

About the Education System of Slovenia

Education System of Slovenia

There are three levels of Slovenian education: basic, secondary and higher education. Applicants have a large set of options. They can decide, at which stage to complete their education and how to continue it depending on career plans or circumstances. The education system in Slovenia is designed to produce specialists with a decent knowledge base, at whatever level they decide to complete their studies. Basic school is the first stage in the Slovenian system of education.

Pre-school Education in Slovenia. Nursery school

General Information

Preschool education in Slovenia is not compulsory. There are public and private nursery schools. All public nursery schools work according to the accredited programs. Managers of private nursery schools are entitled to draw up their own programs, but they are also required to be publicly accredited. Every educator and assistant educator should have an appropriate pedagogical education, pass examinations and receive permission to work with children. Each year, the entire staff of nursery schools passes a medical examination.



Almost all nursery schools in Slovenia operate from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A nursery school can be selected in any district. Almost every nursery school has its own web page, where you can find information about programs, their costs, and simply get an idea of a nursery school and its educators.

Age Categories

In Slovenia, nursery schools accept children from 11 months. In total, there are 3 age categories:

- The first age category is from 1 to 3 years, each group includes 9–12 children.
- The second age category is from 3 to 4 years, each group includes 12–19 children.
- The third age category is from 4 to 6 years, each group includes 17–22 children.

Fees in Nursery Schools

The fees in Slovenian public nursery schools are little different from those in private ones, from 350 to 600 euros per month, depending on the program. If you send two children at once to a nursery school, the fee for the second child will be much lower.

If at least one parent is a tax resident in Slovenia and has permanent residence registration, you can rely on a subsidy from the state that is a reduced nursery school fee. The amount of compensation depends on the total family income. To obtain a nursery school subsidy from the government, please apply to the Social Protection Centre (Centri za socialno delo).

Child Adaptation in a New Nursery School

Once enrolled into a nursery school, during the first one–two weeks, a child will spend one hour in the nursery school, a few days later the child will stay in the nursery school until lunch. And in a week or two, after the preschool teacher’s approval, the child will stay for a full day.

Cooperation with Parents

Slovenian nursery schools organize active cooperation with parents (in groups and individually): consultations and meetings are held, parents participate in the preparation of show programs, discuss menu, excursions, etc.

Parents are sure to receive all the necessary information by e-mail or phone calls. The information on the learning process can be found on a notice board at the nursery school. There are also advertisement boards where children write wishes for their parents, for example, what they would like to receive as a gift for the New Year. Children also participate in the exhibitions of handicrafts. They make gifts for their parents with their own hands.

An Example of Daily Routine in a Slovenian Nursery School

Time	Activity
5:30 (6:00) a.m. – 7:30 a.m.	Child care, playing with children
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Individual learning games and group games, active games in gyms and game rooms, outdoor games, excursions.
12:30 p.m.	Dinner
1:30 p.m.	Day sleep
2:30 p.m.	Afternoon snack
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 (5:30) p.m.	Child care, active outdoor games and playing in game rooms

Meals in Nursery Schools

Web sites of nursery schools always provide a week menu for each age category. A list of potential allergen-containing ingredients is always provided together with the menu. If your child is allergic to any food product, you need to inform your group's preschool teacher, and your child's menu will be changed.

School Education in Slovenia. Primary School

Basic School

According to the legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, all children must necessarily receive basic general education that is to finish a basic school (in Slovene: osnovna šola). Training is free for both Slovenian citizens and foreign children.

Studying at a basic school lasts 9 years at the age from 6 to 15 years. At the end of the 6th and 9th grades, schoolchildren have to pass the National Knowledge Assessment Test (in Slovene: Nacionalno preverjanje znanja). Based on the received assessment result and combined with the overall performance, a 9th-grade pupil is given a permission to continue his/her education.

General Information

If you already live in Slovenia or are planning to move, and your child is already a pupil and soon turns 6 years old, it is time to think about school. In Slovenia, there is no division into primary and secondary schools, and at the age of six, children start their primary or basic education, which lasts for 9 years that is until they reach 14–15 years.



