated in the upper secondary programmes. Of these adults, 3.8% were enrolled in general education, 60% in technical education, 34.6% in vocational education and 0.6% in short vocational education. 77% of them were younger than 25.

Distinctive features

VET in Slovenia is characterised by the following main features:

- occupational standards form the basis for competence-based VET programmes and for the NVQ system;
- vocational and technical programmes are offered in all professional fields, all VET programmes combine general subjects with professional modules that integrate theoretical and practical learning; permeability between education levels and programme types is high;
- work-based learning represents an integral part of all types of VET programmes. Students are trained in modern intercompany training centres and companies as well as in apprenticeship form;
- upper secondary school autonomy: framework curricula are set at national level, while VET schools are responsible for design curricula. They adapt 20% of the curricula (open curricula) to local companies' needs.

Slovenia has one of the lowest rates of early leavers from education and training (ELET) in the EU. In 2022 the percentage of ELETs/ NEETS aged 18-24 with a maximum of primary education was 4.0%. The reasons are the traditionally high value of education in society, availability of State scholarships, progression opportunities in education, and a well-developed guidance system, as well as a well-developed network of formal adult education providers.

[1] The name of the institute in the national language is Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje, shorter Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje, abbreviation (CPI).

[2] Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia:
<https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/H101S.px> and
<https://pxweb.stat.si/SiStatData/pxweb/sl/Data/-/0954001S.px>

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Improving VET response to labour market needs has been at the heart of the development of competence-based curricula since 2006. The implementation period has brought changes in school curriculum planning, school-company cooperation culture, didactic and student assessment approaches and VET attractiveness. Significant efforts were made through investing in new training facilities (intercompany training centres) and reinforcing in-company work-based learning (WBL). The apprenticeship path is available in 39 out of 44 vocational upper secondary programmes. Still, the quality of WBL and competence-based assessment remain a challenge.

Further development of career guidance services and promoting more flexible and individualised paths remain current priorities. The importance of raising adults' levels of skills is growing, as adult [participation in VET](#) has been consistently decreasing. Additionally, in 2021, [50% of the population](#) aged 16-74 in Slovenia had at least basic digital skills, compared to 54% in the EU-27.

Projects supported by the [Recovery and resilience facility](#) (RRF) focus on the adapting VET to digital, sustainable transition, and increasing the resilience of the education system. Digital, green and entrepreneurial competences are being introduced into education programmes; computer science and informatics are being strengthened. Development of accredited CVET programmes for upskilling specific vocational competences is another response to labour market needs. New programmes offer training to employees to improve vocational competences and acquire new or in-depth specialisation. They are developed at EQF levels 4 and 5.

Recognising the importance of monitoring and forecasting labour market needs for occupations and competences, the labour ministry, together with other stakeholders, presented the results of the [Skills Forecasting Platform](#) project in June 2023. The project continues under the new name "Labour Market Platform" and aims to contribute to a well-functioning labour market, by creating quality jobs and providing infrastructure to better match supply and demand. It will also include a transparent job search interface, matching support tools, and offering information on current and future labour market needs (based on occupational needs and competence projections), as well as resources needed for skills development and career guidance.

Shortages of VET teachers and other professionals are also challenges to address.

[3] [Recovery and Resilience Plan: Advanced Slovenia](#)

[4] [Results of medium and long-term forecasts of labour market needs until 2037.](#)

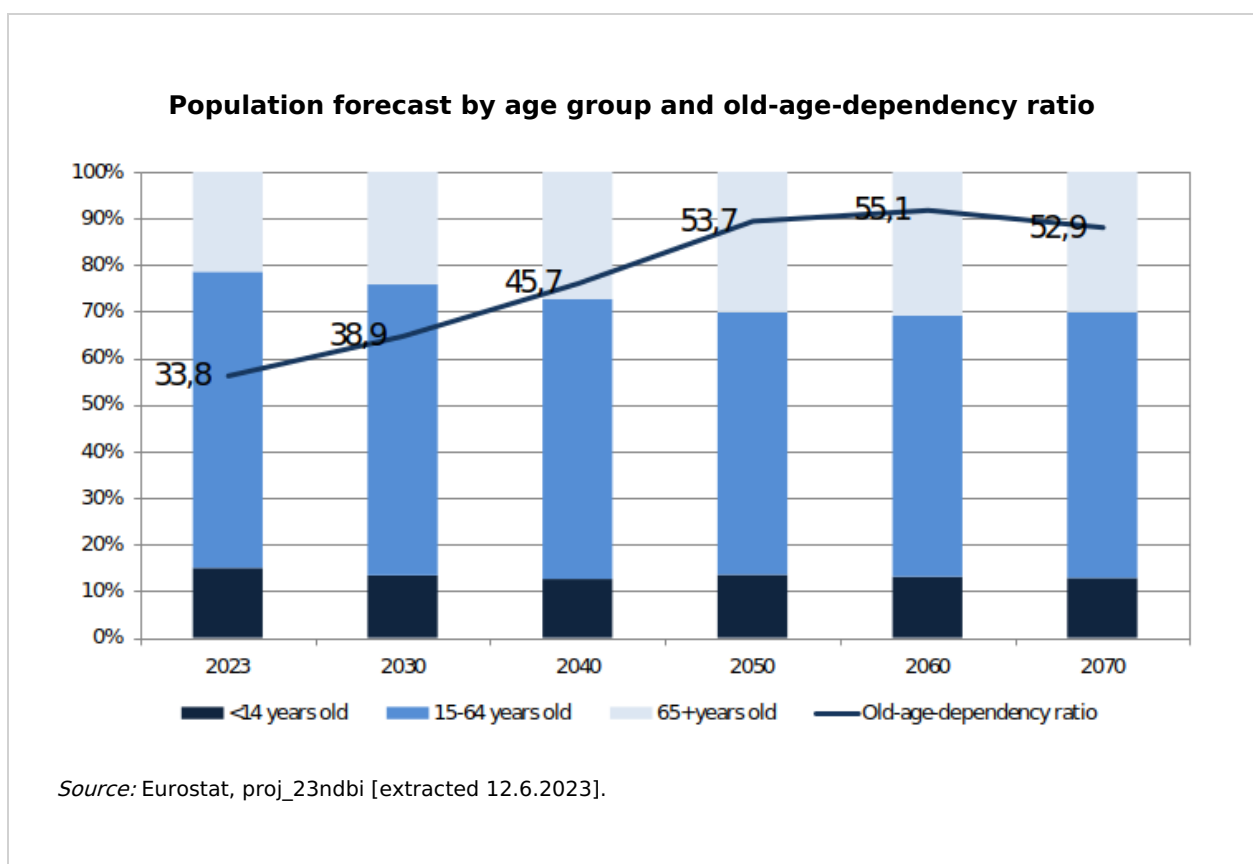
CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

Population in 2022: 2 107 180 (1) It increased by 2.0 % since 2017 due to positive net migration, although natural population (2) growth was negative.

The population is ageing. The old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 33.8 in 2023 to 52.9 in 2070 (3) .



In response to the ageing population, the government adopted an active ageing strategy in 2017 (4) .

From 2017 until 2022, comprehensive support was provided to companies for the active ageing of employees (5) aimed at increasing the vocational competences of the adult population (over 45 years old). During this period, 25 innovative projects and 50 companies were supported. The implementation of this measure is foreseen in the new financial period under the European Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 (6) .

In Slovenia, the number of foreign citizens increased by 50.6% between 2017 and 2022, mainly due to labour migrations. Their share in total population increased by 2.6 percentage points and totalled 8.2% in 2022. Of these foreign citizens, 87.7% are from non-EU countries, mainly from

former Yugoslavia countries.

The Slovenian economy increasingly employs the foreign labour force to address labour market shortages. In 2023, the [Act amending the Employment, self-employment and work of foreigners Act](#), along with the [Act amending the Act on foreigners](#), were adopted to facilitate immigration and employment procedures. Currently (2023), a migration strategy is in preparation to define the objectives, orientations, and measures for migration governance in Slovenia. Additionally, an [integration strategy](#) is being developed to support the integration of non-EU nationals into the cultural, economic and social life of the country.

The country has two minorities, Italian and Hungarian. The Italian minority has an option to learn in their native language and learn Slovene as a second language. A VET school in Obalno-kraška region ([Scuola media Pietro Coppo](#)) offers 12 different VET programmes in Italian teaching language.

The Hungarian minority has a bilingual VET school in Pomurska region ([Dvojezična srednja šola Lendava, Kétnyelvű középiskola, Lendva](#)), offering 20 different VET programmes.

3.2 Economics

Most companies are micro and small-sized.

Main economic sectors:

- manufacturing (automobile, metallic, electronics, pharmacy and chemicals, etc.);
- wholesale and retail trade;
- construction.

These sectors created the highest output (EUR) in 2022.

The highest number of persons in employment.

- manufacturing,;
- wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles;
- education;
- construction;
- human health and social work activities.

Export comprises mainly manufacture of medical and pharmaceutical products, machinery, transport equipment, road vehicles (including air-cushion vehicles), , petroleum, petroleum products and related materials (7) .

3.3 Labour market

In the first half of 2020, when the COVID-19 epidemic emerged, the demand for labour force decreased. Shortly after that, from the second half of 2020 onwards, high economic activity and demographic changes led to an increasing number of employers facing a shortage of (suitable) staff for employment. In the beginning of 2023, 55.8% of employers faced this challenge; among big companies, this share was even higher at 85.1% (8) . These employer difficulties are also reflected in the vacancy rate, which in 2022 reached its highest ever (9) . According to the Eurochambers European Economic Survey, 55% of employers cite the lack of skilled workers as one of the biggest challenges for doing business in 2023 (10) .

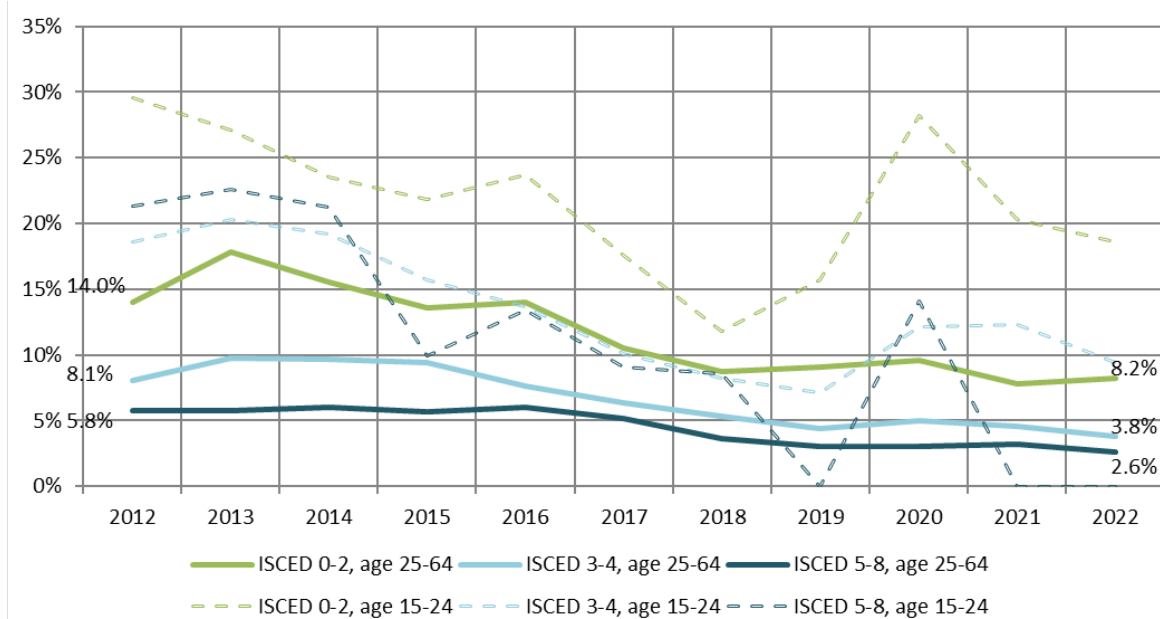
Alongside labour shortages due to demographic reasons, knowledge and skills mismatches are further hampering the availability of (adequate) human resources to address social, environmental and economic challenges. For many years, employers have faced a shortage of workers with upper secondary VET education. According to the Employment forecast, 2023/I, there is a shortage of heavy lorry and tractor-trailer drivers, welders, bricklayers, simple

manufacturing workers , sales workers, cooks and waiters (11) . Employers also face shortages of tertiary-educated workers, too. According to the 2023 [Occupational Barometer](#) estimates, occupations requiring tertiary education, particularly health and education professionals, ICT specialists, other engineers, and some social science graduates, face significant shortfalls (12) .

According to the Employment forecast, 2023/I , in the second half of the 2023 the most positive employment forecasts are in the construction, hospitality and catering sectors. In these industries, more than 60% of employers expect difficulties in finding staff. Health and social care, catering, transport and storage activities, education and construction have the highest share of employers expecting difficulties in finding staff. Otherwise, 55.7% of all employers expect difficulties in finding staff (13) .

The process of professions’ deregulation (14) started in 2010, when there were 323 regulated professions. The aim of this policy has been to ease entry conditions and access to the labour market and to minimise the administrative burden that would lead to easier inclusion of young people, migrants and other groups in the labour market. By 2023, there were 221 regulated professions, mainly in infrastructure, health and economy (15) .

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012 - 2022

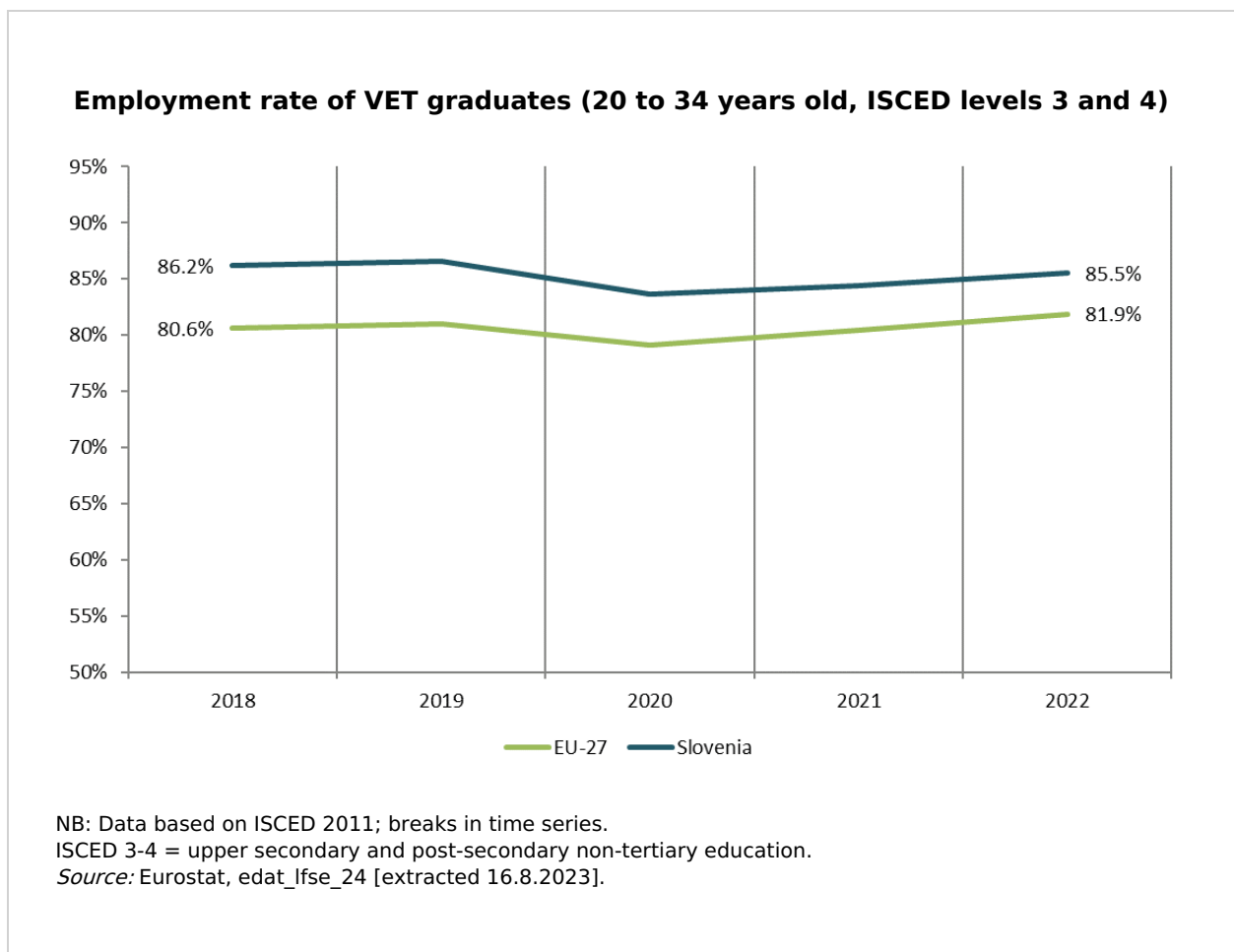


NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 0-2 and 5-8, age 15-24.
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.
 Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [extracted 16.8.2023].

