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This VET in Europe report is part of a series prepared by Cedefop’s ReferNet network. VET in Europe reports provide an overview of national vocational education and training (VET) systems of the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. The reports help to understand VET’s main features and role within countries’ overall education and training systems from a lifelong learning perspective, and VET’s relevance to and interaction with the labour market.

The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop.

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1. CHAPTER External factors influencing VET

1.1. Demographics

In 2017, Slovenia’s population was 2,065,895 (1). It had increased annually by 0.1% on average in the past four years due to continued relatively low positive net migration and natural increase.

According to new 2015 population projections (Eurostat (2018e)) the population is going to rise slowly until 2024 due to higher net migration and higher life expectancy and then fall by 6% until 2070. The age structure is going to change substantially between 2017 and 2070 (Figure 1). While the number of children and young (0-19 years) will remain almost unchanged compared to the year 2017, the share of older than 65 will rise by 43% and there will be one fifth fewer of those in the active age (20-64 years old). The increase in the number of older people is due to the larger generations born after the Second World War until 1980 and increased life expectancy. The old age dependency ratio will almost double. It has been rising rapidly in recent years owing to the declining number of working-age people and a rising number of older people.

Figure 1. Population by age in 2017, 2030 and 2070

This situation emerged in 2012 not only because a large post-war generation exited from the labour force and joined the ranks of the older population, but mainly because, smaller

(1) Data as of 1 January; statistical definition for the population is harmonised with the definition for the population and migrants in The Regulation on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection. The Slovenian population consists of persons with a permanent or temporary residence in Slovenia for one year or more and not temporarily absent from Slovenia for one year or more.
cohorts born in the early 1990s started to enter the group of the working-age population. In 2017, there were 30.7 older people per 100 working-age people in Slovenia. Projections show that the number of older people will continue to increase for three decades, when the generations born up to the beginning of the 1980s (when around 30 000 children were born per year, after that almost 10 000 fewer) will be transitioning into old age. In 2017, there was already almost more than one-quarter more old people than children.

As a result, the education and training system will need to prepare for the challenges presented by the ageing population. The State has already responded by adopting the Active ageing strategy (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the RS hereinafter IMAD, 2017) (see Chapter 1.5.2) and Comprehensive Support to Companies for Active Aging of Employees (Public Scholarship, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the RS hereinafter Public Fund, 2017b) (see Chapter 1.7) aimed at increasing the vocational competences of the adult population.

1.2. Economics and labour market

The Slovenian economy is strongly integrated into the international environment, where now, after the economic crisis, stimulating economic conditions prevail. The latter increases external demand, which strengthens Slovenian exports, which thus remains the main generator of economic growth in Slovenia. According to the European Commission (2018), however, in 2019 growth is set to become more domestically driven. Continuing economic growth has a positive impact on the recovery of the Slovenian labour market; therefore also a wage growth and a significant reduction in unemployment.

From 2014, the country recorded positive shifts in average annual GDP growth in several areas. In a climate of increased foreign demand, improved economic competitiveness and stronger government investment, annual GDP growth was 3%. Slovenia’s development gap, which arises from lower productivity compared with the EU average, started to narrow only in 2016 and is still considerably wider then before the crisis (85% in 2017 compared to 90% in 2008). Therefore, it remains the key aspect that needs to be strengthened (Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD, 2018).

The employment rate for the 15 to 64 age group has increased since 2014. In 2015-17, the increase accelerated by 4.1 pp which was, among other factors, the result of the inclusion of those who had not actively sought employment until then. In 2018 and 2019, the employment is expected to grow at a slower pace, due to labour shortages. An indicator for the improvement of the labour market conditions from 2015 onwards is the higher rate of transition from unemployment to employment (2) and the higher job-finding rate (3) (Figure 2).

(2) The net flows of transition from employment to unemployment reflect the difference between the number of workers transitioning from employment to unemployment and the number of workers transitioning from unemployment to employment. Negative flows reflect a decline in the number of unemployed people.
With the recovery of the economy since 2014, the employment rate has grown significantly in all age groups (15-24, 25-49 and 50-64). This was especially evident in 2016 and 2017, due to measures to stabilise economic conditions, the strengthening of the economic cycle and improved competitiveness. Despite that, the employment rate for the older population (55-64) remains among the lowest in the EU because of a relatively early retirement, which has undermined the long-term sustainability of the pension system (IMAD, 2018).

The trends of employment rate were different for different education groups in 2015-17. Despite high economic activity, the employment rate of low skilled fell by 0.3 pp. On the other hand, the employment rate of the population with tertiary education (ISCED levels 5-8) increased rapidly from 2015 onwards and is well above the EU average (see Annex 1, Table 1).

During the economic downturn, the rise in the unemployment rate was especially high for the young. In 2015-2017, because of a solid economic growth, the unemployment rate dropped significantly for all age groups (see Annex 1, Table 2). Whereby, under these conditions, wage pressures are set to rise (European Commission, 2018). As a result, higher wages could undermine external competitiveness.

Due to increased employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector in the years of economic recovery, the unemployment rate for workers with ISCED 0-2 fell, in the period 2015-17 by 3.1 pp. The unemployment rate for those with ISCED 3-4 qualifications fell, too, in the period 2015-17 by 3.2 pp. For those with ISCED 5-8 qualifications the drop in

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(3) The job-finding rate can be interpreted as the probability of transitioning from unemployment to employment. It is expressed as a percentage of unemployed persons who were unemployed in the previous quarter and entered employment in the next quarter.
unemployment rate was the smallest by 0.5 pp among all educational levels. These trends indicate an overall improvement in the labour market in recent years.

Structural imbalances increased slightly during the crisis years (see Annex 1, Tables 3). However, high employment growth and active employment policy (AEP) measures reduced the long-term unemployment rate (5.3% at its peak), starting with a 0.6 pp drop in 2015, which was followed by another drop in 2016 and 2017 by 0.4 pp and 1.2 pp respectively. The share of the long-term unemployed in the total number of unemployed remained large until 2016, then fell under 50% in 2017, but it remained above the EU average. The long-term unemployed are at risk of their knowledge and skills becoming obsolete, which reduces their employment prospects. Therefore, additional activation and training measures to improve the employability of the long-term unemployed is required (IMAD, 2018).

1.3. Structure of the labour force by educational attainment

According to the labour force survey, approximately one-half of employees are VET graduates at ISCED level 3. This share decreased in 2017 (see also Annex 1, Table 5) and was at its lowest point during 2012-17. Younger age groups, where the share of those with VET at ISCED level 3 is lower, are now entering the labour market. In contrast, the share of the employed with ISCED 5–8 levels of education is on the rise, especially among younger age groups (25-34 years) because of the high participation rate of the young in tertiary education.

The share of employees and VET graduates at ISCED level 3 is much higher for men, while the share of employees with ISCED 5-8 levels of education is higher for women. This relates to trends for enrolment in formal education. In terms of ISCED 3, the share of those enrolled in VET is higher for men than for women. In contrast, there is a higher share of women enrolled in general ISCED 3 and, thereafter, in ISCED 5-8.

According to the labour force survey data, in 2017 49.6% of unemployed have a VET qualification at ISCED level 3. This percentage has decreased since 2012, due to the increased demand for persons with VET at ISCED level 3 because of economic recovery. Conversely, the share of unemployed with ISCED levels 5-8 qualifications increased. This is due to the high number of tertiary education graduates, modest cooperation of tertiary education with enterprises and lack of working places for them. The share of unemployed with ISCED 0–2 has decreased because of increased employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

There is a gap between the education structure of employees in the private sector and those employed in public service (Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia SORS, farmers not included). The share of employees with VET at ISCED 3 level is much higher in the private sector (Figure 3), which is connected to the private sector types of work and work requirements, especially in the following sectors: transportation and storage, construction, mining and quarrying (see also Annex 1, Table 6).

Figure 3. Share of people in employment with VET, total and by activity (NACE Rev.2), 2016 (%)
NB: According to the data for 1 September. People in employment are people in paid employment and self-employed people, except for farmers.

Source: SORS.

The share of employees with VET at ISCED level 3 is lower in the public sector because of the sectors characteristics: human health and social work activities in addition to education, public administration, defence and security. Moreover, the share of employees with ISCED level 0-2 qualifications is much higher in the private sector than in the public sector. In private sector, skills mismatches exist. Employees with ISCED level 0-2 are commonly in occupations that demand ISCED 3-4 level of qualification (craft and related trades workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers). Since the recovery of the economy, demand for employees with ISCED 3-4 VET is on the rise and not in alignment with the enrolled number of young people. The share of employees with ISCED levels 5-8 is much higher in the public than in the private sector. The education field leads the way, where the majority of employees are teachers and are required to hold ISCED level 5-8 qualifications.