During the first four years, one teacher conducts all lessons, and in the first grade, there is one additional tutor. Subsequently and for the remaining 5 years of basic education, subject teachers will conduct classes. It may not be stated that the quality of education is better at certain schools. In Slovenia, the curriculums of all schools are publicly accredited. This means that children receive the same quality of education both in the capital's centre and in the smallest settlement.

Enrolment to a Basic School

The enrolment of children to public primary schools is regulated by *the applicable law*. Based on this law, children of the foreign citizens residing in the Republic of Slovenia have a right to compulsory general education under the same conditions as the Slovenes that is free of charge if they study in one of the public schools. However, school lunches (about € 2.5 per day for the academic year 2015/2016) and snacks (about 80 cents per day for the academic year 2015/2016) are to be paid. Books, stationery and excursions are paid as a one-time fee. In some cases, it is possible to apply for a meals subsidy.

Parents must apply for admission of their children to the first grade if in the current calendar year they turn 6 years old. It must be done in February of the current academic year so that your child could start leaning on 1 September. For foreigners, however, an exception could be made. Since school education in Slovenia is compulsory for everyone, a child could also be enrolled to school even later. For example, if you have recently moved to Slovenia, your schoolchild can immediately join the study process. Enrolment to school takes place in accordance with the age and grade completed in the previous school. All public basic *schools* are assigned to the regions, so that the application should be submitted to the schools at a place of residence. If there are vacant places in other schools, a child can be enrolled to any of them. In addition, there are *academic programs* in schools for children with special educational needs.

Will my Child Cope with the Program?

Each child is unique. For some children it is easy to study in a foreign language, for others it may be a bit more complicated. According to our experience, the younger the child is, the faster he/she adapts to the new environment. Do not worry: all teachers are ready to help, willing to give extra classes, ready to explain as much as you need. In addition, foreign students often receive free extra lessons of the Slovenian language, which are held as a “zero” lesson or after the main classes.

All school work under the five-point grading scale. Russian mark “3” matches the Slovenian mark “2” and “unsatisfactory” is “failing”. A non-achiever in Slovenia will sound like [tsvekar] or [tsvekarka]: [tsvek] is translated as a “nail”. It is compulsory to study thoroughly: you can get mark “5” only for your excellent knowledge. Never worry if your child repeats the grade. Adapting of each child to the school system, language and a new environment passes differently and takes different time. Nevertheless, from our own experience and experience of our friends, children quickly and confidently adapt to the new environment, especially if they participate in school life and attend different clubs and activities.

Documents for Enrolment

The necessary documents include a birth certificate/passport and a confirmation of temporary/permanent address of the child’s residence in Slovenia. When moving from other schools, a list of disciplines and marks from the prior place of learning translated into the Slovenian language and a certificate of grade completion will be required as well.

Academic Year in Slovenia

Academic year for schoolchildren begins on 1 September and ends around 26 June. Saturday, Sunday and public holidays are days off. A list of holidays in Slovenia can be found at the following [link](#).

In addition to public holidays, the Slovenes celebrate the Easter Sunday and the Easter Monday; the Day of the Holy Trinity (Pentecost); 15 August (the Assumption of the Virgin Mary), 21 October (the Reformation Day), and 25 December (the Nativity of Christ or Christmas).

School vacations in Slovenia for the academic year 2018/2019 were as follows:

School Vacations	from	to
Autumn	29 October 2018	2 November 2018
New Year	24 December 2018	2 January 2019
Winter	18 February 2019	22 February 2019
May Day	27 April 2019	3 May 2019
Summer	26 June 2019	31 August 2019

Approximate Day Schedule

Lessons start at 8 a.m., but those parents who need to go to work earlier, can lead a child to school as early as 6:30 a.m. Teachers will take care about children for an hour and a half before the classes start. A school academic hour lasts for 45 minutes. After the second lesson, there is a long 25-minutes break, during which children have a snack. Snack typically includes a sandwich and fruit.