In 2021 and 2022, the unemployment rate of young people (15-24 years) at ISCED levels 0-4 fell due to improved labour market conditions. However, low-educated young people (ISCED 0-2) remain especially vulnerable in the labour market. Despite decreasing, their unemployment rate in 2022 was 18.6%, which is 1.0 percentage point higher than in 2017 (17.6%) and significantly

higher than the unemployment rate of upper secondary graduates (ISCED 3-4), which was 9.4% in 2022.

The unemployment rate of age group 25 to 64 was decreasing in 2021 and 2022. In 2022, it was 3.5% and the lowest in last 10 years. These trends are related to demographic trends (decreasing number of people in age group 20 to 64 years) and high economic activity, resulting in labour market shortages. Since 2017 the unemployment rate decreased for all education groups, the least for low educated who face unemployment more often than upper secondary and tertiary educated.



Employment of VET graduates aged 20 to 34 (ISCED levels 3-4) decreased in 2020, negatively affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. In 2021 and 2022, as labour market conditions improved, it increased and was 0.7 percentage points lower in 2022 than in 2018.

-
- [1] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 16.8.2023]
 - [2] Natural population growth is the difference between the numbers of births and deaths in a population.
 - [3] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).
 - [4] Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the RS, hereinafter IMAD, 2017: [Active Ageing Strategy](#)

- [5] [Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the RS.](#)
- [6] Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: [Annual Report on the implementation of State action on the labour market for 2022](#) (direct link available [here](#))
- [7] Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia: [Exports and imports by the Standard International Trade Classification, by countries, Slovenia, annually.](#)
- [8] Employment Service of Slovenia: [Employment Forecast.](#)
- [9] Eurostat. [Job vacancy rate by NACE Rev. 2 activity - annual data.](#)
- [10] Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. Eurochambres Economic Survey: Unpublished data.
- [11] Employment Service of Slovenia: [Employment Forecast 2023/I.](#)
- [12] Employment Service of Slovenia: [Occupational barometer 2022.](#)
- [13] Employment Service of Slovenia: [Employment Forecast.](#)
- [14] Deregulation means to withdraw the regulation of the profession or to renew the regulation.
- [15] [Slovenian Business Point](#)

CHAPTER 4.

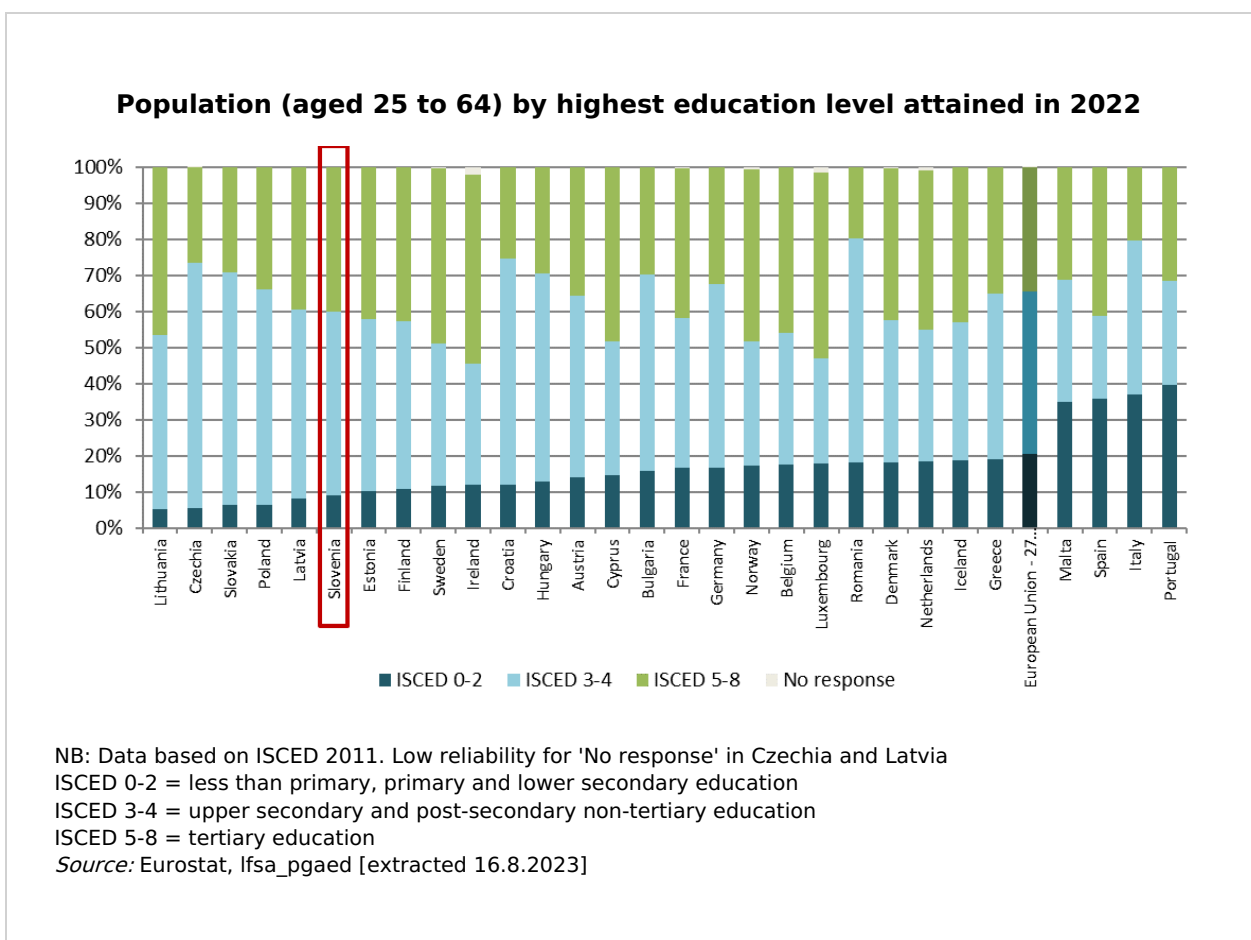
Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

The share of the population aged up to 64 with at least upper secondary (upper secondary and tertiary) education was in 2022 91%, among the highest in EU. This high share is mainly related to the high participation of young people in upper secondary education, the [low share of early school leavers](#), and the participation of adults in education. It exceeded the national target set by the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 for the third year in a row. Many years of growth in this share is related to the high participation of young people in tertiary education and the transition of younger, on average more educated people to higher age groups (a demographic effect).

The share of the population aged up to 64 with higher education (40.1 %) was in 2022 in Slovenia above EU average.

The share of those with low or without a qualification (9.0 %) was among the lowest in the EU.



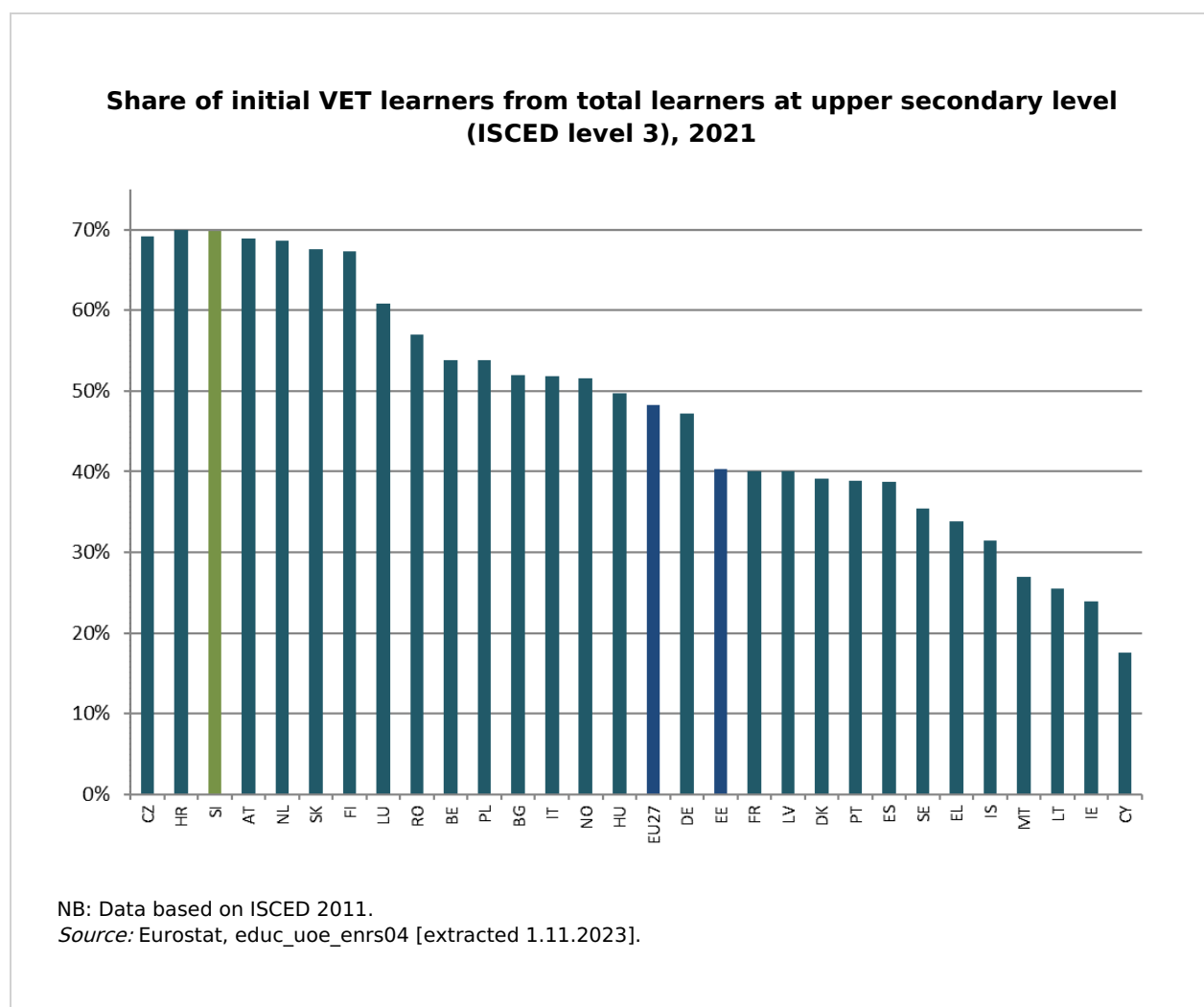
4.3 VET learners by level

In Slovenia, the share of learners in VET at ISCED level 3 was 69.8 % in 2021 and is one of the highest among EU countries.

Share of learners in VET by level in 2021

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
not applicable	69.8 %	not applicable

Source: Eurostat educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 16.8.2023].



The number of young people enrolled in VET was declining during the 2015/16 - 2019/20 period, mainly due to demographic reasons.

In the 2022/23 school year, their number increased for the third consequently year. The supply of VET graduates does not meet labour market needs, where there is excessive demand for several VET occupations. With many young people opting for tertiary education and considering the general labour shortage due to demographic reasons and favourable economic developments, employers are struggling to find this type of workers.

4.4 Female share

Traditionally, there are more males in VET than females. Women make up around 41% of total enrolments in VET, which is significantly different from general programs where around 61% of enrollees are female. Males prefer professions in fields like science and engineering, manufacturing and construction, while females more often enrol in programmes in fields like education, social sciences, business and law, health and welfare, humanities and arts and services.

Table: Young people, enrolled in VET, number and structure, by sex, in %, school 2022/2023

	Total, number	Structure of enrolment by sex, in %	
		Men	Women
Fields of education - TOTAL	49 951	58.3	41.7
Education	2 702	9.9	90.1
Humanities and arts	3 188	33.2	66.8
Social sciences, business and law	6 482	41.4	58.6
Science	363	48.5	51.5
Information and communication technologies (ICTs)	3 570	94.4	5.6
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	19 019	89.2	10.8
Agriculture	2 445	46.3	53.7
Health and welfare	5 885	22.2	77.8
Services	6 297	34.3	65.7

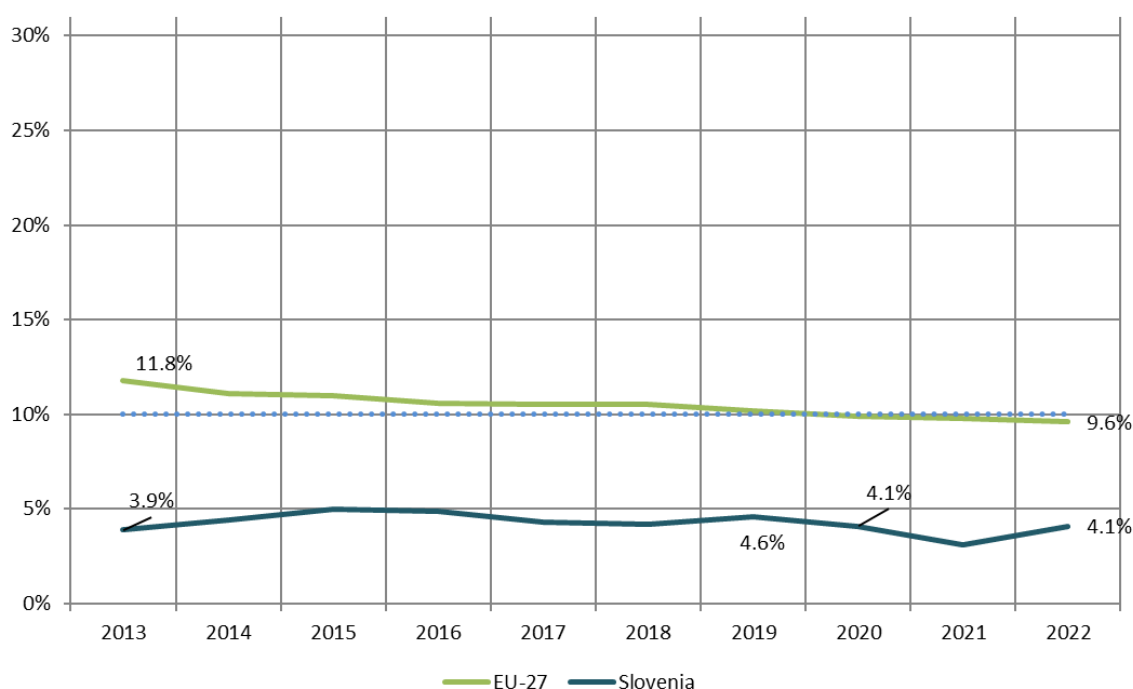
Source: Statistic Office of the Republic of Slovenia [extracted 16.8.2023].

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training was 4.1% in 2022, which is approximately the same as in 2013 (3.9 %).

It is higher among men (4.2%) than women (3.9%) and among foreign citizens (10.2%) than among Slovene citizens (3.6%).

