

Amendments to the Education Act (245/2008)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2021 Approved/Agreed

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

ID number 39099

Background

12 years of experience with the implementation of the Education Act adopted in 2008 resulted in the need for its revision.

Objectives

In 2021, substantial changes in the Education act were introduced. Some of them also have an impact on the provision of VET, especially in efforts:

- (a) to revise the 2008 curricular reform, in particular, to adjust the creation of school curricula (school educational programmes) to strengthen the development of key competences;
- (b) to streamline admission to secondary schools, e. g. by sending a single electronic application declaring interest in alternative programmes and secondary schools, and allowing additional admission corrections in case of entry into dual VET;
- (c) to strengthen the impact of external national testing (conducted at the end of lower secondary education) by enabling students who achieve a 90% success rate to be admitted to grammar schools and those with an 80% success rate to be admitted to VET schools without entrance exams;
- (d) to introduce flexibility in completing secondary school educational programmes, for example, by allowing students who meet the requirements of the national curriculum to take the school-leaving examination in specific subjects in earlier years. Students will also have the option to voluntarily take the examination in multiple subjects;
- (e) to change the guidance, counselling and prevention system, with services to be provided in five successive support levels. The first will consist of pedagogical and professional staff and the school support (inclusive) team, the second level will be carried out by school special pedagogues and school professionals in cooperation with professionals in the counselling and prevention centres, the third and fourth support levels will comprise counselling and prevention centres, and the fifth level support will be provided by specialised counselling and prevention centres;
- (f) to create a framework for the establishment of 'clusters of schools', which will be a legal entity with several organisational units, which can be kindergartens, basic and secondary schools, including VET schools, while these components will no longer be legal entities;
- (g) to define and legally reinforce key terms, e. g. national minority school or inclusive

- education, while establishing a legal obligation to support and improve inclusive education and prevent potential segregation of children to ensure equal access to education;
- (h) to back the provision of international programmes by legislation;
- (i) to reform the pathway of obtaining lower secondary education. To lower the barrier to enter lower secondary VET programmes for learners from special stream schools, and early leavers from lower secondary education without completion of the programme. Mentally challenged graduates with mild intellectual disability from special stream programmes will be offered the option to achieve the ISCED 2 level general education by passing externally administered tests. Early school leavers will be offered the option to achieve ISCED 2 level general education (ISCED 244) via examinations during their enrolment in lower secondary VET programmes (ISCED 253);
- (j) to expand the integration of distance learning within full-time education, in alignment with the requirements outlined in the respective State educational programme.

Amendment (182/2023) to the Education act focused on inclusive education. It has

- (a) defined segregation in education and training;
- (b) specified how to understand compliance with the prohibition of segregation;
- (c) revised definition of special education needs;
- (d) newly introduced 'support measures' necessary for a child or learner to fully participate in education and training and develop their knowledge, skills and abilities even in the case of special needs;
- (e) structured support measures into 21 categories; introduced a catalogue of support measures designed to enhance individual learners' knowledge, skills, and abilities, maintained by the education ministry; and
- (f) established who provides and who decides on the provision of the relevant support measures.

In 2024, standards of prohibition of segregation with a manual of implementation were introduced and the obligation for the education ministry 'to publish a catalogue of results of experimental verifications and innovations in education and training on the dedicated website'.

Description

In January 2021, the education ministry submitted to public discussion an extensive amendment of the Education act (245/2008), which provoked a heated debate with more than 1 000 comments, of which more than 680 were fundamental. In March 2021, therefore, the revised version was resubmitted for public discussion. This discussion was expected to pave the way to introducing curricular reform and also reforms embedded in the National recovery and resilience plan (RRP). Public discussion and further legislative changes related to the RRP followed, predominantly focusing on support of inclusive education.

2021 Approved/Agreed

A final version of the amendment to the Education Act was adopted by the government on 25 August 2021 and by the parliament on 20 October 2021.

2022 Implementation

The amendment came into effect on 1 January 2022, with some provisions implemented later.

2023 Implementation

Three amendments to the Education act were introduced. One (Act No 182/2023) bringing deep changes focusing on inclusive education with objectives detailed above, and two with comparably minor changes.

a. Act No 276/2023 responding to the COVID-19 impact and the need to improve the physical condition of learners, this amendment mandated at least two teaching hours of physical and sports education per week. Schools were also recommended to use optional hours to expand these two teaching hours. In VET schools, this requirement can conflict with employers' demands to maximise practice-oriented education;

b. Act No 263/2023 stipulated that schools must 'create the conditions and provide cooperation to the personal assistant in performing their tasks'. Although personal assistants serving persons with severe disabilities are not qualified pedagogues, the amendment allows them to provide 'personal assistance during the educational process and other activities in the school' as specified by Act No 447/2008.

2024 Implementation

Act No 120/2024 amended also the Education act to respond to employers' concerns by exempting VET schools with high practical training needs from the obligatory provision of two teaching hours per week of physical and sports education. The legislation also allows all schools to achieve obligatory annual teaching hours of physical and sports education through relevant afternoon activities.

Act No 290/2024 amending also the Education act introduced standards of prohibition of segregation with a manual of implementation to comply with the RRP milestone - 100% of schools implementing these standards. Furthermore, a catalogue of results of experimental verifications and innovations in education and training should address a long-standing systemic weakness by supporting the dissemination of good practices. The catalogue will include both major innovations from multi-year experiments and smaller innovations related to the form, methods, and tools used in education and training, such as learners' assessments.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (until 2024)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers

Trainers

School leaders

Guidance practitioners

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Education act No 245/2008 as amended by the Act No 415/2021\[Zákon c. 245/2008 Z. z. o výchove a vzdelávaní \(školský zákon\)\]](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Preventing and reducing early leaving from education and training

The Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30, approved by the government on 24 November 2021, addresses early school leaving in the section 'Second chance education and F-type programmes'. It suggests four measures aimed at:

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

National recovery and resilience plan

The National recovery and resilience plan sets out a package of reforms and public investments to be implemented by 2026.

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Amendments to the Act on VET (61/2015)

Strengthening the position of 'sectoral assignees' and the Employer Council for VET over the VET system as a whole from 2021 induced a debate over creating a new institution covering the VET system as a whole.

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/39099>