From 11:40 a.m. to 1:45 p.m., children can have a hot lunch. After the sixth lesson, at 1:15 p.m., there is another long break. Typically, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, children should have an afternoon snack. At the end of classes, children can visit the extended day-care group and stay there until 4:30 p.m.

In addition, children can study in private schools:

- The Waldorf Basic School in Ljubljana and Maribor (*Waldorfska šola*). The school uses *an alternative teaching method*.
- The Alojzij Šuštarj Basic School (*Osnovna šola Alojzija Šuštarja*). Study programs of this school are based on the Catholic school programs.
- The Montessori Institute (*Montessori inštitut*). This institution uses the program of pedagogy and education *developed by Montessori*.

Finally, there are four international schools in Slovenia.

The *British*, *American* and *French* schools offer the academic programs from the education systems of three countries, respectively. Most of the teachers in these schools are native

speakers. The *IBSL* cannot be ignored as well, which is the International Bilingual School of Ljubljana.

Extracurricular Activities

In Slovenia, schoolchildren are taught to love active lifestyle from a young age: they participate in school fairs, performances, sports teams and clubs, go on excursions, hiking in the mountains and so on.

Exams

In the 6th and 9th grades, schoolchildren pass the mandatory *state exams*. In the 6th grade of a basic school, the exams include tests in mathematics and the first foreign language, as well as an examination on the Slovenian, Italian or Hungarian languages, depending on the region of residence. In the 9th grade, children pass examinations in mathematics and the Slovenian, Italian or Hungarian languages, as well as in one more subject chosen by a child from an approved list.

After the 9th grade, schoolchildren move to the next educational level. They can go to a regular grammar school or to a specialized gymnasium with a focus on certain subjects or profession.

Secondary Education

Schoolchildren, who graduated from basic schools, can choose what type of secondary education they want to receive depending on their basic school academic performance, career aspirations and plans. In Slovenia, there are 4 types of secondary education:

1) Minimum Vocational Education

If a pupil has only 7 years of basic school, he/she can receive a minimum vocational education, which is aimed at preparing children for the mastery of future profession. Training on such a programme lasts 2 years and ends with a final examination, according to which children can continue studying at a vocational school.

2) Secondary Vocational Education

Secondary vocational education (in Slovene: Srednje poklicno izobraževanje, SPI) is available for students who have completed a basic school or received a minimum vocational education. In secondary vocational educational institutions, students study for three years and master applied professions such as carpenter, mechanic, glazier, hairdresser, baker, etc.

Vocational schools offer apprenticeship programmes that are supported in Slovenia at the national level. If the country experiences a lack of qualified personnel in a certain field of expertise, then students of corresponding study programmes can be trained in practice by a real employer. This facilitates the search for job and helps students better solidify the theoretical knowledge and soon feel engaged in the working process and team. At the end of studies, students have to pass a final examination.

If a student has a desire to continue his/her education at a university or a vocational college, he/she must pass the General Final Examination (in Slovene: matura), which includes Slovenian language, Mathematics and a foreign language. There are also paid **preparatory courses** (in Slovene: Maturitetni tečaj), during which students are trained to pass the exams.

3) Secondary Technical and Vocational Education

Students can get a secondary technical and vocational education after completing studies at a basic school. The training lasts 4 years and is aimed at obtaining in-depth knowledge within a specific technical or economic profession.

At the end of studies, a Professional Final Examination (in Slovene: Poklicna matura) should be passed. The result of this exam involves enrolling in a vocational college or university for a professional Bachelor's degree programme. If students have passed the General Final Examination (in Slovene: matura), they can later apply for a university Bachelor's degree programme.

4) General Secondary Education

Children can also receive general secondary education in gymnasiums. There are schoolchildren who want to continue their studies and receive higher education. That is why gymnasiums are so popular among applicants. These are usually the schoolchildren who passed successfully the National Knowledge Assessment Test at a basic school and were successful in all disciplines.