Early leavers from education and training in 2013 - 22



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training

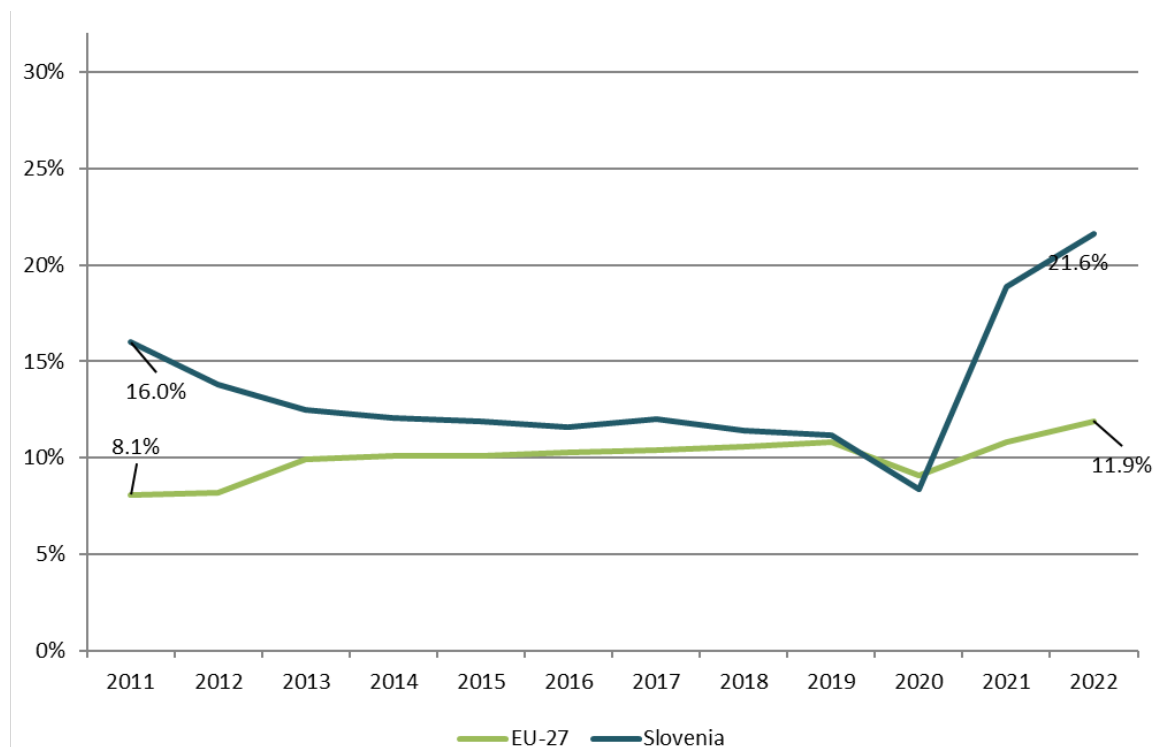
Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 12.6.2023] and European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [extracted 16.8.2023].

For more information visit [Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving](#) and our interactive toolkits: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#).

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Adult participation in lifelong learning increased strongly in 2021 after years of decline and a sharp decrease in 2020 due to COVID-19 epidemic. This rise in 2021 was largely due to the increase in webinars during the epidemic, the increased availability of publicly funded training and the wide availability of free training; the data were also impacted by a change in methodology. In 2022, it increased even more (to 21.6%) and, for the first time, exceeded the national target set in 2013, 2017 and 2022, ranking just behind Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and Denmark among EU Member States.

Participation in lifelong learning in 2011- 22



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (break in series 2021).
 Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [extracted 16.8.2023].

Adult participation in lifelong learning increased strongly in 2021 after years of decline and a sharp decrease in 2020 due to COVID-19 epidemic. This rise in 2021 was largely due to the increase in webinars during the epidemic, the increased availability of publicly funded training and the wide availability of free training; the data were also impacted by a change in methodology. In 2022, it increased even more (to 21.6%) and, for the first time, exceeded the national target set in 2013, 2017 and 2022, ranking just behind Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, and Denmark among EU Member States.

The participation of people with low educational attainment, older people, the inactive and immigrants - who were already less likely to participate in education before the epidemic - increased less in 2021 and 2022 than that of other groups. This means that the gaps among socio-economic groups widened. In terms of activity status (employed, unemployed and persons outside the labour force or inactive) adult participation in lifelong learning is still the highest among those in employment and lowest among persons outside the labour force.

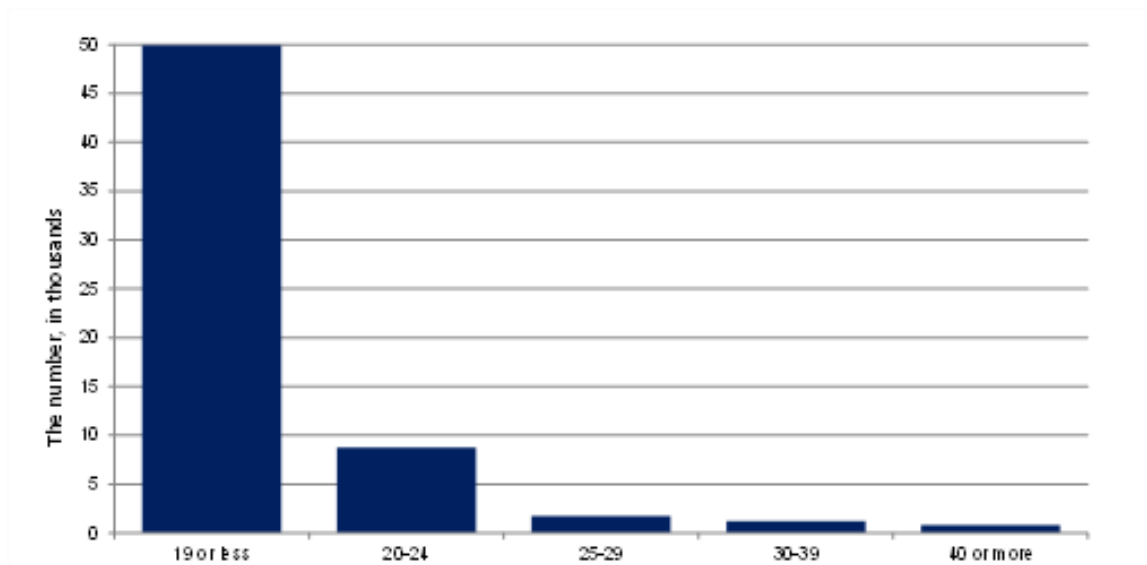
Differences in participation also exist among persons in employment. In the private sector, where the share of the low educated is relatively higher, participation in lifelong learning was again lower in 2022 than in the public sector. By activities, participation was low in construction, accommodation, administrative and support service activities, and water supply (sewerage, waste management, and remediation activities), while it was high in financial and insurance activities, education and professional, scientific and technical activities.

By occupational group, it is highest among professionals and managers, and lowest among workers in elementary occupations and craft and related trades.

4.7 VET learners by age

VET learners by age group

The number of young people and adults, enrolled in VET at ISCED 3-4, school year 2021/22



Source: [Statistic Office of the Republic of Slovenia, SiStat Database](#), [extracted 16.8.2023].

In the structure of enrolments in VET, 77.9% of participants are aged 19 or less, 20.1% aged 20-24, while the shares for other age groups are much lower.

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- pre-school education (ISCED 0);
- integrated primary (ISCED 100, EQF 1) and lower secondary education (ISCED 244, EQF 2) (nationally referred as basic education).
- upper secondary education:
 - short vocational programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 3);
 - vocational programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 4);
 - vocational - technical programmes (2 years) (ISCED 354, EQF 4);
 - technical programmes (4 years) (ISCED 354, EQF 4);
 - general programmes (ISCED 344, EQF 4).
- tertiary education
 - higher vocational programmes (ISCED 554, EQF 5);
 - professional bachelor programmes (ISCED 655, EQF 6);
 - academic bachelor programmes (ISCED 645, EQF 6);
 - integrated bachelor and master programmes (ISCED 766, EQF 7);
 - master programmes (ISCED 767, EQF 7);
 - doctoral programmes (ISCED 844, EQF 8).

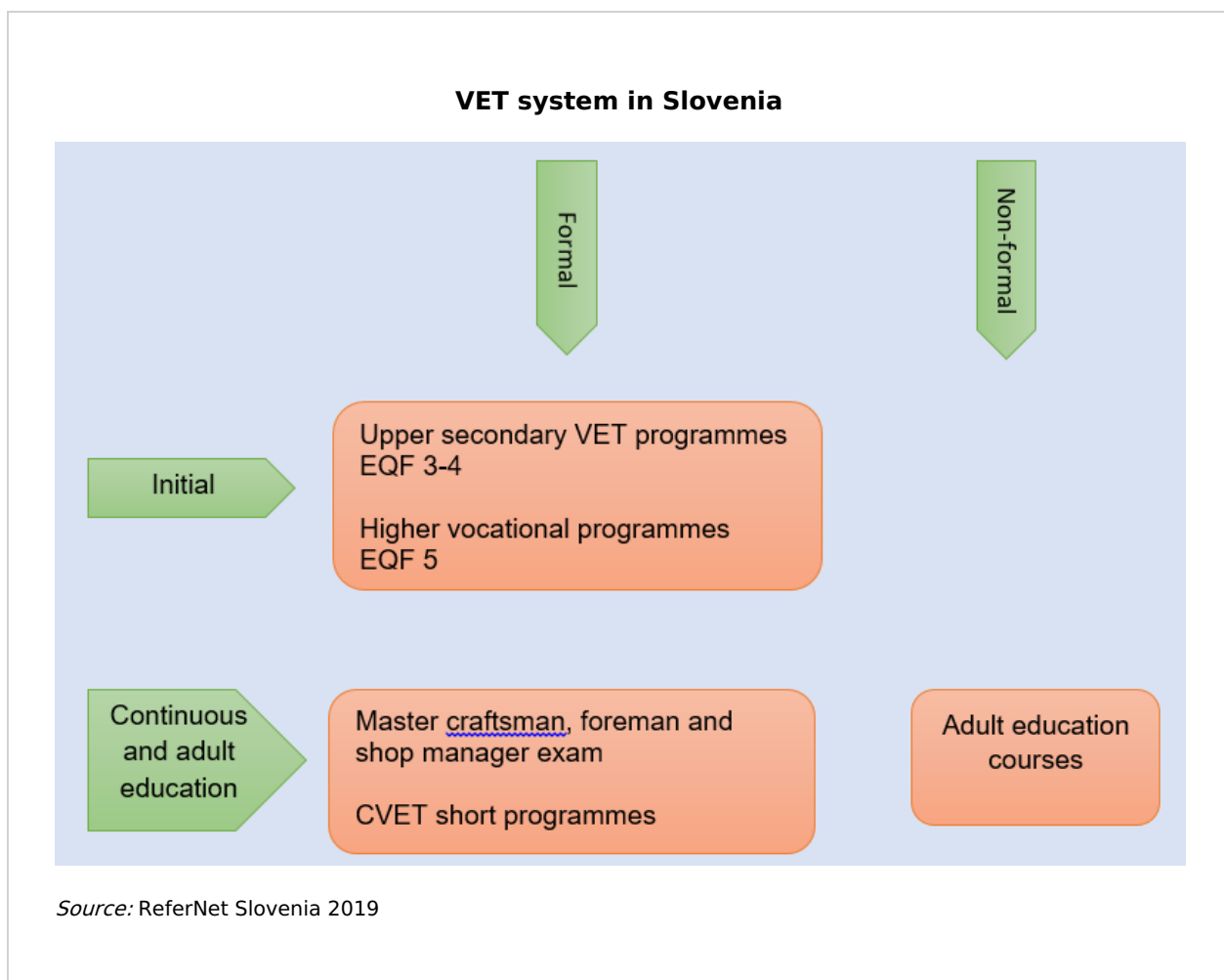
In 2022/23, 84.6% of children aged 1 to 6 were enrolled in kindergarten (*vrtec*). Each child is legally entitled to a place in a kindergarten, but pre-school education is not compulsory. Kindergartens can be public or private. 94% of children enrolled in kindergarten attend public ones, which are founded and financed by the local communities. Fees can be subsidised by the government.

Basic education (*osnovna šola*) lasts 9 years; it consists of single structured primary and lower secondary education and is compulsory (ISCED 1-2). Learners start at age 6 and complete their basic education at age 15 in 450 public and six private schools (approx. 1 % of pupils attend private schools). Learners who do not finish basic education successfully in 9 years can enrol in short vocational education (ISCED 353, EQF 3). Public schools are founded by local communities and funded by education ministry. Parents contribute mostly for meals, school supplies, books and extracurricular activities.

At upper secondary level, general programmes (*gimnazija*) last 4 years (ISCED 344, EQF 4) and are completed by external examination, general matura (*splošna matura*). Enrolment depends on grades in the last 3 years of basic education. Graduates have access to tertiary education. Six private schools and approximately 60 public schools offer general programmes. Public schools are founded and funded by the education ministry. Parents contribute mostly for meals, school supplies, books and extracurricular activities. There are two types of general programmes: general gymnasias and professional gymnasias. The latter provides general education but with some emphasis on professions (technical, economic, art).

To transfer from general to vocational education after having completed 3 years of gymnasias, learners may attend a 1-year vocational bridging course, enabling them to pass a vocational matura. Approx. 35 % of young people are enrolled in general programmes and approx. 6 % of those are in private schools.

Tertiary education comprises higher vocational education (2 years), professional and academic programmes at a bachelor level (3 or 4 years) integrated bachelor and master programmes (5 or 6 years), and master level (1 or 2 years). Doctoral programmes last 3 years. Almost 60% of 19-year-olds are enrolled in some type of tertiary education programmes.



Formal initial VET

Both young learners and adults can enrol in initial VET programmes free of tuition charges. Once young learners are enrolled, they can repeat one grade and re-enrol in the same grade but different programme. If they are not successful and want to continue, or want later in life to re-enter or change profession, they can enrol as adults.

Initial VET consists of accredited, formal programmes at upper secondary and higher education level.

1. Short vocational programmes (2 years) at ISCED 353, EQF 3 level with assistant type of professions, accessible to learners with minimum EQF 1 (attending 9 years of basic education). Graduates of short vocational programmes, passing a final exam (*zaključni izpit*), can continue to the second entry point: vocational programmes (3 years) at ISCED 353, EQF 4. In 2022/23, approx. 1,5% of learners were enrolled in short vocational programmes.
2. Vocational programmes (3 years) at ISCED 353, EQF 4 level is the second entry point. In 2022/23, approx. 16% of learners choose to enrol in one of 44 vocationally different

programmes. They are accessible to learners with a minimum EQF 2 (successful completion of basic education). The programme ends with a final exam (*zaključni izpit*). After 3 years of professional work experience, graduates of vocational programmes, can participate in the craftsman, foreman or shop manager exam; with additional exams, they can continue also to higher vocational programmes. Approx. one third of young vocational programme graduates continue to vocational technical programmes (2 years) at ISCED 354, EQF 4, which concludes with a vocational matura (*poklicna matura*) that gives them access to tertiary education.

3. Most VET students (42.1% in 2022/23) start upper secondary level in technical programmes (4 years) on ISCED 354, EQF 4, finishing with a vocational matura that gives them access to tertiary level: higher vocational programmes (2 years, ISCED 554, EQF 5), professional bachelor programmes and, with completed additional fifth general matura subject, also to academic bachelor programmes. Transferring from VET to the general path is possible also through a 1-year matura bridging course, which prepares learners for general matura. The three above-mentioned programmes are mainly school based with in-company WBL from 4 to 24 weeks, in some cases extension is possible up to 50 weeks. Since the school year 2017/18 apprenticeship has been reintroduced. The existing 3-year vocational programmes are gradually being adapted at national level to be implemented as an apprenticeship path in addition to a school-based path. Apprentices spend at least 50%, maximum 60%, of their time learning with mentors in companies. In order to conclude their upper secondary studies with an EQF 4 level qualification, VET students must pass either a final exam (first language and practical assignment) or acquire the vocational matura (two general, one vocational theoretical and practical assignment). Since 2000, all upper secondary learners can have their prior knowledge assessed by the school; this can reduce learners' obligations within the programme.
4. In 2022/23, 12.49% of all tertiary students were enrolled in higher vocational programme (2 years, ISCED 554, EQF 5). Enrolment is open to individuals with a general or vocational matura. Students complete the programme with a higher education diploma (diploma of higher vocational education, *diploma o višji strokovni izobrazbi*).

Upper secondary VET programmes and higher vocational programmes are also available for adults and provided by public and private schools.

Formal continuing VET

Craftsman, foremen and shop manager exams are traditionally understood as CVET, as the applicants (at least 3-year vocational programme graduates) must have specific prior professional working experience. It is a way that an experienced employee can be promoted to a more demanding work position that does not require the next education level. Optional preparatory courses and literature may be offered by the chambers, which also assess the candidates.