1.4. Labour market supply and demand mismatch

The Predictor of employment 2018/1 (ESS, 2018) (4) survey showed that 43.9% of employers were unable to find enough appropriate candidates, whereas this share was even higher (68.8%) in big companies and have been increasing over the last years. This is a consequence of several factors. One is the inadequate past structure of enrolment in ISCED 3-4 and ISCED 5-8 levels of education and insufficient cooperation of education with enterprises. The next are demographic trends (ageing population and shrinking population of...
young people, available on the labour market). Then there is the recovery of the economy and an increased demand for labour force (at ISCED 3-4 level). It will be important to ensure an appropriately educated supply to the labour market, because the ageing population together with economic growth will increase the demand for ISCED 3-4 level labour force.

There is a consistently high demand for the following occupations: welders, drivers, and workers for simple manufacturing tasks, toolmakers, sellers, waiters, warehouse employees, soldiers and household assistants. These occupations require ISCED 3-4 level VET qualifications and enable better chances of finding employment than others. The past structure of enrolment in upper secondary education resulted in shortages for some occupations, especially those at ISCED 3-4 VET.

Employers face the biggest problems with finding appropriate candidates for work in the following fields of activities: information and communication, other services and in health and social care. 69.0% of employers mentioned lack of working experiences (39.6%), inappropriate education (30.8%) and lack of vocational specific knowledge (22.7%) as influencing factors to difficulties employing new candidates.

1.5. Education attainment

1.5.1. Young people

Trends (the number and structure of people enrolled in different types of education programmes) regarding ISCED 3 education and graduates (the number and structure) influence the labour market supply.

The share of young people, enrolled in ISCED 3 VET programmes totalled 64.7% in the 2017/18, and 35.3% in general education. In 2012-17, the share of young people increased in favour of the VET programmes (Annex 1 Table 8 and Figure 4). Education preferences of the young have changed over the years. The labour market conditions for those with ISCED level 5-8 qualifications have deteriorated sharply since the beginning of the crisis (2008), which created more interest in ISCED 3 VET. Over the last years, different policy measures such as introducing apprenticeship, scholarship policy and different campaigns for attracting young people to VET were introduced. (See Chapter 2.2.1.1 and Chapter 4)

The share of young people, enrolled in ISCED 3 VET is high compared to the EU average. However, most have direct enrolment into ISCED level 5-8 programmes, which together with free of charge study for students enrolled in Bologna 1st and 2nd cycle stimulates them to enrol in tertiary education and thus postpone entry into the labour market. Wages for the employees with ISCED 3 VET are on average much lower than those with tertiary education and thus stimulate participation in tertiary education. Demographic changes must be borne in mind (the decreasing number of young people entitled to enrol in ISCED 3 education). That is why, despite the constantly high participation rate of the young in ISCED 3 education, the number of enrolments in VET decreased, especially in the long term period (2005-17), although not as much as in general education programmes.
Figure 4. Young people enrolled in ISCED level 3 education by type of programme, 2012/13–2017/18

Source: SORS.
The share of graduates in ISCED 3 VET increased in 2012/13-2016/17 and was 61.9% at the end of this period. The number of ISCED 3 VET graduates decreased due to decreasing enrolments in the past (Figure 5), but to a lesser extent than in general programmes. Regarding demographic changes (population ageing) and the need to ensure more workers, the issue to be dealt with in the future is how to increase the number of young people in ISCED 3 VET.

Figure 5. Young people, graduating in ISCED 3 education, by type of educational programme, 2005/06-2016/17

Among VET, there is a constant demand from employers for young people with vocational upper secondary education. A positive development was observed in 2012-17 (Annex 1 Table 8 and Figure 4), despite that, their number is low.

In the structure of enrolments in ISCED level 3 programmes, around one-quarter are enrolled in science and technology. During the 2012-17 period, the share of enrolments in this area and their number increased (see Annex 1, Table 7), which is favourable from the employers' perspective, who face problems with finding candidates for some occupations (e.g. technicians, welders, toolmakers). In the structure of young people, graduating in ISCED level 3 programs the share in general programmes decreased mostly in 2012-16 period, while in engineering, manufacturing and construction increased the most (Figure 6).
In the past few years, measures were introduced for greater cooperation between VET and enterprises, raising the quality and attractiveness of VET:

(a) The Apprenticeship Act was adopted in 2017 and consequently apprenticeship was introduced in vocational upper secondary education in the school year 2017/18 (see Chapter 2.2.1.1)

(b) Scholarships for shortage occupations are intended to encourage the young people to embark on education for occupations where a discrepancy exists between current and future labour market supply and demand. In 2017, 1 018 students were chosen with public tender (Public Fund, 2017a).

(c) In 2016, a measure for increasing teachers' competences was introduced. Teachers spent some time in enterprises, where they increased their practical knowledge. Meanwhile, a representative from the enterprise or an unemployed person substituted them in school (CPI, 2016).
1.5.2. Adults

Skills mismatches among adults lower their possibilities to adapt to global trends (technological change, ageing, climate change etc.) and to raise productivity. According to the PIAAC survey, there is a discrepancy in terms of level of education in a little more than one-fifth of employees and a discrepancy in terms of field of education in approximately three-tenths of employees, while 12–14% of employees do not have appropriate literacy or numeracy skills. Adults, particularly the low skilled, older and employees as well, lag behind in literacy and numeracy skills and digital skills (OECD, 2016). Employees lack verbal abilities, reasoning abilities, interpersonal orientation, conscientiousness and independence (OECD, 2018).

The participation of employees and unemployed in lifelong learning contributes to their employability, flexibility and adaptability to labour market needs. Participation of adults in lifelong learning could decrease skills mismatches. According to labour force survey data, the participation of employees \(^5\) aged 25-64 years in formal or non-formal education fell during the period 2010-17 and totalled 13.3% in 2017, while in 2010 it totalled 18.5%. Despite economic recovery over recent years, it has stagnated (see Annex 1, Table 11).

Participation of adults in ISCED 3-4 VET can reduce skills mismatches. The structural composition of adults enrolled in ISCED 3-4 programmes differs from that of the young. In 2016/17, 95.0% of the adults enrolled in VET and only 5.0% in general education programmes (see Annex 1, Tables 9 and 10). Compared with 2012, the share of those in VET decreased slightly. In 2017, some measures were adopted which could stimulate participation of adults in VET. The first measure is co-funding education and training for raising the educational level and acquiring vocational competences 2016-18 intended for completing upper secondary educational programs, including VET (Public Fund, 2017e). The second measure is apprenticeship, which started in school year 2017/18 and may be used for adults, too.

The state supports adult education within an active labour market policy aimed at raising employability of the unemployed and of jobseekers (employees whose employment contract will end soon) who have a right and obligation to participate in several programmes under the (AEP). In 2016, the State financed several education and training programmes, 6930 persons were included and 4.3 M EUR were spent (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017). The State supports participation of adults in education through its annual Adult Education Programme, aimed at raising the educational level of the population, employability and general knowledge. In 2018, 82.8 M EUR was available for adult education, and the plan for 2019 is 77.2 M EUR (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018 and 2019).

\(^5\) Employees comprise those who fall under one of the following categories: (a) people who worked for at least one hour for pay or profit or family gain during the reference week; (b) people who were not at work during the reference week but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent. This definition is applicable to employees, self-employed people and family workers.
In 2017, some important documents that could stimulate life-long learning and decrease skills and labour market mismatches and increase employability of employees and unemployed were adopted.

(a) Active ageing strategy based on the active ageing concept. The perception of the working-life concept will change. Alongside long-living, occupational changes and an increasing need for life-long learning, the traditional life cycle (education-working life-retirement) will change to be a more fluid concept: the individual will have more a diverse career experiences and will have to participate in life-long learning. (IMAD, 2017).

(b) Slovenian Development Strategy 2030; from 2017 represents a new National Developmental Framework. Life-long learning could contribute to well-being, greater competitiveness and should be stimulated, especially for low-educated and other vulnerable groups.

(c) OECD Skills Strategy: A diagnostic report, prepared in cooperation with OECD addresses nine issues (OECD, 2017b) (6). During 2017 and 2018, an Action Plan has been in preparation.

