

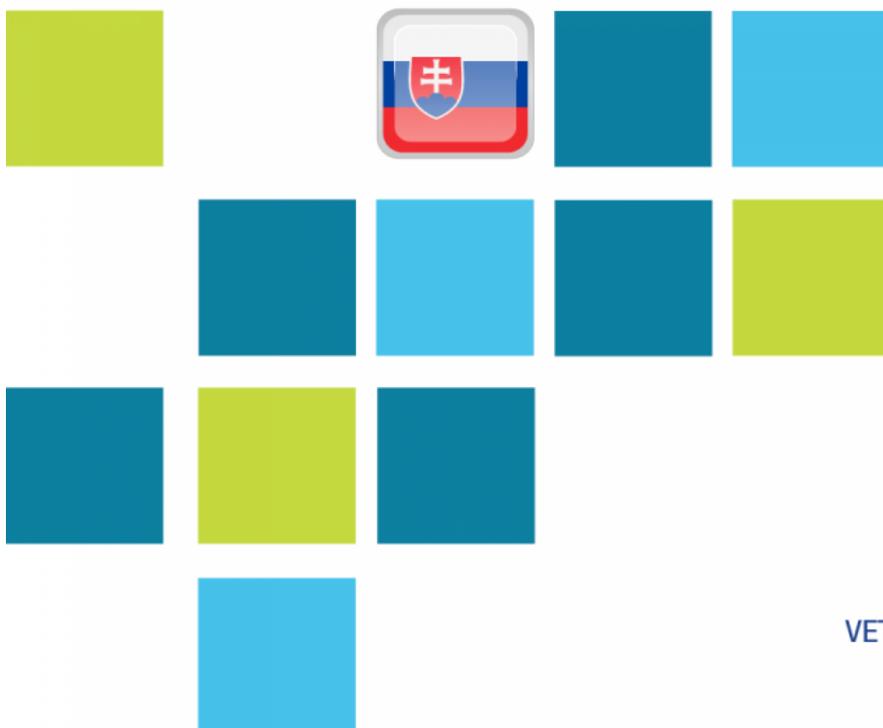


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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE  
**SLOVAKIA**

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**SYSTEM DESCRIPTION**



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  - Follow-up programmes leading to EQF 4, ISCED 454 (nadstavbové štúdium).
  - Programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification (also called 'qualifying programmes') leading to EQF 4, ISCED 454 (pomaturitné kvalifikačné štúdium).
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554 programmes leading to EQF 5 qualification in music and drama conservatory (hudobné a dramatické konzervatórium)..

- Lower secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 1 to 3, ISCED 352 ( [100]) (učebný odbor odborného učilišťa).
- References.

## CHAPTER 1.

# Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

VET in Slovakia comprises the following main features:

- Employment rate of 20- to 34-year-old VET graduates has increased since 2014
- Almost 7 out of 10 upper secondary learners are in VET programmes
- The share of early leavers from education and training has significantly increased during the last decade
- Dual VET was introduced in 2015/16 and it is gradually expanding
- Participation in lifelong learning is well below the EU-28 average.

Distinctive features (1) :

IVET is strongly State-regulated, predominantly school-based, combining provision of general education and developing key competences with vocational skills. A broad variety of upper secondary programmes contributes to high youth education attainment and, despite a negative trend, still low early leaving from education and training (8.6% in 2018).

Ties between VET schools and the business world loosened during the early period of economic transformation in the 1990s. Since then, with new legislation, involvement of social partners in VET has been increasing in programming, curriculum design and qualification award. Since 2015, social partners have been also more actively involved in VET governance.

Stronger engagement of the business world in informing VET schools about skill needs via sectoral (skills) councils (2) should help IVET better adjust to a rapidly changing labour market.

## CHAPTER 2.

# Main challenges and policy responses

Deterioration in many international indicators calls for action:

- decreasing performance in reading, mathematics and science, visible from PISA (3) , negatively affects participation in mechanical and electrical engineering VET programmes, leading to shortage of supply of technically skilled graduates in the national economy;
- early leaving from education and training data of Eastern Slovakia deteriorated extremely, being in a long-term over the EU 2020 target;
- participation in lifelong learning is well below the EU-28 average (4.0% compared to 11.1% in 2018).

The 2012 European Council country-specific recommendations have identified three areas for action:

- strengthening labour market relevance of education and vocational training;
- improving education of vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- ensuring labour market reintegration of adults.

They are still relevant: ESF projects have had some impact, but more time is needed to address them fully. In spite of substantial progress in reforming VET since 2008, systemic changes, including additional investments, are needed to:

- secure up-to-date equipment in VET schools to improve training quality;
- increase the attractiveness of the VET teacher and trainer profession and improve their in-service training substantially;
- strengthen VET research and labour market analysis, focusing on graduate tracking and identification of transferable skills, to improve understanding of labour market and skill needs;
- support more systematically the mobility of learners, VET staff and experts, and learn from international expertise and experiences to mainstream activities;
- bridge the worlds of learning and work by ensuring that experts with a business background can inform VET schools on emerging skill needs, particularly by reinforcing the position and role of sectoral (skills) councils;
- make the qualification system more flexible through continuous revision (linked to the work on the Slovak qualifications framework) and development of validation procedures for non-formal and informal learning.

Information based on VET in Slovakia Spotlight 2016 (4) .

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[3] In mathematics, from 492 in 2006 to 475 in 2015. In science, from 488 in 2006 to 461 in 2015. In reading, from 466 in 2006 to 453 in 2015. 2015 PISA overall results are on average 463 points, far below the OECD average (492) and well below the national target of 505 percentage points set by the government.

## CHAPTER 3.

# External factors influencing VET

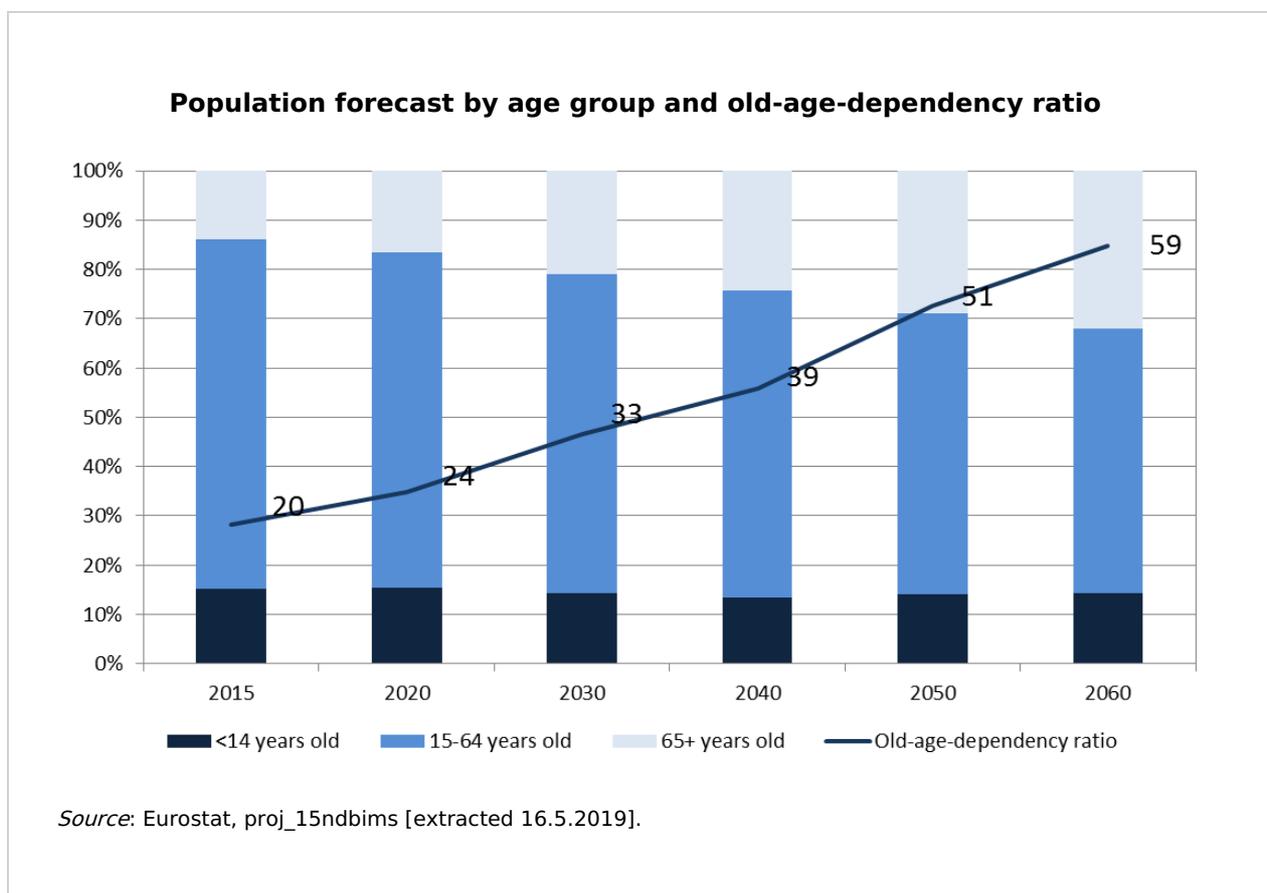
## 3.1 Demographics

Population in 2018: 5 443 120 (5)

It increased by 0.6% since 2013 (6) .

As in many other EU countries, the population is ageing.

An old-age dependency ratio is expected to increase from 20 in 2015 to 59 in 2060 (7) .



Life-births decreased severely from 73 256 in 1993 to 50 841 in 2002, followed by a slight increase up to 57 639 in 2018. Population decline resulted in a surplus of places in schools and caused intensifying competition among education providers. The number of secondary VET schools decreased from 506 in 2008/09 to 444 in 2018/19 (performing arts schools excluded).

Furthermore, a shift towards ISCED 354 programmes, entitling to apply for higher education, to the detriment of ISCED 353 programmes leads to a lack of skilled workers in some professions, and craftsmen in particular: only 22% of upper secondary VET graduates completed ISCED 353 programmes, while 78% completed ISCED 354 programmes in 2017.

The population is composed of Slovaks (80.7%), Hungarians (8.5%), Roma (2%) and other minorities (less than 1% each) (8) . About three quarters of ethnic Roma declared other than Roma nationality. Hungarian minority is served by schools with Hungarian as the language of instruction from kindergartens to higher education; provision of VET is limited compared to general education. In 2018, there were 444 VET schools, of which 392 had Slovak as the language of instruction, 25 had Hungarian and Slovak, 12 had Hungarian, 13 had English and Slovak and 2 had German and Slovak.

## 3.2 Economics

203 092 out of the 219 466 companies registered in Slovakia as of 31 December 2017 were micro-sized (0-9 employees).

26.2% are employed in large enterprises, while 73.8% in other enterprises; 44.7% of employees are working in micro companies, 13% in small companies and 15.1% with medium-sized companies (9) .

Main economic sectors:

- manufacturing;
- wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles;
- construction;
- health and social work activities;
- transportation and storage.

The Slovak economy is among the most open economies in the EU heavily depending on exporting industry products, mostly automotive; the country is a world leader in manufacturing of cars per capita.

The two faster growing sectors are professional, scientific and technical activities (+28.8%) and health sector and social work activities (+21.3%).

## 3.3 Labour market

There are 290 professions in Slovakia, according to the EU regulated professions database (10) .

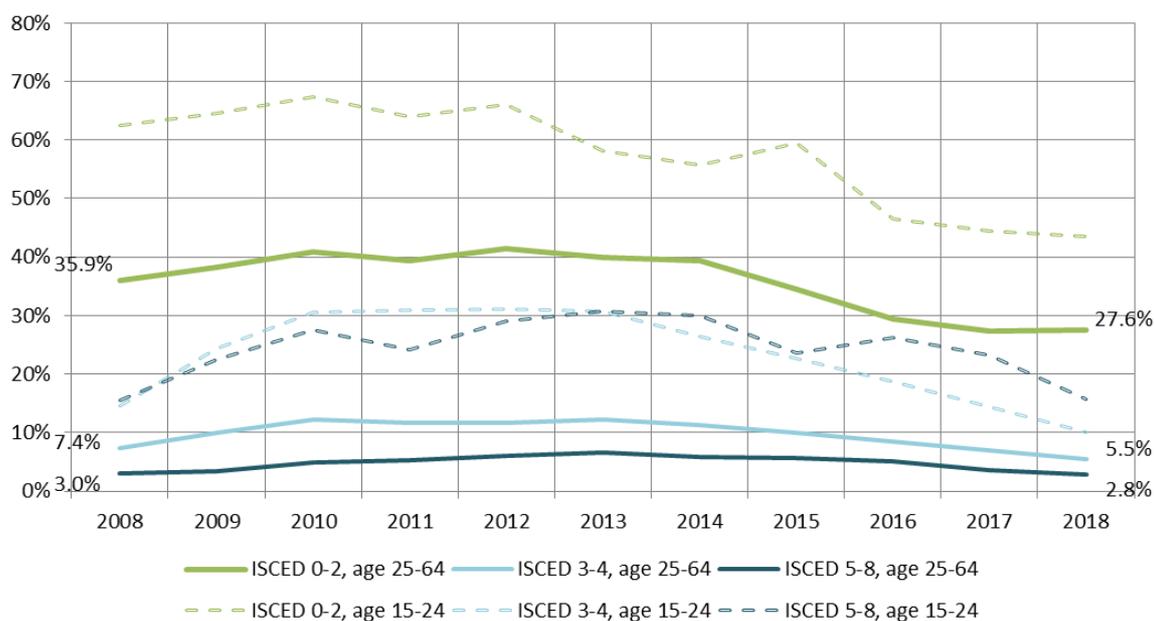
Trade Licencing Act (455/1991) is very relevant for secondary VET, as it stipulates preconditions for starting a business via listing the crafts requiring a certificate of apprenticeship (or fulfilling other prescribed requirements) and a list of trades requiring a variety of certificates of proficiency, often in addition to formal education certificates.

Furthermore, there is a variety of sectoral legislation prescribing requirements for entering respective working positions, sometimes set in cooperation with professional organisations.

A full list of regulated professions is available (in Slovak) at the education ministry portal (11) .

Total unemployment (12) (2018): 5.9% (6.0% in EU28); it decreased by 2.6 percentage points since 2008 (13) .

### Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2008-18



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 5-8, age 15-24.  
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.  
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.  
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.  
 Source: Eurostat, lfsa\_urgaed [extracted 16.5.2019].

