

UNESCO National Commission Country Report Template

Under the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference ([WHEC2022](#))

[Section for Higher Education](#) | Division for Education 2030

Higher Education Report: SLOVENIA

UNESCO National Commission in alliance with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

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Ljubljana, 30/3/2022

Abstract

Slovenia set a goal to increase, by 2030, the tertiary educational attainment, so that at least 50 % of Slovene citizens, that are 30 -34 years old, should have at least a first cycle degree. To achieve this goal, traditional enrolment is not sufficient and Slovenia needs to create lifelong learning opportunities in higher education through developing an ecosystem for micro credentials, which is foreseen by 2025 for all EU member states.

In the frame of the Recovery and resilience plan, Slovenia is implementing a reform for a green and resilient transition to Society 5.0, which aims to ensure higher education is more adaptable, resilient and responsive to the environmental needs and consequently improves the relevance of its role for economic recovery, increasing productivity, promoting cohesion and a balanced societal, environmental and economic development. To achieve this goal, the reform has to address areas of content (curriculum development and delivery), infrastructure (the supporting environment connected to the organisation of study process in the broader sense) and the adaptation of the legal normative framework.

Content

Abstract	1
Content.....	2
Acronyms.....	3
Presentation.....	4
Current situation of higher education.....	4
1.1 Historical enrolment and graduation rates.....	4
1.2 Quantity and types of higher education institutions	5
1.3 Legal and institutional framework of higher education.....	6
1.4. Another relevant subheading.....	Napaka! Zaznamek ni definiran.
Current challenges in higher education	8
Challenge 1.....	8
Challenge 2.....	Napaka! Zaznamek ni definiran.
Towards 2030 and beyond: recommendations for the future	8
Recommendation 1.....	8
Recommendation 2.....	8
Recommendation 3.....	9
References.....	10
Annexes	11
Annex 1.....	11
Annex 2.....	11

Acronyms

NPVŠ - Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education by 2030

HE – Higher Education

HEIs – Higher Education Institutions

NAKVIS - Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

SOK - Slovenian Qualifications Framework

eVŠ - Record and Analytical Information System of Higher Education in the Republic of Slovenia

[Note: The following narrative, including footnotes, should not exceed 4,000 words – this does not include references and any annexes]

Presentation

The report is prepared in light of the WHE conference 2022 themes. The current situation takes into account all legislative changes until 30. March 2022. The challenges and recommendations are mostly viewed in the context of: SDG 4: Quality education; SGD 8: Decent work and economic growth; SGD 5: Gender equality; SGD 10: Reduced inequality; SGD 13: Climate action.