(d) In 2018, the new Adult Education Act was adopted that structures non-formal education and ISCED 1-2 adult education. It arranges public services and establishes a public network of institutions that delivers adult education, stabilises financing of these institutions and increases their connections within the public network.

### 1.6. Access regulation to professions

In 2010, when there were 323 regulated professions, the process of deregulation started. In 2014, the process got the status of one of the key governmental projects with interdepartmental status (Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, 2017). The Slovenian aim is to lower regulation of entry conditions, to facilitate access to the labour market and to minimise the administrative burden in acquiring work permissions.

Since 2010, Slovenia deregulated professions in several fields like tourism, funeral and cemetery activity, construction, geodetic survey, chimney sweeping service, driving schools, and veterinary science.

In 2016 and 2017, Government adopted additional legislation amendments for decreasing administrative burdens and simplification of regulations: trade, funeral and cemetery activity,

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(6) These issues are:
- (a) equipping young people with skills for work and life;
- (b) improving the skills of low-skilled adults;
- (c) boosting employment for all age groups;
- (d) retaining and attracting talent from Slovenia and abroad;
- (e) making the most of people skills in the workplace;
- (f) using skills for entrepreneurship and innovation;
- (g) inclusive and effective governance of the skills system;
- (h) enabling better decisions through improved skills information;
- (i) financing and taxing skills equitably and efficiently.
driving schools, social assistance, geodetic activity, veterinary and construction work. The number of regulated activities/professions in these fields decreased from 30 to 18. In the last two years, the total number of regulated activities and professions decreased from 227 to 215. The biggest changes were in trade professions, where seller and commercial manager were deregulated. In construction, the number of regulated professions decreased from 10 to 4.

1.7. Employment policies relevant to VET

Several strategies and policy measures for raising employability of the young and adults have been implemented over the last years.

In 2017, the Apprenticeship Act was adopted. Although the apprentice is not an employee, easier employment is expected also for adults. According to the Act, an adult learner is a person who is enrolled part-time in education, an unemployed or employed person. So far, no adults were enrolled in apprenticeship (See chapter 2.2.1.1).

The programme Co-funding of education and training for raising educational attainment and acquiring vocational competences 2016–18 aims to raise education level and vocational competences of adults by subsidising participation in formal education (Public Fund, 2017e).

Several measures, related to VET could increase competitiveness and employability of employees.

(a) The program Co-financing non-formal education and training of employees (2016 – 18) aims to increase employees' competences and encourage training of employees for employability and competitiveness. It aims to increase labour market mobility, improving workers' motivation and adaptability, stimulating life-long learning. In 2017, 899 individuals participated in the program (Public Fund).

(b) Competence centres for HR development programme (2016 –19) aims to improve the competences of employees as well as strengthen the competitiveness of the Slovenian economy. It focuses on the transformation of business models and facilitates networking of companies and the transfer of good practices in the field of personnel development. In 2017, 22 workshops were organised with 536 participants (Public Fund).

(c) The programme Comprehensive Support for Active Ageing of the Labour Force at Companies (2016 –22) aims to increase competences of older employees, raising awareness about negative demographic trends and adaptations needed and ensure support for employers for efficient age management. Around EUR 30 million will be invested until 2022 (Public Fund).

Several measures, related to VET for increasing employability of unemployed are in force. Some of them are:

(a) Intercompany training centres (MIC) at school centres are implementing practical programs for encouraging employability of unemployed in 2017. Theoretical and
practical training in intercompany training centres follows practical training at the employers (ESS, 2017):

(b) The NVQ certification system enables the formal verification of knowledge gained in non-formal and informal learning (see Chapter 2.3.2). The share of exits into employment after acquiring a National Vocational Qualification totalled 61.6 % in 2014, 63% in 2015, 71.6% in 2016 and 74.2% in 2017 (for 2017 only partial results exist) (Ministry of Labour Internal Report 2018):

(c) Project learning for young adults – PUM-O (2014–20) is a program for unemployed or job seekers who are not enrolled in education. In 2017, 433 were enrolled in the program, the share of exits into employment is 15.9% (partial results) (Ministry of Labour, Internal report 2018). PUM-O is designed especially for early school leavers aged 15 - 26, to encourage young unemployed adults to acquire skills to help them gain employment or resume formal education, and create a professional identity through socio-cultural activities:

(d) The Work trial programme enables unemployed to test their knowledge and skills at the working place before getting an employment. An employer must ensure a mentor for at least 20 hours. An individual participates for at least 100 hours and at most one month. In 2017, 2202 unemployed people participated in the program. The share of exits into employment is 68.5% (Ministry of Labour, Internal report, 2018);

(e) On-the-job training programme is intended for acquiring knowledge and skills for the unemployed: older than 50 years, younger than 30 years, long term unemployed or do not have more than basic education. In 2017, 720 unemployed persons enrolled in the programme. The share of exists into employment is 478% (Ministry of Labour, Internal Report 2018);

(f) The program I can do it because I know has been implemented in 2016 and 2017. The purpose of the programme was to increase the employability of the unemployed persons. It was divided in two steps. The first was participation in training for acquiring NVQ, and the second training at the working place. In 2016 and 2017, 1,772 persons enrolled into the program (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017). The program discontinued in 2018.
2. CHAPTER Provision of VET

2.1. Chart of the national education and training system

Figure 7. VET in Slovenia’s education and training system

NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Slovenia.
The education system is organised as a public service (Eurydice). Public kindergartens, schools and universities providing accredited programmes are secular and the school space is autonomous. The State monitors public educational institutions by appointment of representatives to governance bodies, public funding (education ministry and municipalities), salary system, adoption of common rules and guidelines of public service, centrally adopted curricula, mandatory self-evaluation by schools, supervision of the school inspectorate, etc. The council of stakeholders (founders, teachers, parents) governs public educational institutions; the management body is the head teacher, who has the autonomy to employ teachers and is the pedagogical leader of a school. Private education institutions are few, none for upper secondary VET, but quite a few for higher VET (7). The following levels compose education system:

(a) pre-school education;
(b) basic education (single structure primary and lower secondary education);
(c) upper secondary education (general education and VET);
(d) higher VET, and
(e) higher education (tertiary level).

Basic education is compulsory. The language of instruction is Slovenian; Italian and Hungarian national communities in two ethnically mixed areas have education in their native language (8), members of the Romani community have some special rights. A network of 90 music and dance schools (15 of them are private) provides accredited programmes for children, young people and adults. Kindergartens and schools include children with special needs by way of inclusion and special classes, and there are special education institutions as well (9). In general, there are no tuition fees for education, but parents participate for kindergarten costs, food, school supplies, textbooks, daily commute, dormitory, excursions etc. A subsidies and scholarship system is in place for economically disadvantaged and talented students.

Compulsory school starts at the age of six and lasts nine years. VET starts at upper secondary level, with the first external differentiation at the age of 15, when learners can opt for IVET programmes or general upper secondary programmes, gymnasia (4 years, completed with the General Matura). Professional gymnasia provides general education but with some emphasis on professions (see Annex 2). Tertiary education in general comprises

(7) Private educational institutions: 21% (94) preschool; 1.3% (6) schools provides basic education, 2.7% (4) upper secondary school but provides only general education; 34 (52%) higher vocational education; out of 105 tertiary educational institutions 47% are public (49 are under 3 universities) and 52% are private (36 of them do not provide accredited studies). Source: website of Ministry for education: www.mizs.gov.si/si/
(8) In VET, 19 programmes are adopted for Italian and/or Hungarian language of instruction (10 SPI, 4 SSI and 5 PTI).
(9) There are 15 institutions for young with special needs, 6 of them offer also VET programmes. On the level of basic education, there are 28 schools and 21 schools with at least one class for children with special needs. 31 kindergartens are taking care for youngest special need children. 4 counselling centres in country are providing additional help to all children, young and parents in distress, financed partly through the health care. Source: website of education ministry.
higher vocational education (2 years), professional and academic programmes at a bachelor level (3 or 4 years), master level (1 or 2 years) and doctoral programmes (3 years).