CVET short programmes are being developed since 2017, with the first published programme in 2019. They are prepared in close cooperation with the employers to upskill employees to perform specific tasks, upgrade and modernise some concrete professional skills. They focus entirely on the vocational and professional competences and 50% of curricula are conducted at the workplace, the other half at school. They last for a maximum 6 months and are prepared at the EQF 3, 4 or 5 level, but they do not provide access to the next level of education for learners.

National vocational qualifications enable citizens to verify their vocational competences, obtained through non-formal and informal learning, but cannot gain levels of education through this option.

Adults and young learners under 18 can enrol in non-formal courses in the education service market provided by private entities or public schools, to gain numerous VET or general competences.

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

With the adoption of the [Apprenticeship Act in 2017](#) and after the pilot implementation of the apprenticeship path in four upper secondary vocational programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 4), in the school year 2023/24 learners could enrol in 39 out of 44 vocational programmes choosing between school-based and apprenticeship paths.

The apprenticeship path means that at least 50% of the programme is undertaken at an employer, while at least 40% - general subjects and professional modules - is in school.

At the beginning of an apprenticeship, the implementation plan for individual learners is prepared in cooperation between the school and the company under the supervision of the chamber; it is signed between the student (or legal guardian), and representatives of the company, school and chamber. It includes the objectives and set of competences for WBL, distribution and schedule of education at the school and in the company, ways and modes of communication and cooperation between the company and school, as well as information regarding the mid-term and final exam for the apprentice (16) .

[16] Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the [European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop](#)

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The [Organisation and Financing of Education Act](#), [Vocational Education Act](#), [Higher Vocational Education Act](#), [Apprenticeship Act](#), [Slovenian Qualifications Framework Act](#), [National Professional Qualifications Act](#) and [Adult Education Act](#) represent main legislation dealing with VET.

The education ministry (17) is responsible for the quality and development of the vocational education and training system, it formulates and implements VET policies and makes system regulations. It prepares the budget for public financing, oversees its implementation and allocates VET programmes and enrolment places for young learners and adults in public and private schools. It cooperates intensely with the labour ministry and social partners (representatives of employees and employers), who are active members of the national expert council for VET (18) operating as a consulting body for the education ministry. A school inspectorate operates within the education ministry. Cooperation with the public employment service (PES) and cooperation with the economy (chambers) is established.

Eight public national-level institutions support educational institutions in the implementation of regulations, development, quality monitoring, and counselling.

- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI);
- National Education Institute of the RS - responsible for general education and general subjects in upper secondary VET;
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education - responsible for adult education;
- National Examinations Centre - external assessment in education;
- Educational Research Institute - research;
- Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes - mobility - national EU agency;
- Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (19) .

These national-level public institutions are government controlled by appointment of representatives to governance bodies, public funding, salary system, adoption of common rules and guidelines of public service.

The providers of accredited VET programmes are public or private schools. Both types of schools are under supervision of the school inspectorate.

The governance body of a public VET school is the school council that is composed of representatives of the founder, school employees, parents and students. The founder - this means the State - participates in the governance of VET schools through representatives appointed to the council and directly in administrative procedures. Public VET schools, providing VET programmes at EQF 3, 4 and 5 for young people and adults, can merge into one School centre consisting of several public VET schools and be led by one director. Higher vocational programmes and upper secondary VET programmes for adults are also provided by private schools.

The management body of a VET school is the head teacher, who is also a pedagogical leader. Teachers enjoy professional autonomy and the head teacher has autonomy in accordance with requirements to employ teachers of her/his own choice.

Higher vocational schools shall establish governance and management bodies depending on the founder (state, private) and organisation (independent college, unit of another institution or company). The management body is the director or head teacher, whereas the council is the governing body.

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- [17] In Slovenian: Ministrstvo za vzgojo in izobraževanje.
- [18] Apart from the Expert Council for VET, specific elements of VET are also the responsibility of the Expert Council for General Education, the Expert Council for Adult Education, and the Expert Council for Higher Education.
- [19] Respectively in Slovenian: Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje, Zavod RS za šolstvo, Andragoški center Slovenije, Državni izpitni center, Pedagoški inštitut, Center Republike Slovenije za mobilnost in evropske programe izobraževanja in usposabljanja, Nacionalna agencija RS za kakovost v visokem šolstvu.

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

The [Organisation and Financing of Education Act](#) stipulates the public financing of upper secondary VET and higher vocational programmes. The sources of funding are specified by purpose, duty and responsibility. The terms and conditions for financing and supervision are presented.

Each year the education ministry determines the cost of a VET programme per learner, based on the methodology for financing education programmes for upper secondary schools and higher vocational schools, mostly regarding cost of work (salaries of school employees), expenditure for goods and services (heating, electricity, water), number of hours in a programme.

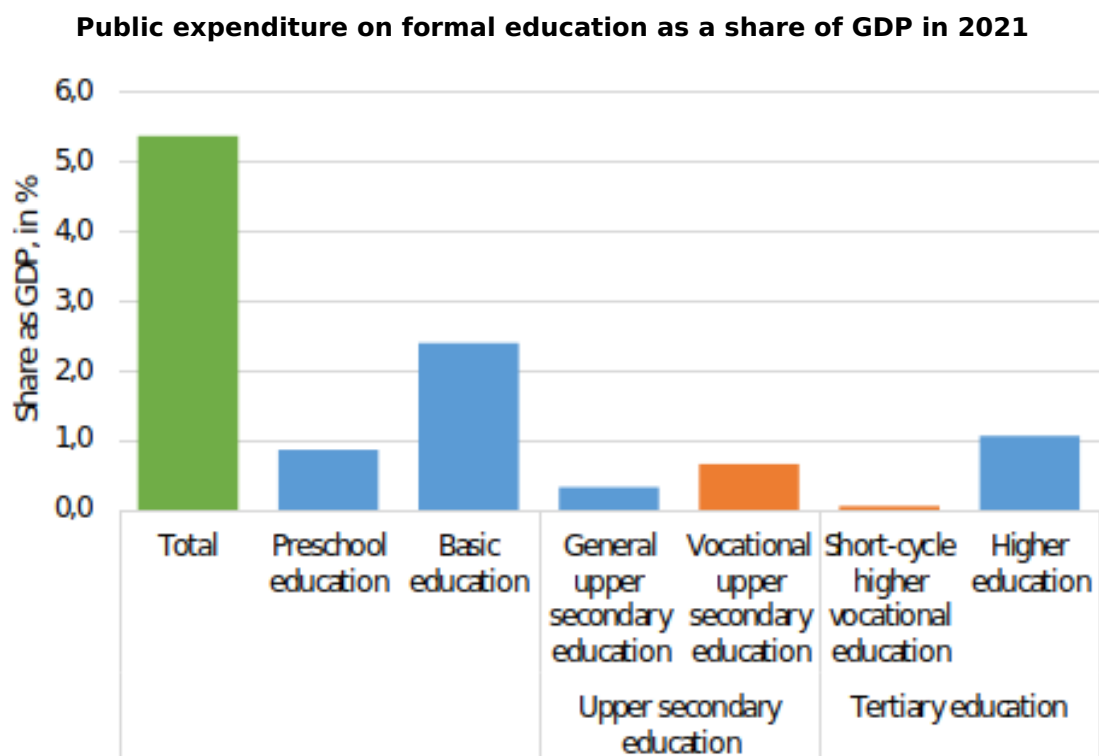
The total level of funding is specified in a financing agreement signed by the education ministry and the school for each budget year.

Additional public funding is also accessible for extra costs and through cooperation in developmental (national and international) projects.

Other possible funding sources for VET include:

- contributions from industry associations and chambers;
- direct contributions from employers for the provision of work practice;
- payments and fees from students;
- funds from the sale of services and products;
- donations, sponsorships and other sources.

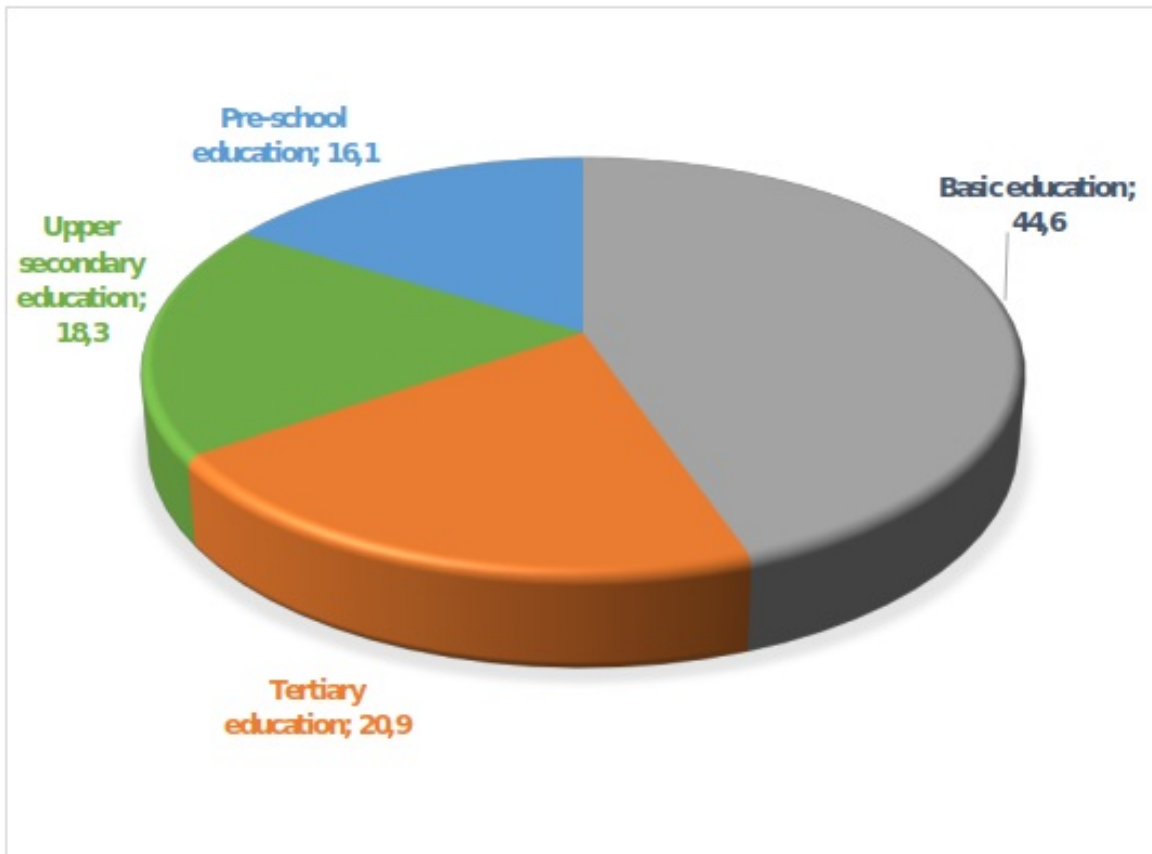
The public expenditure allocated to formal education (including VET) in 2021 amounted to EUR 2 804 889 million, or 5.37 % of GDP. The biggest total public expenditure for formal education, in terms of share of GDP, was allocated to basic education (2.39 %), followed by tertiary education (1.12 %), upper secondary education (0.98 %) and pre-school education (0.87 %) (20) .



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].

In the structure of public formal education expenditure structure in 2021, the largest share was allocated to basic education, which has the highest number of pupils among education levels, followed by tertiary and upper secondary education. The lowest share was allocated to pre-school education.

Public formal education expenditure structure by levels of education in 2021



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].

[20] [Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia/](#)

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

In VET, at upper secondary level, there are the following types of teacher positions defined (21) :

- Teachers of general subjects;
- Teachers of professional modules;
- Teachers of practical training in professional modules;
- Teachers for additional professional help;
- Teacher for communication in Slovenian sign language;
- Teacher for work with deafblind.

Education requirements for teachers at upper secondary level:

Teachers of general subjects must have a master's degree (ISCED 7, EQF 7) in the respected field.

The education level of a teacher of professional modules must be at least on ISCED 655 / EQF 6 level, and a teacher of practical training in professional modules must have at least the ISCED 354 or EQF 4 level, in addition to a minimum of 3 years of relevant work experience and craftsman exam (22) .

Teachers providing additional professional help, teachers for communication in Slovenian sign language, and teachers for work with deafblind must have a master's degree (ISCED 7, EQF 7) in the respected field. In some cases, it is also sufficient to have ISCED 655 or EQF 6 level and specific qualifications such as being an instructor of Slovenian sign language, an interpreter for deafblind, or a specialist for work with deafblind.

There are additional experts employed at VET schools, with the minimum education level and/or other conditions specified for each role in brackets:

- Counsellor (ISCED 655, EQF 6)
- Librarian (ISCED 655, EQF 6)
- Organizer of practical training (same as the teacher of practical training in professional modules)
- Organizer of in-company practical training (same as the teacher of practical training in professional modules but also at least ISCED 554, EQF 5)
- Manager of the estate (ISCED 554, EQF 5)
- Manager of the head office of learning companies (ISCED 655, EQF 6)
- Expert at the head office of learning companies (ISCED 655, EQF 6)
- Organizer of adult education (ISCED 655, EQF 6)
- Lab technician (ISCED 354 or EQF 4)

All teachers and experts must have pedagogical/andragogical competences (or special pedagogical competences if teaching in adjusted programmes) worth at least 60 ECTS, of which at least 15 ECTS must be gained through teaching practice. For teacher of practical training in professional modules and organizers of practical training, a craftsman exam is sufficient as it includes also pedagogical/andragogical competences. All teachers and experts have to pass a [state professional exam](#).

In VET (23) , at the higher (24) vocational level, the following teaching positions are defined:

- Lecturers;
- Instructors;
- Lab technicians;
- Librarians.

Education requirements for teachers at higher vocational education level:

Lecturers at the higher vocational education level must have a relevant master's degree (ISCED 7, EQF 7), 3 years of work experience, pedagogical/andragogical education and relevant professional achievements (shared authorship of valid education programmes, textbooks or study materials, membership of exam committees, and similar).

Instructors must have at least a bachelor's degree (ISCED 655, EQF 6) and pedagogical/andragogical education; lab technicians at least higher VET education (ISCED 554, EQF 5) and pedagogical/andragogical education, and librarians at least a relevant master's degree (ISCED 655, EQF 6) and pedagogical/andragogical education.

In-company mentors (active at both levels of VET) are employees of the company conducting WBL as part of VET programmes. They must have professional education in the appropriate field, an appropriate amount of work experience, and have completed a short pedagogical/andragogical training designed for mentors, which was modernised in December 2020.

Teachers, lecturers and other experts are employed by the schools and funded by the education ministry. They can be employed full-time; according to the number of students enrolled, some may have part-time contracts.

Salary in general depends on the education level. Apart from this, they are included in a promotion scheme through which they can achieve four major promotion levels.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

Teachers (and other experts) have opportunities for continuing their professional development, which is defined only as a right of 15 days in 3 years (25) and not as an obligation. The education ministry partly finances accredited programmes for the continuing professional development of teachers and the other part is covered by the school. A great deal of additional teacher training is also provided through national and international projects. Schools can also invite private providers of non-accredited programmes.

According to the [rules on the selection and co-funding of further education and training programmes for educational professionals](#), there are two types of accredited CPD programmes for teachers.

- Continuing teacher education (*programi za izpopolnjevanje izobrazbe*) for teachers who need to gain additional training for a specific teacher position (for example a mechanical engineer cannot get pedagogical/andragogical training during university studies, so she/he needs to pass this training) or for special tasks (for example for teachers to work with special education needs (SEN) students as SEN experts).
- Career development courses (*programi kariernega razvoja*) are shorter (approx. 8-24 hours) courses on various topics that teachers can choose from a catalogue published by the education ministry (didactical courses, modernisation of a learning subject, key competences). Providers can be private or public organisations that are included in a catalogue via public tender and may be co-financed.

The teachers participate in training in ICT, individualisation, apprenticeship, etc., organised by CPI and financed within various national and international programmes (e.g. ESF, Erasmus+).

