

Development of lifelong career orientation and counselling in Higher VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 SLOVENIA

Timeline

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 48453

Background

Career centres operate within higher VET schools, fostering stronger connections between students and employers. A key objective of the Higher VET Strategy and the Resolution on the Adult Education Master Plan of the Republic of Slovenia for 2022–2030 (RENPIO), is to further enhance the counselling system at the higher VET (EQF level 5), providing tailored support to students and graduates of Slovenia's higher vocational schools.

Objectives

The project, 'Development of Lifelong Career Guidance and Counselling in Higher Vocational Education', aims to raise student's awareness of the importance of career planning and lifelong learning (LLL) for an effective entry and stay into the labour market. It also seeks to establish the professional foundations for developing a career counselling system in higher VET.

Description

The project 'Development of Lifelong Career Guidance and Counselling in Higher Vocational Education' aims to enhance career counselling and support for students and graduates of higher vocational schools in Slovenia. Key activities include:

For students:

- (a) raising awareness of lifelong career guidance through workshops to develop skills for entering the job market;
- (b) establishing an e-learning platform for career counselling;
- (c) creating an online information hub, planning my career, aiming higher,
- (d) developing the career opportunities finder, app for internships and job placements;
- (e) providing individual career counselling;
- (f) organising, business breakfasts, for networking with potential employers;
- (g) conducting an analysis of distance learning during the 2020/21 academic year to assess the impact of COVID-19.

For higher vocational schools:

- (a) hosting meetings with employers to align educational outcomes with labour market demands;
- (b) using the Career opportunities finder, for internship and job postings;
- (c) implementing a methodology for career centres at higher vocational schools.

For career centre staff:

- (a) training and professional development for career advisors;
- (b) setting up an e-learning platform with career counselling materials;
- (c) establishing an Information Hub for Career Centres,
- (d) providing resources for career centres to improve their operations.

For employers:

- (a) using the Career opportunities finder to post internship and job opportunities;
- (b) attending networking events with students;
- (c) engaging in Business Breakfasts for student-employer connections.

For the broader community: promoting self-employment initiatives.

The project is funded by the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport and aligns with the Strategic and Development Plans of the Association of Higher Vocational Schools (Skupnost VSS).

2023 Implementation

The 2023 activities included:

- (a) the organisation of a conference in September 2023 for career counsellors on how to motivate students to use counselling tools;
- (b) updating two online classrooms for students and career counsellors;
- (c) the organisation of a conference 'Challenges in working with special needs students' in May 2023 entitled
- (d) the organisation of two training events for students on career orientation and financial literacy (17 May 2023 online and 26 May 2023 as a live session);
- (e) meetings with representatives of companies: 13 meetings between higher VET schools and companies were organised. Employers were invited to present how they can support young people at the start of their careers, explain their needs for technical staff, and outline what they expect from and offer to students in practical training.

2024 Implementation

Between August and October 2024, the Higher VET school association carried out an evaluation of career centres in Higher VET schools based on interviews with employers, a focus group consisting of career counsellors in Higher VET schools, and approximately 183 questionnaire respondents.

Career centres play a crucial role in providing students with information about professions and the labour market while also offering personalised counselling tailored to individual needs and goals. In today's rapidly evolving world, lifelong learning has become essential, and career centres continue to support individuals even after they complete formal education. This field requires skilled professionals and strong collaboration with various stakeholders to be effective.

Evaluation highlighted:

- (a) Students consider career centres valuable for career planning but see room for improvement, particularly in adapting programmes more effectively to their needs.
- (b) Competencies among higher vocational school graduates vary. Strengths include familiarity with SWOT analysis and awareness of their career interests, whereas weaknesses lie in understanding the labour market, job interview skills, and

application preparation. Moving forward, greater emphasis should be placed on individual counselling and support in finding employers for practical training and employment.

- (c) Employers value the theoretical foundation gained by students but highlight challenges in applying this knowledge in practice. Strengthening soft skills, enhancing practical experience, and fostering lifelong learning readiness are essential, alongside improving collaboration between Higher VET schools and employers.

Looking ahead, systemic support is necessary to define clear roles and allocate dedicated staff for counselling in Higher VET schools. At present, these schools primarily provide group counselling and often lack the capacity for individual support. Career counselling is mostly informal and dispersed among different staff members, leading to workload strain and a lack of continuity. As a result, students do not have access to structured individual counselling. Greater attention must be given to improving systems, staffing, and funding to ensure comprehensive career guidance and support.

2025 Implementation

The project Development of Lifelong Career Guidance and Counselling in Higher Vocational Education continued in 2025. Key activities included meetings between employers, mentors and graduates, as well as training sessions for students focusing on application and interview skills.

Meetings between employers, mentors and graduates held at higher vocational schools aimed to strengthen links between education and labour-market needs, improve practical training, and support the career development of students and graduates. Across all events, the shared objectives were to facilitate students' and graduates' transition to the labour market; exchange information on labour-market needs and employer expectations, including competences and values; address key challenges and trends such as generational differences and artificial intelligence; showcase good practices in mentoring, cooperation and practical training; and reinforce the role of higher vocational schools and the Association of Higher Vocational Colleges in competence development and collaboration with industry. In total, 16 events were organised, with the participation of 310 company representatives.

The student training sessions focusing on application and interview skills emphasised the importance of lifelong learning and continuous competence development for labour-market entry and career progression. Participants developed essential job-search skills, including effective self-presentation, interview techniques, non-verbal communication and the formulation of relevant questions. The trainings also supported the development of personal potential, self-confidence and entrepreneurial thinking. Overall, 372 students participated in seven training sessions.

Further activities within the framework of the project included a survey aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the presence of students with special needs, students with special rights and international students in higher vocational education. Participating schools submitted data through an online questionnaire covering enrolment figures, adaptations for students with special needs, tutoring, and identified challenges and needs. The results will serve as a foundation for further systemic improvements in support mechanisms and inclusive practices. Additional project activities focused on strengthening the competences of career guidance staff and professionals working with students with special needs.

The project also included cooperation between the Association of Slovenian Higher Vocational Colleges and company HR departments, chambers of craft and commerce, employment services, and advisers in public adult education services. This cooperation focuses on systematically gathering up-to-date labour market needs and skills requirements directly from HR professionals, business chambers and the Employment Service, thereby ensuring that educational provision and career guidance activities are aligned with current labour market demands.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
School leaders
Guidance practitioners

Other

Students of Higher VET
schools

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Lifelong guidance

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Project 'Development of lifelong career guidance and counselling in Higher Vocational Education'](#)

“ … ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Development of lifelong career orientation and counselling in Higher VET: Slovenia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/48453>