


Act on adult education (292/2024)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2024 Approved/Agreed

2025 Implementation

ID number 47912

Background

This area of education was not sufficiently covered by legislation. Although the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009) also regulated further education concerning adults (for example, the accreditation of programmes and the information system of further education - ISDV platform), it is already outdated. It does not respond adequately to the European policies that Slovakia has committed to and to new international challenges. The Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 approved by the government in 2021 also drew attention to the need to develop new legislation. The legislative process was delayed due to COVID-19-related restrictions.

Objectives

According to the submission report to the law, the law aims to introduce system tools that will mitigate the effects of social and technological changes on people's lives. The education system needs to respond more flexibly to these changes to ensure that every citizen has lifelong access to opportunities to learn and develop their skills and competences, so that everyone can realise their potential in personal, professional and civil life. The law is intended to support flexible options for obtaining qualifications and to enhance the clarity and usability of qualifications in an international context. The proposed changes aim to systematise qualifications in the Slovak Republic and to clarify their typology.

The law, therefore, introduces new regulations for the Slovak Qualifications Framework (SKKR) and the National Qualifications System (NQS) and establishes individual learning accounts (ILAs) and microcredentials as new tools for improving access to education and qualifications. It creates the conditions for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, based on the newly established system of 'verification of learning outcomes' respecting four validation phases (identification, documentation, assessment and certification) in accordance with international recommendations.

To improve quality management in adult education, the law proposes the certification of educational institutions and also entrusts the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) with the accreditation of adult education programmes. The previous Accreditation Commission for Further Education affiliated with the education ministry will be abolished.

Description

The education ministry initiated new legislation instead of the originally proposed law on lifelong learning, which was previously recommended by the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30 and approved by the government. Although the strategy suggested drafting a new act on lifelong learning, the education ministry decided to submit an act on adult education. Since the development of comprehensive lifelong learning legislation covering learning from cradle to grave would require the involvement and coordination of multiple ministries, the education ministry submitted to the government a law on adult education. However, it includes provisions addressing lifelong learning. It is visible in the definition of fundamental terms in § 2 and in the definition of the lifelong learning system in § 3. The Act on adult education was approved by the government on 21 August 2024, and submitted to the parliament. This legislation builds on relevant recommendations from the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30, aligning with the provisions initially planned for the Act on Lifelong Learning.

2024 Approved/Agreed

The law was approved by the parliament on 30 October 2024, coming into effect on 1 January 2025, replacing the abolished Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009). Throughout the year, the education ministry worked on bylaws to address key conceptual issues, as the law serves as a framework. Decree No 405/2024, adopted on 13 December 2024, clarifies certain provisions of the law. It specifies requirements for documents proving the quality assurance system of an educational institution as a precondition of certification of educational institutions and a precondition for submission of educational programmes for accreditation. It also details accreditation procedures, the issuance of microcredentials, qualification cards relevant for registration in the National Qualifications Register, and qualification requirements for diverse actors.

Extensive European resources have been earmarked to support capacity building and the functioning of the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA). The SCA is to become a key influential actor with an impact on all segments of education because responsibility for maintaining the National Qualifications System (NQS) has been transferred from the education ministry to the SCA. Moreover, the SCA is now becoming the accreditation agency for adult education programmes, instead of the ministry. Supervision by the SCA is even stronger for adult education programmes related to digital and green skills. According to the law, only certified educational institutions registered with the SCA may offer programmes for acquiring, renewing, expanding, or deepening digital skills. Inclusion in the list of providers for digital and green skills is subject to meeting the SCA's requirements.

2025 Implementation

Certification of educational institutions is in progress in two alternative ways. Institutions that previously implemented an internal quality assurance system and were successfully evaluated, are automatically accepted into the register of certified institutions. This applies to institutionally accredited higher education institutions and adult education institutions that possess a quality certificate explicitly listed by the education ministry. Other institutions must conduct self-evaluation, prepare an improvement plan, and deliver online evidence of compliance with quality standards covering five areas. A specialised portal that presents quality standards, manuals, an online application for certification, and many other features prescribed by law has been developed. This certification is a precondition for submitting individual programmes for accreditation.

Accreditation of programmes is to be conducted by the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA). The SCA took over this responsibility from the former accreditation commission affiliated with the education ministry. Accreditation of a programme is obligatory only if public funding is involved and if the programme leads to the so-called professional qualification. The manual for submitting an application for accreditation of educational programmes is available on the SCA's website. The application fee is EUR 200. The accreditation procedure submitted by certified institutions is, however, currently hampered by the need to revise the National Qualifications Register.

A 'Career gate' portal, under development by the SCA, is the new name for the joint platform merging the originally independent platforms of the National System of Occupations and the National Qualifications System. It also provides access to the register of professional qualifications. Registering a professional qualification is contingent upon the development of a so-called qualification card, which also contains the learning outcomes required for the respective professional qualification. If a certified educational institution seeks accreditation for a programme it considers suitable for receiving a professional qualification not yet in the register, it must propose the enrolment of this new professional qualification to the register. The SCA has already developed requirements and procedures for registering new professional qualifications.