Training of in-company mentors

Additional training programmes for mentors are implemented by chambers or through various projects financed by the education ministry, the ESF, Erasmus+ and other sources. The training aims to equip mentors with the basic pedagogical/andragogical knowledge, understanding of the developmental characteristics of the young, psychological and pedagogical elements of learning and teaching, communication skills, skills regarding health and safety at work, and relevant legislation. They also learn the importance of a strong organizational culture for successful work, how to integrate students into the work process, and how to prepare documentation for effective management, monitoring, and validation of students.

For more information visit Cedefop project page on [Teachers' and Trainers' professional development](#) and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#). You may also read [Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World](#) and [Cedefop comparative analysis](#).

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- [21] [Rules on educational qualification of education and other staff in vocational and technical education, Official Gazette of RS, No. 87/22,](#)
 - [22] [The Crafts act \(*Obrtni zakon*\)](#)
 - [23] Higher Vocational Education Act, Official Gazette of RS, [86/04](#), [100/13](#) and [54/22](#) - ZUPŠ-1, <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4093>
 - [24] Rules on educational qualification of higher vocational college teachers and other education staff in short-cycle higher vocational education, Official Gazette of RS, [35/11](#) and [130/21](#)
 - [25] Collective agreement for the education sector in the Republic of Slovenia; Ministry of Education (1994).

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

VET programmes are prepared based on labour market data such as the data on labour market movements. The Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ) and Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURS) collect these data in their official records using their own classification tools in the process.

As labour market data are presented at the aggregated level (i.e. unemployment, the active population, needs for new employment positions, and the like), the need for a research institution to analyse and monitor changes in the labour market has emerged several times in the past. This is to provide support for decision-making processes within the scope of the preparation of VET programmes and to forecast potential education requirements.

The official records on current workplace demand managed by the ZRSZ, where the majority of the employment positions offered by employers are recorded, have proven to be a comprehensive source of information. However, the problem with these records is the poor organisation of the data in the various educational programmes, which changed during the education reforms, and so a comprehensive data review, as well as its translation into high-quality topical data (educational programmes), is required. In addition, the systematic collection of labour market needs according to the employers' provision of information ended in 2013, and the country therefore lost one of the databases from which the data was drawn (26). Since 2022, efforts have been invested in establishing a comprehensive personnel database similar to the one available we had before 2013.

See also [Cedefop's skills forecast](#) and [European Skills Index](#).

10.2 Designing qualifications

Vocational qualifications

There are two types of vocational qualification (*poklicna kvalifikacija*). The first may be acquired following the education and training system path (gaining also an education level) and the second by recognition of non-formal and informal learning (gaining a qualification recognised by employers but not an education level). In 2007, the legislation (27) connected both systems with occupational standards (*poklicni standardi*).

Vocational qualifications are classified in the sectoral qualification structures approved by the sectoral committee for occupational standards. The labour ministry established 10 sectoral committees for occupational standards, which are composed of experts and representatives nominated by social partners (e.g. chambers, ministries, trade unions).

Occupational standards

Occupational standards serve as the basic documents for preparing educational programmes and catalogues of knowledge for national vocational qualifications (NVQs). They also form one of the foundations for conducting examinations and verifying vocational qualifications obtained through the recognition of non-formal learning. The methodology for the preparation of occupational standards is prescribed, which ensures their transparency and comparability.

The preparation of occupational standards is conducted through social dialogue. It is important for employers to describe the knowledge, skills and competences employees need to possess, now and in the future. Occupational standards do not simply serve as a record of the current situation; they are also an indicator of the situation as it develops. This is of considerable importance for the changing labour market, not just from the employer's perspective, but, more importantly, from the point of view of the certificate holder.

Occupational standards must be prepared in cooperation with experts who are familiar with the profession, work organisations, technology and trends in the development of the profession and the sector itself. Occupational standards are closely related to sector and profession.

Occupational standards development process

The process of the preparation of occupational standards and national vocational qualifications catalogues are determined in the National Professional Qualifications Act. It starts with an initiative submitted by any legal or natural person to the Institute of the RS for VET (CPI). The CPI provides an expert assessment and submits it for discussion to the relevant sectoral committee for occupational standards. When discussing the initiative, the following is especially important: information on the needs of the labour market, the comparability of standards for a specific qualification among EU Member States, and, if necessary, compliance with regulations and norms.

If the sectoral committee for occupational standards considers the initiative to be well founded, they appoint the experts who, with methodological support from the CPI, prepare a proposal for an occupational standard. The national methodology provided by the CPI serves as a uniform basis for all occupational standards and NVQ catalogues, thereby ensuring the transparency and comparability of documents at the national level.

Based on the occupational standard, experts prepare a proposal for an NVQ catalogue (with the new entry/-ies). The sectoral committee submits the NVQ catalogue to the Expert Council for VET for discussion. When the council supports the NVQ catalogue, it proposes its adoption to the labour ministry. The procedure for revision that takes place every 5 years is the same as the procedure for the preparation of new occupational standards.

Preparation of VET programmes

Based on one or more occupational standards, a VET programme is developed by CPI. The national curriculum standards (minimum hours for general subjects, professional modules, the proportion of open curricula, etc.) for each level of VET programme are set by the Expert Council for VET, which proposes the adoption of the VET programme to the education ministry.

The learning-outcomes approach is seen as a useful way of bringing VET programmes closer to 'real life' and the needs of the labour market. National VET framework curricula define the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired by students. The syllabi usually follow Bloom's taxonomy for learning outcomes. Broad competences in the catalogues of knowledge for modules/subjects are defined as the ability and readiness to use knowledge, skills and attitudes in study and work contexts.

The [Slovenian Qualification Framework Act \(2016\)](#) has defined the unified system of qualifications as the [Slovenian Qualifications Framework \(SQF\)](#) since 2016. It is a comprehensive qualifications framework that includes approximately 1 680 qualifications, classified in three distinct categories of qualifications. The SQF consists of 10 levels defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. SQF and EQF levels are indicated on certificates, diplomas and Europass supplements from all education and training levels, and in the SQF register. Inclusion of qualifications in the framework is possible only after a formal accreditation procedure.

The three types of qualifications are:

- education, gained by completing formal programmes; graduates are awarded a certification

- indicating the level and field of the qualification;
- vocational qualifications, obtained through the recognition of nonformal learning (NVQ system), and CVET programmes;
- supplementary qualifications, which increase learner competences in a specific professional field. These qualifications are not part of the public or private education system. They are included in the SQF at the suggestion of the employer, group of employers or public employment service and are tailored to labour market needs. They are demonstrated by the certificate acquired.

All qualification types mentioned above do not lead to a higher education level than the one already possessed by the individual.

More information on national qualifications frameworks and the qualifications types can be found in the [NQF online tool](#)

[26] Since 2013 private sector employers are not obligated anymore to inform PES about a vacancy, therefore PES collects data from Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (Labour Market Regulation Act, amendment in 2013).

[27] The National Professional Qualifications Act (2007, 2009).

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The Vocational Education Act in 2006 and Organisation and Financing of Education Act in 2007 identified the importance of quality assurance and self-evaluation of VET schools as obligatory and crucial method for quality assurance (QA) and quality development (QD), while it strengthened the autonomy and the developmental role of IVET. Schools are required to establish a quality committee consisting of a minimum of a chairperson plus five members, from representatives of teachers and other professional members of school staff, employers, students and parents. The committee is obliged to publish an annual quality report on the school website. The structure and content of the report is up to the school. However, VET providers have to monitor 11 national quality indicators (10 EQAVET indicators included), which are established by the Council of Experts in 2017; upon request, VET providers have to send the data to the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) (EQAVET NRP in Slovenia), but they do not have to make the information on 11 national indicators public.

There is a national reference point (NRP) for quality assurance in upper secondary VET ([EQAVET NRP in Slovenia](#)). The NRP is part of the EQAVET network and is based at the CPI.

Its role at EU level is manifesting the role of EQAVET network, which is developing a common European framework for QA in VET and implementing it in national VET systems. [The CPI also participates in EU-level peer review activities related to Quality assurance.](#)

At national level, the NRP gathers information about quality assurance in VET schools and school centres, monitors quality indicators at the national level (28) and supports VET providers in the process of establishing and developing QA systems in their organisations. The EQAVET NRP offers training, guidelines (CPI, 2007 (29) , CPI 2017 (30) , ŠR 2019 (31)) webpage, newsletters, peer review with national or international teams of peers, self-evaluation campaigns and platforms and other service to support VET providers in QA and QD efforts. EQAVET NRP collaborate mostly with VET schools and VET school centres, which offers IVET and CVET. State and private providers use for adult education purposes some EQAVET NRP services. The EQAVET NRP participated in developing the common national framework for QA in education, which was developed in collaboration with the education ministry, four national educational institutes and developmental/pilot schools in the period 2016-19. According to the legislation, CPI is obliged to assess the quality of VET based on the collected data from schools and other statistical sources. The insights are published in a [national quality report on VET](#) and other evaluation reports (32).

According to Higher Vocational Education Act (2004, 2013) a Quality Committee consisting of five lecturers and two students is also requested in higher vocational schools, while the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) (33) monitors the quality assurance of higher vocational schools.

Responsibilities/assignments of the Quality Committee in higher VET programmes are:

- create conditions for the promotion and development of the quality of educational work at school;
- establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and assessment of the quality and efficiency of work at the school;
- plan, organise and coordinate monitoring and quality assurance at school;
- cooperate with the NAKVIS and make comparisons between schools at home and abroad;
- monitor the employment opportunities of graduates;
- on the basis of employers' responses, make proposals for improvement;

- prepare evaluation reports to be discussed with the NAKVIS.

A part of CVET that is conducted by adult education institutions and is funded by the State abides by the quality assurance regulation included in the Adult Education Act (2018). This requires VET providers to establish an internal QA system lead by a quality committee. It includes regular monitoring and self-evaluation, cooperation in the external evaluation, and public presentation of their internal quality assurance system on their web pages.

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- [28] Renewed set of 11 national quality indicators were set in 2017 by the Expert Council for VET. All 10 EQAVET indicators are included into the set of [11 national indicators](#)
 - [29] Mali, D. et al. (2007). *Priporočila šolam za izvajanje samoevalvacije: ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti v poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju* [*Recommendations for schools on self-evaluation: determining and ensuring quality in VET*]. Ljubljana: Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje.
 - [30] Grašič, S.; Pogačnik Nose, Š.; Žagar, T. (eds) (2017). *Okvir EQAVET za ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti: priročnik za implementacijo evropskega okvira kakovosti poklicnega in strokovnega izobraževanja in usposabljanja na ravni šole* [*The EQAVET framework for determining and assuring quality: a manual for the implementation of European quality framework for VET*]. Ljubljana: Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje.
 - [31] Brejc, M.; Širok, K. (eds) (2019). *Zbirka kakovost v vrtcih in šolah* [*Quality in kindergartens and schools series*]. Ljubljana: Šola za ravnatelje.
 - [32] [Poročila o kakovosti poklicnega in strokovnega izobraževanja](#) [*Reports on the quality of vocational and technical education*]:
 - [33] Nacionalna agencija republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu (NAKVIS).

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Slovenia has had a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning in place since 2000.

Several national and regional organisations and institutions are involved in putting this policy into practice. Awareness of validation has grown amongst the general population and is no longer considered a new topic (34) .

Validation procedures are included in legislation for higher education, higher vocational education, and adult education. The national system (national vocational qualifications) enables acquiring formal qualifications by means of validation procedures for non-formal and informal knowledge as legally regulated (35) .

Validation of higher vocational programmes, that is part of tertiary education, takes place according to European credit transfer system (ECTS) criteria, along with a comparison between the competences achieved by the candidate and those declared in the accredited syllabus of the course or in the study module/programme. Each institution and university member is free to prepare and use ECTS in accordance with the qualification for which they provide education (autonomy granted by the Higher Education Act).

There are two main legally regulated routes in VET for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge. For the purpose of further participation in formal education, the validation process is based on education standards (catalogues of knowledge for professional modules and the operational curriculum). If the purpose of validation is recognition of occupational competences in the labour market, the national vocational qualifications (NVQ) system is used, and the knowledge and experience gained by the candidate are compared with the skills and competences in the NVQ catalogue.

The recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge is often seen as the domain of adult education, and so recognition of non-formal and informally acquired knowledge in the formal education system is not widespread. It is most common with part-time students in higher vocational education and least common with upper secondary school students (36) .

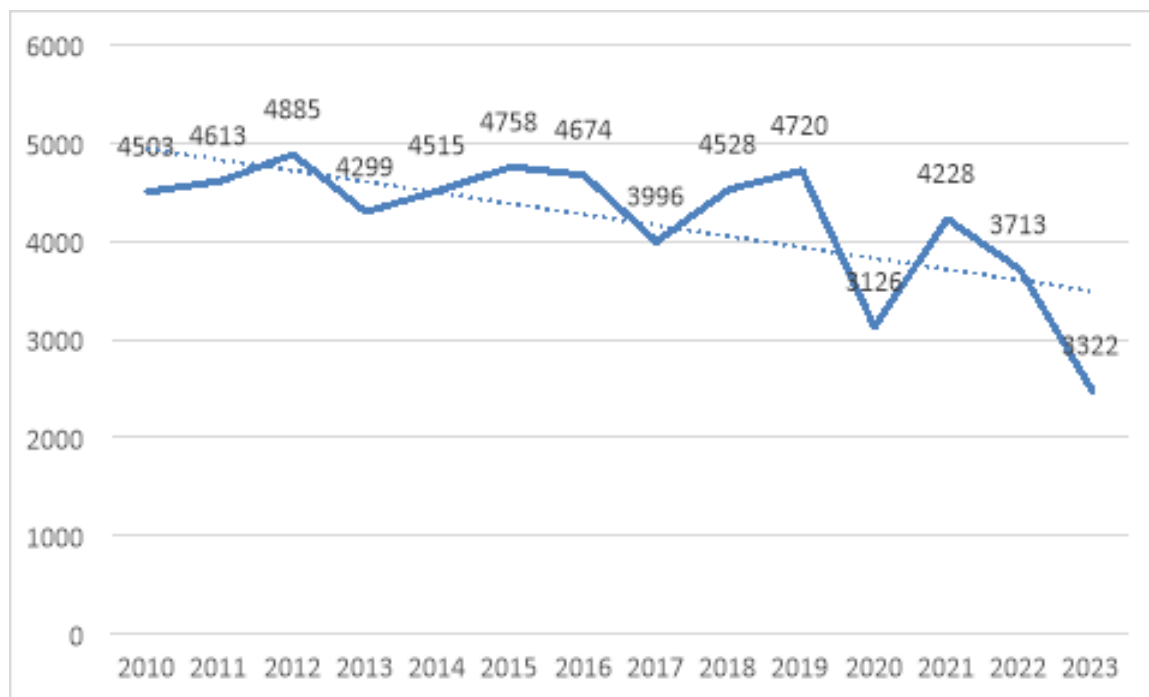
According to the Vocational Education Act and Instructions for adjusting upper secondary VET education to adult learners (37) , class teachers must prepare the individual learning plan for adult (part-time) students, that must include information about previously gained and recognised formal and non-formal knowledge. However, higher vocational education is the exception since the procedure is well defined by the common guidelines and standards in the procedures for the recognition of previously acquired knowledge in higher vocational education (38) .

The development of the system of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge for adults in VET has also been dealt with at systemic level by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) in cooperation with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET (CPI) in 2011. Technical criteria have been drawn up for the systemic regulation of the evaluation and recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge in VET, for adult learners primarily. This remained at the proposal level and has never been implemented on the systemic level. The responsibility has been left to the VET schools.

Candidates whose previously acquired knowledge has been recognised within the formal education system may be exempt from certain requirements of a formal education programme (e.g. practical training, subjects or modules, and similar), and may obtain a NVQ certificate or career progression within an enterprise.

In 2020 CPI prepared a publication entitled *Validation of non-formal and informal learning - One-off report*, explaining the background of the national vocational qualifications system, verification procedure, funding, and quality assurance.

Number of NVQ certificates issued, by year



Source: www.nrp.org , [extracted 13.10.2023].

In 2023, an NVQ certificate could be obtained for approximately 175 qualifications (39) . Candidates must prepare a personal portfolio and take part in a validation procedure.