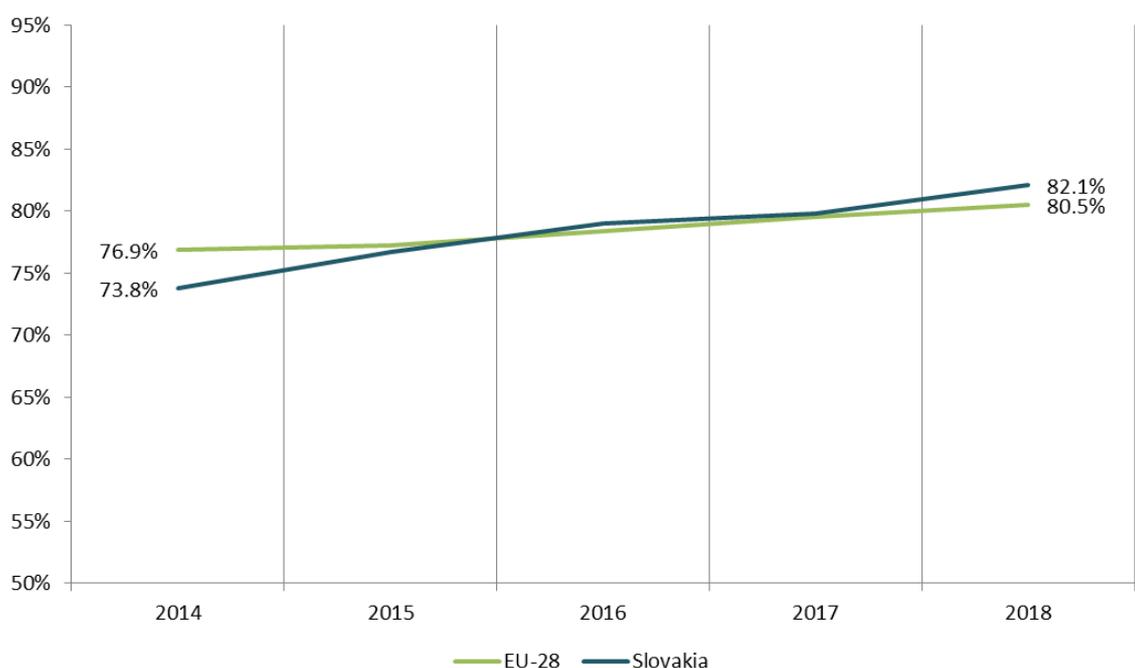
Unemployment is distributed unevenly between those with low- and high-level qualifications. Unemployment of low-qualified has been in decrease since 2015. The crisis influenced medium- and high-qualified young people more than low-qualified.

In 2018, the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) was lower than in the pre-crisis years. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications aged 15 to 24 is significantly lower than the unemployment rate of tertiary education graduated aged 15 to 24.

Many low-skilled Roma living in segregated communities of low living standard can hardly escape the poverty trap without specific interventions. Emerging social enterprises is one of policy tools that are now targeting disadvantaged groups.

Employment rate of 20- to 34-year-old VET graduates increased from 73.8% in 2014 to 82.1% in 2018.

### Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.  
ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.  
Source: Eurostat, edat\_ifse\_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

The increase (+8.3 pp) in employment of 20-34 year-old VET graduates in 2014-18 was higher compared to the increase in employment of all 20-34 year-old graduates, from 69.1% to 76.3% (+7.2 pp) in the same period (14) . Employment rate is negatively affected by the low employment rate of people without at least lower secondary education.

[5] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 16.5.2019].

[6] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 6.5.2019].

[10] [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=regprofs&id\\_country=25&quid=1&mode=asc&maxRows=\\*&#top](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm?action=regprofs&id_country=25&quid=1&mode=asc&maxRows=*&#top)

[11] [http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/8184\\_7711\\_6972\\_5996\\_revizia\\_zoznam-rp-2018-secure-08012018.xls](http://www.minedu.sk/data/files/8184_7711_6972_5996_revizia_zoznam-rp-2018-secure-08012018.xls)

[12] Percentage of active population, 25 to 74 years old.

[13] Eurostat table une\_rt\_a [extracted 20.5.2019].

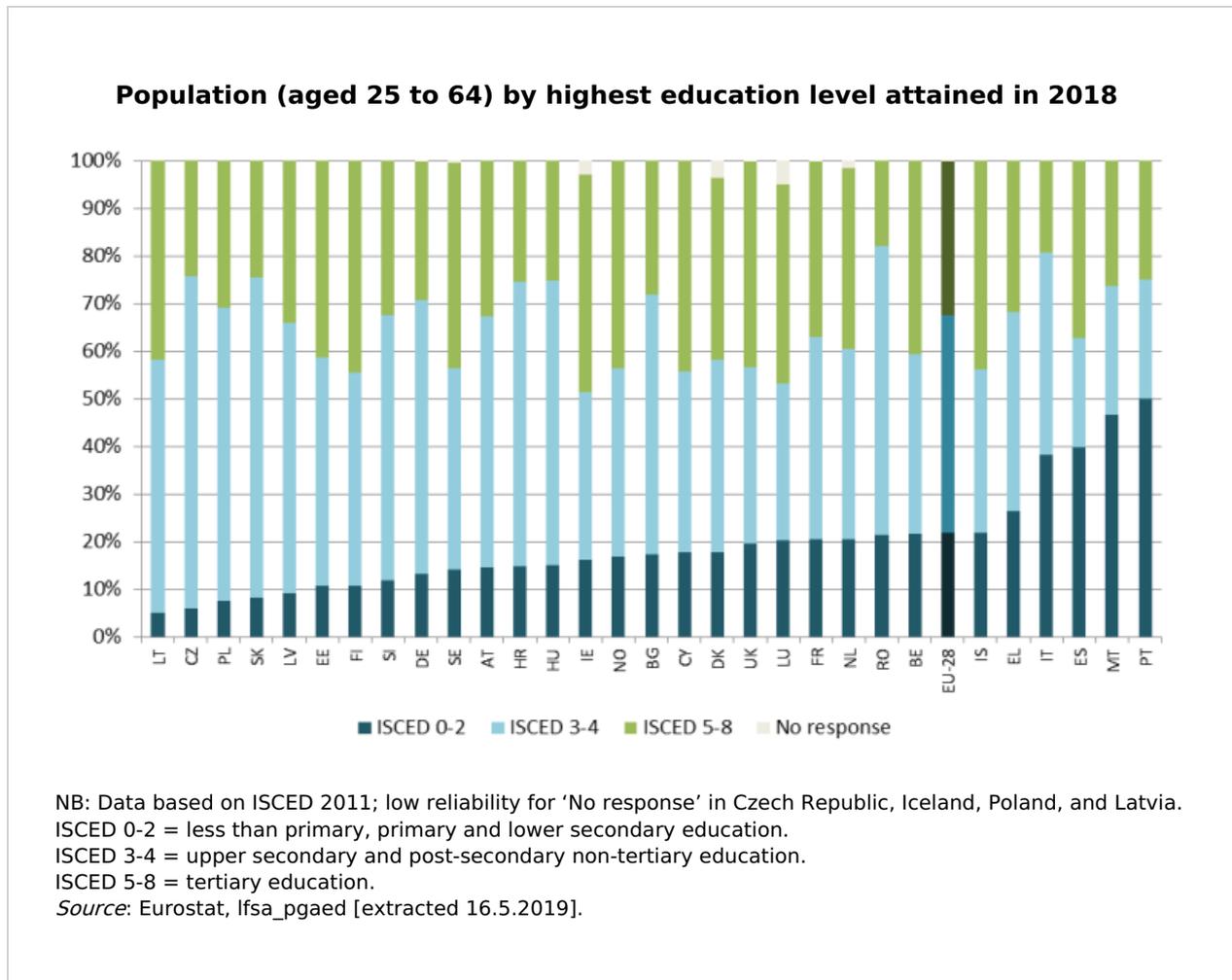
[14] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat\_ifse\_24 [extracted 16.5.2019].

## CHAPTER 4.

# Education attainment

## 4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Eurostat data show that in Slovakia the share of medium-level educated population in the age group 25 to 64 is the second highest in EU (67.1% compared to 45.7% in EU28), while the share of low educated is the fourth lowest (8.3% compared to 21.8% in EU28). When it comes to high educated, Slovakia however performs below the average of EU (24.6% compared to 32.2% in EU28), despite substantial growth in the share of young tertiary educated people (37.7% compared to 37.1% in EU28 in the age group 30 to 34 in 2018) (15) .

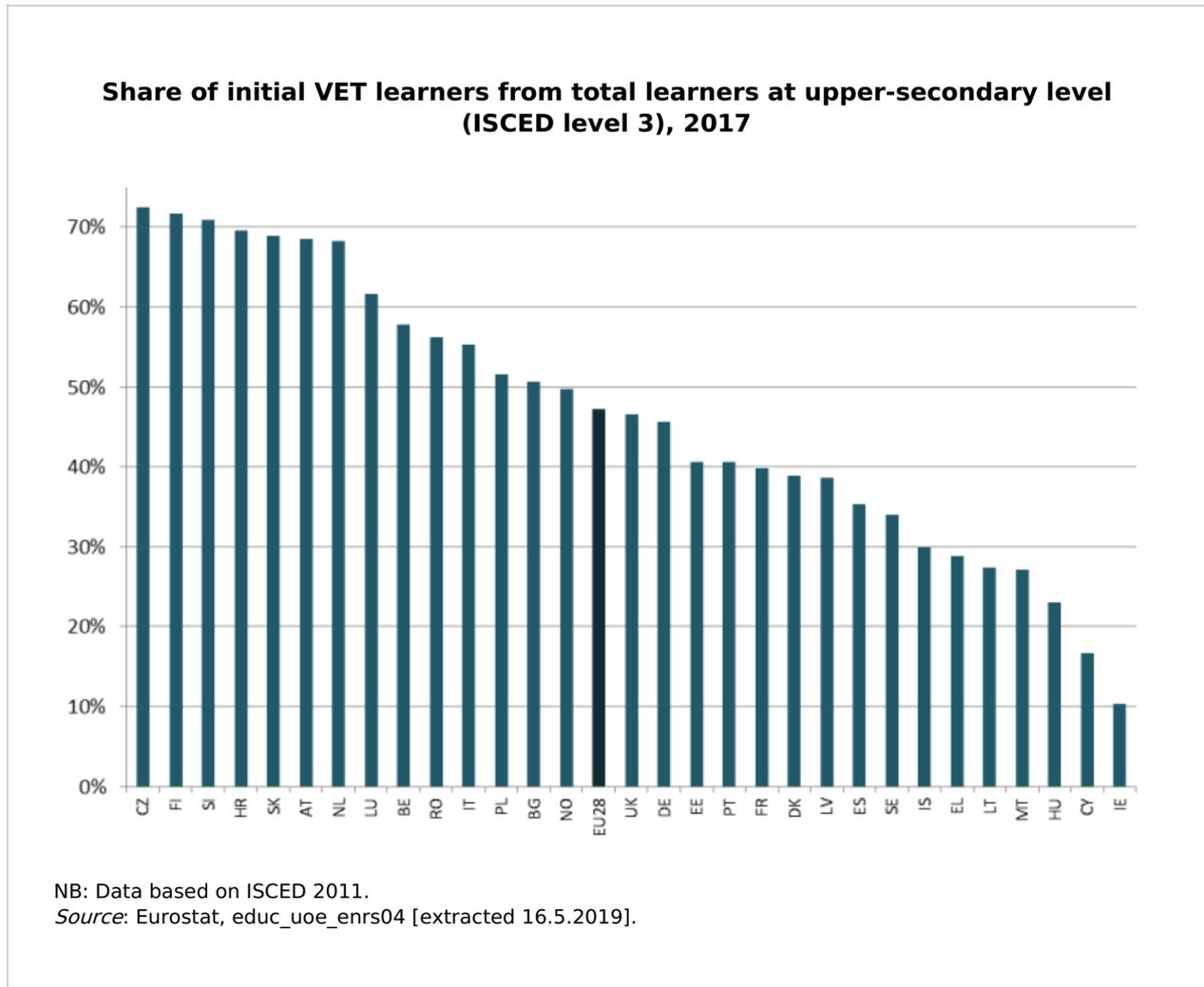


## 4.3 VET learners by level

### Share of learners in VET by level 2013-17

	lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
2013	1.5%	68.1%	100.0%
2017	2.6%	68.9%	100.0%
Change 2013-2017	+1.1 pp	+0.8 pp	-

Source: Eurostat, educ\_uoe\_enrs01, educ\_uoe\_enrs04 and educ\_uoe\_enrs07 [extracted on 16.5.2019].



## 4.4 Female share

In 2018/19, in full-time programmes 45% of VET learners were females, while in part-time programmes females were 66% (16) .