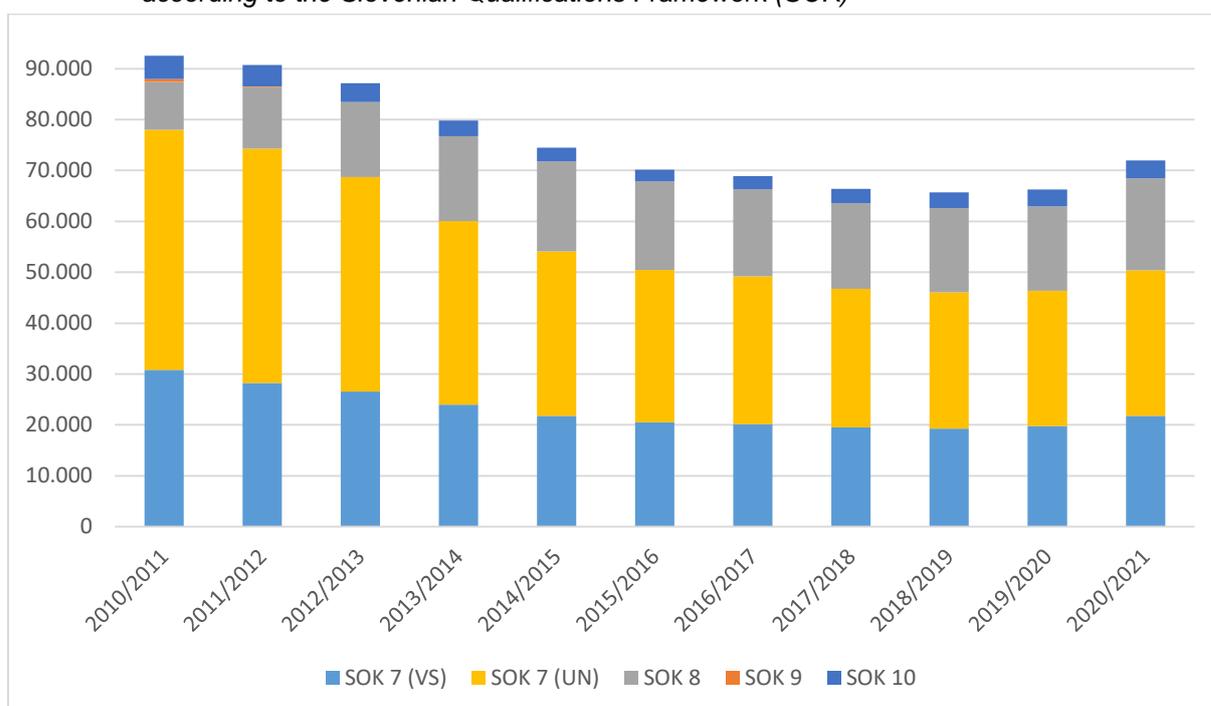
Current situation of higher education

1.1 Historical enrolment and graduation rates

The number of students has decreased by 22.3% in the last ten years, which would be 29.8% without taking into account foreign students. Enrolment declined in both full-time and part-time studies. The reduction in the number of students varies between cycles of study. The largest decrease (23.9%) was recorded in doctoral studies, which can be linked to the transition from four- to three-year study programs.

More female than male students are enrolled at all study levels. The ratio between male and female students has been around 60:40 for the last ten years. In the 2020/21 academic year, 60.5% of female students and 39.5% of male students were enrolled. The proportion varies between cycles of study. The highest share of female students is in master's studies (61.9%), while male students have the highest share in doctoral studies, where they represent 45.7% of those enrolled.

Picture 1: Students in academic years 2010 / 11–2020 / 21 by achieved level of education, according to the Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SOK)