The number of certificates awarded has been stable, with a small increase during recent years. It decreased in 2020, due to the pandemic but increased slightly again in 2021, presumably because candidates who could not participate in 2020 due to COVID restrictions were able to do so.

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning please visit [Cedefop's European database](#).

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- [34] Košmrlj, K. (2016). *2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning: country report Slovenia*.
 - [35] [National Professional Qualifications Act](#) (see Chapter 2.3.2). First published in *Official Gazette* of the RS, No 85/2009. In Slovenian: Državni zbor Republike Slovenije (2009). *Zakon o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah*.
 - [36] Žnidarič, H. et al (2010). *Poročilo o spremljanju izvajanja postopkov priznavanja neformalnega znanja* [*Report on monitoring the implementation of procedures of*

recognition of non-formal learning]. Ljubljana: Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje (CPI).

- [37] Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju: <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4325>, Navodila o prilagajanju izrednega srednješolskega izobraževanja: <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=NAVO1184>
- [38] Državni zbor Republike Slovenije (2010). Pravilnik o priznavanju predhodno pridobljenega znanja v višjem strokovnem izobraževanju [[Rules on the recognition of the previous education in higher vocational education](#)]. *Official Gazette* of the RS; No 20/2010.
- [39] The number of qualifications available decreased slightly, as some of them have been revised recently and the committees and accredited providers have not been appointed yet.

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

Scholarships

The scholarship system is State regulated by the [Scholarship Act](#) and includes all education programmes and both young people and adult learners. The [Scholarship Policy \(2020-2024\)](#) (40) is adopted by the government every 5 years to set up an implementation framework for awarding scholarships for shortage professions.

A State Social Scholarship (*državna štipendija*) is available for disadvantaged students from low-income families at all education levels except for elementary school. Depending on family economic status, the scholarship ranges from EUR 31.27 to EUR 129.44 per month for learners under 18 and from EUR 62.54 to EUR 258.87 per month for those over 18. Additional allowances can be obtained for above average grades (between EUR 20.14 and 47.4), accommodation (EUR 94.78), and special needs (EUR 59.24). The aim of additional allowances is to foster a sense of responsibility for education, to shorten the period of education, and to improve the employability of the beneficiaries.

The scholarship for talented students (also known as the *Zois scholarship*, named after the nobleman Žiga Zois, an important philanthropist) provide an incentive to learners who achieve exceptional results and performance. The monthly amount of the scholarship is EUR 142.18 for upper secondary learners studying in Slovenia and EUR 284.35 for those studying abroad. The scholarship is higher for tertiary education and amounts to EUR 165.87 for studying in Slovenia and 331.75 for studying abroad. Again, additional allowances can be obtained for accommodation (EUR 94.78) and special needs (EUR 59.24).

The purpose of the **Scholarship for shortage professions** (*deficitarna štipendija*) is:

- attracting more learners to VET, in order to provide adequate human resources according to the needs of the labour market;
- encouraging enrolment in the fields of education that enable faster employability of graduates.

Annually, one thousand scholarships for shortage professions (EUR 118.48 per month) are offered.

Scholarships for shortage professions are offered to the students of specific VET programmes. The list of such programmes is prepared annually in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia and the education ministry. Funding for the Shortage Scholarship tenders from the 2016/17 to 2019/20 school years was provided by the European Social Fund and the labour ministry. From 2020/21 school year onwards, funding is provided solely from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Scholarships for Slovenians living abroad give young people of Slovenian descent living abroad the possibility to come to Slovenia to obtain tertiary education. It helps to reinforce ties between Slovenian expatriates and their native country. These scholarships also follow the objectives of the strategy for economic cooperation between Slovenia and the Slovenian communities in neighbouring countries. The scholarship amounts to EUR 236.97 per month, with additional funds available for those without health insurance.

The Ad Futura scholarships support international mobility of upper secondary and tertiary education learners and researchers. They are awarded for studying abroad, study visits abroad, and participation in knowledge and research competitions abroad. The Ad Futura scholarship for

study abroad is granted for undergraduate or graduate study at education institutions abroad for academic fields defined in the call for applications. A scholarship is usually granted for living cost (up to EUR 1000) and tuition fees (up to EUR 15 000). The amount of the scholarship, conditions and criteria are determined in the call for applications (41) . The obligation of students is the employment in Slovenia for as many years as the scholarship was granted.

Facilitating formal education

The measure runs since 2016 and is coordinated by the Employment Service of Slovenia. The target group is the unemployed. The purpose of the activity is to:

- increase employability and flexibility of the unemployed;
- reduce the labour market mismatch;
- increase education and qualification level of the unemployed;
- enable them to acquire education for a shortage profession

Textbooks, commute and school meals

In a small country like Slovenia, the low total number of VET learners in some VET programmes, makes it unprofitable for publishing houses to get involved in publishing textbooks for professional modules. Their cost is covered by the government, while the CPI coordinates textbook development. VET schools have a so-called school-textbook fund financed by the State and lend textbooks to learners for a maximum one third of cost. Learners from disadvantaged economic backgrounds can get lower borrowing fee (42) . Since 2023 there is also a national project aimed at facilitating the preparation of e-learning materials and ensuring their availability on a national level.

Upper secondary schools offer one meal per day to learners. The State subsidises the cost for economically weaker families (43) .

All full-time learners receive subsidised tickets covering their daily commute cost with public transportation, if the school is located at least two kilometres away (44) .

[40] [Politika štipendiranja](#)

[41] *Source:* [Vocational education and training in Slovenia \(2021\): Short description](#).

[42] [Rules on approval of the text books \(2015, 2017\); Rules on management of the text books \(2020\); Organisation and Financing of Education Act \(2007, latest amendments 2023\)](#)

[43] [Government guidelines on subsidising meals for learners](#).

[44] [Government guidelines on subsidising commuting of learners](#).

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Not applicable

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

The VET Act (2006, 2017 in 2019) states the objective of VET as to promote lifelong learning and career management skills. Among other duties, school counsellors provide vocational guidance to students. For each 20 classes of 26 students (520 students) schools can employ one school counsellor. Every school, including VET schools, employs at least one school counsellor, while larger schools have two or three (45) .

The [National Education Institute](#) is responsible for the professional framework for school counselling work and for the professional support for school counselling services.

Learners, parents and school staff can find exhaustive information on the CPI web portal [mychoice](#), which can be helpful in deciding on further educational and training paths.

For recently introduced (2017/18) apprenticeship programme learners, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), Chamber of Craft and Small Business (OZS) provide information and offer guidance in search of an apprenticeship placement. A [central register of training places](#) on offer has been set up and maintained by the CPI.

Information and counselling at tertiary education level is provided through career centres established at all universities and higher schools. The quality of service varies as there is no central regulation.

From 2021, the guidance service in adult education is provided as a public service financed by the education ministry. This guidance has been offered as a public service and encompasses three areas: enrolment in and continuation of education, identification and documentation of knowledge and skills and support for self-directed learning. The public service is based on revisions to the [Adult Education Act](#) (2018), which promote guidance for adult learners, and on the [Guidelines for implementing adult education guidance as a public service](#) (2020).

It is implemented in 35 public adult education organisations all over Slovenia as Information and guidance centres and Centres for self-directed learning. Each year, around 30 000 adults reach out to the guidance service for support. Special attention is given to marginalised groups of adults, who are usually less educated and have lower participation rates in lifelong learning (LLL). Organisations in the public network are supported by the [Slovenian institute for adult education \(ACS\)](#) (monitoring, training, tools etc.).

Other forms of guidance in adult education (mostly career guidance) are also offered by nongovernmental and/or private organisations

In 2023, the CPI conducted an evaluation of guidance activities for adults in VET schools. The evaluation was carried out in cooperation with the Slovenian Institute for adult education.

The labour ministry holds the responsibility for guidance services for the unemployed. It finances guidance in the public employment service (ZRSZ). Guidance is provided by 59 local offices and career centres. Career counsellors in ZRSZ local offices and career centres offer advice and counselling, e-counselling, group information sessions, job-search seminars and guidance regarding employment programmes, mostly to the unemployed (80%), but also to learners (15%). ZRSZ maintains their [Where and how \(Kam in kako\)](#) an online tool for research, development and upskilling career options intended for learners and adults.

ZRSZ also provides 160 hours of informal training for career counsellors from all areas.

Career centres for young people

The labour ministry implemented the [Career Centres for Young People programme](#), co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), from 2016 to 2022. The main goal of the programme was to support young people's integration into the labour market by better linking the education process with the local environment and the economy. The programme aimed to provide better access to career guidance services for young people (aged 6 to 19).

The career centres were to:

- provide information on occupations and labour market;
- provide career guidance for the young;
- carry out activities to empower parents to help develop their children's careers;
- organise promotional activities of the Career Centres and career guidance;
- empower the young people in career planning;
- develop new approaches to career guidance for young people;
- strengthen cooperation between the stakeholders in the labour market and career orientation organisers, the employment service of Slovenia, the Institute of the republic of Slovenia for VET and schools.

Two career centres were established in Slovenia, one in Western Cohesion Region (Career Place) and the other in Eastern Cohesion Region (Like and Go). The two were lead partners with three branch offices/ project partners each, so there is a career centre in all regions, with 8 overall.

The activities of the Career centres ceased to be implemented in August 2022. The programme will continue to be funded by the European Social Fund+ and implemented within the European Cohesion Policy Programme 2021-2027. The Career Centres will be organised and implemented in each of the 12 statistical regions in Slovenia.

Counselling is also offered throughout the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning, particularly in preparing learning portfolios. In Slovenia, the tasks and the role of counsellor in NVQ validation procedures do not constitute an independent profession. Most counsellors are employees of institutions that operate both as providers of NVQ verification and validation procedures and as providers of preparatory courses for NVQ assessments that are not regulated by the law and not obligatory for candidates. The provision of counselling in verification procedures is regulated and the counsellors are required to complete 2-day training in counselling.

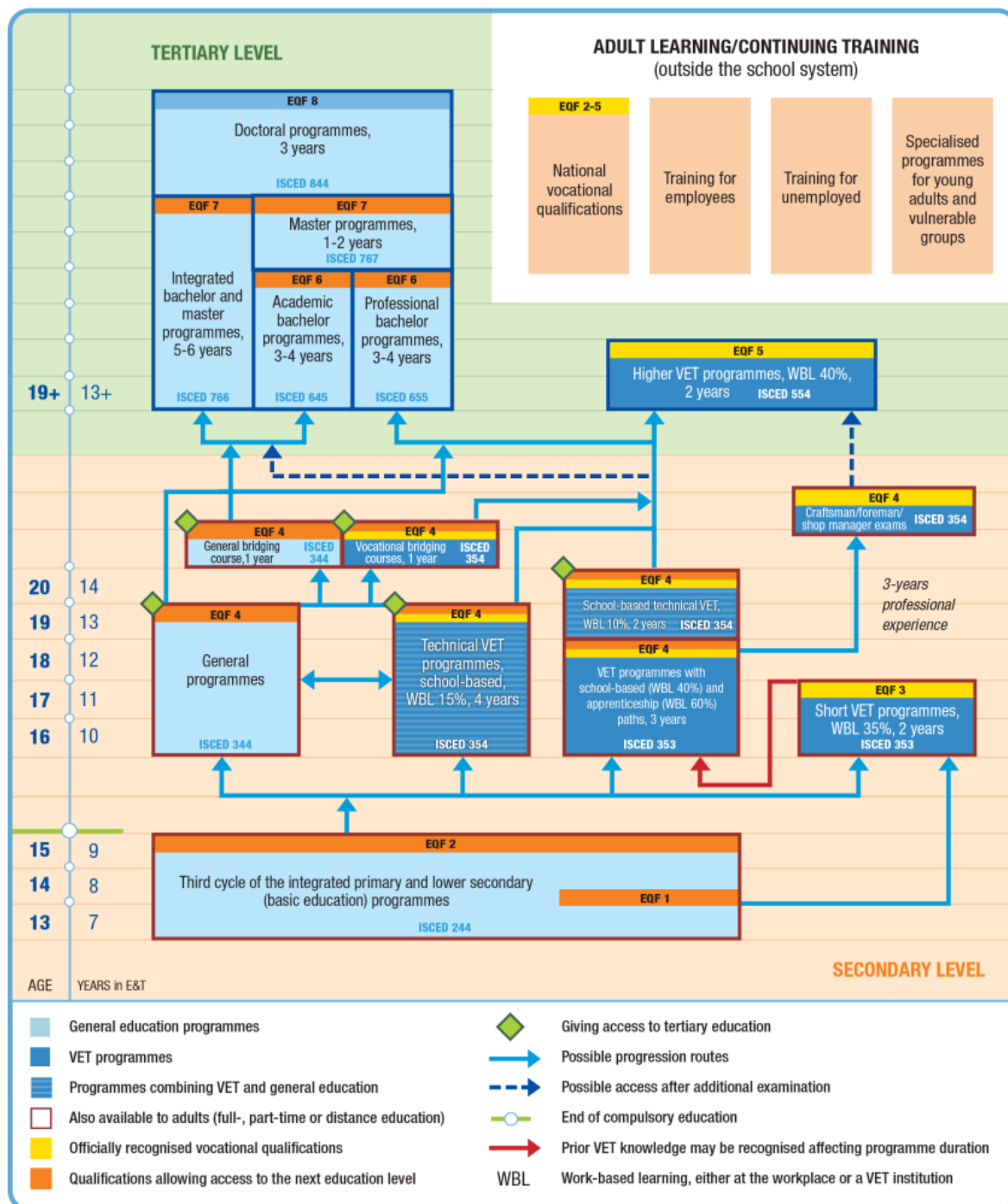
National coordination and collaboration in career guidance are managed through a national Expert group for lifelong career guidance. The group was nominated by the minister of education and has 14 members: representatives of ministries, public institutions and other relevant parties.

Please see:

- [Guidance and outreach Slovenia report](#);
- [Cedefop's labour market intelligence toolkit](#);
- [Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices](#).

[45] The guidelines for school counsellors (agreed by the national board of experts for general education in 1999) assigned the responsibility for career guidance to school counsellors.

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Slovenia: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database].

www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/slovenia-u3

VET Programme Types

EQF 4
Mainly
School-based
Technical VET,
WBL 15%,
4 years
ISCED 354

Technical upper secondary programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (srednje strokovno izobraževanje, SSI)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	19
Length of a programme (years)	4		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓




ECVET or other credits 240

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance) Programmes are mainly school-based. Approximately 15% of the programme is work-based learning, of which at least 8 weeks (minimum 304 hours, depending on the programme) are in-company training. The rest is practical training at school workshops as a part of the professional module.