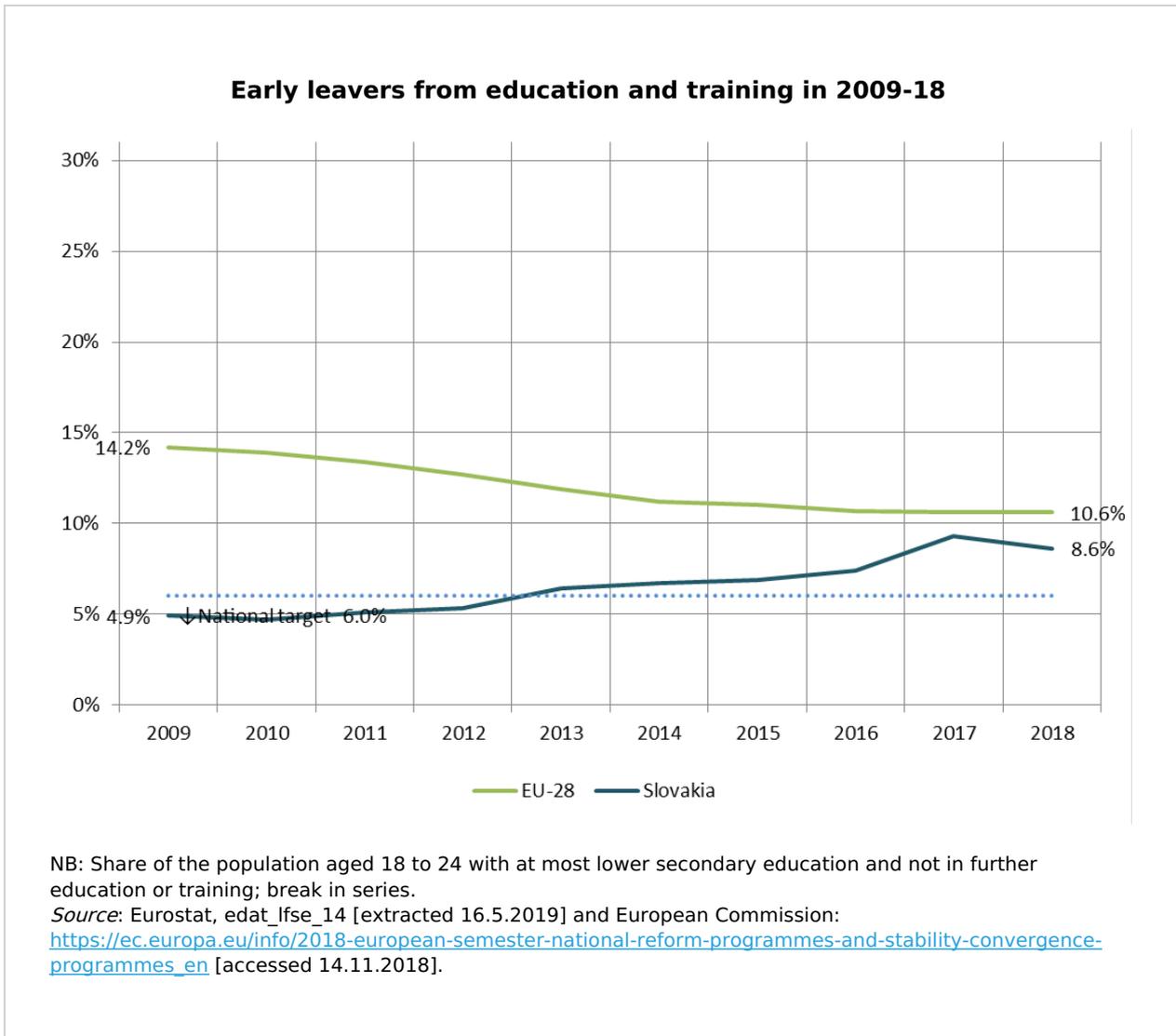
In textile and clothing and teacher training (including child and social care) full-time programmes more than 90% of learners are females, while in healthcare and veterinary females are more than 80%. In technical studies, such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, wood-processing and ICT more than 90% of learners are males, while in construction more than 80% are males.

60% of part-time learners participate in healthcare, teacher training and economics and organisation programmes, which are programmes that females chose more often. Professions

related to these studies are also more strictly regulated compared to others.

## 4.5 Early leavers from education and training

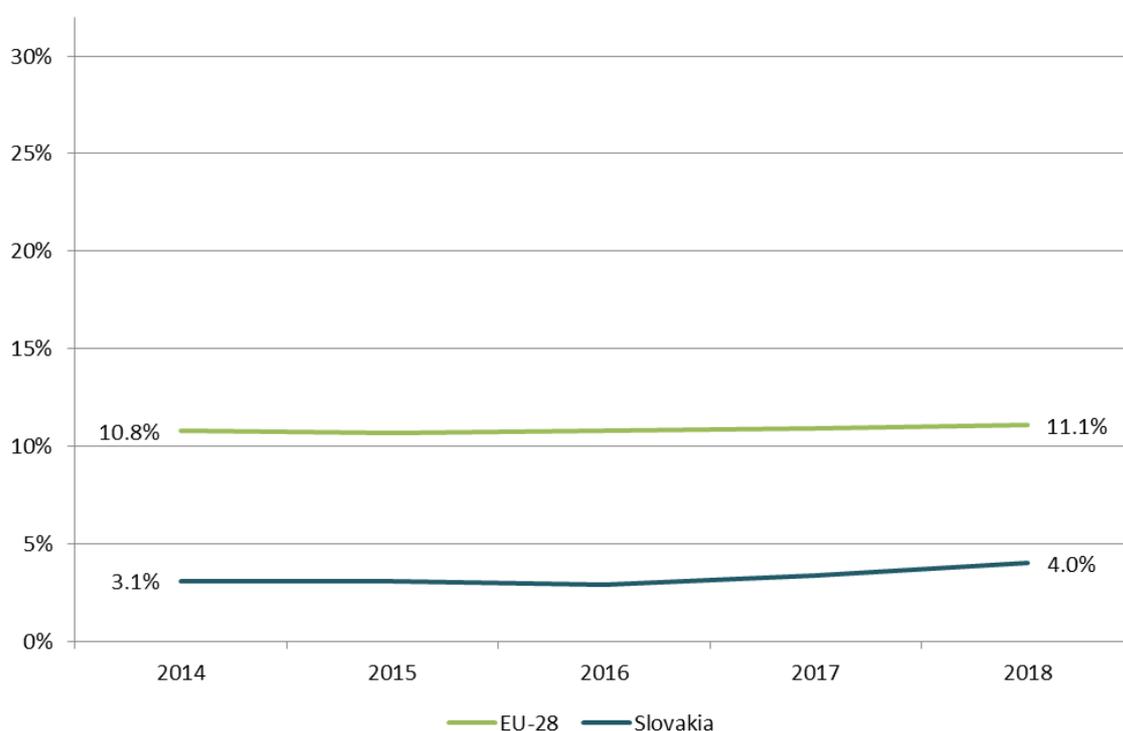
The share of early leavers from education and training has increased from 4.9% in 2009 to 8.6% in 2018. Although it is still better than the EU-28 average of 10.6%, it is well above the national target for 2020 of not more than 6.0%.



Moreover in 2017, the share of female early leavers from education and training was for the first time in history above the EU 2020 target of not more than 10%, increasing from below 5% in 2008-2012 to 10.3% in 2017 (17) . Severe regional disparities are visible from 14.7% of early leavers in NUTS 2 region - Eastern Slovakia.

## 4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

### Participation in lifelong learning in 2014-18



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training.  
 Source: Eurostat, trng\_ifse\_01 [extracted 16.5.2019].

Participation in lifelong learning in Slovakia has remained stable, but very low in the past decade. In 2018, it reached 4.0%, still well below the EU-28 average (11.1%).

## 4.7 VET learners by age

### Share of ISCED 2 to 5 VET learners by age groups (%)

Age group	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	%	%	%	%	%
0-19	44.8	31.4	31.2	30.9	30.2
20-24	94.0	95.4	94.6	93.8	94.2
25+	95.3	97.1	96.8	96.4	96.9

Source: Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information data, tabled by ReferNet Slovakia.

While the share of VET learners in the youngest age cohort decreases, it is only slightly changing in other age cohorts. Comparably high influenced by post-secondary programme structure, within which only VET programmes are offered. Adults prefer VET over general education, or enter tertiary education.

[15] Source: Eurostat, table t2020\_41 [extracted 10.5.2019].

- [16] Organised as evening classes for adults.
- [17] Eurostat LFS edat\_ifse\_14 [extracted 16.5.2019].

# CHAPTER 5.

## VET within education and training system

The education and training system comprises:

- pre-school education (ISCED 0);
- integrated primary (four years, ISCED 1; EQF 1) and lower secondary general education (five years, ISCED 2; EQF 2), nationally referred to as basic education);
- lower secondary VET (ISCED 2; EQF 2-3);
- upper secondary general education (ISCED 3; EQF 4);
- upper secondary VET (ISCED 3; EQF 3 and 4);
- post-secondary non-tertiary VET (ISCED 4 and 5; EQF 4 and 5);
- academic higher (tertiary) education (ISCED 6 to 8; EQF 6 to 8).

Pre-school education starts at the age of three.

Compulsory education starts at the age of six and includes nine years of basic education (integrating four-year primary and five-year lower secondary education) and at least one year of upper secondary education. This mechanism is intended to prevent leaving education early, as learners usually stay at upper secondary education after the mandatory first year.

Upper secondary general education can take the form of either an eight-year programme starting after completing grade five of basic education (18) or of a four-year programme after completing basic education (bilingual programmes are five years). Upper secondary general education graduates receive the *maturita* school leaving certificate allowing access to higher education.

Higher (tertiary) education comprises bachelor, master (or integrated bachelor and master) and PhD programmes. Labour market oriented bachelor programmes emerged, supported by the ESF. Professional bachelor studies in mechanical engineering started in 2017/18. Tertiary educational attainment in the age group 30-34 is in steep increase, it has almost tripled since entering the EU: from 12.9% in 2004 to 37.7% in 2018.

Special programmes cater for learners with special education needs.

The Slovak education and training system is still based on the 1970s model aimed at providing all learners with at least upper-secondary education, mainly through school-based VET. In addition to work-based learning backed by school-company contracts, 'dual' VET providing work-based learning in companies based on contracts with individual learners was introduced in 2015 (19) .

VET at lower, upper and post-secondary levels is delivered by secondary VET schools (SOŠ, stredná odborná škola). VET schools, similarly to general education schools, are highly regulated through legislation and detailed curricula, although they are legal entities and are also obliged to adjust their curricula within the limits set by the national curricula. Most VET schools are public.

VET can be currently offered as:

- school-based programmes with practical training (mainly) in school workshops;
- dual VET, where learners (or their parents) have contracts with enterprises for provision of in-company training, while companies and schools have agreements on provision of dual VET specifying in detail duties of both partners;

- mixed scheme, with school-based learning along with training provided by a company within the framework of school-company contract specifying numbers of trainees and a share of training performed by the company.

Most VET programmes are provided at upper secondary level. The strong majority of secondary VET graduates receive the *maturita* school leaving certificate allowing access to higher education. There are programmes with extended component of practice that offer the *maturita* school leaving certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship.

Three-year VET programmes, regardless whether school-based or offered in cooperation with companies offer a VET qualification (nationally referred to as certificate of apprenticeship). Graduates of these programmes can enter a two-year programme to receive a *maturita* school leaving certificate.

Participation in lower secondary VET and post-secondary programmes is low.

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[18] From 2019/20, only 5% of respective age cohort will be allowed to enter this programme. Shares may differ among regions based on a decision of the education ministry.

[19] Act on VET 61/2015 amended in 2018. <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/61/20180901>

## CHAPTER 6.

# Apprenticeship

Dual VET was introduced in 2015/16. Companies can sign individual training contracts with learners for in-company practical training, complemented with an institutional contract between secondary VET schools (SOŠ) and companies. Learners are considered VET students and not employees. Training in dual VET is offered by company instructors in specific company training premises, but can be complemented also by training in school workshops or other companies' premises.

Four-year (occasionally five-year) and three-year (occasionally four-year) upper-secondary programmes (ISCED 354 and 353 respectively) can be offered as school-based or 'dual VET'. From 2018/19 school-based and 'dual VET' will be based on the same national curricula. Companies participating in dual VET are expected to contribute to respective school educational programme development. Although enrolment in dual VET has been gradually increasing, its overall share is still (at the time of reporting) less than 3% of all learners starting upper secondary level (20) .

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[20] See information about introduced changes in: *Slovakia: making dual VET more attractive*. Cedefop news on VET.  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/slovakia-making-dual-vet-more-attractive>

# CHAPTER 7.

## VET governance

### **Institutions of VET governance**

A new VET governance architecture was created in 2009 and revised in 2015 and 2018 (21) . It consists of the following coordinating and advisory bodies:

- National VET Council is the coordinating body affiliated to the government (22) that discusses VET policy, such as regional and sectoral strategies. 18 working groups covering selected study fields support adjustments in VET programmes better matching them to labour market needs. A working group for the verification of labour market needs focuses on assessing self-governing regions activities related to secondary VET regulation;
- Regional VET Councils are composed of representatives of state, self-government, employers and employees. They are advisory bodies to the heads of the eight self-governing regions; they prepare regional VET policy documents, discuss number of places to be offered in respective schools and programmes, etc.;
- Sectoral (skills) councils (23) are voluntary independent associations of employers' representatives, trade union representatives, education institutions, state administration and self-government authorities regulated by the Act on Employment Services (5/2004). The Alliance of Sectoral Councils' is their umbrella organisation (24) . Sectoral (skills) councils provide expertise to policy-makers concerning labour market needs in terms of knowledge, skills and competences required in occupations and cater for delivery of occupational standards for labour sector-driven information system on the labour market (25) , and support the creation of a national qualifications system (NQS) (26) ;
- Sectoral assignees (institutions of the world of work selected from chambers and employers' associations) represent employers' interests in each VET study field as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts. Sectoral assignees should play a prominent role in adjusting VET to labour market needs and in assuring its quality. The Employer Council for Dual VET (27) encompassing sectoral assignees involved in dual VET, coordinates their activities;
- Expert groups and ad hoc working groups affiliated to the State Institute of Vocational Education covering respective fields of study focus on diverse curricula issues and conditions of provision of VET (material, spatial and equipment-related requirements).

Schools are headed by directors appointed by school establishers for a five-year term, based on a tender organised by a school board (rada školy). School board can also have impact on development plans of schools and can also suggest dismissing of the director. School board is as a rule composed of 11 members representing school staff, parents, school establisher, students, and, if requested, also sectoral assignee. School director is not a member of school board.

In 2018, there were 444 VET schools, out of which 87 private and 17 church-affiliated. The rest of schools are established by self-governing regions with few exemptions of schools established by the state.

Since 2009, the influence of employers on VET policy has been gradually increased also concerning school-based VET. VET schools must submit their school educational programmes (autonomously elaborated school curricula reflecting and adjusting national curricula to local/regional needs) to sectoral assignees unless they were elaborated in cooperation with companies participating in dual VET or discussed with companies offering practical training within the mixed scheme (28) . In 2017/18, sectoral assignees for the first time checked assignments related to school leaving examinations. There is also a strong engagement of sectoral assignees in dual VET in assessment and certification of companies offering practical

training and in training of in-company trainers (instructors).

### **Regulation of secondary VET**

Self-governing regions are responsible for maintaining public secondary VET schools and for regulating inflow of learners into schools in their territory. VET programmes and numbers of students are strictly regulated to address regional labour market needs, based on macroeconomic forecasting data and opinion of regional stakeholders. The education ministry supports schools by providing regulations for content, pedagogy, qualification of staff, etc. Some VET schools are under the responsibility of the interior and health ministries.

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- [21] Act on VET 184/2009 and Act on VET 61/2015 as amended.
  - [22] <http://radavladyp.sk/>
  - [23] Sectoral (skills) councils are a voluntary independent association of employers' representatives, trade union representatives, education institutions, state administration and self-government authorities regulated by the Act on Employment Services(5/2004.They were originally established as working groups participating in creation of the National System of Occupations.
  - [24] [https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/aliancia\\_sr](https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/aliancia_sr)
  - [25] [www.istp.sk](http://www.istp.sk)
  - [26] Responsibility for NQS and Slovak qualifications framework lies with the education ministry.
  - [27] The Employer Council for Dual VET is set by the Act on VET 61/2015:  
<http://www.rzsdv.sk/wordpress/>
  - [28] VET can be also offered as a mixed scheme of school-based learning along with training provided by a company within the framework of school-company contract specifying numbers of trainees and a share of training performed by the company.