All educational programmes leading to the level of education are accredited (basic, upper-secondary, higher vocational and higher education) and part of formal education. They are also available in the AE system. This enables those who want to change occupation or continue with their education. On the other hand, AE is widely developed also in the field of informal education and accredited non-formal programmes targeted at groups of adults, those who need to improve their basic competences, literacy skills or those who are trying to integrate in society and need help.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the education and training system in cooperation with social partners, who are active members of three national expert councils (10) operating as a consulting body for the Ministry. A school inspectorate and office for youth operate within the Ministry. Eight public institutions for the implementation of regulations are also active, supporting provisions of education institutions and for the development of the education and training programmes. The main institution responsible for VET is the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI). The others cooperating and also mentioned in this report are the National Education Institute Slovenia (NEIS), the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), the National Examinations Centre (NEC). Cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) and cooperation with economy (chambers) is established.

2.2. Government-regulated VET provision

In this chapter, we present accredited VET programmes leading to publicly recognised and formal vocational qualifications and level of education. They are a part of formal and government-regulated national education and training system and are intended in the first place for young people. We refer to this set of programs as Initial Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter IVET) on ISCED levels 353, 354 and 554 (11). The process of developing VET qualifications (standards, programmes…) and the evaluation of them is the main task of CPI.

Occupational standards serve as the basis for IVET programmes leading to formal vocational qualifications. The Ministries for Education and Labour fund the design of the occupational standards, programmes and qualifications by CPI and work in cooperation with social partners (12). Formal vocational qualifications can be gained through VET programmes

(10) The Expert council for general education; The Expert council for VET; and the Expert council for AE.
(11) Higher vocational education (ISCED 554) can be considered as an exception, as it can be for most professions and students also form of CVET and because is partly under the monitoring of regulation of higher education (HE).
(12) A social partnership is established in the following segments at national level: (1) Sectoral Committees for the preparation of occupational standards are composed of experts nominated by chambers (see Chapter 3); preparation of occupational standards is funded by the Ministry of Labour. (2) Social partners are members of the Expert Council for VET, which provides expert counselling in
provided by VET schools in cooperation with companies and through the system of National Vocational Qualifications (see Chapter 2.3.2).

2.2.1. IVET at upper secondary level

IVET programmes (13) start at upper secondary level. In accordance with the Vocational Education Act (2006 and 2017), IVET providers are schools working in partnership with companies. The State founds public-school network, which provide IVET programmes. Schools can be merged to establish one school centre. In 2018, there were 57 schools and 31 school centres, together 88 VET schools.

In 2017/18, approximately 65% of 73 776 youth attended IVET programmes (see Chapter 1.5.1.). In the same year, approximately 23% of students opted for 3 years vocational programmes (see Figure 8 and 9) (14).

Figure 8. A share of all students enrolled in upper secondary programmes by the type of the programme, %

![Pie chart showing distribution of students by type of programme]

Source: SORS.

There are four types of IVET programmes at upper secondary level. Annex 1, Table 12 presents the typical learner age, the duration and number of programmes, the school leaving decision-making. At the local level: (1) Companies, representatives of business, enterprises, institutions or other social partner organisations cooperate with VET schools in the preparation of so-called open curriculum as a part of VET programmes. (2) Work-based learning is a part of the VET programmes that takes place in companies. The chambers carry out verification of learning workplaces, run and update registers of learning workplaces, publish announcements of learning workplaces every school year and provide interim exams for SPI students and apprentices.

(13) Main sources for this chapter are: www.mizs.gov.si/si/ and www.cpi.si, and Guidelines for the preparation of the upper secondary VET programmes.

(14) The abbreviations for the programmes are explained on the next page and in the Annex 1, Table 12.
certificate, access to further education and the entry requirements for each type of programmes.

**Figure 9. A share of young people enrolled in the first year of upper secondary programmes by the type of the programme, %**

![Chart showing the distribution of young people enrolled in the first year of upper secondary programmes by type of programme.](image)

NB: PTI VET programmes are not included in this chart. They are included in data for 4th and 5th year of schooling, as the programme is meant for graduates of 3-year SPI programmes.

*Source: SORS.*

**Short Vocational Upper Secondary Education** (*nižje poklicno izobraževanje, NPI, ISCED 353*) lasts for two years and enables learners who have completed compulsory education (nine years of basic education) or completed basic education for special needs learners with lower educational standard to work as an assistant in 6 professions or enrol in three or four-year IVET programmes.

In **Vocational Upper Secondary education** (*srednje poklicno izobraževanje, SPI, ISCED 353*) can enrol one who has successfully completed basic education or NPI and fulfils specific conditions if required. After completion of a three-year SPI with a final exam, learners can enrol in the **Vocational Technical Upper Secondary Education** (*poklicno tehniško izobraževanje, PTI, ISCED 354*) to obtain the same level of education as SSI or if they want to increase their opportunities to enter tertiary education. In 6 out of 19 PTI programmes, graduates of any SPI programme regardless of the profession can enrol, if he or she has at least 3 years of relevant work experience.

The entry conditions for **Technical Upper Secondary Education** (*srednje strokovno izobraževanje, SSI, ISCED 354*) are the completion of basic education or an NPI programme.

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*15* There is a special condition for entry into the geo-operator miner vocational upper secondary programme, i.e. psychophysical ability.
and the specific requirements of some programmes (16). After four years, SSI programmes are completed with a Vocational Matura (see Annex 2) and enable enrolment in higher vocational and higher education.

All IVET programmes are modular. Vocational module or several modules together enable the acquisition of a vocational qualification. Vocational modules are competence-based and include vocational theory and practical training at schools. For each vocational module, a catalogue of knowledge is prepared at a national level. It includes general objectives, vocational competences, informative and formative objectives of the vocational module. This is similar to general education subjects.

There are two types of practical training. Schools organise practical training at school in their workshops as a part of the vocational module. The second type is practical training in a company or Work-Based Learning (WBL), which is part of the educational programme and takes place in a real working environment, in companies or partly at intercompany training centres (MIC, see Annex 2). In the field of agriculture, it can also be carried out entirely on school premises (17).

The share of practical training is defined in the programme and varies according to the type of the programme:

(a) NPI: 35-40% practical training, of which 4 weeks (152 hours) is intended for in-company training.

(b) SPI: 40% practical training, of which 24 weeks (912 hours) is in-company training (18), which can be prolonged to up to 53 weeks if an individual learning contract is signed; in apprenticeship path WBL is at least 50% (see Chapter 2.2.1.1.).

(c) SSI: 15% of the educational programme is intended for practical training, of which at least 8 weeks (at least 304 hours, depending on the programme) is set aside for in-company training.

(d) PTI: 10%, of which 2 weeks (76 hours) is assigned for in-company training.

For the implementation of WBL in companies, a learning contract must be signed. A learning contract contains the competences the learner should acquire and develop, the duration of the in-company training as well as the other responsibilities and obligations of both parties, and contains no elements of employment. It is usually concluded between the school, an employer and student or his/her legal guardians (a collective learning agreement). In SPI programmes, it is possible to sign an individual contract between the employer and the student, which also allows the WBL in companies to be extended to up to 53 weeks (in this

(16) There is a special condition in some SSI programs: manual skill testing, the ability to distinguish between colours (both required for a dental technician), psychophysical ability (geotechnics) and artistic ability (design and photography technicians).

(17) Due to the nature of agricultural professions most schools have developed their own farms.

(18) The extent of work-based learning differs in some programs (e.g. in the programme Gastronomy and Hotel Services there are 29 weeks of work-based learning).
case, practical training in school is reduced). Students with individual contracts are required to pass a mid-term test of practical skills in the second year, which is provided by the relevant chamber. In the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years, the education ministry published a call for enrolment in some SPI programmes for which an individual contract was required. In school year 2017/18 the first SPI programmes were implemented in an apprenticeship form (see below), and the set of competences for WBL for SPI programmes regardless of their form have been developed at the national level.

Schools must prepare 20% of the curricula by themselves. Legislation delivers 80% of the content of VET programmes, and the rest is a so-called “open curriculum”, which should be designed by schools in cooperation with local employers and local communities in accordance with local specifics or needs.

NPI and SPI programmes are completed with a final exam. For NPI programmes, the final exam comprises the final work (a product or service) with a presentation, and, for SPI programmes, a mother tongue exam is included. Upon successful completion of the final exam, the candidates may be employed without the need for any further formal education or training (traineeships) or may continue their education. An examination catalogue for final work with presentation for each NPI and SPI programme is prepared on national level.

SSI and PTI programmes are completed with a Vocational Matura examination (see Annex 2).

After completing the Vocational Matura, learners can gain entry into the labour market or continue their education in higher vocational education programmes or first cycle professional education. It is possible for students with a Vocational Matura to pass one additional exam (5th subject) from the General Matura subjects, which then enables learners to enrol in some of the first cycle academic programmes.