Main providers VET schools

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies Approximately 15% (40% of which is in-company training)

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-company training (at least 8 weeks) • practical training at school (in school estates or intercompany training centres (MIC) or school workshops)
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>To enrol in technical upper secondary education (SSI), successful completion of basic education or short vocational upper secondary education (NPI) is required.</p> <p>Usually, the learners are 15 years of age.</p> <p>Specific programmes may have additional entry requirements.</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>SSI programmes are completed with a vocational matura (<i>poklicna matura</i>). This is composed of two parts, two exams each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory part: written and oral exam in (1) mother tongue (Slovenian but also Italian/Hungarian in some areas) and (2) theoretical subject (depending on the programme); • elective part: oral and written exam in (3) foreign language or maths, and (4) a practical assignment as product, service or project work with a presentation or seminar. The student can choose practical assignment topic in cooperation with the teacher of professional module. <p>The vocational matura examinations rules are the same for all candidates. The written parts of the first and third exams are external and provided by the National Examination Centre (RIC), while the second and fourth exams and all oral parts of the exams are carried out and assessed at the school level by the school examination boards for the vocational matura. The schools with the same programme may cooperate in the provision of the examination. Since 2020, the second exams for VET programmes with large enrolment are gradually becoming external exams organized in cooperation with RIC (in 2022, involving 12 VET programmes).</p> <p>For the fourth exam, an employer representative as an external member may be part of the school examination board. This member is required to possess, as a minimum standard, technical upper secondary education in the appropriate field, at least 5 years of relevant professional experience, and must meet all the requirements for the vocational matura set by the National Committee for the vocational matura.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Upon passing the vocational matura examination, learners obtain a vocational matura certificate (<i>spričevalo o poklicni maturi</i>).</p> <p>Graduates also receive a Europass certificate supplement, which is individualised for each student and prepared in the Slovenian and English languages.</p> <p>The vocational matura Certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education or enter the labour market.</p>

Examples of qualifications	Economic technician, electrotechnician, pharmaceutical technician, geominig technician, nature protection technician, environmental technician, nautical technician, electronic communications technician, mechatronic technician.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>After completing the vocational matura, learners can enter the labour market or continue their education in higher vocational education (ISCED 554) programmes or the first cycle professional education (ISCED 655).</p> <p>It is possible for students with a vocational matura to pass one additional exam (fifth subject) from the general matura subjects, which then enables learners to enrol in some of the first cycle academic programmes (ISCED 645).</p>
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p></p> <p>In formal VET, receiving a school leaving certificate through validation is not possible. What is possible is recognition of a part of a programme (professional module or a subject).</p>
General education subjects	<p></p> <p>4-year technical programmes contain a minimum of 2137 hours of general education subjects like Slovene language, maths, foreign language, arts, social science subjects, natural science subjects and sports education (46) .</p>
Key competences	<p></p> <p>The technical upper secondary programmes are competence-based, which means that there is an emphasis on development of key and vocational competences. This is done by connecting the vocational/theoretical education with practical training and systematic inclusion of key competences.</p> <p>The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge. Schools may also include key competences in the open curriculum (47) , where competences, objectives and content may be added to existing content categories, or additional (new) content categories may be designed for the specialised part of the programme.</p>

Application of learning outcomes approach



All VET programmes are modularised since 2006.

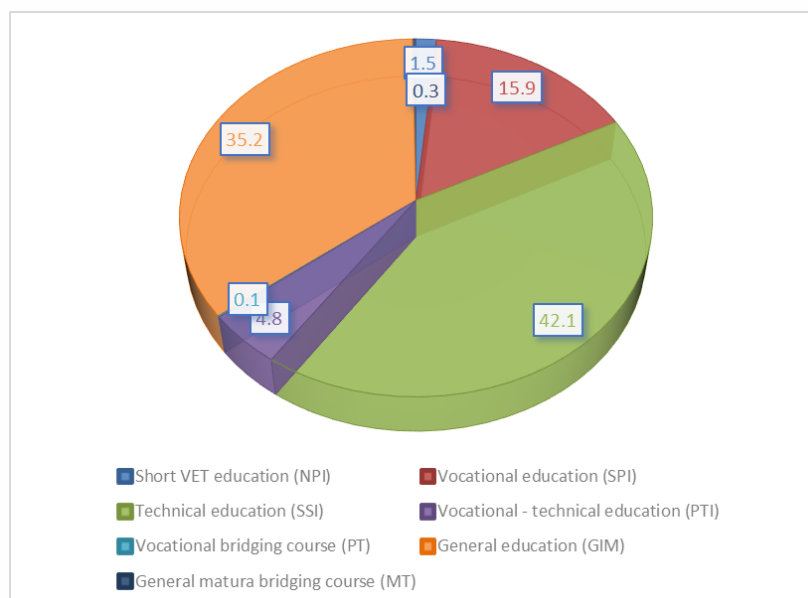
Several professional modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification.

Professional modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at a national level. It includes general objectives of a module, vocational competences, defined by informative and formative learning outcomes

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

In the 2022/23 school year 41.1% of learners were enrolled in these programmes (share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes)

Share of all students enrolled in upper secondary level by the type of the programme (%)



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].





- [46] In line with the guidelines for the preparation of the upper secondary VET programmes.
- [47] Schools must prepare 20% of the curricula by themselves. National curricula deliver 80% of the content of VET programmes, and the rest is a so-called 'open curriculum', which should be designed by schools in cooperation with local employers and local communities in accordance with local specifics or needs.

EQF 4
Mainly school-based technical VET, WBL 10%, 2 years ISCED 354

Vocational technical upper secondary education programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (poklicno tehniško izobraževanje, PTI)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	15
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	120 credits		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	PTI is a school-based learning programme: Approximately 10% of the programme is work-based learning, of which 2 weeks (76 hours) are in-company training. The rest is practical training at school workshops as a part of the professional module.		
Main providers	VET schools		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Approximately 10% (of which 30% is in-company training)		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-company training (at least 2 weeks - 76 hours); • practical training at school (at school premises, intercompany training centres (MIC) or school workshops) 		

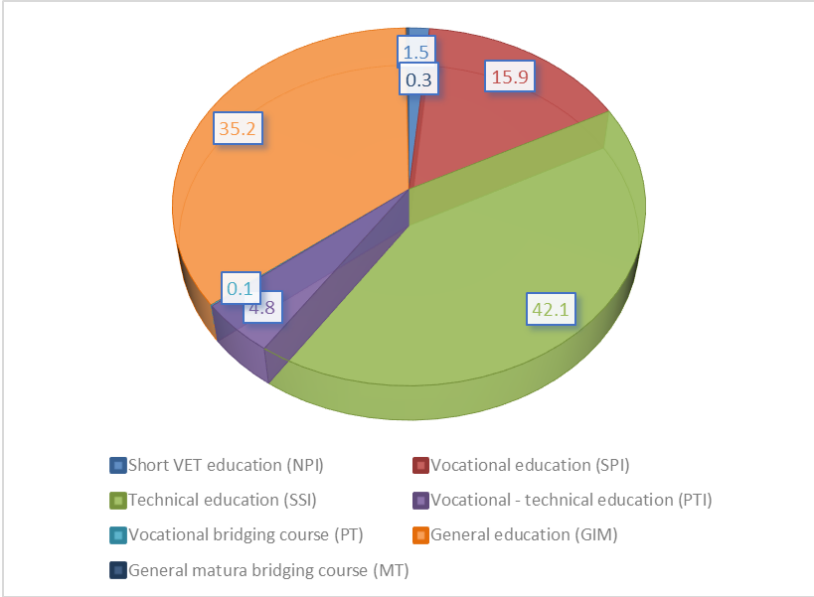
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	To enrol in vocational technical upper secondary education (PTI), successful completion of vocational upper secondary education (SPI - ISCED 353) is required. Learners of first year are usually 18 years of age.
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>PTI programmes are completed with a vocational matura (<i>poklicna matura</i>). It is composed of two parts, two exams each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory part: written and oral exam in (1) mother tongue (Slovenian but also Italian/Hungarian in some areas) and (2) theoretical subject (depending on the programme); • elective part: oral and written exam in (3) foreign language or maths, and (4) a practical assignment as product, service or project work with a presentation or seminar. The student can choose the practical assignment topic in cooperation with the professional module teacher. <p>The vocational matura examinations rules are the same for all candidates. The written parts of the first and third exams are external and provided by the National Examination Centre (RIC), while the second and fourth exams and all oral parts are carried out and assessed at the school level by the school examination boards for the vocational matura. The schools with the same programme may cooperate in the provision of the examination. Since 2020, the second exams for VET programmes with large enrolment are gradually being organized as external exams in cooperation with RIC (in 2022, involving 12 VET programmes).</p> <p>For the fourth exam, an employer representative as an external member may be part of the school examination board. This member is required to possess, as a minimum standard, technical upper secondary education in the appropriate field, at least 5 years of relevant professional experience, and must meet all the requirements for the vocational matura set by the National Committee for the vocational matura.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Upon passing the vocational matura examination, learners obtain a vocational matura certificate (<i>spričevalo o poklicni maturi</i>).</p> <p>Students also receive a Europass certificate supplement, which is individualised for each student and prepared in Slovenian and English languages.</p> <p>The vocational matura certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education or enter the labour market.</p>
Examples of qualifications	<p>Automotive service technician, economic technician, electrotechnician, gastronomy, geominig technician, construction technician, graphic technician, horticultural technician</p> <p>Not to be confused with the technical upper secondary programmes. It is the same qualification, acquired through a different path.</p>

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>After passing the vocational matura, learners can enter the labour market or continue their education in higher vocational education (ISCED 554) programmes or first cycle professional education (ISCED 655).</p> <p>It is possible for students with a vocational matura to pass one additional exam (fifth subject) from the general matura subjects, which then enables learners to enrol in some of the first cycle academic programmes (ISCED 645).</p>
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p></p> <p>In formal VET, receiving a school leaving certificate through validation is not possible. What is possible is recognition of a part of a programme (professional module or a subject).</p>
General education subjects	<p></p> <p>These programmes contain (48) a minimum of 1178 hours of general education subjects like Slovene language, maths, foreign language, art, social science subjects, natural science subjects and sport education.</p>
Key competences	<p></p> <p>The vocational technical upper secondary programmes are competence-based which means that there is an emphasis on development of key and professional competences. This is done by connecting the vocational/theoretical education with practical training and systematic inclusion of key competences.</p> <p>The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge. Schools may also include key competences in the open part of the curriculum, where competences, objectives and content may be added to existing content categories, or additional (new) content categories may be designed for the specialised part of the programme.</p>
Application of learning outcomes approach	<p></p> <p>All IVET programmes are modularised since 2006. Several professional modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification.</p> <p>Professional modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at national level. It includes general objectives of a module and vocational competences, defined by informative and formative learning outcomes.</p>

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

In the 2022/23 school year 4.8% of learners were enrolled in these programmes (share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes)

Share of all students enrolled in upper secondary level by the type of the programme (%)



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].

[48] In line with the guidelines for the preparation of the upper secondary VET programmes.

EQF 4
VET programmes with School-based (WBL 40%) and Apprenticeship (WBL 60%) paths, 3 years ISCED 353

Vocational upper secondary education programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 353 (srednje poklicno izobraževanje, SPI)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

ECVET or other credits 180 credits

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

SPI is mostly offered as a school-based path. It includes 40% of work-based learning of which 24 weeks (912 hours) is in-company training. In-company training can be to up to 53 weeks if an individual learning contract is signed. Collective contracts are more common than individual.

In the apprenticeship path at least 50% of the programme is in-company training, while at least 40% of the programme is provided as school education. Together the work-based learning is approximately 60%.



In the school year 2023/24 students could enrol in 21 different SPI programmes in the apprenticeship path.

Main providers

VET schools (school-based path)

VET schools (apprenticeship path)

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	<p>School based path:</p> <p>Approximately 40% (of which 60% is in-company training)</p> <p>Apprenticeship path:</p> <p>Approximately 60% (of which 90% is in-company training)</p>
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical training at school (at school estates, intercompany training centres or school workshops) • in-company training <p>School-based path</p> <p>For the implementation of in-company training, a learning contract must be signed. A learning contract includes the competences the learner should acquire and develop, the duration of the in-company training as well as the other responsibilities and obligations of both parties. The learning contract does not include employment provisions. A contract can be collective or individual. A collective contract is more common. It is usually signed between the school, an employer and student or his/her legal guardians. An individual one is signed between an employer and a student. This type of contract allows the WBL in companies to be extended to up to 53 weeks (in this case, practical training in school is reduced). Students with individual contracts are required to pass a mid-term test of practical skills in the second year, which is provided by the relevant chamber.</p> <p>Apprenticeship path:</p> <p>An individual contract is signed by an employer, school, chamber and a student or his/her legal guardian prior to the student's enrolment into the programme. At the beginning of an apprenticeship, the apprenticeship implementation plan is prepared in cooperation between the school and the company under the supervision of the chamber and signed between student, and representatives of the company, school and chamber. It includes the objectives and set of competences for in company WBL, distribution and schedule of education at the school and in the company, ways and modes of communication and cooperation between the company and school, information regarding the mid-term and final exam for the apprentice. Apprentices are required to pass a mid-term test of practical skills in the second year, which is provided by the relevant chamber.</p>
Main target groups	<p>Programmes are available for young people and adults.</p> <p>Some programmes are adjusted for special needs students, or the classes are bilingual for education in ethnically mixed areas.</p>
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>To enrol in vocational upper secondary education (SPI), completion of basic education or short vocational upper secondary education (NPI) is required.</p> <p>Usually, the learners are 15 years of age.</p> <p>In some cases, fulfilling specific conditions if required as well (49) .</p>

Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>SPI programmes (school-based and apprenticeship path) are completed with a final exam. It comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written and oral exam of mother tongue; • the final practical assignment: a product or service with a presentation. <p>An examination catalogue for the practical assignment (final product or service with a presentation) for SPI programme is prepared at national level.</p> <p>Candidates for the examination must successfully pass the third grade. The final exam is conducted at schools, usually in June and August. The member of the examination board for practical assignment can be a member of the relevant chamber.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Final examination certificate (<i>spričevalo o zaključnem izpitu</i>)</p> <p>The Final examination certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education or enter the labour market.</p> <p>Students also receive Europass certificate supplement, which is individualised for each student and prepared in Slovenian and English languages.</p>
Examples of qualifications	Florist, metal shaper - tool maker, gastronomy and hotel services, baker, electrician
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>Upon completion of the final exam, SPI graduates may be employed or may continue their education.</p> <p>SPI graduates have access to vocational technical programmes (PTI).</p>
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p></p> <p>In formal VET, receiving a school leaving certificate through validation is not possible. What is possible is recognition of a part of a programme (professional module or a subject).</p>
General education subjects	<p></p> <p>These programmes contain (50) as minimum 1048 hours of general education subjects, such as Slovene language, maths, foreign language, art, social science subjects, natural science subjects and sports education.</p>

Key competences



The upper secondary programmes are competence-based which means that there is an emphasis on development of key and professional competences. This is done by connecting the vocational/theoretical education with practical training and systematic inclusion of key competences.

The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge. Schools may also include key competences in the open part of the curriculum, where competences, objectives and content may be added to existing content categories, or additional (new) content categories may be designed for the specialised part of the programme.

Application of learning outcomes approach

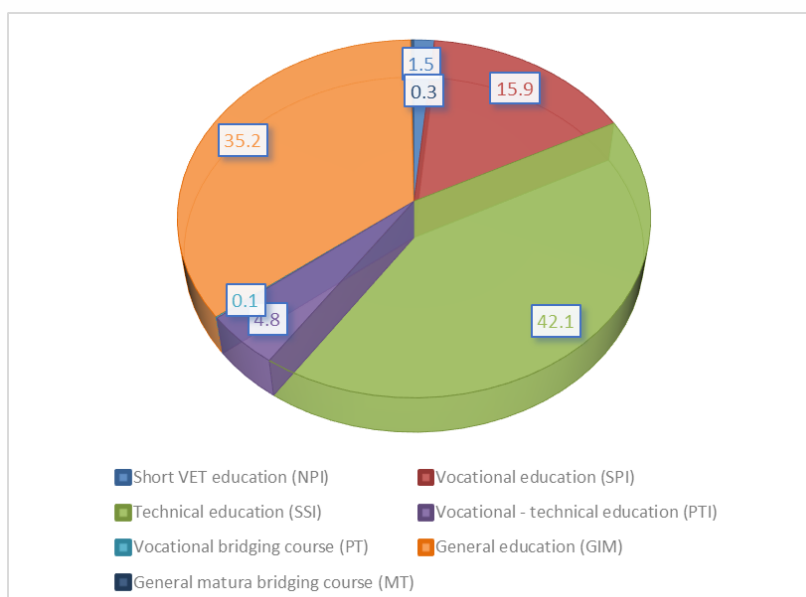


In the VET reform of 2006, all IVET programmes were modularised. Several professional modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification. Professional modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at national level; it includes general objectives of a module and vocational competences defined by informative and formative learning outcomes

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

In the 2022/2023 school year 15.9 % of learners were enrolled in these programmes (share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes).

Share of all students enrolled in upper secondary level by the type of the programme (%).



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].


- [49] There is a special condition for entry into the geo-operator miner vocational upper secondary programme, i.e. psychophysical ability.
- [50] In line with the guidelines for the preparation of the upper secondary VET programmes.