## CHAPTER 8.

# VET financing mechanisms

In relative terms, total public expenditure on education in Slovakia is lower than in EU28. Furthermore, substantial inflow comes from the European structural and investment funds.

**General government expenditure on education in Slovakia and EU28**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
SK % of GDP	3.5	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	3.8
SK million EUR	2 326.7	2 695.0	2 816.2	2 917.2	2 946.7	2 933.7	3 127.9	3 327.7	3 119.1
EU28 % of GDP	4.9	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.7

*Source:* Education ministry, finance ministry; Eurostat, table gov\_10a\_exp; last update: 17.8.2018 [extracted 23.8.2018].

Expenditure on secondary education including secondary VET (0.8% of GDP) is substantially lower than the EU28 average (1.9% of GDP). Despite more generous support for dual VET, financing secondary education and in particular VET remains critically low.

### **Initial VET**

Initial VET, regardless of ownership, is subsidised from the state budget. In 2019, per capita contribution varied between EUR 1 917.68 to EUR 3 657.65 depending on school category (29) . This type of financing often forces VET schools to attract learners regardless of their capabilities and personal aspirations. Capital expenditures are covered by bodies that establish schools (and by the State in case of emergency). Schools must attract additional funding to complement state subsidy. Private schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated VET schools can benefit from parish community donations.

### **Continuing VET**

Continuing VET is funded by learners, employers, public finances and EU funds. Cost per person is substantially lower compared to EU-28.

### Cost of CVET courses (EUR)

CVT main indicator	CVTS 3 (2005)	CVTS 4 (2010)	CVTS 5 (2015)
Cost of CVT courses – cost per person employed in all enterprises – EU28	478	545(b)	585
Cost of CVT courses – cost per person employed in all enterprises – SK	144	267(b)	256
Cost of CVT courses – cost per person employed in enterprises providing CVT courses – EU28	626	668	701
Cost of CVT courses – cost per person employed in enterprises providing CVT courses – SK	213	351	312

NB: (b) = break in time series.

Source: Eurostat Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) [trng\_cvt\_17s], last update: 14.6.2018, [trng\_cvt\_18s], last update: 14.6.2018 [extracted 5.9.2018].

### Labour market training

Labour market training for unemployed and employed job seekers heavily depends on ESF funding.

### Trends in training expenditure within labour market polices (million EUR)

	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2015	2016
Total LMP (mill. EUR)	170.5	232.5	321.8	446.9	581.5	546.8	460.6	419.8	486.7
Training (mill. EUR)	3.4	9.3	2.7	6.8	7.3	0.2	0.3	7.6	6.9
Share in LMP (%)	2.0	4.0	0.8	1.5	1.3	0.0	0.1	1.8	1.4
Share in GDP (%)	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
PPS/per person*	12.1	35.7	11.5	30.5	26.2	0.8	0.9	27.8	28.8

(\*) Expenditures on training per person wanting to work in purchasing power standard (PPS).

NB: mill. = million; LMP = labour market expenditure.

Source: Eurostat, [Imp\_expme\_sk], [Imp\_ind\_exp] [extracted 5.9.2018].

[29] Detailed data on financing of schools in respective 15 categories are available at <http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/12740.pdf>

## CHAPTER 9.

# Teachers and trainers

## 9.1 VET teacher types

In VET, there are:

- general subject teachers;
- vocational subject teachers;
- trainers in school (nationally referred to as ‘masters of practical training’);
- in-company trainers (nationally referred to as ‘instructors’); from 2018, also head instructors can be employed by companies).

**Teachers and trainers in VET schools in 2010/11, 2015/16 and 2017/18**

	2010/11	2015/16	2017/18	Change 2018/2011 (%)
Teachers	13 247	10 874	10 230	-22.8
Trainers in school	3 470	2 840	2 621	-24.5

NB: Full-time teachers only, including (deputy) directors. Data on in-company trainers are not available.  
Source: Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information.

The number of in-company trainers has been in gradual increase, though still limited, as the share of dual learners is less than 3% of all first-year learners in upper secondary education. Companies often employ trainers from schools in the case of lack of own employees able to serve as in-company trainers.

General and vocational subject teachers are university graduates. Graduates from non-pedagogical programmes need to also complete pedagogical studies to obtain a full VET teacher qualification.

General subject teachers are trained and also fully qualified for the general education stream. They are adjusted to the VET learner needs within their continuing professional development and in-service training.

Trainers in VET schools are formally required to have a *maturita* school leaving certificate or completed pedagogical studies. However many of them have a Bachelor’s degree, as it provides better remuneration.

The 2015 legislation amending the 2009 Pedagogical Staff Act has made qualification requirements more flexible to attract (more) people from business and industry to teaching and make it easier to change subject areas/positions:

- specialists in occupation-oriented areas are not required to comply with qualification

- requirements in pedagogy provided that they teach at most 10 hours per week; ensuring/assessing their teaching competences is the school directors' task;
- those who would like to move to other areas/positions, would only need to do the pedagogy part required for the new position.

In-company trainers are not considered pedagogical staff. Since the introduction of dual VET in 2015, in-company trainers are required to:

- have at least a certificate of apprenticeship in the respective study field;
- have three-year experience as a fully qualified worker in the respective occupation;
- have completed an 'instructor training' offered by sectoral assignees (30) within one year of their first appointment.

## 9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

Responsibility for teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) is with school directors and is based on annual plans. Provision of in-service training is very sensitive to ESF sources. Traditionally, most of the training is provided by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre much of it focuses on pedagogy and general issues. There is a lack of training aimed at innovations and changes in the business world. Although it is not their responsibility, professional and employer organisations also provide CPD for teachers. Some offer places in courses for business and industry professionals for reduced fees or for free. Eligibility for public funding is linked to competence development in areas covered by the respective professional standards.

The Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff (317/2009) specified four career levels of teachers/trainers: beginner, independent teacher and attested teacher (first and second (advanced) level attestation); it also defined the professional standards of each level and introduced credits in continuing training. In April 2019, a fully new Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff (138/2019) was approved abolishing both a heavy criticised credit system and the Accreditation Board responsible for accreditation of continuing training programmes. Instead of this, the new legislation speaks about professional development and financial bonus for completion of training specified by the law or passing the state examination in foreign languages. In fact, CPD has been again reduced to traditional in-service training, as also visible from renaming in-service teacher trainers to trainers of professional development.

Pre-service training of teachers and trainers also faces changes due to the transformation of higher education already in progress (31) . New accreditation procedures interlinked with assessment of internal quality assurance system by a newly established independent Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education are in the pipeline.

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[30] Institutions of the world of work selected from chambers and employers' associations to represent employers' interests as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts.

[31] See Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (269/2018) that came into force on 1 November 2018, <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2018/269/20181101>

## CHAPTER 10.

# Shaping VET qualifications

### 10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Responsibility for analysing and forecasting labour market development lies with the central labour office according to the Act on employment services (5/2004). In initial VET, as stipulated by the VET Act (61/2015), chambers and/or employer representatives, empowered as sectoral assignees (32), should support the central labour office in analysing and forecasting labour market development (33).

There are two models of macroeconomic forecasting available (34). The supervised by the labour ministry model forecasts additional labour market needs by ISCO (35) groups. The forecasting data are transformed into estimation of ceilings for each programme and each school, and used for further negotiation on regulation of the inflow of new entrants into secondary schools and secondary programmes.

Furthermore, analyses of job vacancy data from online job portals (36) and information on regional players can also influence decisions of self-governing regions' heads on VET entrants and, subsequently, graduate supply.

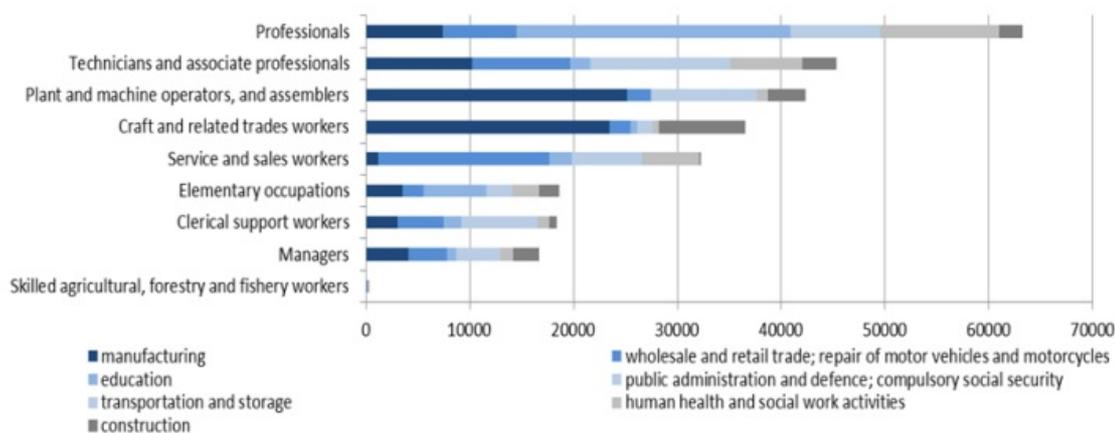
Forecasts have been used by national authorities to enforce stronger regulation of secondary VET in response to employer criticism of secondary school graduate supply. The central labour office regularly presents information to all VET governance players based on forecasting and analysis of registered unemployed data. Self-governing regions and individual schools are also offered data about graduate unemployment rates and their transition to the labour market between September and May. These indicators should inform families and lower secondary students about their chances on the labour market. However, they are only proxies as administrative data on employment of graduates are lacking.

In February 2019, the labour ministry also launched a new portal (37) to offer detailed data on graduates of respective programmes (average wages, employment and unemployment rates, and estimation of prospects) regionally and nationally. It is expected that these data will inform students, education counsellors and career guidance counsellors about prospects of respective professions and fields of study.

Additionally, new lists of jobs have been developed by the labour ministry to indicate professions lacking labour force in all eight regions in Slovakia (38). This also indicates what kind of graduates from secondary VET and what kind of labour market training for the unemployed is needed.

About 150 jobs were identified in total nationwide. In districts with very low unemployment, short-track procedures for employment of foreign labour force in relevant professions have been introduced.

## Occupations requirement in main sectors until 2020



NB: ISCO-08 categories; Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE Rev.2) sectors in the legend.

Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, 2015, based on Trexima Ltd. data.

The most significant employment growth is forecasted in manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles sectors, and in the education sector.

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (39) and European Skills Index (40) .

## 10.2 Designing qualifications

Three sets of standards are under development and/or further refinement:

- educational;
- occupational; and
- qualification.

Educational standards were developed backed by the 2008 Education Act (245/2008). These educational standards were developed under the lead of the State Institute of Vocational Education and National Institute for Education (both directly managed by the education ministry) and predominantly driven by educators' experience. Educational standards are composed of so-called content and performance standards, as stipulated by the Education Act (245/2008). Performance standards can be seen as learning outcomes that students are supposed to achieve during their studies and demonstrate when completing them. Assessment standards are considered a tool to help evaluate whether learners have achieved the performance standards. Assessment standards are to be developed by schools and set within school educational programmes (school curricula) specifying criteria and assessment procedures for achieving performance standards corresponding to respective school environment.

Occupational standards were developed by the sectoral (skills) councils (41) . Their development was initiated by the labour ministry, backed by the Act on Employment Services (5/2004) (42) . Development of occupational standards has been significantly affected by employers' representatives active in sectoral (skills) councils. Occupational standards have an important information function and contributed also to improved information of job seekers within the information system on the labour market managed by the labour sector (43) . However,

occupational standards have no normative power for recognition of qualifications.

Qualification standards started to be developed under the supervision of the education ministry backed by the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009) and supported by the ESF project 'Creation of the national qualifications system'. Within this project an online qualification register (44) and the Slovak Qualifications Framework (SKKR) have been created.

Qualification standards in the register should inform the education sector and in particular schools in updating their school educational programmes.

### **Curricula development**

Since 2008, curricula development has been decentralised. The state is responsible for developing national curricula, officially titled as 'state educational programme' (štátny vzdelávací program). These contain educational standards. Subsequently, schools prepare their own school curricula, officially titled as 'school educational programme' (školský vzdelávací program) based on a respective 'state educational programme'. School educational programmes must be discussed with sectoral assignees and representatives of companies offering practical training. In the case of dual VET, companies offering practical training directly participate as co-authors of respective school educational programme.

Currently there are 28 state educational programmes (45) . These documents are prepared by the State Institute of Vocational Education in cooperation with expert commissions containing experienced practitioners from the world of education and the world of work (46) . They are also discussed with sectoral assignees. A draft document is submitted for discussion to the respective tripartite working group of the National VET Council. Thus, state educational programmes are commented by representatives of social partners specified by law (47) before submitting for final approval and issuing by the education ministry. These programmes cover all major VET fields under the responsibility of the education ministry and contain specific framework requirements for all relevant ISCED levels and educational standards for individual programmes. The ministries of health and interior are autonomous in programming initial VET under their responsibility.

State educational programmes also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (48) . Originally, they reflected all individual competences separately, from 2013/14, only three overarching key competences are set and subsequently also reflected in school educational programmes:

- act independently in a social and working life;
- use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;
- work in heterogeneous groups.

To cover general education requirements in VET, the National Institute for Education responsible for national curricula for general education also develops educational standards for all relevant general subjects for VET programmes by ISCED levels (49) . In the case of foreign languages, standards are set in compliance with the respective levels (A1 to C1) of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Since 2015, developing curricula for dual VET has been in progress based on requirements from chambers and employers' representatives. From 2019, the same curricula documents apply for school-based and dual VET.