Qualification cards containing learning outcomes are also needed for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. According to the Act on adult education (292/2024), the SCA is responsible for the validation of learning outcomes related to professional qualifications. The creation of the assessment portfolio of an individual applicant depends on the elaboration of the qualification card for the respective professional qualification. In addition, the assessment standard must be created by the national guarantor. A list of national guarantors and authorised assessors specialised in respective professions will be created under the responsibility of the SCA.

The education ministry explicitly distinguishes between accredited programmes, non-accredited programmes and microcredentials, considering the latter as a specific category. Therefore, it maintains a specialised register of institutions offering educational programmes that award microcredentials. In contrast to international practice, microcredentials are explicitly bound to a minimum of 25 lesson hours, with one lesson hour being 45 minutes, rather than to a 'small volume of learning' as defined in the respective Council recommendation. Higher education institutions and VET schools certified as providers of adult education programmes can apply for registration with the education ministry by submitting only the prescribed information about the programme. However, other certified educational institutions must first receive consent from VET schools or higher education institutions offering programmes related to the subject of the planned microcredentials. If they decline, the national guarantor and the education ministry act as the final decision-makers. An application fee is allowed by law and is the official source of income for the respective assessor. In contrast to international experience, the provision of programmes leading to microcredentials is restricted as it must comply with 'current labour market needs'. This can be a reason for a programme assessor to refuse approval. 'Current labour market needs' are not defined by the Act on adult education, but this term is frequently used by the SCA and the labour ministry in relation to training offered under active labour market policies.

The SCA has also been given a new responsibility to maintain a register of providers of programmes related to digital and green skills, that are entitled to draw from public sources. On 1 July, the SCA published a manual for submitting applications to the register. Eleven institutions were registered as of 30 October 2025.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth
- Sector Councils Alliance

Target group

Learners

Adult learners

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Lifelong guidance

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as a driver for innovation and growth preparing for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Sustainability - a green link in VET

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Act No 292/2024 on adult education](#)

[Sector Councils Alliance website](#)

[Council recommendation on microcredentials](#)

[Information system on adult education](#)

['Career gate' portal](#)

Related policy developments

2025 **Approved/Agreed**

Tertiary VET reinforcement

The education ministry reflected the 2023 Government manifesto by elaborating 40 projects and creating related project teams.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 **Implementation**

Individual learning accounts

Reflecting the LLCS 2030 recommendations the State Institute of Vocational Education prepared a comparative study focusing on new European policies, ILAs and microcredentials.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2025 **Implementation**

Sector Councils Alliance

The amendment to the Act on employment services established the Sector Councils Alliance (SCA) as the interest association of legal entities.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

National implementation plan: Slovakia

Eight priority areas were identified in relation to the achievement of the objectives, five of which explicitly target VET, two target lifelong learning in parallel with VET ((f) and (h)) and one targets interlinking general education and VET (e):

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021-30

LLCS 2030 focuses on four thematic areas: the qualification system; basic skills and civic education; lifelong learning, counselling, and motivation of citizens for lifelong learning; and building a system of skills management and identification of lifelong learning needs.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

System of verifying qualifications

The project System of verifying qualifications, run by the State Institute of Vocational Education, started in 2019 and is expected to be completed on 1 February 2023.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Requirements for trainers in companies

According to the 2015 Act on VET, in-company trainers should have certificates that are equivalent to, or of a higher level than, certificates offered to learners by programmes they are involved in. These certificates must be in the same or similar field of study.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts

The 2016 government manifesto also aimed at further changing the system of career development. It envisaged certification in line with professional standards for pedagogical staff and experts employed by regional schools.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Easing access to the teaching profession

The 2015 legislation amending the 2009 Pedagogical Staff Act made qualification requirements more flexible to attract (more) business and industry professionals to teaching and to facilitate changes of position or subject areas.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

2025 Implementation**Slovak national qualifications framework**

The development of the SKKR has been a lengthy process. It progressed in parallel to the wider reform of VET and involved various stakeholders.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation**Flexible routes to labour market relevant qualifications**

The so-called 'shortened studies' (ISCED 353) were put in place in 2015/16 in line with the Act on VET (61/2015). They target young people and adults who want to broaden or deepen their qualification or acquire another one to improve their employability.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation**Guidance for young people**

The ESF project Dual education and increasing attractiveness and quality of VET launched in 2016 and run by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) aims at improving career guidance and counselling services for learners in VET and those who consider entering this field.

 SLOVAKIA**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative


Subsystem

IVET

2025 Implementation

The Employer council for dual VET

An umbrella body, the Employer Council for dual VET, was set up in 2016 aiming to strengthen cooperation between respective sectoral assignees involved in dual VET. The Council is partially financed from the State budget.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

“ … ” Cite as

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