Besides the vertical transition (see and Annex 1, Table 12) learners also have the option to transfer between different types of programmes, including general upper secondary education but only once to the programme with the same entry requirements (19). Knowledge already gained in previous programmes can be recognised individually. Students (or early school leavers) who have successfully completed up to the fourth year of gymnasium, the fourth year of an SSI programme or the last year of a PTI programme can attend vocational courses (poklicni tečaj) or a Matura course (maturitetni tečaj) (see Annex 2) that is one year in duration. Vocational courses are only available for four qualifications (Economics, catering and Tourism, Early Childhood Education and Computer Science). Upon completion of a vocational course, entry to the Vocational Matura examination is possible, with an upper secondary level of education acquired as a result.

(19) In 2017, the change of the Vocational Education Act and the Gimnazije Act reduced the options for transfer. In the whole period of regular, publicly funded programmes with the same entry requirements one transfer and one repetition of class is possible.
2.2.1.1. Apprenticeship

In 2017, the Apprenticeship Act was accepted. The European Social Fund (ESF) project Reform of Upper-secondary Vocational Education 2016-21 started in November 2016 to support the implementation of the apprenticeship. The reform aims to support companies, the providers of WBL, and to create and monitor a register of practical training placements in cooperation with social partners (chambers, unions). Reform also supports development of flexible and individualised teaching methods and learning pathways. CPI will evaluate and monitor the reform activities and submit the results to the Expert Council for VET.

Chambers verify practical training placements in companies suited for apprentices. The future apprentice \(^{(20)}\) and employer sign the contract and register it at the corresponding chamber. An apprenticeship contract \(^{(21)}\) is a condition for enrolment to a school that provides a suitable SPI programme in apprenticeship form. Employer must cover some subsidies/costs the same as for employees and pay at least EUR 250 reward to apprentice per month.

At the beginning of an apprenticeship, the plan for implementation of the apprenticeship is prepared in cooperation between the school and the company under the provision of the chamber. It includes the objectives of WBL, the set of competences for WBL, distribution and schedule of education at the school and WBL in the company (at least 50% of the programme), ways and modes of communication between the company and school and a plan for cooperation in providing the final exam for the apprentice.

Since school year 2017/18 onwards, some of the SPI programmes have been implemented in a school-based and apprenticeship path. Now, in the second school year of implementation, 150 apprentices are enrolled in the first or second year of the programmes, in 20 schools and 8 SPI programmes \(^{(22)}\).

2.2.1.2. Special needs education

The provision of Special Education Needs (SEN) in Slovenia follows a multi-track approach towards inclusion, which means that a variety of services are offered by mainstream education and by segregated settings. By following the principles of inclusion, most children with special needs are integrated into the mainstream schools, but the programmes are adapted to them and they also have additional support \((The Placement of Children with Special Needs Act, 2011)\). Upon request, a special committee at NEIS may grant learners a SEN status. A customised learning programme is then prepared that defines the learning forms and methods, additional professional support, physical help and necessary adjustments to the organisation, assessment, grading, progression and schedule.

\(^{(20)}\) Apprentice must be at least 15 years old. For underage apprentice the contract is signed also by parents.

\(^{(21)}\) Apprenticeship contract is not an employment contract. Apprentice has the same civil status as other students. The same goes for adult learners who can also enrol, their civil status stays unchanged.

\(^{(22)}\) Those programmes are: Joiner, Stonemason, Metal Sharper-Toolmaker, Gastronomy and Hotel Services, Painter, Industrial Machinery Mechanic, Paper maker, Glassmaker
At the upper secondary level, learners with special needs are included in all types of programmes. When adjustments in the mainstream schools are not enough for successful inclusion, learners with special needs are enrolled in an adjusted VET programme (23) carried out by 6 specific schools and institutes.

### 2.2.2. Higher vocational education

Higher Vocational Education (višje strokovno izobraževanje, VSI, ISCED 554) is regulated by the Higher Vocational Education Act (2004) and is publicly financed. It is a part of tertiary education and CVET. For further details about the number of programmes, the usual age of learners and access to further education see Annex 1, Table 12.

The programmes last for two years, 40% of which (20 weeks) takes place as in-company training (PRI), for which a learning contract must be signed between the student, the school and the company. However, this is not an employment contract.

Higher vocational programmes are provided by higher vocational schools, which are sometimes an organisational part of a School centre. In 2018/19, it is possible to enrol in 28 public and 19 private higher vocational schools (Ministry of Education, 2018a) (24). Learners can study full-time or part-time (as adult learners); for part-time study, the student pays the tuition fees. For part-time students, the schools shall follow The Instructions on customizing part time study in higher vocational education (2012). For full-time students, tuition is covered by public funds. Private schools with concessions also provide opportunities for full-time studies.

Anyone who has passed the Matura exam (general or vocational) or master craftsman, foreman or shop manager exam, and passed the mother tongue exam and mathematics exam or a foreign language exam at the level of a Vocational Matura can enrol in higher vocational programmes.

Higher vocational programmes are finished with a diploma exam and give the formal title of an Engineer. The diploma exam consists of a practically oriented diploma thesis and a thesis defence. As part of the thesis, the learner can also carry out project work or services with a theoretical defence.

### 2.2.3. Adults in IVET

Those who did not finish IVET programmes are potential adult learners. They can be students that never attended upper-secondary school did not finish IVET and those who lost

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(23) Educational programs with equal educational standards, adapted for the hearing impaired, learners with speech disorders, physically disabled learners and for blind and partially sighted learners. In 2018 there are 5 NPI, 10 SPI, 3 SSI and 7 PTI programmes adapted.

(24) Two of the 19 private higher vocational schools have a concession, each for one VSI programme. http://www.mizs.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/direktorat_zar_srednje_in_visje_solstvo_ter_izobrazevanje_odraslih/srednjesolsko_izobrazevanje/vpis_v_srednjesole/vpis_20182019/
the right for enrolment free of tuition regardless the age or finally those who are changing their profession.

In 2016/17 school year, almost all adults enrolled in NPI IVET programmes were from 15 to 34 years old. The highest number, over 40% of IVET adult learners were in the age group 20 to 24 (SORS, 2018).

Enrolment in the IVET programmes can be at upper secondary or higher education level in numerous public VET schools, Folk High Schools (25) or private educational organisations, the latter enrol just over 20% of adult learners.

In 2018, 77 VET schools out of 88 provide VET programs for adults (26). 25 Folk high schools and 14 private educational institutions also provide these programmes. Adults attending formal programmes (upper secondary and tertiary education) have the same rights as regular students until they are 26 years of age, and are not registered as job seekers with the ESS when unemployed.

IVET for adults is covered by the legislation for VET and not by the legislation for AE. The educational organisations must follow the Instructions on the Adjustment of Part-Time Education for Upper Secondary VET (Ministry of education, 2008) and the Amendment of the Instructions on Customising Part-Time Study in Higher Vocational Education (Ministry of education, 2017). The main differences are regarding organisation of the instruction and exams to adjust to an adult with family and work related obligations and regarding previous knowledge of future adult students.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for IVET AE as it is for the whole AE. SIAE as a national institute for AE developed the quality assurance approach for AE, which, in case of IVET, is also in alignment with regulatory demands for VET in general. Providers of IVET therefore can benefit from SIAE support (guidance, tools, trainings etc.) in quality assurance of their provision.

### 2.2.4. Quality assurance in VET schools

The Vocational Education Act in 2006 identified the importance of quality assurance, while it strengthens the autonomy and the developmental role of IVET. The schools are required to establish a quality committee consisting of a minimum of five members: representatives of teachers, employers, students and parents. In addition, all educational institutions must self-evaluate their work regularly. The committee is obliged to publish a quality report on the school website every school year.

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(25) Folk High schools (*ljudske univerze*) traditionally provide public services for all forms of AE and are well spread throughout the country.

(26) Data obtained from the website of the education ministry and call for enrolment in upper secondary programs for adults, for the 2018/19 school year. Schools providing only general upper secondary programs are not included.
The CPI is a national reference point for quality assurance in upper secondary VET within the EQAVET network. It gathers information about the quality assurance in VET schools, monitors quality indicators at the national level (\(^{27}\)) and supports VET schools with trainings, publications (CPI, 2007) and cooperation in international projects in the field of quality assurance.

