

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

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STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA

- Pre-school education
- Basic education
 - Basic first stage
 - Basic second stage
- Secondary education
 - General secondary education
 - Grammar schools
 - Specialized secondary education
 - Specialized secondary schools
 - Vocational schools
 - Apprentice training centres
 - Conservatories
- Higher education

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Age of entry: 2,5/3 years

Age of exit: 6/7 years

Last year of pre/school education is considered compulsory.

BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education lasts for nine years and is compulsory. It is divided into two stages of four and five years respectively:

Basic First Stage

Type of school providing this education: základná škola I. stupeň (Basic School First Stage)

Length of program in years: 4

Age level from: 6 to 10

Basic Second Stage

Type of school providing this education: základná škola II. stupeň (Basic School Second Stage)

Length of program in years: 5

Age level from: 10 to: 15

Subjects taught

Subjects at basic second stage (many of them are taught even earlier however) include:

- Slovak language and literature (includes Slovak and world literature and Slovak grammar; Slovak is to be replaced with Hungarian or Ukrainian in minority schools; usually everyday one class),
- foreign language(s) (usually two or one, usually English and German or Spanish; before 1990 Russian was compulsory with 4 classes a week)
- mathematics (incl. geometry almost everyday one class),
- geography (political and physical alike, usually 2 classes a week),
- biology (incl. botany, animal biology, human biology, geology and environmental studies; usually 2 classes a week),
- chemistry (usually 2 classes a week),
- physics (usually 2 classes a week),
- history (usually 2 classes a week),
- religion or ethics (class is subject to a choice, usually 1 class a week),
- PE (usually 2 classes a week),
- music (usually 1 class a week; sometimes skipped altogether due to lack of equipment, funds, teachers),
- drawing (usually 1 class a week, sometimes skipped altogether due to lack of equipment, funds, teachers),
- technical education (usually 1 class a week, sometimes skipped altogether due to lack of equipment, funds, teachers)

There are also many facultative "primary art schools"- afternoon schools for particular music instruments, theatre, painting etc. These have had a long tradition in Slovakia and are attended by a large majority of pupils.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary education is provided by the following types of schools:

1. Grammar school / gymnasium: Provides general secondary education and prepares for further study at universities and other higher education institutions.

2. Specialized Secondary School: Prepares students for vocational education and for study at higher education institutions.

3. Vocational Secondary School: Prepares students for occupations requiring higher level vocational education and a School Leaving Certificate. Students may continue their studies at higher education institutions.

4. Apprentice Training Centres: Prepare school-leavers for professional activities.

5. Conservatories: Conservatories are a special type of professional school that provides courses in such fields as Singing, Music, Dancing and Dramatic Arts.

GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

A. Type of school providing this education: Gymnázium /Grammar school
Length of program in years: 4

Age level from: 15 to: 19

Certificate/diploma awarded: vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške (School-leaving Certificate)

B. Type of school providing this education: Gymnázium / Grammar school

Length of program in years: 8

Age level from: 10 to: 18

Certificate/diploma awarded: School-leaving Certificate

SPECIALIZED SECONDARY EDUCATION

Type of school providing this education: stredná odborná škola (Specialized Secondary School)
(Technical, Economic, Agricultural, Health Care, Arts)

Length of program in years: 4

Age level from: 15 to: 19

Certificate/diploma awarded: vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške (Secondary School-leaving Certificate)

Vocational Secondary

Type of school providing this education: stredné odborné učilište (Vocational Secondary School)

Length of program in years: 4

Age level from: 15 to: 19

Certificate/diploma awarded: učňovský list (Certificate of Apprenticeship), vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške (School-leaving Certificate)

Apprenticeship

Type of school providing this education: odborné učilište (Apprentice Training Centre)

Length of program in years: 3

Age level from: 14 to: 17

Certificate/diploma awarded: učňovský list (Certificate of Apprenticeship)

CONSERVATORIES

Type of school providing this education: konzervatórium (tanec)(Conservatory (Dance))

Length of program in years: 8

Age level from: 15 to: 23

Certificate/diploma awarded: absolútorium

Type of school providing this education: konzervatórium (Conservatoire)

Length of program in years: 6

Age level from: 15 to: 21

Certificate/diploma awarded: absolútorium

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Most children with special educational needs currently attend special schools. Integration of the child with special educational needs into the system of special education requires recommendation from appropriate authority and parental consent. The structure of special education in these schools is very similar to that of mainstream education.

Education of children with special educational needs is carried out from pre-primary level up to the upper secondary level in special or mainstream schools. In mainstream schools the child with special educational needs may be integrated with its peer into a mainstream class (individual integration) or into a special class at mainstream school among children with the same kind of handicap (social integration).

HIGHER EDUCATION

INSTITUTION TYPES

Univerzity (Universities)

Technické univerzity (University of Technology)

Ekonomické univerzity (University of Economics)

Pol'nohospodárske univerzity (University of Agriculture)

Pedagogické univerzity (University of Education)

Umelecké vysoké školy (Academy of Arts)

Vojenská vysoká škola (Military Academy)

Policajné vysoké školy (Police Academy)

Zdravotnicke vysoké školy (Medical Higher Education Institution)

Higher education institutions are legal entities. They include **public** higher education institutions, **state** higher education institutions and **private** higher education institutions.