There are different types of gymnasiums:

- a **general gymnasium**, where students study general subjects, such as Slovenian language, World Literature, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, History, Biology, etc.;
- a **classical gymnasium**, where students, besides basic subjects, also study Latin and have more lectures on History and Philosophy;
- a **gymnasium with in-depth study of foreign languages or natural sciences**;
- a **sport gymnasium, which is usually chosen by** young professional athletes.

When passing the **General Final Examination** (Matura), students take tests in the Slovenian Language and World Literature, Mathematics, English and two optional subjects. After graduating from a gymnasium, students can enter a university.

Vocational education in Slovenia

In Europe, as well as in Slovenia there is a high demand for skilled professionals. According to the statistics, the German labor market needs 150,000 specialists with the secondary professional education ([DW](#), 2015).



Vocational education

Vocational education is the most demanded class of workers in the European labor market, which focuses on the attainment of specific, practical set of skills and knowledge.

Apart from the theoretical and practical knowledge, which you get while studying at the vocational education institution in Slovenia, you also get *the working experience in the European Union*, which will give you an advantage when applying for employment.

After the graduation from the Vocational institution, the graduate can find employment both in Slovenia and in other EU countries.

Study year

In Slovenia, the full-time studies start on 1 October and the part-time studies on 31 October. The study year officially end on 30 September of the following year.

In order to pass a unit, all the seminars, exams and practice has to be done before 1 October. The vocational programs are based on the modular educational system. Usually, students are

studying one or two subjects for 2 months and then after the end of the “module” they pass the exams, and the process repeats until the end of the year. There are also periods to retake the exams, which are normally held in January, June and September.

The holidays are twice a year: in winter and summer. The dates depend on your results during the exams and practice.

Student dormitory

Most of the vocational institutions have a student dormitory (študentski dom), which are modern and clean. The cost varies from €120 to €250 per month, depending on the number of people in the room, food and the service in general. The usual price for a room for two people is around €120 – €160 per month.

Student discounts

The students studying at public and private vocational institutes have the same rights and entitlements as students studying at the tertiary institutions.

In Slovenia students benefit from a special system of discounts, which include lunch discounts almost at every café and restaurant, discounted fares for public transport, museums, exhibitions, cinemas and more. As a student you have the opportunity to use student discounts for interstate transport, traveling within the Schengen Zone cheaply and with no need for another visa.

The students can apply for a scholarship and also have the right to work*

** — The employment for students can be done via the Student service (študentski servis). It's an official organization representing the interests of students, provides assistance in finding a job, issues student discounts and assists in adaptation in Slovenia.*

Vocational College

Training in vocational colleges (in Slovene: Višje strokovno izobraževanje) is available to graduates of gymnasiums and secondary vocational schools, who have already worked for three years and passed the Slovenian language, Mathematics and Foreign Language exams (in Slovene: Poklicna matura).

Vocational colleges offer more study programmes than universities do. These programmes are focused on developing practical skills in such areas as Tourism, Wellness, Economics, Logistics, Security, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Two-year studies end with the diploma defence.

Higher education in Slovenia

Higher Education

Slovenian education is recognized at the international level. Training is conducted according to the Bologna system. An increasing number of universities keep introducing study programmes in English into the academic process.

Higher education in Slovenia for foreigners is provided on a paid basis, although the tuition fee is relatively low. Slovenian education is recognized throughout the EU, so graduates of Slovenian educational institutions can continue their studies in other EU countries. If desired, they can enter a Master's degree programme in any other country of the European Union and participate in student exchange programmes.



Advantages of Higher Education in Slovenia

- EU education and international diploma.
- A wide range of programmes and faculties.
- Residence permit with the right to work—a residence permit for the purpose of studies.

- Affordable tuition fees.
- Ability to apply for three different programmes at one time.
- Study programmes in Slovenian and/or English.
- Opportunity to receive a scholarship upon good academic performance. Educational grants for students of master's and post-graduate programmes.
- European and international exchange programs for students including Erasmus.
- Internships and opportunity to work in European companies from the first year of study.
- Well developed system of student bonuses (up discount in restaurants, museums, libraries, cultural events and public transport).
- Ability to travel freely around all EU countries.
- Culturally diverse and tolerant environment, calm mentality and interesting language experience.