The education ministry presented a new common national framework for quality assurance in 2017 which encompasses levels of education from pre-school until the end of upper secondary level in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2018c), which implementation is planned in the next few years. A Quality committee consisting of five lecturers and two students is also requested in higher vocational schools (according to the Higher Vocational Education Act (2004, 2013)), where their quality assurance falls under the monitoring of The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

### 2.2.5. Financing

*The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (2007-17)* stipulates the public financing of upper secondary VET and higher vocational programmes. The sources of funding are specified by purpose, duty and responsibility. The terms and conditions for financing and supervision are presented. Adults in VET are the only students required to pay for tuition.

The financing for upper secondary schools and higher vocational schools is calculated based on the criteria and standards issued by the education ministry. On this basis, the funds per student are calculated. The total level of funding is specified in a financing agreement signed by the education ministry and the school for each budget year.

Additional public funding is also accessible also through the coordination of cooperation in developmental (national and international) projects.

Other possible funding sources for VET include:

(a) additional funds contributed by the institution's founding organisations,
(b) contributions from industry associations and chambers,
(c) direct contributions from employers for the provision of work practice,
(d) payments and fees from students, apprentices and adults,
(e) funds from the sale of services and products,
(f) donations, sponsorships and other sources.

The public expenditure (Annex 1, Table 14 and Figure 10) allocated to formal education (including IVET) amounted to EUR 1 938 million or 4.80% of GDP in 2016. The biggest share of total public expenditure for formal education was allocated to basic education (44.14%), followed by tertiary education (19.72%), pre-school education (16.92%) and upper secondary education (19.12%).

\(^{(27)}\) Renewed set of 11 national quality indicators were set in 2017 by the Expert Council for VET.
Figure 10. Public formal education expenditure; share of 4.8% of GDP by level of education in 2016

![Pie chart showing distribution of public formal education expenditure by level of education in 2016.](image)

NB: Totals do not match due to rounding.

Source: SORS.

### 2.2.6. Teachers and trainers in VET

At upper secondary level, teachers of general subjects must have a 2nd cycle degree (ISCED 7), completed pedagogical/andragogic training and the State professional exam. There are two types of teachers of vocational modules. Teachers of the theoretical part are expected to meet the same requirements as teachers of general subjects. Teachers of the practical training must have vocational upper secondary education or higher vocational education (ISCED 354 or 554), pedagogical/andragogic training, the State professional exam and at least 3 years of relevant work experience (28). In-company mentors must have professional education in the appropriate field, an appropriate number of years of work experience and pedagogical/anagogical training (See Chapter 4.2.3).

Lecturers at the higher vocational education level must have a relevant university degree or 2nd cycle degree (ISCED 7), three years of work experience and relevant professional achievements (the co-authorship of valid education programmes, textbooks or study materials, membership of exam committees, and similar).

(28) Before the introduction of vocational modules in 2006, upper-secondary VET programmes included professional/vocational theoretical subjects and in-school practical training. It is expected that both types teachers are involved and cooperate within vocational modules, therefore the requirements for them were not changed.
Teachers have limited options for continuing their professional development, which is defined only as a right (15 days in three years; the Collective agreement for the education sector in the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Education, 1994) and not as an obligation. The education ministry partly finances programmes for the continuing professional development of teachers. A great deal of additional teacher training is also provided through national and international projects.  

2.3. Other forms of training

In this chapter forms of training that are outside national education and training system, outside IVET (see Chapter 2.2) is presented. They can be government-regulated (accredited) and funded, can lead to vocational qualification but not to level of education according to ISCED.  

All forms of VET presented in this chapter are a part of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) and at the same time part of the AE. They are formal, non-formal and informal education in vocational fields. The purpose of AE is to support active integration of adults into life and work, to upgrade and upskill for the needs of the workplace or for retraining. Therefore, we include in this presentation some information also on general AE, especially for under privileged groups.

2.3.1. Master craftsman, foreman and shop manager certification

In some professions, it is possible to pass master craftsman, foreman and shop manager exams (mojstrski, delovodski ali poslovodni izpiti), which are provided by the chambers. The exams are intended for those with vocational upper secondary education (ISCED 353) and at least three years of relevant work experience. Candidates who pass their exams gain a technical upper secondary education level (ISCED 354) and, by passing the general exams of the Vocational Matura, can enrol in higher vocational education programmes. Preparations for this exam comprise practical and professional theory parts, skills that are necessary for running a business and pedagogical/andragogic training, which means that craftsmen, foremen, and shop managers can be mentors to students in WBL and in-company practical training. Preparation courses for the craftsman, foreman and shop manager examinations are non-formal programmes provided by chambers and intercompany training centres (MIC).

Master craftsman/foreman/shop manager exams are conducted based on the catalogues (approved by the Expert Council for VET) and carried out in accordance with the Rules on Master Craftsman’s Examinations and the Rules on Examinations for Foremen and Plant Manager (Ministry for Economy 2004, 2009).

(29) For more information on teachers and trainers please see ‘Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of vocational education and training: mapping their professional development in the EU – Slovenia. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series’.  

(30) The exception is the craftsman, foreman and shop manager (see next Chapter and Table 12).  

(31) The Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia conducts the master craftsman examination. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia conducts the shop manager exam and the Institute for Business (unit of the Chamber of Commerce) conducts the foreman exam.
2.3.2. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ)

The NVQ certification system enables the formal verification of knowledge gained in non-formal and informal learning, thereby allowing the economic sphere to initiate an incentive to create occupational standards according to the needs of the labour market, especially for those professions or tasks within the profession that are not covered in the formal VET system.

The NVQ certification system, which is a network of institutions and bodies for the assessment and recognition of qualifications, was first implemented by the National Professional Qualifications Act in 2000. Through the verification and validation of NVQs, candidates can demonstrate their competences in various ways according to a specific occupational standard and a catalogue of standards of vocational knowledge and skills (hereinafter NVQ catalogue).

The main purpose of formal verification is to obtain a comprehensive overview of the knowledge, skills and competence of an individual. This process is carried out according to prescribed procedures, which ensures the quality and impartiality of the system, the involvement of all relevant partners, and the transparency and comparability of the knowledge and skills of the individual. Consequently, the NVQs are also included in SQF (see Chapter 3.3).

The method and procedure for assessment are set out in the Rules on the method and procedure for the validation of national professional qualifications (Ministry of Labour, 2015), which ensures the uniformity, transparency and quality of certificates:

(a) The NVQ validation procedure is carried out by providers who fulfil the conditions set out in the NVQ catalogue, meet the material conditions and are included into a register of providers at the RIC.

(b) The assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences required for a candidate to embark on an NVQ is conducted by a three-member committee appointed by the NEC. The members of the validation committee are experts in their fields of work, which is demonstrated by proofs of knowledge, educational qualifications and work experience required. On completion of training for members of the committee, the NEC grants them a licence, which is valid for four years.

To renew the licence, committee members must submit evidence to the NEC of their ongoing professional training, based on which the NEC extends the validity of the licence.

(c) Every candidate who participates in the NVQ validation procedure is provided with advice and guidance. A counsellor informs the candidate about the NVQ verification and validation procedure, gives advice on suitable/more suitable qualifications and helps to put together a portfolio (personal summary folder).

(d) During the first phase of the assessment procedure, the NVQ validation committee evaluates the candidate's portfolio in accordance with the occupational standard adopted and based on criteria for evaluating the documents. Based on the latter the committee can:
(e) Establish the fulfilment of all the conditions set out in the occupational standard and the NVQ catalogue, decide that practical assessment is not necessary and recognise the candidate's NVQ,

or

(f) Define the content and precise instructions to assess each candidate separately based on his/her portfolio evaluation.

(g) During the assessment procedure, candidates demonstrate their skills and knowledge directly to the committee. The assessment method is defined in the NVQ catalogue, along with the tasks through which the committee verifies the candidate's skills and knowledge. The assessment can be in written, practical or oral form but is most frequently a combination of these methods.

In 2018, NVQ certificates are available for 189 qualifications. The prices for NVQ verification differ and depend on the methodology of the assessment and certification procedure. NVQ verification costs can be covered by both the employee and the employer (candidate), depending on the agreement in place.

Candidates with less experience in the chosen area can enrol in a course for preparation for obtaining an NVQ. These courses are not obligatory for obtaining the NVQ certificate and are not part of the NVQ system (thus not regulated by National Professional Qualifications Act), but they help obtain the knowledge and qualifications required for NVQ validation procedure. These are non-formal programmes that can be organized by companies for their employees or various institutions that are usually providers of the NVQ verification and validation procedure. Courses for preparing for obtaining an NVQ and the NVQ certifications, which follow, are also a part of the AEP (see Chapter 2.3.4).