- **Public** schools of higher education are the basic case. They are established by law. The vast majority of schools of higher education is of this type. They are financed by the government and possible business activities.
- **State** institutions of higher education are all military, police and medical schools. They are established through the corresponding ministries of the government. They are financed by the government and possible business activities.
- **Private** institutions of higher education are established and financed by non-government institutions, but approved by the Ministry of Education. This type of school is still quite rare.

Higher education institutions provide higher education within the framework of accredited study programmes. The study programmes will be at three levels. They may join the first two levels of higher education into a single whole.

The first level is the **Bachelor study programme**.

The study programmes of the second level and those of the first two levels of higher education joined into a single whole are: **Master study programmes, Engineer study programmes** and **Doctoral study programmes**.

The study programme of the third level is the **PhD study programme** and specialized training in medicine.

The first level leads to the degree of Bachelor /Bakalár/; the second level, the complete higher education, leads to the academic degrees of Master /Magister/, Engineer /Inžinier/, Doktor všeobecnej medicíny, Doktor zubného lekárstva, Doktor Veterinárnej medicíny; and the third level leads to the Doctorate/PhD.

ACADEMIC YEAR

Classes from: September to August

Long vacation from: 1 July to 31 August

STAGES OF STUDY

University level studies:

- **University level first stage: Bakalárske štúdium (Bachelor studies):**

The Bachelor study programme as the study programme of the first level aims at the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge based on the current state of science and art and at mastering their use in the exercise of a profession or the follow-up of higher education studies. The first stage usually lasts for three or four years, covering all disciplines except Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy and Law. After completion, graduates are granted Certificates and awarded the degree of Bachelor /Bakalár/.

- **University level second stage: Magisterské, Inžinierske, Doktorské štúdium (Master studies):**

Complete university study lasts for four to six years and consists in research. Courses in the Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Pharmacy, Theology, Law and Art last for five years. Graduates are granted the degrees of Magister and of Magister umenia in artistic fields of study. Studies in Economics, Agriculture, Chemistry and technical fields last for five or five-and-a-half years and lead to the academic degree of Inžinier and to the title of Inžinier-architekt in Architecture. In Veterinary Medicine, studies last for five-and-a-half years and lead to the academic degree of Doktor Veterinárskej Medicíny. In Medicine, studies last for six years and graduates are granted the academic degrees of Doktor všeobecného lekárstva or Doktor zubného lekárstva.

Graduates of the fields of study in which the academic degree of Magister is awarded may sit for the **Examina Rigorosa**, which also includes the defence of a dissertation. Upon successfully completing it, students are awarded the following academic degrees:

Natural Sciences	Doktor Prírodných Vied	RNDr.
Pharmacy	Doktor Farmácie	PharmDr.
the Humanities and Arts	Doktor Filozofie	PhDr.
Law and Security	Doktor Práv	JUDr.
Teacher Training and Sports	Doktor Pedagogiky	PaedDr.
Theology*	Doktor Teológie	ThDr.

*except for the study programmes in the field of Roman Catholic theology

- **University level third stage: Doktorandské štúdium (PhD. studies):**

PhD. studies require three years of full-time study, or five years of part-time study.

Admission requirements are the completion of complete university study at the second level. After successful defence of the doctoral thesis, graduates are granted the degree Philosophiae Doctor ("PhD.") or Artis Doctor ("ArtD.") in the fields of Art. PhD. students in the field of Catholic Theology are awarded the degree of "licenciát teológie" ("ThLic.") after completing the first comprehensive part of PhD. study. PhD. graduates in this field are also awarded the degree of "doktor teológie" ("ThDr."). In accordance with the proposed principles, the PhD. corresponds to the degree of Kandidát Vied ("CSc.") which was granted to graduates of doctoral studies until 1997.

- **University level fourth stage: Doktor vied (Doctor of the Sciences, DrSc.):**

The DrSc. is awarded to outstanding researchers after the defence of their thesis and for their scientific and research work.

TEACHER EDUCATION

- **Training of pre-primary and primary/basic school teachers**

Faculties of Education train teachers for the 1st and 2nd stages of primary schools. Teachers for the first stage of primary school follow a four-year course. Teachers for the second stage of primary school follow a five-year course combining two subjects.

- **Training of secondary school teachers**

Secondary school teachers of specific subjects are trained at various university faculties according to their field of study. The course lasts for five years and leads to a state final examination. It is offered by: Faculties of Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Physical Education and Sports, and Faculties of Education. Graduates of Technical Universities, Universities of Economics and of the University of Agriculture who wish to teach the subjects of their field of study at secondary school level can follow pedagogical training.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDIES

- **Distance higher education**

Since 1991, the City University in Bratislava provides distance education using English programmes in cooperation with the Open University at Comenius University. In 1994, several higher education institutions in the SR were involved in the regional project PHARE - Pilot Project for Regional Cooperation in Distance Education.