University



Students who have completed secondary education and successfully passed the General Final Examination can enter a university and receive a Bachelor's degree in Management, Marketing, Business, Construction and other majors. There are university and vocational Bachelor's degree programmes. The difference between them is that vocational programmes involve more practical subjects.

Bachelor's degree programmes in Slovenia usually last 3 years and end with the thesis defence. After graduation from a Bachelor's degree programme, students can continue their studies and receive a Master's degree.

Studying under a Master's degree programme (in Slovene: Podiplomski študij) lasts 2 years and ends with the Master's thesis defence. Some programmes (for example, International Relations, Law) offer the "4 + 1" system, which is 4 years of Bachelor's degree and 1 year of master's degree studies. Students can receive PhD degree in Slovenian universities for 2–4 years. Studying under a PhD degree programme also ends with the defence of a doctoral thesis.

In Slovenia, there are:

- *state universities* ([University of Ljubljana](#), [University of Maribor](#), [University of Primorska](#), [University in Nova Gorica](#));
- *private universities* (New University, University in Novo Mesto);
- *international universities* (Alma Mater Europaea, EMUNI);
- *private institutes*.

Admission and Tuition Fees in Slovenian Universities

- Mostly there are no entrance exams (except for specialized programmes, such as journalism, Slovenian language and culture studies, pedagogy, creative programmes).
- Admission to the majority of programmes does not require passing the Slovenian language test or providing an English language certificate (TOEFL/IELTS).
- All study programmes are implemented in the Slovenian or English languages depending on the programme and the teachers' preferences.

Thus, in order to enter a university in Slovenia, you have to provide documents, your education certificates have to gain the academic approval and, of course, pass all admission rounds successfully.

The higher education system in Slovenia includes 3 levels

Level 1: Bachelor's degree—3–4 years (dodiplomski študij);

Level 2: Master's degree —1–2 years (podiplomski študij);

Level 3: Doctor's degree—3 years (doktorat).

There are four state universities in Slovenia

– ***University of Ljubljana*** (Univerza v Ljubljani). It enters the world's Top-500 best universities according to the academic ranking. It is the largest university in Slovenia. It comprises 23 faculties and 3 academies of arts.

– ***University of Maribor*** (Univerza v Mariboru). It is the second largest university in Slovenia. First, the School of Economics and Commerce was established in 1959. The university received its status in 1975. At the moment, the university includes 17 faculties.

– ***University of Primorska*** (Univerza na Primorskem). It entered the register in 2003. The university includes 9 faculties and is located in Koper.

– ***University of Nova Gorica*** (Univerza v Novi Gorici). The University was founded on the basis of the School of Environmental Sciences in 1995. In 2006, it was renamed into the University of Nova Gorica. It consists of four faculties, the School of Viticulture and Ecology, the School of Arts,

the Graduate School, and several research institutes and laboratories well-known throughout Slovenia.

Two International Universities

- **Alma Mater Europaea.** The International University with the centre in Salzburg (Austria) opened a higher education institution in Maribor in 2007. The university has faculties in Ljubljana, Murska Sobota and Ptuj. Now, the university has six first-degree programmes, nine second-degree programmes and doctoral studies.

- **European-Mediterranean University** (EMUNI Evro-sredozemska univerza). Since its foundation in 2008, the European-Mediterranean University has become one of the priority projects of the Mediterranean Union. Currently, it offers several international second-degree programmes and doctoral studies.

In Slovenia, there are 47 private specialized faculties including art academies. Basically, these are highly specialized faculties that pay special attention to the practical side of education. All private faculties in Slovenia have state accreditation. Professors invited from around the world and professionals employed according to their degree fields in successful European companies conduct lectures and seminars of all current programmes. Besides, study tours to various companies throughout Europe are organized.