In the years 2000-18, 93,618 certificates were awarded and the trend in recent years is slowly declining (see Figure 11).

The NVQ system contains clear elements of a quality assurance system, also defined by the law. These are apparent in the following points:

(a) Occupational standards and NVQ catalogue are planned at the National level in conjunction with the social partners (enterprises, chambers of commerce).

(b) Providers of the NVQ validation procedures are accredited by the NEC. They also provide advice to participants in NVQ validation procedures.

(c) Counsellors advise candidates about the NVQ validation procedures help with the preparation of a portfolio and advise on possibilities for additional training. They are required to attend the training sessions.

(d) Assessors of NVQ validation procedures undergo compulsory training and obtain a licence from the NEC. Provisions on the composition of the committee for the validation of NVQs are contained in the NVQ catalogue.
(e) Candidates have the right to appeal against the result of the NVQ validation procedure.

(f) The CPI carries out an evaluation of the NVQ system and the NEC provides on-going monitoring of the work of the members of the committees during the assessment procedures. The NEC and CPI also run workshops with committee members and counsellors, at which more detailed instructions for the implementation of individual NVQs are prepared.

Figure 11. Number of certificates awarded in 2010-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Certificates Awarded</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4,503</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>3,996</td>
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Source: CPI.

### 2.3.3. Verified training programmes

There are two so-called verified or accredited training programmes. First are those needed by citizens to legally perform regulated activities used for personal reasons or as volunteers (i.e. driving licence, diving licence, firefighters, mountain rescuers), but may be also obligatory in some professions.

The second type of verified training programmes emerged in various specific fields of professions to sustain the specific level of quality of work needed to protect safety or rights of workers, citizens and/or customers. They are regulated by field legislations, included in the register of verified programmes by the responsible ministry and provided by accredited institutions (these are not regulated professions mentioned in Chapter 1). The professionals are obligated to pass those programmes and gain publicly valid certificate or licence to practise the profession (firefighting, swimming pool lifeguards, professional drivers, real estate agent, driver of a forklift truck etc.)

For both type of programme, the learning outcomes, qualifications obtained and final examination are defined. After completion, participants gain a publicly valid qualification, but do not obtain a level of education. Providers must have qualified personnel, appropriate equipment, and have fulfilled other requirements imposed by the responsible ministry to obtain the public authorisation needed to carry out the programme (accreditation). The
providers are then entered in the competent ministry’s register for the contract period. Several of them are also operating through or in cooperation with international professional organizations (e.g. maritime).

The programmes vary in terms of their length and entry conditions. Most of them have tuition fees, but some are co-founded by State. In some public services, vocational training is provided by the institutions employing these professions, e.g. the army and the police. For the police, the entry condition even for formal IVET programme is an employment contract with the interior ministry. In military professions and for example to become a municipal traffic warden, for example, verified training programmes are validated and verified using NVQ certification.

2.3.4. Vocational training programmes of the employment service

One of the AEP measures (see Chapter 1.5.2.) is education and training activities, prepared by the ESS in cooperation with employers to respond to labour market needs. To form those programmes, the ESS first identifies the needs of employers, based on which a workplace description of the skills and competencies required is developed in the form of a training programme proposal. The proposal is then reviewed by the competent representatives of the employers, who agree on the suitability of the programme, depending on the status and development of the sector in question. According to the review, the proposal for the training programme is implemented, redesigned or omitted accordingly. Training programmes are provided by outsourced institutions, which fulfil the requirements and are entered in the register of ESS providers.

The duration of the programmes varies. For example, training for auxiliary work in textiles lasts 260 hours (50 hours of professional theory, 90 hours of practical training and 120 hours of practical training at the employer). After completing these programmes, the candidates are presented with a certificate describing the skills and qualifications they have acquired and duration of the programme. These certificates are not publicly recognised but contain important information for employers and raise individual’s possibility of employment. (see Chapter 4.1.2 and 4.1.3).

2.3.5. Continuing education and training for employees

Data on education and training in enterprises are collected by SORS every 5 years within the framework of The Continuing Vocational Training Survey, figures for 2010 and 2015 are available. Some data about learners is collected for years 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

In 2014/15, 517 organisations provided continuing education and training programmes (compared with 401 in 2013/14 and 358 in 2011/12). Most (37.1%) were private organisations specialised in providing AE and driving schools (24.9%), (but the most participants (over 45%) attended CET in specialised parts within enterprises. All the providers carried out 30 632 different CET programmes for 430 109 participants (compared with 342 689 in 2013/14, 302 340 in 2011/12 and 327 020 in 2008/09).
From 2010 to 2015, the share of companies that trained their employees at the workplace increased significantly from 8% to 32% also due to intense AEP. Most of companies in 2015 explained, that the reason for doing so was to train the future employees regarding the company needs (35.8%). The second most common reason (29.6%) was to choose best future employees, while 21.7% said that they wanted to use learners’ competences during the training and 12.9% decided to train future employees to prevent skill matching difficulties with direct employment (SOR, 2017).

In 2017, the education ministry started activities for the further development of CVET programmes already introduced in relevant legislation with the help of ESF (National news on VET, 2018). CPI is in the phase of introducing the methodologies for CVET programmes and will evaluate the effect of the implementing new programmes. The consortium of VET schools has gained the ESF financial support to implement those programmes over the next few years. Programmes will be short (from 10 to 35 ECVET) and non-formal, meaning that they will not provide new level of education, but some of them will provide publicly recognised qualification, which will be based on the occupational standard. These CVET programmes will be prepared by schools and employers, but on the initiative of the employers to up-grade, up-skill and modernise the professional competences of employees and unemployed. Programmes will take place at schools with at least 50% of time in the companies.

2.3.6. Programmes for vulnerable groups

The State is primarily responsible for developing learning for vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups are defined in legislation regulating AE and the labour market, together with measures for improving their learning opportunities, learning achievements and training to meet the needs of labour market in annual program of AE, AEP measures and The Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrants in Adult Education (The Expert council for AE, 2013).

The education ministry is responsible for the formal and non-formal education of adults, which is aimed at raising their educational level and key competences. The interior ministry is responsible for the education and training of migrants. A special educational programme was accredited in 2010 for the initial integration of migrants. The programme is co-founded by the ESF and is free of charge for immigrants who get a certificate of eligibility for participation at their local civic office. In 2017, 1,364 immigrants attended the programme (see Annex 2). Migrant students in VET are entitled to additional hours of Slovenian language and adjustment of grading funded by the educational ministry. The latter together with parents or home country co-found also additional hours of mother tongue and national culture for migrants (Ministry for Interior, 2014).

The ministry for Labour is responsible for the education and training of unemployed, employers and employees. Unemployed can register at the ESS. See figure 12 for the number of unemployed persons in educational activities during the period 2011-16 (Figure 12).
AEP measures of ESS are in place to increase employability and employment of unemployed. One of the AEP measures is focused on training and education. Beside the programmes introduced in chapter 1.7., these are:

(a) Non-formal education and training provided by different institutions in cooperation with ESS aims to acquire skills that increase employability. The target groups are especially those with no proper education, no work experience, those for whom supply exceeds demand for their professions, and those whose skills have become obsolete. There are approximately 150 non-formal training programmes available, of which approximately 10% are verified (see Chapter 2.2) and around 30 for foreign languages and ICT skills (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017).

(b) Project learning for young adults (PUM-O) (see Chapter 1.7.)

(c) The inclusion of the unemployed in support and development programmes. The aim here is to integrate unemployed in projects co-funded from other sources in order to improve their employment opportunities, remove obstacles to finding employment, and enables the acquisition of new experiences, skills and competences. In 2016, 588 enrolled and 309 were employed or became self-employed (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017).

(d) Formal education and training. According to the Catalogue of AEP measures, only unemployed can be included in formal programmes of basic education. In 2016, 323 unemployed persons were involved (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017).

AEP measures in the field of employment focus also on the gaining work experiences for unemployed. Those programmes are or act like form of traineeship. In three different
programmes in 2016, 5 840 (32) unemployed were included (Ministry of Labour and ESS, 2017).

