

Response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Slovenia

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE



SLOVENIA

Timeline

2020 Implementation

2021 Implementation

2022 Discontinued

ID number 36044

Background

With the COVID-19 outbreak, Slovenian schools faced an unprecedented situation of having to organise distance learning with little or no time for preparation. Decisions on how to enable students and apprentices to continue learning and how to proceed with vocational *Matura* and final exam had to be made. Working with students from vulnerable groups is also a challenge. To offer guidance and support for a positive outcome on these, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, together with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET and both chambers, prepared a set of interventions and guidelines.

Objectives

To enable the students to complete the school year 2020/21, despite the COVID-19 outbreak, and provide support to distance learning.

Description

From 16 March 2020, all education institutions in Slovenia were temporarily closed until further notice, by government order for the purpose of the COVID-19 infection control. All students, including VET, had to stop attending classes at schools and stop living in dormitories. VET students, including apprentices, also had to interrupt their training in companies. Additionally, from 30 March 2020, government prohibition of movement outside the municipality of permanent or temporary residence was in place.

The reopening of education institutions depended on the health situation in the country. Upper-secondary schools were supposed to reopen for final year students on 18 May 2020 in order to prepare for, and participate in, final exam and *Matura*.

The calendars for the final exam and vocational *Matura* were adjusted but the final dates of the school year remained the same. Competent institutions like the National Examinations Institute, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET and the chambers, together with the Ministry of education, were preparing an adaptation of the exam regulations and specific subjects' exams guidelines.

Exams for the purpose of obtaining national vocational qualifications were temporarily suspended.

All upper-secondary schools, including vocational schools, organised distance learning and on-line classes from the first day of the school closure. Teachers used different communication means, including e-mails, Moodle, on-line classes, and various video conference systems, such as MS Teams and Zoom. Apprentices also had to follow distance learning classes organised by their schools. Usually, schools included apprentices in groups of students following the school-based pathway. In some cases, in-company trainers participated in distance learning. Some schools organised separate on-line classes for apprentices. The extension of the school year was not planned in Slovenia and the extension of the training period in companies was not foreseen either. The Act determining the intervention measures to contain the COVID-19 epidemic and mitigate its consequences for citizens and the economy stipulated that final year students who were unable to continue work-based learning (WBL) in school or at an employer were considered to have completed WBL if they had received positive grades in vocational modules. The students were able to participate in distance learning and prepare for the final examination or vocational *Matura*.

If WBL was scheduled to begin at the end of the school year, it would still be possible for first- and second-year students to begin their training, the situation at the time permitting. Schools were recommended to be flexible and, as a last resort, consider WBL as finished on the basis of the existing grades.

The Ministry of Education and the Institute of the RS for VET prepared guidelines to support distance learning and assessment as well as instructions for final examinations. Special attention was given to supporting distance learning for apprentices and for teachers working with students from vulnerable groups.

2020 Implementation

With the improved epidemic situation, kindergarten and school students gradually started to return to school on 18 May 2020. Apart from some exceptions, such as final-year students, most upper secondary students continued distance education until 24 June when the students went to school to receive their certificates.

In May 2020, the Act determining the intervention measures to mitigate and remedy the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic was adopted. It allowed extension of deadlines to enrol in higher education institutions and consideration of the extreme circumstances in the procedure of obtaining and maintaining the right to scholarship.

In July 2020, the National Education Institute published the results of the study 'Distance education in COVID-19 epidemic times in Slovenia', conducted in May and June 2020 to analyse various practices of distance education. The research included the experience of distance teaching and learning, organisation and implementation of instruction, use of digital technology, realisation of learning objectives, didactic strategies and methods of distance teaching, assessment of knowledge, self-evaluation of skills to implement distance teaching, benefits and challenges, as well as cooperation with different stakeholders.

In July 2020, the Act on intervention measures to prepare for the second wave of COVID-19 was adopted. It amended the provisions of the Scholarship Act in reference to reimbursing employers the joint company scholarships, and to obligations to offer employment to students receiving scholarship.

At the end of August 2020, the public institutions conducted training to support kindergarten and school teachers, head teachers and other education staff in their endeavours to make distance learning work.

In the school year 2020/21, the education activities in kindergartens, basic schools, upper secondary schools started on 1 September, as usual and according to the B model (all go to school). The Ministry of Education, the National Education Institute and National Institute of Public Health prepared a publication, 'Education in the Republic of Slovenia relevant to COVID-19'. Four possible models of instruction and relevant recommendations were introduced, to answer questions on how schools can plan and implement educational activities.

In October 2020, schools were closed again. First from 19 till 23 October for upper secondary, music and primary school (Grades 6-9). On 26 October 2020, distance education began for all levels.

2021 Implementation

In the school year 2020/21, distance education continued for upper secondary students from October 2020 to 15 February 2021. Then the students took turns in distance learning in 2-week shifts until 17 May 2021; final year students were exempted from this. From 1 April till 11 April 2021, it was distance learning for all students again. As differences in the levels of knowledge between the students increased, exacerbated by the declining social conditions, adjustments were made to Vocational matura 2021 and to the number of grades necessary for successfully finishing the school year. The responsible authorities issued a manual, School year 2021/22 in the Republic of Slovenia in the COVID-19 related conditions: models and recommendations.

2022 Discontinued

Measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis have been discontinued.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ) (until 2023)
- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI)
- National Examinations Centre (RIC)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Teachers

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Modernising infrastructure for vocational training

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Supporting teachers and trainers for and through digital

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Slovenian Education Network](#)

[Croocos: Wish my teacher knew](#)

[Croocos: Helping discussion](#)

[Distance education website](#)

[Analysis of distance education](#)

[Manual, 'School year 2021/22 in the Republic of Slovenia in the COVID-19 related conditions: models and recommendations'](#)

Related policy developments

2021 Completed

Reform of upper-secondary education project

A 5-year project Reform of upper-secondary vocational education, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), started in November 2016.

The project includes the following activities:

 SLOVENIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/36044>