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[32] Institutions of the world of work selected from chambers and employers' associations and defined by law (Decree 251/2018) to represent employers' interests as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts, see more in Cedefop (2016). *Vocational education and training in Slovakia: short description*. Luxembourg:

Publications Office. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/831200>

- [33] Act on VET 61/2018, § 32, <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2015/61/20180901>.
- [34] Developed by (a) the Institute of Economic Research of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (2014) and (b) Trexima Bratislava and supervised by the labour ministry.
- [35] International standard classification of occupations.
- [36] <https://www.profesia.sk/> and <https://www.istp.sk/>
- [37] [www.trendyprace.sk](http://www.trendyprace.sk)
- [38] [https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/zamestnavanie-cudzincov/zoznam-zamestnani-s-nedostatkom-pracovnej-sily.html?page\\_id=806803](https://www.upsvr.gov.sk/sluzby-zamestnanosti/zamestnavanie-cudzincov/zoznam-zamestnani-s-nedostatkom-pracovnej-sily.html?page_id=806803)
- [39] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast>
- [40] <https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index>
- [41] Sectoral (skills) councils are a voluntary independent association of employers' representatives, trade union representatives, education institutions, state administration and self-government authorities regulated by the Act on Employment Services 5/2004.
- [42] [https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/vz\\_domov](https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/vz_domov)
- [43] <https://www.istp.sk/kartoteka-zamestnani>
- [44] <https://www.kvalifikacie.sk/kartoteka-kariet-kvalifikacii#/>
- [45] See the website of State Institute of Vocational Education at <http://siov.sk/vzdelavanie/odborne-vzdelavanie-a-priprava/> containing also performing arts programmes and newly emerging sports school programmes.
- [46] State educational programmes explicitly state names of all authors and institutions they represent.
- [47] Act on VET 61/2015, § 28 (2).
- [48] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
- [49] See the website of State Institute of Vocational Education at <http://siov.sk/statne-vzdelavacie-programy/> containing educational standards for general subjects.

# CHAPTER 11.

## Quality assurance

The so far applied national/regional quality assurance approaches are traditional in terms of governance and methodology. The European quality assurance in VET (EQAVET) principles have not yet been implemented.

### **Regional schooling including VET schools**

The State School Inspectorate is a main stakeholder that checks VET quality. It is an independent state administration body headed by the chief school inspector appointed for a five-year period by the education minister; its evaluation work is based on annual plans and resulting in yearly reports presented to the parliament.

According to the Act on State Administration and Self-governance (596/2003), directors are responsible for the quality of their schools' performance. They can be replaced by a self-governing region upon the chief school inspector's request based on justified severe failures.

The National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements is responsible for developing national testing instruments and implementing national and international testing. It informs about results and suggests improvements. It is responsible for monitoring and assessing quality of education, as stipulated by the Education Act (245/2008). The institute develops, on an annual basis, tests in mathematics and languages that are used in *maturita* school leaving exams in grammar schools and ISCED 354 programmes of VET schools.

However, both institutions predominantly focus on general education subjects. Despite envisaged expansion of national testing and quality checking, both institutions would require extra staff to cover respective VET fields. This is why employer representatives are expected to help more to check the quality of VET. They are however not assigned the ultimate responsibility for quality assurance in practical training and achieving qualification standards by individual learners due to lacking personal and financial capacities. Currently, sectoral assignees (50) focus primarily on input and process, e.g. on certifying company premises established for provision of practical training within dual VET, certifying instructors and head instructors responsible for practical training within dual VET, awarding a title VET centre to outstanding VET schools according to their criteria (51). Sectoral assignees only assist a) the State School Inspectorate in quality checking of practice-oriented training provided by companies within dual VET and b) schools in quality checking within final examinations.

According to the law, schools are still responsible for quality of their graduates in both theory and practice, but with an increasing share of training in companies they have no sufficient control to guarantee it.

It is important to improve financial and personal capacities of sectoral assignees and enhance responsibility of training companies for the results of training.

### **Continuing VET and adult learning**

Detailed accreditation of further education programmes and authorised institutions for examinations are stipulated by the Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009). Despite addressing quality in its recent amendments, this legislation focuses predominantly on 'input' assessment. Evaluation processes are still under development. Assessing course provision by graduates' rating was suggested by the education ministry, however not put in place so far. New legislation is needed to address quality assurance in more detail and in the full range, as the current Lifelong Learning Act applies to programmes provided by the education sector only. Quality

assurance in other sectors depends on sectoral authorities and is regulated in various ways.

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- [50] Institutions of the world of work selected from chambers and employers' associations to represent employers' interests as professional counterparts to education authorities and experts.
- [51] VET school complying with quality requirements in terms of learning environment, equipment, staff and school-businesses cooperation is identified based on approval establisher, Regional VET Council and final decision of sectoral assignee.

## CHAPTER 12.

# Validation of prior learning

There is no genuine and appropriately developed national model for validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Lifelong Learning Act (568/2009) created some preconditions for gradual progress but it in fact refers only to certification of the ability to run a business originally restricted to certificate of apprenticeship holders.

The following are data indicating the trend in issuing certificates 'verifying professional competences', entitling people without a certificate of apprenticeship (required by the Trade Licensing Act) to start a business.

**Number of certificates of professional competences in 2013-2017**

Year	Number of certificates issued
2013	640
2014	805
2015*	819
2016	786
2017	1 044

NB: (\*) Except 2 387 certificates issued by the National Lifelong Learning Institute within the ESF project targeting employed job seekers.

Source: Education ministry.

Certificates verifying 'professional competence' are not equivalent to those from formal education. They substitute a 'certificate of apprenticeship' for the purpose of starting a business only. These certificate holders are entitled to start a craft regulated by the Trade Licensing Act (455/1991), but they are not allowed to progress within formal education based on these certificates, as they do not certify the respective education level.

## CHAPTER 13.

# Incentives for learners

The following incentives for learners are in place:

- performance-based state-funded motivation scholarships for learners in programmes related to occupations that are in high demand on the labour market. These equal 25%, 45% and 65% of the national subsistence minimum, depending on their school performance;
- company scholarships amounting up to four times the national subsistence minimum;
- remuneration for productive work during training which has no ceiling to allow companies to better value quality performance of learners;
- state scholarships for socially disadvantaged learners who perform well to support completion of secondary VET.

The Government will create Individual learning accounts in amount of EUR 200 annually for adults and fiscal incentives in support of employees' training. In total, EUR 15 640 000 is to be allocated between 2020 and 2027 in support of adult learning and CVET.

Incentives for unemployed learners (covering travel costs, meals, childcare during participation) can be currently also offered by public employment services. Currently, the most attractive and successful retraining schemes for the unemployed (RE-PAS and KOMPAS) can be considered as a sort of learning vouchers. Requalification Passport (RE-PAS) scheme entitles an unemployed person to attend a retraining course of his/her choice for free. The choice of training can be drawn from a list of accredited or some specific non-accredited courses (e.g. ICT related) offered by public or private providers. The cost of the selected course must be approved by the labour office. The administrative burden lies with training providers who actively attract unemployed and not individual learners. The 'KOMPAS' (abbreviation stands for competence passport) scheme focuses on provision of courses aimed at strengthening key competences important for transition into the labour market. Both schemes are supported by the ESF under the responsibility of public employment services and currently operated as RE-PAS+ and KOMPAS+ schemes indicating further improvement of the original schemes.

## CHAPTER 14.

# Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Since 2015, the new Act on VET (61/2015) has introduced corporate tax reliefs for enterprises involved in dual VET; additional stimuli were introduced by the amendment of this act in 2018:

- a tax exemption for certified companies that train VET learners reduces training costs by 21%;
- companies also receive a 'tax bonus' of EUR 1 600 or 3 200 for each learner depending on the hours (200 or 400) of training provided per year;
- the remuneration for learners for productive work is also exempted from levies (up to 100% of a minimum wage);
- companies that offer 200 to 400 hours of training per year will receive direct per capita payment EUR 300, and those offering more than 400 hours will receive EUR 700. SMEs qualify for EUR 1 000.

Non-financial incentives were also introduced simplifying administrative procedures or expanding the period for entering dual VET.

## CHAPTER 15.

# Guidance and counselling

According to the Education Act (245/2008) guidance and counselling in the education sector is provided by

- centres of educational and psychological counselling and prevention;
- centres of special education guidance and counselling;
- individuals directly employed in schools.

The services are provided by educational counsellors, school psychologists, school special pedagogues, therapeutic pedagogues, social pedagogues and prevention coordinators. They address learners at primary and secondary schools. Educational counsellors are regular teachers with specialisation gained through continuing training. Nevertheless, they can offer just information and some guidance, but not a genuine counselling, as they are not professional psychologists. Positions of educational counsellors and specialised career counsellors were newly stipulated by law (52) .

In the labour sector, offices of labour, social affairs and family offer career guidance and counselling for job seekers. Currently, there are over 150 labour office counsellors nationwide retrained to work with personal portfolios. Furthermore, external counsellors are involved in the portfolio initiative for the unemployed.

Two institutions capitalise on international networking and guidance experience. Euroguidance Slovakia (53) focuses on guidance practitioners and policy-makers from both the education and employment sectors. The Association for Career Guidance and Career Development (54) has developed into an important professional body commenting and influencing policies.

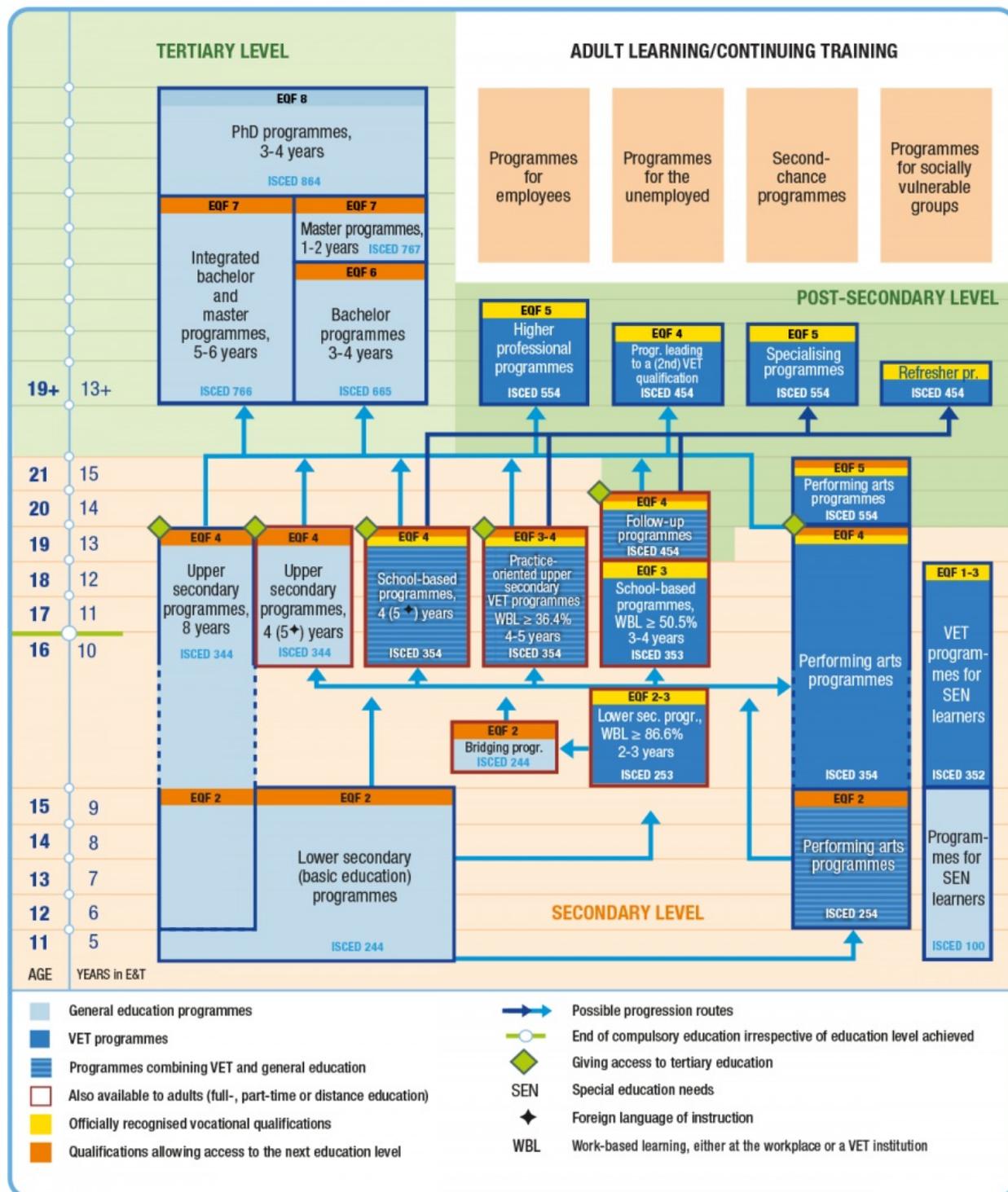
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[52] Act on Pedagogical and Professional Staff 138/2019: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2019/138/20190901>.

[53] [http://web.saaic.sk/nrcg\\_new/\\_main.cfm?clanok=2&menu=2&open=1&jazyk=sk](http://web.saaic.sk/nrcg_new/_main.cfm?clanok=2&menu=2&open=1&jazyk=sk)

[54] <https://rozvojkariery.sk/>

# Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.  
Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Slovakia, 2019.

