


Tertiary VET reinforcement

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 SLOVAKIA

Timeline

2025 **Approved/Agreed**

ID number 50709

Background

The Higher education act (131/2002) did not provide an adequate legislative framework for professionally oriented bachelor programmes that would take into account the needs of the labour market and students' practice in the field. Teaching was predominantly theoretical, and links between students and employers were weak, which reduced the readiness of graduates for specific professions. Insufficient flexibility of studies limited individual study paths and adaptation to changing labour market needs. The new Higher education act (300/2025) addresses the requirements of the EHEA and national practice. The new act seeks to improve the readiness of graduates for practice, expand cooperation between higher education institutions and employers, and introduce flexible forms of study.

Objectives

The act introduces measures aimed at:

- (a) strengthening professionally oriented bachelor's study programmes (§ 58(3) to (6)), with an emphasis on practical training (a minimum of 30 credits), cooperation with employers, and linking theoretical knowledge with practical competences;
- (b) increasing the flexibility of studies by introducing the possibility of a final internship or final bachelor's thesis (§ 58(5) to (6), § 83), which will allow students to adapt the final assessment to their focus and practical profile, i.e., to apply knowledge and skills in a real environment;
- (c) providing legislative background for short study programmes (§ 66), which are oriented towards the swift acquisition of practical skills and competences, support cooperation with employers, and provide an alternative path to SKKR level 5 qualification;
- (d) recognising credits from learning outside higher education that could amount to 60% of bachelor's study workload and 30% of ISCED 6+7 studies, among which parts of ISCED 554 higher professional studies at VET schools and microcredentials are explicitly indicated (§ 81);
- (e) supporting lifelong learning and regional labour market needs, including modular study and the development of professional competences (§ 58(3) to (6), § 62, § 66 and § 83).

Description

The education ministry reflected the 2023 Government manifesto by elaborating 40 projects and creating related project teams. Nine project teams worked on topics focusing on higher education, and one of these (No 3.9), titled 'New Higher education act', capitalised on results from all project teams and elaborated fundamentals for the new act. This team, like other project teams, included representatives of relevant stakeholders. Thus, representatives of academia contributed substantially to the initial wording of the law.

The original Higher education act (131/2002) dealt with the details of professionally oriented programmes only briefly, defining them only in contrast to academically oriented study programmes: Professionally oriented bachelor programmes were understood as programmes that focus on mastering the use of theoretical and practical knowledge for the performance of a profession, in contrast to academically oriented bachelor programmes, which focused on continuing to second-level university studies.

The new law (§ 58) stipulates that professionally oriented bachelor's study programmes are implemented in cooperation with employers, and their learning outcomes focus mainly on practical skills. Professionally oriented bachelor's study programmes include practical training of at least 30 credits. The new law (§ 75) regulates in detail the organisation and forms of practical training, such as professional practice, professional internship, laboratory exercises, clinical exercises, creative studio exercises, simulations, project work and field exercises (§ 75(2)). During practical training, the institution where the training takes place may provide remuneration to the student (§ 75(3)).

Each professionally oriented bachelor's study programme includes a bachelor's thesis and a final internship. The student chooses whether to prepare a thesis or complete an internship (§ 83). The university thus enables the student to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and competences in workplace tasks in accordance with the learning outcomes of the study programme. The university actively cooperates with institutions for internships and supports opportunities for them. The internship is supervised by a consultant, a university teacher, who professionally guides the student and monitors progress. After completion, the student prepares a record of the final internship, documenting progress, activities performed, and ability to apply knowledge and skills. Assessments are carried out by the consultant and a responsible person from the institution. They confirm successful activities.

For the first time in legislation, the new law introduces 'short study programme' (§ 66). This is a form of higher professional study provided by a higher education institution. It aims to provide practical knowledge for immediate entry into a specific occupation. The standard length of study ranges from a minimum of one to a maximum of two academic years, with a study load of 60 or 120 credits. Successful completion requires taking a final exam. For a two-year programme, graduates can obtain a professional diploma with the right to use the title 'DiS' (Diploma specialist) at SKKR/EQF 5 level. Universities may cooperate with secondary schools providing higher professional education.

The specificities of the programme are that at least one third of the study (in credits) must be practical training. The university should implement short study programmes primarily in cooperation with employers. The employer should provide practical training, may participate in teaching subjects, and cooperate in programme design and adjustment.

2025 Approved/Agreed

Official public commenting on the law lasted from 1 July to 21 July 2025, followed by negotiations between the education ministry and subjects defending the objections raised. Finally, three objections remained, and the consolidation process was closed without agreement. These three objections do not tackle the transition from secondary VET to higher education and the provision of tertiary VET. The Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic approved the Higher education act on 18 August 2025, the government on 20 August 2025, and finally, the parliament on 21 October 2025. Concerning higher education, the most relevant issues will come into force from 1 September 2026. Currently, higher education institutions work on adjusting to new duties and exploiting new opportunities.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

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

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

Osnabrück Declaration

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Higher education act \(300/2025\) \(the version in force from September 2026\)](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Act on adult education (292/2024)

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.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Swiss project in support of VET

The main activities of the project comply with the three aforementioned objectives and six measures.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

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

Amendments to the Education Act (245/2008)

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.

 SLOVAKIA

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

“ … ” Cite as

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