EQF 3

Short VET
Programmes,
WBL 35%,
2 years
ISCED 353

Short Vocational Upper Secondary Education programmes leading to EQF level 3, ISCED 353 (nižje poklicno izobraževanje, NPI)

EQF level	3	ISCED-P 2011 level	353
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	17
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	120 credits		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	NPI is offered as a school-based learning option. It includes approximately 35% work-based learning, of which 4 weeks (152 hours) is intended for in-company training.		
Main providers	VET schools or School centres		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Approximately 35-40% (of which 20% is in-company training)		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in-company training (at least 4 weeks) • practical training at school, at school estates, intercompany training centres or school workshops 		
Main target groups	Programmes are available for young people and adults.		

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	In NPI programmes can enrol learners who have completed compulsory education (9 years of basic education) (51) or completed basic education for special needs learners with lower educational standard.
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>NPI programmes end with a final exam in the form of a practical assignment: a product or service with a presentation.</p> <p>An examination catalogue for a product or service with a presentation for NPI programme is prepared at national level.</p> <p>Candidates for the examination must successfully pass the second grade. The final exam is conducted at schools, usually in June and August. The member of the examination board for practical assignment can be a member of the relevant chamber.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Final examination certificate (<i>Potrdilo o zaključnem izpitu</i>)</p> <p>This certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education (enrolment into SPI vocational upper secondary education) or enter the labour market.</p> <p>Students also receive a Europass certificate supplement, which is individualised for each student and prepared in Slovenian and English languages.</p>
Examples of qualifications	Woodworker, Assistant construction worker, Biotechnology and care assistant
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Upon completion of the final exam, NPI graduates may be employed (as an assistant) or may continue their education by enrolling in vocational upper secondary education (SPI).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p></p> <p>In formal VET receiving a school leaving certificate through validation is not possible. What is possible is recognition of a part of a programme (professional module or a subject), exemption and shortened education.</p>
General education subjects	These programmes contain (52) a minimum 675 hours of general education subjects, such as Slovene language, maths, social and natural science and sports education.

Key competences ✓

The upper secondary programmes are competence-based, which means that there is an emphasis on development of key and professional competences. This is done by connecting the vocational/theoretical education with practical education and systematic inclusion of key competences.

The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge. Schools may also include key competences in the open part of the curriculum, where competences, objectives and content may be added to existing content categories, or additional (new) content categories may be designed for the specialised part of the programme.

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

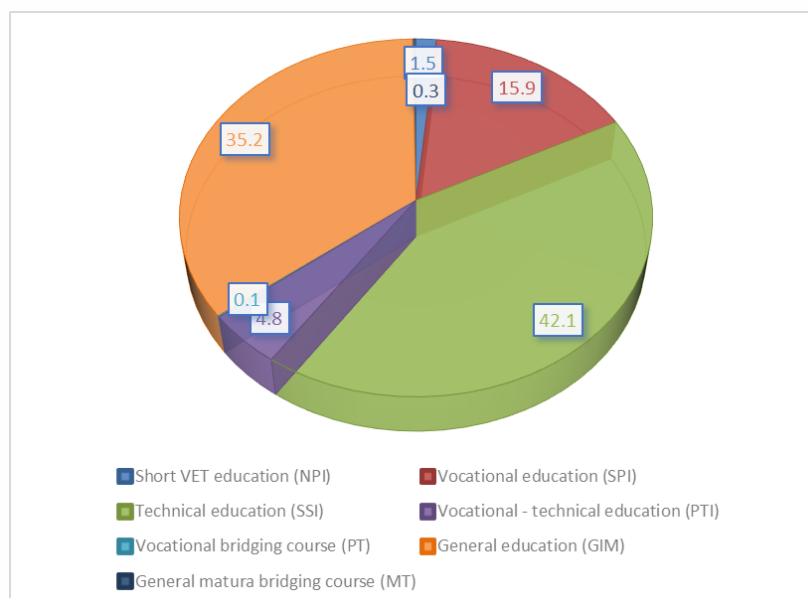
All IVET programmes were modularised in 2006. Several professional modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification.

Professional modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at national level. It includes general objectives of a module, vocational competences, defined by informative and formative learning outcomes.

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

In the 2022/23 school year 1.5% of learners were enrolled in these programmes (share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes).

Share of all students enrolled in upper secondary level by the type of the programme (%)



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].

- [51] Attending 9 years of basic education is obligatory; this requirement is deemed fulfilled when the learner is enrolled in basic education for 9 years. Basic education is successfully completed when the learner achieves the minimum learning outcomes.
- [52] In line with the guidelines for the preparation of the upper secondary VET programmes.

EQF 4
Vocational bridging courses, 1 year ISCED 354

Vocational bridging programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (poklicni tečaj, PT)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	14	Usual completion grade	15
Usual entry age	19	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	1		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	
	for young learners, N for adults		

ECVET or other credits 60 credits

Exception: Computer technician 77 credits

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

The course is primarily intended for learners who wish to transfer from general education to vocational education.



It is a route to technical education level; general education subjects are recognised, so the programme consists solely of professional modules with WBL.

Vocational course is available for 4 programmes, 34 weeks each

- Economic technician
- Gastronomy and tourism
- Preschool education
- Computer technician

Main providers VET Schools

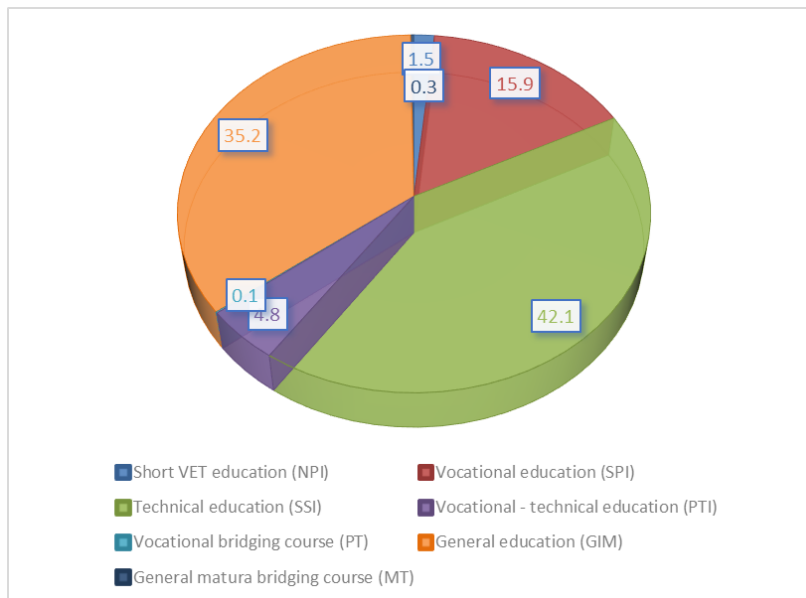
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic technician, 1150 hours • Gastronomy and tourism, 508 hours • Preschool education, 304 hours, just in-company training • Computer technician, 418 hours
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical training at school • In-company practice
Main target groups	Young people, adults
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>Completed 4 years of upper secondary general programme (<i>gimnazija</i>) or technical programme (without vocational matura).</p> <p>Learners are usually 19 years of age.</p>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>Vocational bridging programmes are completed with a vocational matura (<i>poklicna matura</i>). It is composed of two parts, two exams each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● compulsory part: written and oral exam in (1) mother tongue (Slovenian but also Italian/Hungarian in some areas) and (2) theoretical subject (depending on the programme); ● elective part: oral and written exam in either (3) foreign language or maths, and (4) a practical assignment as product, service or project work with a presentation or seminar. <p>The student can choose a practical assignment topic in cooperation with the teacher of professional module.</p> <p>The vocational matura examinations rules are the same for all candidates. The written parts of the first and third exams are external and provided by the National Examination Centre (RIC), while the second and fourth exams and all oral parts of the exams are carried out and assessed at the school level by the school examination boards for the vocational matura. The schools with the same programme may cooperate in the provision of the examination. Since 2020 the second exams for VET programmes with large enrolment are gradually being organized as external exam in cooperation with RIC (in 2022, involving 12 VET programmes).</p> <p>For the fourth exam, an employer representative as an external member may be part of the school examination board. This member is required to possess, as a minimum standard, technical upper secondary education in the appropriate field, at least 5 years of relevant professional experience, and must meet all the requirements for the vocational matura set by the National Committee for the vocational matura.</p>

Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Upon passing the examination, learners obtain a vocational matura certificate (<i>spričevalo o poklicni maturi</i>).</p> <p>The certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education or enter the labour market.</p> <p>Students also receive an Europass certificate supplement, which is individualised for each student and prepared in Slovenian and English languages.</p>
Examples of qualifications	<p>There are only 4 programmes of this type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic technician • Gastronomy and tourism • Preschool education • Computer technician
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>After passing the vocational matura, learners can enter the labour market or continue their education in higher vocational education programmes (ISCED 554, EQF 5) or in the first cycle of professional education (ISCED 655, EQF 6).</p> <p>It is possible for students with a vocational matura to pass one additional exam (fifth subject) from the general matura subjects, which then enables learners to enrol in some of the first cycle academic programmes (ISCED 645, EQF 6).</p>
Destination of graduates	Official data unavailable
Awards through validation of prior learning	Information not available
General education subjects	
Key competences	 <p>The upper secondary programmes are competence-based, which means that there is an emphasis on development of key and professional competences. This is done by connecting the vocational/theoretical education with practical education and systematic inclusion of key competences.</p> <p>The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge.</p>
Application of learning outcomes approach	<p>All IVET programmes were modularised in 2006. Several professional modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification.</p> <p>Professional modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at a national level. It includes general objectives of a module and vocational competences defined by informative and formative learning outcomes.</p>

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

In the 2022/2023 school year 0.1 % of learners were enrolled in these programmes (share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes).

Share of all students enrolled in upper secondary level by the type of the programme (%)



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) [extracted 16.8.2023].

EQF 4

Craftsman/foreman/


shop manager exams

ISCED 354

Master craftsman, foreman and shop manager exams (mojstrski, delovodski ali poslovodni izpiti) at EQF level 4, ISCED 354. Each exam is under the auspices of the individual chamber that organises the exams. Candidates study independently, though preparatory courses may be prepared due to market demand and literature may be also offered.

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	Not applicable	Usual completion grade	Not applicable
Usual entry age	Not applicable	Usual completion age	Not applicable
Length of a programme (years)	Not applicable		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✗ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master craftsman: EUR 1 284 - 1 683, depending on the profession. • Foreman: EUR 1 264.86 • Shop manager: EUR 717.74 <p>Occasionally the cost can be co-financed through the public tender for shared financing of tuition.</p>	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Independent study, though preparatory courses may be prepared due to market demand and literature may be also offered.		

Main providers	<p>The Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia conducts the Master craftsman examination.</p> <p>The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia conducts the foreman examination.</p> <p>Slovenian Chamber of Commerce conducts shop manager exam.</p>
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Not applicable
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Not applicable
Main target groups	<p>The exams are intended for those with vocational upper secondary programmes (ISCED 353, EQF 3), and at least 3 years of relevant work experience.</p> <p>Adults who would like to improve their level of education, and/or become a mentor to a student or an apprentice in a company.</p>
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<p>For Master craftsman and Foreman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocational education and at least 3 years of work experience in the relevant profession • technical education and 2 years of work experience in the exam profession • at least higher VET education and 1 year of work experience. <p>For Shop manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vocational education and 3 years of work experience
Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>Master craftsman/foreman/shop manager exams are conducted based on the national catalogues and carried out in accordance with the Rules on Master craftsman examinations and the Rules on examinations for Foreman and Plant manager (Ministry for Economy 2009, 2004).</p> <p>The examinations consist of four units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practical unit • specialised theoretical unit • business/economics unit • pedagogical/andragogical unit <p>Each unit consists of one or several exams.</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>After passing the examination, candidates obtain a master craftsman (or foreman or shop manager) certificate (<i>spričevalo o opravljenem mojstrskem, delovodskem, poslovodskem izpitu</i>) and gain technical upper secondary education (ISCED 354, EQF 4).</p>

Examples of qualifications	<p>Master craftsman: Master confectioner, Master joiner, Master butcher, Master beekeeper, Master watchmaker</p> <p>Foreman: Foreman in electro-energetics, Construction foreman, Food foreman</p> <p>Shop manager</p>
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Candidates with prior lower level of education who pass this examination gain a technical upper secondary education level (ISCED 354, EQF 4) and, by passing the general exams of the vocational matura, can enrol in higher vocational education programmes.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	Not applicable
Key competences	Not applicable
Application of learning outcomes approach	Not applicable
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

EQF 5

Higher VET programmes,



WBL 40%

2 years

ISCED 554

Higher Vocational programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (višje strokovno izobraževanje, VSI)

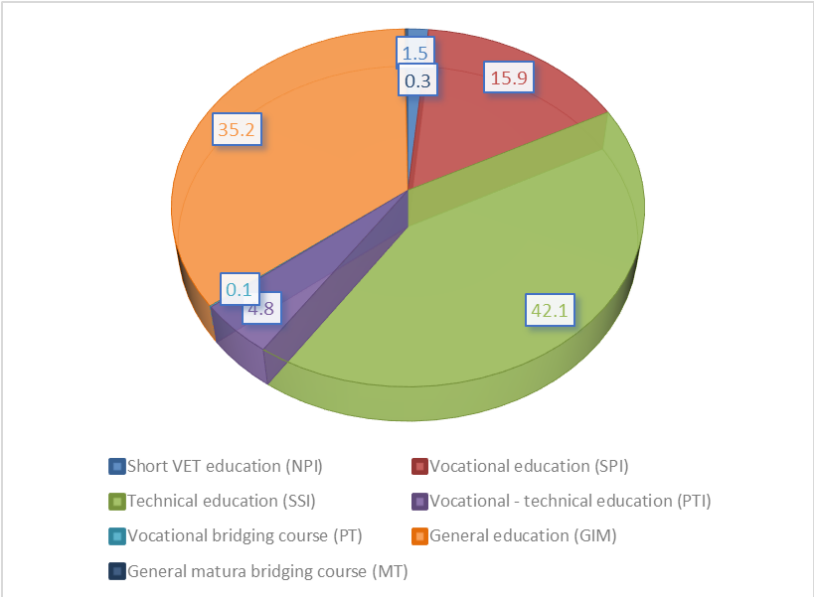
EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	14	Usual completion grade	16
Usual entry age	19	Usual completion age	21
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓
	for full-time learners		
	N		
	for part-time learners		
ECVET or other credits	120		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Higher vocational programmes are school-based but include 20 weeks of in-company training. In-company training is based on a learning contract signed between the student, the school and the company. The learning contract is not an employment contract.		
Main providers	Higher vocational schools public and private.		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Approximately 40% (of which 100% is in-company training)		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-company training (at least 20 weeks) 		

Main target groups	Young people, adults
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general or vocational matura, or • 3 years of working experiences, master craftsman, foreman or managerial examination and vocational matura general subject exams.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The diploma exam consists of a practically oriented diploma thesis and a thesis defence. As part of the thesis, the learner can also carry out project work or services with a theoretical defence.
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Diploma of higher vocational education (<i>diploma o višji strokovni izobrazbi</i>), an integral part of which is a diploma supplement in Slovene and one official language of the European Union. Learners also gain the title of engineer or a title that corresponds to this level.</p> <p>The certificate is nationally recognised by the education and labour authorities. With this certificate, someone can access the next level of education or enter the labour market.</p>
Examples of qualifications	Mechanical engineer, Bionics engineer, Forestry and hunting engineer, Social network organiser, Woodworking engineer, Higher ballet dancer.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	A transition from higher vocational study programmes to higher professional (ISCED 655, EQF 6) and university (ISCED 645, EQF 6) study programmes is possible. University/faculty can recognise subjects and validate them, enabling a student to enrol into the second year of study with some additional exams.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	In formal VET, receiving a school leaving certificate through validation is not possible. What is possible is recognition of a programme part (professional module or a subject) exemption and shortened education.
General education subjects	
Key competences	The key competences are defined in national catalogues of knowledge and integrated into the professional modules.
Application of learning outcomes approach	 <p>Professional modules are competence-based and include school studies and practical training at a company. For each professional module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at a national level. It includes general objectives of a module and specific vocational competences, defined by informative and formative learning outcomes.</p>

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners**

In the school year 2022/23 12.49% enrolled in Higher Vocational Education.

A share of all students enrolled in tertiary level by the type of the programme (%) is presented in the graph below.



Source: Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia (SURS).