# VET Programme Types

EQF 2-3
Lower secondary Programmes, WBL =/> 86.6% 2-3 years ISCED 253

## Lower secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 2 and 3, ISCED 253 (učebný odbor na získanie nižšieho stredného odborného vzdelania)

<b>EQF level</b>	2-3	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	253
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	10	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	11-12
<b>Usual entry age</b>	15+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	17+ or 18+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2-3		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	 but it depends on an individual learner track. Compulsory education starts at the age of six and as a rule includes nine years of basic education and at least one year of upper secondary education. Thus, a learner can be in his/her 10 <sup>th</sup> year or a higher year (inter alia due to repetition of classes at basic school). In the first case it is a part of compulsory education, in the latter case it is not.	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	

<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b> 	<b>Is it available for adults?</b> 
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	No credits applied
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<p>According to law, these programmes can be offered as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school-based; with practical training in own workshops or facilities;</li> <li>• school-based; with contracted segments of practical training in companies; or</li> <li>• dual VET.</li> </ul> <p>In practice, it is school-based due to a specific target group, often not attractive for companies.</p> <p>Part-time (evening) and distance forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula).</p>
<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools ( <i>stredná odborná škola</i> )
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	≥86.6%
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<p>Currently, practical training is offered predominantly in schools. It can also be offered within a mixed scheme, with school-based learning complemented by training provided by a company based on a school-company contract specifying numbers of trainees and a share of training hours performed in the company.</p>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>These programmes target low achievers, who haven't completed lower secondary education.</p> <p>Programmes are available for young people and also for adults.</p> <p>Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. technical services in car repair shops, textile manufacturing).</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Incomplete lower secondary (basic) education due to repeating grades or insufficient performance in the final year of basic school. There are no age limits.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a final examination composed of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a written part;</li> <li>• a practical part; and</li> <li>• an oral part.</li> </ul> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>

<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes offer qualifications that allow performing simple tasks.</p> <p>In individual cases a certificate of apprenticeship (<i>výučný list</i>) is awarded.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Certificates as a rule do not indicate a specific profession. Thus, qualifications relate to performing simple tasks in respective sectors of economy of study fields.</p> <p>For girls the most popular qualification is garment worker, while for boys the most popular qualification is construction worker.</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Learners can also enrol in a one-year bridging programme (ISCED 244) which gives access to upper secondary education that is often also offered simultaneously. They can also enter the labour market without completion of this bridging programme.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>There are no data about graduates. They are often targeted by public employment services or outreach programmes, as they are classified as early leavers from education and training.</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	
<b>General education subjects</b>	
<b>Key competences</b>	
	<p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (55) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>

<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.</p> <p>National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<p>ISCED 253 learners account for 3.1% out of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (56) .</p>

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- [55] [See](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962) European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
- [56] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 3

School-based  
 Programmes,  
 WBL => 50.5%  
 3-4 years  
 ISCED 353

**Three- and four-year upper secondary VET programmes leading to EQF 3, ISCED 353 (učebný odbor na získanie stredného odborného vzdelania)**

<b>EQF level</b>	3	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	353
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	10	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	12 or 13
<b>Usual entry age</b>	15 to 16	<b>Usual completion age</b>	18 or 19
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	3 or 4		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	 Compulsory education starts at the age of six and includes nine years of basic education and at least one year of upper secondary education. Thus, as a rule the first year of this programme (16 years of age) belongs to compulsory education to facilitate transition from lower secondary to upper secondary education.		<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b> 

<p><b>Is it initial VET?</b> ✓</p>		<p><b>Is it continuing VET?</b> ✗</p> <p>In individual cases it could be considered CVET provided these learners progress in training that is content-related linked to previous training and follows the period of working in a relevant working position. Legislation does not make a strong difference between initial and continuing VET.</p>
<p><b>Is it offered free of charge?</b> ✓</p> <p>In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.</p>		<p><b>Is it available for adults?</b> ✓</p> <p>Adults usually apply for part-time (evening and distance) forms.</p>
<p><b>ECVET or other credits</b> ✗</p> <p>(57)</p>		
<p><b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b></p>	<p>These programmes can be offered as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school-based; with practical training in own workshops or facilities;</li> <li>• school-based; with contracted segments of practical training in companies; or</li> <li>• dual VET.</li> </ul> <p>Since dual VET was introduced in 2015/16, it has allowed companies to sign individual training contracts with learners for in-company practical training, complemented with an institutional contract between schools and companies. Learners in dual are VET students and not employees. Final responsibility for assessment and certification lies with schools concerning both theory and practice.</p> <p>Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). Part-time forms are only offered as school-based.</p> <p>The so-called 'shortened studies' were introduced from 2015/16. Based on the mainstream three-year programmes, they focus on occupation-related areas and last either one or two years. The two-year study leads to a certificate of apprenticeship; participants of the one-year study are attendance and exam certified.</p>	
<p><b>Main providers</b></p>	<p>Secondary VET schools (stredná odborná škola)</p>	
<p><b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b></p>	<p>&gt;= 50.5%, depending on individual schools, in a dual form it is as a rule over 60%</p>	

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• in-company training</li> </ul> <p>Training in school-based programmes can be offered in school workshops/labs, but also combined with in-company training based on a school-company contract. Training in dual VET is offered by company instructors in specific company training premises, but can also be complemented by training in school workshops or other companies' facilities.</p>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Programmes are available for learners who have completed lower secondary education and also for adults who want to acquire an attractive qualification in the labour market.</p> <p>Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. machinery mechanic). Some might be slightly adjusted to take into account their challenges.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completion of lower secondary (general) education (grade 9 of basic school equal to ISCED 244) and in some cases, specific requirements for skills or a state of health may apply.</p> <p>Drop-outs from lower secondary (general) education qualify after completion of a one-year bridging programme.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete this programme, learners need to pass a final examination composed of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a written part, where the knowledge of a topic drawn from up to 10 topics is assessed;</li> <li>• a practical part, where the student's skills and abilities are assessed in a topic drawn from up to 15 topics; and</li> <li>• an oral part, within which knowledge of a topic drawn from at least 25 topics is assessed.</li> </ul> <p>Topics for the written part and the oral part of the final exam are elaborated by teachers of vocational subjects in cooperation with trainers.</p> <p>Topics for the practical part of the final exam are elaborated by trainers in cooperation with the teachers of vocational subjects, all must be approved by the school director. Topics are discussed with sectoral assignees.</p> <p>The written part of the final exam lasts from 45 minutes to 120 minutes. The practical part lasts for a maximum of 24 hours and, if requires by the nature of the exam, it can take up to four weeks. The oral exam lasts for no more than 15 minutes.</p> <p>Practical and oral examination is open to public and an officially nominated employer representative can actively assess learners.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>

<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a VET qualification (nationally referred to as certificate of apprenticeship) and to a school-leaving certificate.</p> <p>The certificate of apprenticeship (<i>výučný list</i>) attests that graduates are qualified to work in the respective occupation, while the school-leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o záverečnej skúške</i>) is considered as attesting the level of education entitling graduates to progress to subsequent formal education programmes.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Carpenter, cook, gardener, hairdresser, metal worker, motor vehicle repairer – automotive electrician, plumber, shop sales assistant
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at post-secondary follow up programmes (EQF 4, ISCED 454).
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p></p> <p>Validation of non-formal and informal learning procedure does not allow for receiving a certificate of apprenticeship. It however allows for receiving a certificate verifying 'professional competence' (<i>osvedčenie o odbornej spôsobilosti</i>) (58) . This certificate is not equivalent to a certificate of apprenticeship, but it is an equivalent substitute for a specific reason: entitling to run a business requiring a certificate of apprenticeship.</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p></p> <p>General subjects represent 22.22% of study time in three-year programmes and 18.56% in four-year programmes. In addition, there are 11.62% and 9.47% of study time, respectively, left on a decision of school. Thus, general education can be expanded, if considered relevant.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p></p> <p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (59) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>

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**Application of learning outcomes approach**



National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.

National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

ISCED 353 learners account for 15.9% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (60) .

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- [57] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.
- [58] Act on Lifelong Learning 568/2009.
- [59] [See](#) European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
- [60] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 3 or 4

School-based programmes,

WBL => 36.4%

4-5 years

ISCED 354

### Practice-oriented four- and five-year upper secondary VET programmes leading to EQF 3 or 4, ISCED 354 (študijný odbor s praktickým vyučováním formou odborného výcviku)

<b>EQF level</b>	3 or 4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	354
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	10	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	13 or 14
<b>Usual entry age</b>	15 to 16	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19 or 20
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	4 or 5		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	 Compulsory education starts at the age of six and includes nine years of basic education and at least one year of upper secondary education. Thus, as a rule the first year of this programme (16 years of age) belongs to compulsory education to facilitate transition from lower secondary to upper secondary education.	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	 In individual cases it could be considered CVET provided these learners progress in training that is content-related linked to previous training and follows the period of working in a relevant working position. Legislation does not make a strong difference between initial and continuing VET.

<p><b>Is it offered free of charge?</b></p>	<p>✓</p> <p>In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.</p>	<p><b>Is it available for adults?</b></p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Adults usually apply for part-time (evening and distance) forms.</p>
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**ECVET or other credits** ✗

(61)

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)**

These programmes can be offered as:

- school-based; with practical training in own workshops or facilities;
- school-based; with contracted segments of practical training in companies; or
- dual VET.

Since dual VET was introduced in 2015/16, it has allowed companies to sign individual training contracts with learners for in-company practical training, complemented with an institutional contract between school and companies. Learners in dual are VET students and not employees. Final responsibility for assessment and certification lies with schools concerning both theory and practice.

Part-time (evening) and distance forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). Part-time forms are only offered as school-based.

**Main providers** Secondary VET schools (*stredná odborná škola*)

**Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies** >=36.4%, depending on individual schools, in a dual form it is as a rule over 50%

**Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)**

- practical training at school
- in-company training

Training in school-based programmes can be offered in school workshops/labs, but also combined with in-company training based on school-company contract. Training in dual VET is offered by company instructors in specific company training premises, but can also be complemented by training in school workshops or other companies' facilities.

**Main target groups**

Programmes are available for young people and also for adults who have completed lower secondary education.

Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. computer network mechanic, digital media graphic designer, beautician). Some might be slightly adjusted to take into account their challenges.

<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<p>Completion of lower secondary (general) education (grade 9 of basic school equal to ISCED 244) and in some cases specific requirements for skills or a state of health may apply.</p> <p>Drop-outs from lower secondary (general) education qualify after completion of a one-year bridging programme.</p>
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a <i>maturita</i> school leaving examination. It is composed of external testing organised by the National Institute for Certified Measurements (in foreign languages; language of instruction and literature; and the Slovak language and Slovak literature in case the language of instruction differs) and internal examination comprising general component (two subjects) (62) and vocational component (theoretical and practical part). For the practical part up to 15 topics and for the theoretical part and general component subjects 25 topics are prepared, approved by the school director.</p> <p>Legislation only prescribes to assess relevant knowledge within theoretical part and skills and abilities within practical part. It is left up to the examination commission (and partly also to examination topics) to what extent standards in state and school educational programmes (school and national curricula) are followed and to what detail they are reflected.</p> <p>The topics for theoretical part and practical part of vocational component of the examination are discussed with sectoral assignees. An officially nominated employer representative can actively assess learners.</p> <p>The practical part of vocational component lasts for a maximum of 24 hours (33 hours in two specific cases), and, if required by the nature of the exam, it can take up to four weeks.</p> <p>Theoretical part of vocational component is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a VET qualification, certified by a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>), and to a certificate of apprenticeship (<i>výučný list</i>), provided that they include at least 1 400 hours of practice oriented training (<i>odborný výcvik</i>).</p> <p>The <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate is considered as certifying both level of education and qualification. In this case 'qualification' refers to the ability to perform professional activities covered by the curriculum; it is often called 'wider' qualification. The certificate of apprenticeship offers a more specific qualification related to an occupation in addition to the wider qualification.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Beautician, bookseller, computer network mechanic, operation and economics of transport operator, plant and equipment mechanic, pharmaceutical production operator.</p>

<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at post-secondary programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification, specialising programmes or higher professional programmes; they can also progress to higher education programmes.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	Validation of non-formal and informal learning procedure does not allow for receiving a certificate of apprenticeship. It however allows for receiving a certificate verifying 'professional competence' ( <i>osvedčenie o odbornej spôsobilosti</i> ) (63) . This certificate is not equivalent to a certificate of apprenticeship, but it is an equivalent substitute for a specific reason: entitling to run a business requiring a certificate of apprenticeship.
<b>General education subjects</b>	 <p>General subjects represent 34.85% of study time in four-year programmes and 35.15% in five-year programmes. In addition, there are 18.18% and 20% of study time, respectively, left on a decision of school. Thus, general education can be expanded, if considered relevant.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	 <p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (64) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	 <p>National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.</p> <p>National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.</p>

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

Learners of ISCED 354 programmes with extended practical training account for 24.0% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (65) .

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- [61] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.
- [62] In schools with other language of instruction in three subjects.
- [63] Act on Lifelong Learning 568/2009.
- [64] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
- [65] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 4

School-based

Programmes,

4 (5\*) years

ISCED 354

**Theory-focused school-based four- and five-year VET programmes leading to EQF 4, ISCED 354. (študijný odbor s praktickým vyučovaním formou odbornej praxe) ( [66]); changes apply for arts programmes and sport education**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	354
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	10	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	13 or 14
<b>Usual entry age</b>	15 to 16	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19 or 20
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	4 or 5 (in case of bilingual programmes); up to five years also in the case of special schools serving special education needs learners		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	 Compulsory education starts at the age of six and includes nine years of basic education and at least one year of upper secondary education. Thus, as a rule the first year of this programme (16 years of age) belongs to compulsory education to facilitate transition from lower secondary to upper secondary education.	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	

<p><b>Is it initial VET?</b> </p>		<p><b>Is it continuing VET?</b> </p>	<p>In individual cases it could be considered CVET provided these learners progress in training that is content-related linked to previous training and follows the period of working in a relevant working position. Legislation does not make a strong difference between initial and continuing VET.</p>
<p><b>Is it offered free of charge?</b> </p>	<p>In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.</p>	<p><b>Is it available for adults?</b> </p>	<p>Adults usually apply for part-time (evening and distance) forms.</p>
<p><b>ECVET or other credits</b> </p>	<p>(66)</p>		
<p><b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b></p>	<p>These programmes are school-based; they focus on VET theory and have a lower share of work-based learning, for example, in school labs, workshops and short-term internships.</p> <p>Expanding dual into this segment of VET is envisaged from the 2019/20 school year. (67)</p> <p>Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). It is up to individual schools and learners demand whether these forms are opened. Data about part-time studies are collected, however, data on a distance form are not distinguished.</p>		
<p><b>Main providers</b></p>	<p>Secondary VET schools (<i>stredná odborná škola</i>) (68)</p>		
<p><b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b></p>	<p>These (non-bilingual) programmes have a prescribed minimum coverage of 4 224 hours, of which a share of general education is 36.36%, VET theory 22.73%, VET practice 19.70% and 21.21% are left on a decision of school. These 'free' hours can be used for general education, VET theory or VET practice.</p> <p>VET practice is composed of hours of working in labs in schools or companies and internships. Lengths of internship differs across fields of study and the total VET practice depends on individual schools (and the decision of schools about 'free' hours).</p> <p>Thus, the share of work-based learning also differs depending on school educational programme (school curricula).</p>		

<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Usually work-based learning takes the form of short-term individual internships in companies. Practical training in groups in companies can be agreed, but practical training in school (in school labs, specialised classrooms and workshops) is more typical and cannot be considered a genuine work-based learning.
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Programmes are available for young people and also for adult graduates of lower secondary education.</p> <p>Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. promotional graphics, social-educational worker, commercial academy), or exclusively for these learners (masseur for the visually impaired). Some might be slightly adjusted to take into account their challenges.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Completion of lower secondary (general) education (grade 9 of basic school equal to ISCED 244) and in some cases specific requirements for skills or a state of health may apply.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a <i>maturita</i> school leaving examination. It is composed of external testing organised by the National Institute for Certified Measurements (in foreign languages; language of instruction and literature; and the Slovak language and Slovak literature in case the language of instruction differs) and internal examination comprising general component (two subjects (69) and vocational component (theoretical and practical part).</p> <p>For the practical part up to 15 topics and for the theoretical part and general component subjects 25 topics are prepared, approved by the school director.</p> <p>Legislation only prescribes to assess relevant knowledge within theoretical part and skills and abilities within practical part. It is left up to the examination commission (and partly also to examination topics) to what extent standards in state and school educational programmes (school and national curricula) are followed and to what detail they are reflected.</p> <p>The practical part of vocational component lasts for a maximum of 24 hours (33 hours in two specific cases), and, if required by the nature of the exam, it can take up to four weeks.</p> <p>Theoretical part of vocational component is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>) confirming level of education and VET qualifications attained.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>

<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>In these programmes, qualifications only rarely address one specific profession. They as a rule certify the ability to perform professional activities related to the respective studies in fields, such as agriculture, forestry and rural development, food-processing; mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, economics and organisation, retail and services, healthcare, etc.</p> <p>There are qualifications naming respective professions, such as healthcare assistant, and there are qualifications indicating rather areas of performance, such as mechatronics, tourism services, agribusiness – farming.</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at post-secondary programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification, specialising programmes or higher professional programmes; they can also progress to higher education programmes.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information not available</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>General subjects represent 36.36% of study time in four-year programmes and 54.55% (of which two thirds Slovak and foreign languages) in five-year bilingual programmes. In addition, there are 21.21% and 16.36% of study time, respectively, left on a decision of school.</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (70) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>

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**Application of learning outcomes approach**



National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.