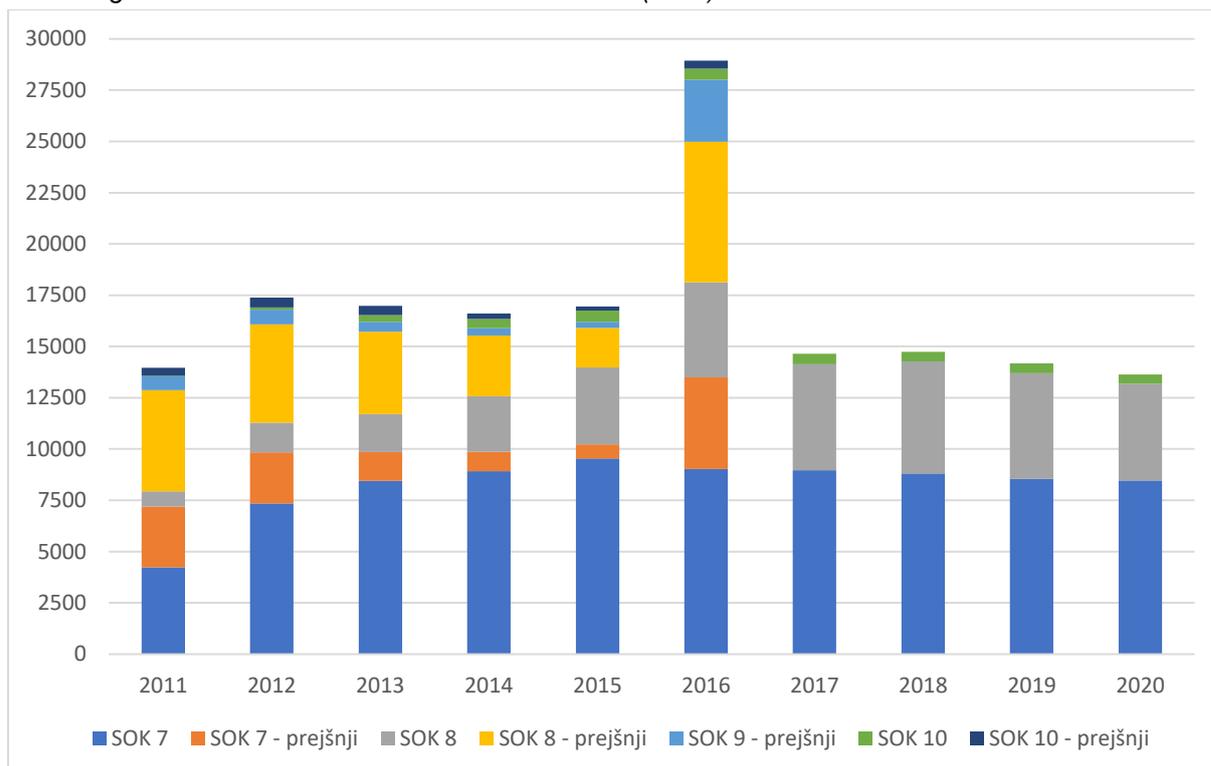


Source: eVŠ; Legend: SOK 7 (VS) includes students of higher professional study programs of the first level and these programs accredited before 11 June 2004. SOK 7 (UN) includes students of university study

programs of the first level, uniform master's study programs of the second level and undergraduate study programs, accredited before 11 June 2004.

From the 2009/10 academic year on, HEIs in Slovenia can offer only the so-called Bologna study programmes (study programmes accredited after 11 June 2004). Previous study programmes expired on 30 September 2016, when the deadline for graduating from these study programmes expired.

Picture 2: Number of graduates in the period 2011-2020 by achieved level of education, according to the Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SOK)



Legend: the word "prejšnji" (translated: former, pre-bologna) applies to study programmes accredited before 11 June 2004 (the so-called pre-Bologna study programs).

1.2 Quantity and types of higher education institutions

The types of higher education institutions (HEIs) include universities, faculties, academies of arts and higher professional colleges. Member institutions of a university include faculties, academies of arts or higher professional colleges.

The HEIs are divided – according to their founder – into public (founded by the state) and private (founded by domestic or non-domestic legal entities or natural persons).

In 2021 there was a total of 105 HEIs (3 public universities with 50 members, 1 public free-standing faculty, 3 private universities with 14 members and 41 private free-standing HEIs).

All public and private HEIs must be accredited with the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS). This is a prerequisite that a HEIs must meet in order to carry out its

activities. In order for a HEI to issue formal degrees, the study programmes must be approved by the state, which is achieved through accreditation with the NAKVIS. The HEIs need to obtain a decision on reaccreditation at least every five years. Since 2016, the reaccreditation of study programmes was abandoned in favour of the institutional reaccreditation.

According to the relevant legislation, universities are autonomous, scientific, research oriented, artistic and educational HEIs. Their mission is to develop science, professionalism, and arts. Universities are multi-disciplinary institutions, composed of faculties, art academies and higher professional colleges. Through education, they equip their students with knowledge and provide them with competences for further education or employment. They must comply with the criteria for the provision of study programmes of all three cycles.

Faculties perform research and educational activities in fields of one or more related or interconnected scientific disciplines and take great care in their development. Faculties may be established when the requirements for at least two cycles of study (the first and second, or second and third cycle) are met.

Academies of art perform artistic and educational activities in the fields of one or more related or interconnected artistic disciplines and take great care in their development. Academies of art may be established when the requirements for at least two cycles of study (the first and second, or second and third cycle) are met.

Higher professional colleges perform educational activities of one or more related or interlinked trades or occupational fields and take great care in their development. Higher professional colleges may be established when they meet the requirements for at least the first cycle of study. Higher professional colleges may also perform research or artistic activities if this is specified in their charters and meets all the requirements. If the charter stipulates and the accreditation procedure concludes that the college has at its disposal adequate higher education teaching staff and meets the requirements for scientific research or arts, the college may also provide master's study programmes; otherwise it may provide such programmes in cooperation with universities, faculties or art academies.

All HEIs may, in addition to degree programmes, also carry out non-degree supplementary study programmes of lifelong learning.

1.3 Legal and institutional framework of higher education

According to the Slovene constitution, Slovene universities are autonomous.

The Higher Education Act regulates issues pertaining to the status of higher education institutions and the requirements for the performance of higher education activities, defines public service in higher education and regulates its system of funding. It also regulates status issues of libraries and institutes and other institutions whose activities are required for the fulfilment of higher education activities, provided that they have been established as part of universities (university member institutions) and student halls of residence.