- **Lifelong higher education**

In 1992, the Slovak Government ratified "The Principles of Lifelong Education" which created the preconditions for the further development of a subsystem of lifelong education. In 1995, the

draft law on further education which defines the role of the State, state administration and self-government in adult education-lifelong education was approved.

- **Other forms of non-formal higher education**

Universities of the Third Age have been established at Comenius University Bratislava, Slovak University of Agriculture and the University of Žilina. Study is provided in the form of half-day courses lasting for four or more semesters. Applicants who have completed secondary education do not have to sit for an entrance examination.

NATIONAL BODIES

Responsible authorities for administration and co-ordination:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic is the central body of the state administration of the Slovak Republic for elementary, secondary and higher education, educational facilities, lifelong learning, science and for the state's support for sports and youth. The Ministry manages schools and school facilities at the territory of the Slovak Republic through generally binding rules, by providing vocational guidance to all founders, it administers the network of schools and school facilities in the Slovak Republic. Through regional school authorities it provides realization of the state administration. The competences of the Ministry are set out by law.

- Higher Education Council (Rada vysokých škôl)

Supreme, self-government body of all higher education.

- Slovak Rectors' Conference (Slovenská rektorská konferencia)

- Accreditation Commission (Akreditačná komisia)

Accreditation of higher education institutions - advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic.

- Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC)

ADMISSIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to university-level studies

School-leaving Certificate / Maturitné vysvedčenie/ with minimum score 4-pass is required for entry to all types of institutions or programmes of study at university level. Academies of Art do not require a secondary school-leaving certificate.

For capacity reasons, a numerus clausus has been introduced in those fields of study which cannot admit all applicants who meet the conditions. The number of students admitted is the decision of the dean.

Foreign students admission

A foreign student is any foreign citizen who follows courses at a Slovak higher education institution. The green identity card entitles the holder to permanent residence in the SR. The holder has all the rights and duties of the Slovak citizen except the right to vote and the duty of military service. Such a foreigner is no longer considered as a foreign student.

There are no quotas established for foreign students.

Admission requirements: Foreign students must have qualifications equivalent to Slovak secondary education and have passed the General Certificate of Education examination or its equivalent. The age limit for admission is 30.

Entry regulations: A valid passport and a visa are required from certain countries.

Language requirements: Students must have an adequate knowledge of the Slovak language. Courses are organized by Comenius University in Bratislava. There are examinations at institution level.

Application procedures:

Apply to individual institution for entry to: Universities, higher education institutions.

Recognition of studies & qualifications:

Studies pursued in home country (System of recognition/accreditation): The Accreditation Commission is the advisory body of the Slovak Government and consists of prominent experts from higher education, scientific and other institutions. Its main purpose is to advise on establishing, amalgamating, dividing or abolishing higher education institutions and faculties. On the basis of recommendations of the Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, it may grant or withdraw the right of a higher education institution or faculty to organize state and postgraduate examinations, habilitation and procedures for the nomination of professors within individual disciplines.

Studies pursued in foreign countries (bodies dealing with recognition of foreign credentials): Slovak ENIC, NARIC, Centre for Equivalence of Diplomas, Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (Stredisko pre ekvivalenciu dokladov o vzdelaní)

Services provided & students dealt with: The Centre for Equivalence of Documents on Education provides recommendations for nostrification of diplomas and assists in cooperation with foreign partner centres in the solution of challenged issues.

STUDENT LIFE

Main student services at national level

- The Student Higher Education Council (Študentská rada vysokých škôl)
- National student associations and unions
- Association of Business and Management Students
- The Youth Council of Slovakia

Health/social provisions

Social security for home students: Yes

Social security for foreign students: No

Health insurance for foreign students can be provided individually for each student: for example life-insurance at his own expense.

Special student travel fares:

By road: Yes

By rail: Yes

By air: Yes

Available to foreign students: Yes

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & EXCHANGES

Principal national bodies that are responsible for dealing with international cooperation and exchanges in higher education:

- The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR)
- Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC)

The country participates in multilateral or bilateral higher education programmes:

CONSTANTIN, LEONARDO da VINCI, PHARE, SOCRATES, TEMPUS, ERASMUS

GRADING SYSTEM

- **Usual grading system at secondary schools:**

Full Description:

1	Excellent	výborný
2	Laudable	chvátilebný
3	Good	dobrý
4	Pass	dostatočný
5	Fail	nedostatočný

Highest on scale: 1

Lowest on scale: 5

The same system of grading is used **at basic schools**, however, some schools may use verbal assessment instead of grades expressed by marks 1-5, especially at basic first level.

- **Main grading system used by higher education institutions:**

Full Description:

A	Excellent	výborný	1
B	Laudable	vel'mi dobrý	1,5
C	Good	dobrý	2
D	Accepted results	uspokojivý	2,5

E	Pass	dostatočný	3
FX	Fail	nedostatočný	4

Highest on scale: A

Lowest on scale: FX

- **Other main grading systems:**

Credit system used at all faculties.

Sources:

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