National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

Learners of school-based ISCED 354 programmes account for 42.8% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (71) .

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- [66] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.
  - [67] This is in fact about efforts to strengthen work-based learning rather than about genuine dual, as a share of VET practice in these programmes is comparably low.
  - [68] Similarly to conservatories, art education schools (*škola umeleckého priemyslu*) and sport schools are not subsumed under the term secondary VET schools to indicated their specificity newly backed by legislation.
  - [69] In schools with other language of instruction in three subjects.
  - [70] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
  - [71] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 4

Follow-up  
programmes

ISCED 454

**Follow-up programmes leading to EQF 4, ISCED 454 (nadstavbové štúdium)**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	454
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	13	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	14
<b>Usual entry age</b>	18 to 19	<b>Usual completion age</b>	20
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	It depends on an individual learner. In the case of immediate continuing in this programme after completion of ISCED 353 programme it is sometimes seen as initial VET. Legislation does not address this issue.	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	It depends on an individual learner. In the case of a break after completion of ISCED 353 programme it is seen as continuing VET. Legislation does not address this issue.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓ In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	✗		

(72)

<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<p>These programmes are school-based; they focus on VET theory, as learners already possess the certificate of apprenticeship (<i>výučný list</i>),</p> <p>Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). It is up to individual schools and learners demand whether these forms are opened. Data about part-time studies are collected, however, data on a distance form are not distinguished.</p>
<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools ( <i>stredná odborná škola</i> )
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	<p>These are usually school-based programmes. All these programmes have a prescribed minimum coverage of 2 112 hours, of which a share of general education is 34.85%, VET theory 22.73%, VET practice 12.12% and 30.30% are left on a decision of schools. These 'free' hours can be used for general education, VET theory or VET practice.</p> <p>Thus, the share of VET practice differs depending on school educational programme (school curricula). Internships or provision of some practice in companies can be agreed based on the school decision.</p>
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	As a rule, practical training is offered in school. It is possible to agree some in-company practice depending on the school decision.
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>These programmes are designed for graduates of ISCED 353 upper secondary VET programmes (<i>učebný odbor</i>) who originally received a certificate of apprenticeship and wanted to deepen their theoretical studies in order to increase their employability and/or to open the option to apply for higher education.</p> <p>Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. wood and furniture manufacturing, entrepreneurship in crafts and services). Some might be slightly adjusted to take into account their challenges.</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Learners should have graduated from ISCED 353 upper secondary VET programmes ( <i>učebný odbor</i> ) with a similar professional orientation.

<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a <i>maturita</i> school leaving examination. It is composed of external testing organised by the National Institute for Certified Measurements (in foreign languages; language of instruction and literature; and the Slovak language and Slovak literature in case the language of instruction differs) and internal examination comprising general component (two subjects (73) and vocational component (theoretical and practical part).</p> <p>For the practical part up to 15 topics and for the theoretical part and general component subjects 25 topics are prepared, approved by the school director.</p> <p>Legislation only prescribes to assess relevant knowledge within theoretical part and skills and abilities within practical part. It is left up to the examination commission (and partly also to examination topics) to what extent standards in state and school educational programmes (school and national curricula) are followed and to what detail they are reflected.</p> <p>The practical part of vocational component lasts for a maximum of 24 hours (33 hours in two specific cases), and, if required by the nature of the exam, it can take up to four weeks.</p> <p>Theoretical part of vocational component is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>).</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Within this segment of VET, qualifications only rarely address one specific profession. They usually certify the ability to perform professional activities related to the respective field of study.</p> <p>Qualifications indicate areas of performance rather than specific professions: catering, entrepreneurship in crafts and services, electrical engineering – manufacturing and operation of machinery and equipment.</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at post-secondary programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification, specialising programmes or higher professional programmes; they can also progress to higher education programmes.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information not available</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✗</p>

<b>General education subjects</b>	✓	General subjects represent 34.85% of study time. In addition, there are 30.30% of study time left on a decision of school. Thus, general education can be expanded, if considered relevant.
<b>Key competences</b>	✓	<p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (74) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	✓	<p>National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.</p> <p>National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>		Learners of ISCED 454 follow-up programmes account for 5.2% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (75) .

[72] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.

[73] In schools with other language of instruction in three subjects.

[74] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.

[75] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 4

Programmes leading

to a (2nd)

VET qualification

ISCED 454

**Programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification (also called ‘qualifying programmes’) leading to EQF 4, ISCED 454 (pomaturitné kvalifikačné štúdium)**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	454
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	14+	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	15+
<b>Usual entry age</b>	19+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	21+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>		<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	Legislation does not address this issue.		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>
			Legislation does not address this issue. In practice it is often considered CVET.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>		<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	
	In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.		

**ECVET or other credits** 

(76)

<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	<p>These programmes are as a rule school-based and as a rule of two types: one focusing on theory and one containing also a solid part of practical training that can be offered also in a company.</p> <p>Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). It is up to individual schools and learners demand whether these forms are opened. Data about part-time studies are collected, however, data on a distance form are not distinguished.</p>
<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools (stredná odborná škola)
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	<p>Predominantly theory-focused two-year VET programmes have a prescribed minimum coverage of 2 112 hours, of which a share of VET theory 33.33%, VET practice 21.21% and 45.45% are left on a decision of schools. These 'free' hours can be used for theory or practice.</p> <p>Two-year VET programmes with extended practical training, offering also a certificate of apprenticeship, have a prescribed minimum coverage of 2176 hours, of which a share of VET theory 32.35%, VET practice 64.71% and 2.94% are left on a decision of schools.</p> <p>Thus, the share of VET practice differs depending on school educational programme (school curricula). As a rule, no work-based learning is offered, unless internships or provision of some practice in companies is agreed based on the school decision.</p>
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	A share of work-based learning depends on individual school's decision. It is as a rule higher in programmes offering both a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate and a certificate of apprenticeship. It can be offered in school workshops/labs, but also combined with in-company training.
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Programmes are available for graduates of at least upper secondary (general or VET) programmes with the <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate who want to obtain a VET qualification or other VET qualification than previously studied.</p> <p>Some programmes are also offered for special education needs learners within a special schools stream (e.g. social legal activities, textile manufacturing, public administration).</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	<i>Maturita</i> school leaving certificate is the only requirement, unless specific health requirements apply. Thus, learners should have graduated from an upper secondary general or vocational education programme, a performing arts programme or a follow up programme.

<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a final examination that is composed of vocational component (theoretical and practical part) of the <i>maturita</i> school leaving examination.</p> <p>For the practical part up to 15 topics and for the theoretical part 25 topics are prepared, approved by the school director.</p> <p>Legislation only prescribes to assess relevant knowledge within theoretical part and skills and abilities within the practical part. It is left up to the examination commission (and partly also to examination topics) to what extent standards in state and school educational programmes (school and national curricula) are followed and to what detail they are reflected.</p> <p>The practical part of vocational component lasts for a maximum of 24 hours and, if required by the nature of the exam, it can take up to four weeks.</p> <p>Theoretical part of vocational component is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a school leaving certificate indicating a specific <i>maturita</i> vocational component (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>). Some of these programmes also offer a 'certificate of apprenticeship' (<i>výučný list</i>), provided they include at least 1 400 hours of practice oriented training.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>Some qualifications offered indicate a particular profession, such as dental technician, some indicate the ability to perform professional activities related to the respective field of study, such as economic informatics, social-legal activities or security service – basic police training.</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or continue their studies at specialising programmes or higher professional programmes; they can also progress to higher education programmes.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information not available</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>✗</p>

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**Key competences** ✓

State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (77) within three groups of key competences:

- act independently in a social and working life;
- use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;
- work in heterogeneous groups.

These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).

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**Application of learning outcomes approach** ✓

National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.

National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

Learners of ISCED 454 programmes leading to a (second) VET qualification account for 3.3% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (78) .

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[76] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.

[77] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.

[78] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 5

Higher professional  
programmes

ISCED 554

**Higher professional programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (vyššie odborné štúdium)**

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	554
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	14+	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	16+
<b>Usual entry age</b>	19+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	22+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	3		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	Legislation does not address this issue.		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>
			Legislation does not address this issue. In practice it is often considered CVET.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓
	In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.		
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	✗		
	(79)		

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)**

These programmes can be offered in dual form or as school-based with internships or parts of in-company training.

Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). It is up to individual schools and learners demand whether these forms are opened. Data about part-time studies are collected, however, data on a distance form are not distinguished.

<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools (stredná odborná škola) (80)
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	<p>These programmes have a prescribed minimum coverage of 3 168 hours, of which a share of VET theory 26.26%, VET practice 26.26% and 40.40% are left on a decision of schools. These ‘free’ hours can be used for theory or practice.</p> <p>Thus, the share of VET practice differs depending on school educational programme (school curricula).</p>
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<p>A share of work-based learning differs across fields of study and individual schools.</p> <p>In the case of dual, training is offered by company instructors in a specific contracted company, but can be complemented also by training in school workshops or other companies’ premises.</p>
<b>Main target groups</b>	These programmes target secondary graduates with the <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate who prefer further studies outside higher education offering attractive training required by the labour market.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	The <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate is the only requirement, unless specific health requirements apply.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass an exam (<i>absolventská skúška</i>), consisting of defending a written paper and a comprehensive examination corresponding to a respective field; in the case of healthcare programmes corresponding to the respective profession.</p> <p>Examination is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to certificate on passing examination (<i>vysvedčenie o absolventskej skúške</i>), documenting attaining a higher professional education level, and to a non-university diploma (<i>absolventský diplom</i>) certifying the achieved qualification, with the right to use the title Diploma Specialist – DiS. (<i>diplovaný špecialista</i>).</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Some qualifications offered indicate a particular profession, such as diploma optometrist, some indicate the ability to perform professional activities related to the respective field of study, such as computing systems, hotel and travel agency management, international business, rural tourism.
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or progress to higher education programmes based on the <i>maturita</i> school-leaving certificate they received after completion of their previous studies.

<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	✗
<b>General education subjects</b>	✗
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (81) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.</p> <p>National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Learners of ISCED 554 higher professional programmes account for 0.99% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (82) .

[79] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.

[80] Similarly to conservatories, art education schools (*škola umeleckého priemyslu*) and sport schools are not subsumed under the term secondary VET schools to indicated their specificity newly backed by legislation.

[81] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur->

[lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962](http://lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962).

- [82] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 5

Specialising  
programmes

ISCED 554

## Specialising programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (pomaturitné špecializačné štúdium)

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	554
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	14+	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	15+
<b>Usual entry age</b>	19+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	21+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	2		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	Legislation does not address this issue.		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b> Legislation does not address this issue. In practice it is often considered CVET.
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓ In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓

**ECVET or other credits**



(83)

**Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)**

These programmes are currently offered as school-based, with internships or parts of in-company training as set by school educational programmes (school curricula) of individual schools.

Part-time (evening and distance) forms are envisaged and described within state educational programmes (national curricula). It is up to individual schools and learners demand whether these forms are opened. Data about part-time studies are collected, however, data on a distance form are not distinguished.

<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools (stredná odborná škola) (84)
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	<p>These programmes have a prescribed minimum coverage of 2 112 hours, of which a share of VET theory 34.85%, VET practice 22.73% and 42.42% are left on a decision of schools. These ‘free’ hours can be used for theory or practice.</p> <p>Thus, the share of VET practice differs depending on school educational programme (school curricula).</p>
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	The share of work-based learning differs across fields of study and individual schools.
<b>Main target groups</b>	These programmes target secondary graduates with a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate in need of further specialisation in the field, for which tertiary education is not needed.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	The <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate in the relevant field is the only requirement. Learners can only enter a programme in a field related to their previous studies.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete this programme, learners need to pass an exam (<i>absolventská skúška</i>), consisting of defending a written paper and a comprehensive examination corresponding to the respective field.</p> <p>Examination is open to public.</p> <p>Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.</p>
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a certificate of passing examination (<i>vysvedčenie o absolventskej skúške</i>), documenting attaining a higher professional education level, and to a non-university diploma (<i>absolventský diplom</i>) certifying the achieved qualification, with the right to use the title Diploma Specialist – DiS (<i>diplomovaný špecialista</i>).</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	These qualifications indicate the ability to perform professional activities related to the respective field of study, such as quality management in chemical laboratory, special pedagogy, tax services.
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	Those who complete these programmes can enter the labour market or progress to higher education programmes based on the <i>maturita</i> school-leaving certificate they received after completion of their previous studies.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Information not available
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	

<b>General education subjects</b>	
<b>Key competences</b>	 <p>State educational programmes (national curricula) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (85) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to this education level and further detailed within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	 <p>National authorities consider both state educational programmes (national curricula) and school educational programmes (school curricula) as learning outcome based. Educational standards (in particular its component 'performance standards') in both national and school curricula are seen as prescribing learning outcomes.</p> <p>National curricula address key competences, vocational competences and personal competences for the field of study (group of similar programmes) at this level. Educational standards (composed of performance and content standards) universal for the field of study at this level and specific for each programme are set in the national curricula and addressed in school curricula. The State School Inspectorate is responsible for assessing compliance of school curricula with national curricula.</p>
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	Learners of ISCED 554 specialising programmes account for 0.23% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (86) .