Resolution on the National programme of higher education by 2030 was adopted by the parliament in March 2022 and is the main development and guidance document and as such also the key strategic document for the formulation of quality goals, criteria, measures and policies in the field of the Slovenian higher education. It comprehensively addresses the field of higher education, in particular with a view to raising the level of quality of higher education in

Slovenia, increasing the responsiveness, flexibility and attractiveness of the higher education system to the needs of the economy, non-economy and society, strengthening its integration into the international environment, improving access to education and opportunities for continuing education and lifelong learning in higher education throughout Slovenia, increasing the intensity of research and innovation and improving the transfer of knowledge to the environment. Detailed Action Plans and a Strategy for Internationalisation and a Strategy for Digitalisation will be prepared by the end of this year.

Other regulatory provisions:

- Criteria for the accreditation and external evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes
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- Criteria for credit assignment to study programmes according to ECTS [
- Criteria for transferring between study programmes
- Criteria for experts of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency in the field of Higher Education
- Criteria for international cooperation in higher education
- Minimum standards for election to the titles of higher education teachers, researchers and higher education associates at higher education institutions
- Rules on the conditions, criteria and procedure for admission and extension of stay in student dormitories
- Rules on the procedure for enrolment and deletion from the register of private higher education teachers
- Rules on diploma supplement
- Rules on pre-enrolment announcement and enrolment in higher education
- Rules on development activities in higher education
- Rules on subsidising the accommodation of students
- Rules of subsidized student meals
- Regulations on tuition fees and accommodation in public students' dormitories for Slovene nationals without Slovene citizenship and foreigners in the Republic of Slovenia
- Rules on tuition fees and other contributions in higher education
- Rules on the provision of data for eVŠ (Record and analytical information system of higher education in the Republic of Slovenia)
- Student constitution
- Decree on budgetary financing of higher education institutions and other institutions
- Decree on financing of doctoral studies
- Students Association Act
- Professional and Academic Titles Act

- Subsidized Student Meals Act
- Student Status Act

Current challenges in higher education

Challenge 1.

According to the NPVŠ, the goal is to increase tertiary educational attainment so that at least 50 % of Slovene citizens, that are 30 -34 years old, should have at least one of the higher education study levels of by 2030.

To achieve that goal, we need to promote lifelong learning opportunities in HE and establish flexible study paths. We see an opportunity in building an ecosystem for micro credentials, which is foreseen by 2025 for all EU member states.

Challenge 2.

Design of learning pathways (how could we create the learning experiences to achieve Green/Sustainable reality and ensure people can obtain skills needed throughout their working carer and personal life).

Challenge 3.

Culture & values (which culture and values should underpin the whole educational reality?). Green transition brings a new paradigm and social values and requires a comprehensive approach to the adaptation of teaching and learning in higher education.

Towards 2030 and beyond: recommendations for the future

The need to reform higher education for a green and resilient transition to Society 5.0 (a system that is responsive to environmental needs and creates a highly skilled workforce for the professions of the future). For this purpose, it is necessary to co-create a study process and curriculum that is adapted to (local) needs of the economy and society and provides graduates with digital knowledge and competencies for sustainable development (including low-carbon circular economy). It is necessary to prepare starting points for investing in green, sustainable and digitally connected higher education, which will be the basis for systemic changes in higher education at three levels:

Recommendation 1.

In terms of content: curricular modernisation of higher education with the introduction of competencies that are crucial for the green and digital transition, taking into account the needs of the labour market in terms of knowledge and skills and their restructuring of existing and future workforce to create Society 5.0 with lifelong learning concepts.

Recommendation 2.

In terms of norm: optimization and increased flexibility of the study process and offer of study programs as well as of a sufficient number of enrolment places according to the societal/market needs.

Recommendation 3

In terms of infrastructure: in support of a changing study process with increased use of ICT and taking into account the environmental aspect of greening; e.g. development of a sustainable and smart lecture hall, low-carbon ethical digitization using intelligent equipment.

References

1. Higher Education Act: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO172>
2. Eurydice Slovenia

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/higher-education-77_en

3. Resolution on the National programme of higher education2030

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO139&d-49681-o=2&d-49681-p=1&d-49681-s=2&tab=analiticni&scrollTop=443>

4. Recovery and Resilience plan: Reform of higher education for a green and resilient transition to Society 5.0 - national document
5. eVŠ (record and analytical information system of higher education in the Republic of Slovenia): <https://portal.evs.gov.si/prijava/>
Slovenian Qualification Framework (SOK): <https://www.nok.si/en>

Annexes

Annex 1

Annex 2