[83] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.

[84] Similarly to conservatories, art education schools (*škola umeleckého priemyslu*) and sport schools are not subsumed under the term secondary VET schools to indicated their specificity newly backed by legislation.

[85] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.

[86] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 4

Refresher  
programmes

ISCED 454

**Refresher programmes leading to ISCED 454 (pomaturitné inováčné štúdium, pomaturitné zdokonaľovacie štúdium)**

<b>EQF level</b>	4	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	454
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	14+	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	14+
<b>Usual entry age</b>	19+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	Depends of the school decision		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	✗	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	✓
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>	✗	<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	✓
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	✓	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	✓
	In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.		
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	✗		
	(87)		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	It fully depends of the school decision, they can be part-time (evening or distance).		
<b>Main providers</b>	Secondary VET schools (stredná odborná škola)		
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	It fully depends on the school decision.		
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	It fully depends on the school decision.		

<b>Main target groups</b>	Learners interested in innovation within their field of study or in better mastering profession or respective professional skills. Legislation speaks about <i>post-maturita</i> innovative study ( <i>pomaturitné inováčné štúdium</i> ) and <i>post-maturita</i> improvement study ( <i>pomaturitné zdokonaľovacie štúdium</i> ),
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Learners should have a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate in the respective field of study, as this study builds on previous education.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	To complete these programmes learners have to pass a final examination specified as final <i>post-maturita</i> examination by law.
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	A certificate on final <i>post-maturita</i> examination ( <i>vysvedčenie o pomaturitnej záverečnej skúške</i> )  These certificates are officially recognised.
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Certification does not specify a profession. This certification is a certificate on attendance and meeting examination requirements rather than explicit qualification requirements. It indicates which study programme it relates to. The content of the study can be visible from the certificate supplement indicating details of the study.
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	These programmes aim to update learners' knowledge and skills.
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	Data on these programmes are not collected and there are therefore no data on potential graduates.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	X
<b>General education subjects</b>	X
<b>Key competences</b>	X
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	It depends on schools. There are no requirements stipulated by law concerning the design of these programmes.
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<1% (88)

[87] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.

[88] Data on these programmes are not collected. This is just an option based on tradition, however, in severe decline, as schools are not motivate this kind of programme and learners prefer alternatives.

EQF 5

Performing arts

Programmes

ISCED 254, 354, 554

**Performing arts programmes covering: eight-year ISCED 554 programme leading to EQF 5 qualification in dance conservatory (tanečné konzervatórium); six-year ISCED 554 programmes leading to EQF 5 qualification in music and drama conservatory (hudobné a dramatické konzervatórium).**

<b>EQF level</b>	5	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	554 (89)
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	6 (dance conservatory) 10 (music and drama conservatory)	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	13 (dance conservatory) 15 (music and drama conservatory)
<b>Usual entry age</b>	11 to 12 (dance conservatory) 15 to 16 (music and drama conservatory)	<b>Usual completion age</b>	19 (dance conservatory) 21 (music and drama conservatory)
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	8 (dance conservatory) 6 (music and drama conservatory)		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	 Compulsory education starts at the age of six and includes nine years of basic education and at least one year of upper secondary education. Thus, as a rule the fifth year in dance conservatory and the first year in music and drama conservatory (both 16 years of age) belong to compulsory education.	<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b>	
<b>Is it initial VET?</b>		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b>	 In public schools it is for free with no age limit, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.	<b>Is it available for adults?</b>	 adults with no age limit can enter full-time programmes

ECVET or other credits



(90)

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<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	No part-time (evening and distance) studies are possible, according to law. An extraordinary form for extremely talented children combining a mainstream education programme with selected parts of a programme in conservatory (in drama or music) is possible (91) .
<b>Main providers</b>	Dance conservatory Music and drama conservatory
<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	Not applicable. Performing arts related training is regulated by individual schools, composed of training in school premises complemented by training through organised performance in school or agreed between schools and other players.
<b>Main target groups</b>	Children and young people talented and interested in performing arts.
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Passing entrance examination including talent assessment

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<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	<p>To complete these programmes, learners need to pass an exam (<i>absolventská skúška</i>), consisting (92) of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• artistic performance corresponding to specialisation at music and drama conservatory or dance conservatory;</li><li>• defending a written paper related to specialisation at music and drama conservatory;</li><li>• comprehensive examination in pedagogy corresponding to specialisation at music and drama conservatory or dance conservatory. (93)</li></ul>
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Examination is open to public.

Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.

In diverse music and drama conservatory programmes, students pass *maturita* school leaving examination after first four years of a six-year programme.

It is composed of external testing organised by the National Institute for Certified Measurements (in foreign languages; language of instruction and literature; and the Slovak language and Slovak literature in case the language of instruction differs) and internal examination comprising general (two subjects (94) and vocational component (theoretical and practical part).

For the theoretical part of vocational component and for general component subjects, 25 topics are prepared approved by the school director. Practical part of vocational component contains prescribed artistic performance.

Those who fail in examination can repeat the examination within a time period stated by law.

Similarly, learners in dance conservatory pass *maturita* school leaving examination in the final year of an eight-year programme. To allow participants of this programme to enter other upper secondary schools, e.g. due to the health problems, a lower secondary education certificate (95) is offered after completion of the fourth year to all learners.

<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>These programmes lead to a certificate on passing examination (<i>vysvedčenie o absolventskej skúške</i>), documenting attaining a higher professional education level, and to a non-university diploma (<i>absolventský diplom</i>) certifying the achieved qualification, with the right to use the title Diploma Specialist in Arts - DiS.art (<i>diplovaný špecialista umenia</i>). They also certify qualifications for teaching in specific performing arts programmes.</p> <p>In music and drama conservatory, learners receive a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>) after first four years.</p> <p>In dance conservatory, learners receive a <i>maturita</i> school leaving certificate (<i>vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške</i>), also in the final year, and a lower secondary education certificate (<i>vysvedčenie</i>) after the fourth year.</p> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	<p>A dance conservatory programme offers three specialisations (classical, modern and folk dance) after four years of the first phase (ISCED 254).</p> <p>Performing arts studies at music and drama conservatory offer 18 programmes in total in four fields – music and drama, dance, singing, music (e.g., composition, conducting, playing the piano).</p>
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Graduates can enter higher education, teach in specific performing arts programmes and/or be active in performing arts.</p>
<b>Destination of graduates</b>	<p>Information not available</p>
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	<p>✗</p>
<b>General education subjects</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>as specified in respective state educational programmes (national curricula) (96)</p>
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>Key competences are reflected in a specific way in state educational programmes (national curricula) and further in school educational programmes (school curricula) of individual schools, not necessarily corresponding to the European reference framework (97) , adjusted to respective conservatory programme needs.</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	<p>✓</p> <p>Learning outcomes are formulated in state educational programmes (national curricula).</p>

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**Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners**

Learners of eight-year dance programmes account for 0.15% and learners of six-year performing arts programmes (singing, music, dance, music and drama) account for 1.96% of all secondary and post-secondary learners (98) .

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- [90] ECVET credits are only used within the geographical mobility.
- [91] Education Act 245/2008, § 103 (9) and education ministry Decree 65/2015, § 8.
- [92] See information of State Institute of Vocational Education on music and drama conservatories at <http://siov.sk/vzdelavanie/konzervatorium/hudobne-a-dramaticke-konzervatorium/> and dance conservatories at <http://siov.sk/vzdelavanie/konzervatorium/tanecne-konzervatorium/>.
- [93] To fulfil qualification requirements for teaching in specific performing arts programmes.
- [94] In schools with other language of instruction in three subjects.
- [95] Although the first phase of this programme is labelled ISCED 254, learners receive the certificate equivalent to ISCED 244, according to Law 245/2008.
- [96] See Section A, Part 7, for music and drama conservatory and Section B, Part 7, for dance conservatory at <http://siov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Statny-vzdelavaci-program-Konzervatoria.pdf>
- [97] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.
- [98] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

EQF 1-3

VET programmes

For SEN learners

ISCED 352

### Lower secondary VET programmes leading to EQF level 1 to 3, ISCED 352 ( [100]) (učebný odbor odborného učilišta)

<b>EQF level</b>	1-3	<b>ISCED-P 2011 level</b>	352
<b>Usual entry grade</b>	10+	<b>Usual completion grade</b>	12+
<b>Usual entry age</b>	16+	<b>Usual completion age</b>	18+
<b>Length of a programme (years)</b>	3		
<b>Is it part of compulsory education and training?</b>	These learners are served regardless of their age and years of schooling, thus also after the end of compulsory education (10 years), to achieve a maximum of their potential. This programme can be seen as not belonging to compulsory education, but this has no implications on attendance provided learners and families are interested in participation. Legislation explicitly indicates that learners should be accepted even after completion of compulsory education.		<b>Is it part of formal education and training system?</b> 
<b>Is it initial VET?</b> 		<b>Is it continuing VET?</b>	
<b>Is it offered free of charge?</b> 	In public schools it is for free, but private and church-affiliated schools can collect fees. Church-affiliated schools do not make use of this option.		<b>Is it available for adults?</b> 
<b>ECVET or other credits</b>	No credits applied		
<b>Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)</b>	School-based with practical training at school or sheltered workshops		
<b>Main providers</b>	Vocational school ( <i>odborné učilište</i> ) for special education needs learners, a component of special schools stream		

<b>Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies</b>	Depends of individual learners and individual schools
<b>Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical training at school</li> <li>• practical training in sheltered workshop</li> <li>• practical training in-company (in individual cases)</li> </ul>
<b>Main target groups</b>	<p>Mentally-challenged children that are expected to at least partly meet standards set for achieving lower secondary vocational education entitling them to perform simple tasks or work under supervision.</p> <p>Children with other challenges enter regular VET programmes slightly adjusted to their needs. Children and adults with severe mental challenges enter practical school programmes (<i>praktická škola</i>) (99) .</p>
<b>Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)</b>	Completion of the last of year of basic school in any age.
<b>Assessment of learning outcomes</b>	To complete a VET programme, learners need to pass a final examination. Performance in practical component results in receiving different certificates and qualifications. Three levels of meeting requirements are officially recognised by law ( <i>zaškolenie, zaučenie, vyučenie</i> ) and specified in school educational programmes (school curricula). All levels indicate qualifications, however, only the highest level leads to a certificate of apprenticeship
<b>Diplomas/certificates provided</b>	<p>There are four certificates and three qualifications an individual can obtain depending on a level of fulfilment of requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• certificate on completing some part of the programme (that is further specified) (<i>osvedčenie o absolvovaní časti vzdelávacieho programu</i>);</li> <li>• certificate on acquiring some skills (that are further specified) (<i>osvedčenie o zaškolení</i>);</li> <li>• certificate on achieving some vocational level (that is further specified) (<i>osvedčenie o zaučení</i>);</li> <li>• certificate of apprenticeship (<i>výučný list</i>).</li> </ul> <p>These certificates are officially recognised.</p>
<b>Examples of qualifications</b>	Auxiliary works in several areas: preparing meals, gardening, bricklaying, painting, pastry
<b>Progression opportunities for learners after graduation</b>	<p>Those who complete this programme with a certificate of apprenticeship can enter the labour market and be employed in the companies informed about their challenges. Others can enter the labour market and be employed in the companies informed about their limits.</p> <p>Sheltered workshop are usually the best for their long-term employment.</p>

<b>Destination of graduates</b>	There are no individualised data about graduates. These graduates do not progress in education to achieve a higher level of education, but they can participate in diverse trainings.
<b>Awards through validation of prior learning</b>	
<b>General education subjects</b>	
<b>Key competences</b>	<p>State educational programmes (national curricula) (100) also reflect all key competences set by the European reference framework (101) within three groups of key competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• act independently in a social and working life;</li> <li>• use interactively knowledge, information communications technology (ICT), communicate in Slovak, mother tongue and foreign language;</li> <li>• work in heterogeneous groups.</li> </ul> <p>These are adjusted to special needs of mentally challenged learners and reflected within individual school educational programmes (school curricula).</p>
<b>Application of learning outcomes approach</b>	Learning outcomes are embedded into assessment criteria or learner profiles in school educational programmes (school curricula) used for description of three performance levels of learners ( <i>zaškolenie, zaučenie, vyučenie</i> ).
<b>Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners</b>	<p>ISCED 352 special education needs learners account for 2.4% of all secondary and post-secondary VET learners (102) . Children who are mentally challenged to the extent that they do not qualify for entering this programme can enter practical schools (<i>praktická škola</i>)</p> <p>There are also learners with special needs in regular VET programmes that are only slightly adjusted to their needs that are therefore subsumed in the shares of respective regular programmes.</p>

[99] There were 1 211 learners in this programme in 2017/18.

[100] National curricula for special education needs learners are prepared by the National Institute for Education; see <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/deti-ziaci-so-svvp/deti-ziaci-so-zdravotnym-znevyhodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/vzdelavacie-programy/vzdelavacie-programy-ziakov-so-zdravotnym-znevyhodnenim-vseobecny-intelektovym-nadanim/stredne-vzdelavanie-nizsie-stredne-odborne-vzd.html>.

[101] See European Parliament; Council of the European Union (2006). Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 394, pp.10-18. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>.

[102] 2017/18. ISCED 2 to 5 full-time and part-time VET learners including performing arts and special education needs learners; except schools of interior ministry and practical schools.

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# References

- [1] Cedefop (2016). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Slovakia*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8102\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8102_en.pdf)
- [2] Sectoral (skills) councils are a voluntary independent association of employers' representatives, trade union representatives, education institutions, state administration and self-government authorities regulated by the Act on Employment Services 5/2004.
- [4] Cedefop (2016). *Spotlight on vocational education and training in Slovakia*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8102\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8102_en.pdf)
- [7] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).
- [8] Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011). Collecting statistical data based on ethnicity is forbidden. According to estimations by experts, only 25% of ethnic Roma declared themselves as belonging to the Roma nationality.
- [9] Slovak Business Agency (2018). *Malé a stredné podnikanie v číslach v roku 2017* [Small and medium-sized enterprises in numbers in 2017]. Bratislava: SBA. [http://www.sbagency.sk/sites/default/files/msp\\_v\\_cislach\\_v\\_roku\\_2017\\_infograf\\_sep2018.pdf](http://www.sbagency.sk/sites/default/files/msp_v_cislach_v_roku_2017_infograf_sep2018.pdf)