3. CHAPTER Shaping VET qualifications

In Slovenia, there are two types of vocational qualification (poklicna kvalifikacija) (33). The first may be acquired following the path of education and training system and the second by following the path of recognition of non-formal and informal learning (see Chapter 2.3.2). The National Professional Qualifications Act (2007, 2009) connected both systems with the occupational standards (poklicni standardi), which represent a learning outcome standard for each vocational qualification that can be formally acquired or recognised in Slovenia. Vocational qualifications are classified in the sectoral qualification structures approved by the sectoral committee for occupational standards. The labour ministry established ten sectoral committees for occupational standards, which are composed of experts and representatives from the chambers, ministries and trade unions.

As occupational standards serve as the basic documents for the performance of examinations and the verification of vocational qualifications acquired through the recognition of non-formal learning, it is therefore important for them to be written in a clear, intelligible and non-ambiguous manner to prevent different or incorrect interpretations. The methodology for the preparation of occupational standards is prescribed, which ensures their transparency and comparability.

The preparation of occupational standards is conducted through social dialogue. It is important for the employers to describe the knowledge and skills the employees are required or need to possess – now and in the future. Occupational standards do not simply serve as a record of the current situation; they are also an indicator of the situation as it develops. This is of considerable importance for the changing labour market, not just from the employer's perspective, but, more importantly, from the point of view of the certificate holder.

Occupational standards must be prepared in cooperation with experts who are familiar with the profession, work organisations, technology and trends in the development of the profession and the sector itself. Occupational standards are closely related to sector and profession. The key competences necessary for a profession are also included.

(32) These programmes are: First challenge 2015 (2 896 included), Supporting traineeship (82 included) and Employe.me 2016/17 (2 862 included).
(33) Term “VET qualification” assumes qualifications are gained only through vocational education and training (VET), that is not a case in Slovenia (recognition of non-formal and informal learning), therefore we choose to use the term “vocational qualification” although the translation of the covering act uses term „professional qualification“. With use of adjective “vocational” we try to approach the adjective “VET” used by the report methodology.
3.1. Integrating the skill requirements of the labour market into VET provision

VET programmes are prepared based on labour market data such as the data on labour market movements. ESS and SORS collect these data in their official records using their own classification tools in the process.

As labour market data are presented at the aggregated level (i.e. unemployment, the active population, needs for new employment positions, and the like), the need for a research institution to analyse and monitor changes in the labour market has emerged several times in the past. This is to provide support for decision-making processes within the scope of the preparation of VET programmes and to forecast potential education requirements.

The official records on current work place demand managed by the ESS, where the majority of all the employment positions offered by employers are recorded, have proven to be a comprehensive source of information. However, the problem with these records is the poor organisation of the data in the various educational programmes, which changed during the various educational reforms, and so a comprehensive data review, as well as its translation into high-quality topical data (educational programmes), is required. In addition, the systematic collection of the demands of private sector employers ended in 2013, and we therefore lost one of the databases from which the data was drawn (34).

3.2. Procedure for the preparation of vocational qualifications

The processes of the preparation of occupational standards and NVQ catalogues (see Chapter 2.3.2) are determined in the National Professional Qualifications Act. It starts with an initiative submitted by any legal or natural person at the CPI. The CPI provides an expert assessment and submits it for discussion to the relevant sectoral committee for occupational standards. When discussing the initiative, the following is especially important: information on the needs of the labour market, the comparability of standards for a specific qualification among EU member states, and, if necessary, compliance with the regulations and norms at the EU level.

If the sectoral committee for occupational standards considers the initiative to be well founded, they appoint the experts who, with methodological support from the CPI, prepare a proposal for an occupational standard. The national methodology provided by the CPI serves as a uniform basis for all occupational standards and NVQ catalogues, thereby ensuring the transparency and comparability of documents at the national level.

Based on the occupational standard, experts prepare a proposal for an NVQ catalogue. The sectoral committee submits the NVQ catalogue to the Expert Council for VET for discussion. When the council supports the NVQ catalogue, it proposes its adoption to the Minister for

(34) Since 2013 private sector employers are not obligated anymore to inform ESS about a vacancy, therefore ESS collects data from Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (Labour Market Regulation Act, amendment in 2013)
Labour. The procedure for revision that takes place every five years is the same as the procedure for the preparation of new occupational standards.

Based on one or more occupational standards, a VET programme is developed. The national curriculum standards (minimum hours for general subjects, professional modules, the proportion of open curricula, etc.) for each VET programme level are set by the Expert Council for VET, who proposes the adoption of the VET programme to the Minister for Education.

In VET, the learning outcomes approach is seen as a very useful way of bringing VET programmes closer to ‘real life’ and the needs of the labour market. National VET framework curricula define the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes to be acquired by students. The syllabi usually follow the Bloom's taxonomy method for learning outcomes. Broad competences in the catalogues of knowledge for modules/subjects are defined as the ability and readiness to use knowledge, skills and attitudes in study and work contexts.

3.3. Inclusion of VET qualifications in the Slovenian qualifications framework (SQF)

The Slovenian Qualification Framework Act has defined the unified system of qualifications as The Slovenian Qualifications Framework (SQF) since 2016. Three qualification categories that consist of qualifications share a common purpose. All qualifications that are included have successfully completed formal accreditation procedures.

- Educational qualification is the outcome of formal VET programmes and denotes the level and field of the formal qualification an individual has obtained. A certificate is awarded as proof of qualification;
- National Vocational Qualification is a qualification obtained under the NVQ procedure, under VET and under CVET programmes;
- Supplementary qualification is a qualification that supplements an individual's competence at the level attained and in a specific professional field, and is tied to the needs of the labour market.

3.4. Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Slovenia has a clear validation of its non-formal and informal learning policy. Several national and regional organisations and institutions implement this policy in practice. The awareness of validation has grown amongst the general population and is no longer considered a new topic (Košmrlj, 2016).

In Slovenia, the validation procedures are included into other sectorial legislations (continuing education, for example, Higher Education, Higher VET Education, Adult Education). The National system (National Vocational Qualifications) enables acquiring formal qualifications by means of validation procedure. This is regulated by the National Professional Qualifications Act (see Chapter 2.3.2).
The education and the labour ministries are responsible for issues regarding education, classification, the validation for employment, and qualification frameworks.

In tertiary education, The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) criteria are considered along with a comparison between the competences achieved by the candidate and the competences declared in the accredited syllabus of the course or in the study module/programme. Each institution and university member is free to prepare and use ECTS in accordance with the qualification for which they provide education (autonomy granted by the Higher Education Act).

In VET, there are two main (legally regulated) routes for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge. For the purpose of further participation in formal education the validation process is based on the educational standards (catalogues of knowledge, professional modules and the operational curriculum). If the purpose of validation is recognition of occupational competences in the labour market the NVQ system is used and the knowledge and experience gained by the candidate are compared with the skills and competences in the NVQ catalogue.

The recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge is often seen as the domain of AE, and so recognition of non-formal and informally acquired knowledge in the formal education system is not widespread. It is most common with part-time students in higher vocational education, and least common with upper secondary school students (Report on the evaluation of the process of recognition of non-formal and informal learning in VET in Slovenia, Žnidarič, 2010).

During ESF projects (up to 2012) (35), specific solutions were established in the formal system regarding the implementation of the recognition of knowledge. Consequently, these solutions improved the implementation procedures in place. According to the Assessment in upper secondary schools Rules (Ministry for Education, 2018) class teacher must prepare the individual learning plan for adult (part-time) student, that must include the information about previously gained and recognised formal and non-formal knowledge. However, higher vocational education is the exception since the procedure is well defined by the common guidelines and standards in the procedures for the recognition of previously acquired knowledge in higher vocational education (Rules on the Recognition of the Previous Education in Higher Vocational Education, Ministry of Education, 2010).

The development of the system of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge for adults in VET has also been dealt with in a systemic level by the SIAE in cooperation with the CPI in 2011. Technical criteria have been drawn up for the systemic regulation of the evaluation and recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge in AE.

Candidates whose previously acquired knowledge has been recognised within the formal education system may therefore be exempt from certain requirements of a formal education

programme (e.g. practical training, subjects or modules, and similar), and may obtain a NVQ certificate or career progression within an enterprise.

The discussion now focuses on how to tie the existing system for recognising non-formally and informally acquired knowledge with the SQF. The smallest unit in the SQF is the qualification, which means that the framework is a classification of qualifications and not individual knowledge, skills or competences. For this reason (and for now), only NVQ leading to a public certificate have been included in the framework from the system for recognising non-formally and informally acquired knowledge in Slovenia.
4. CHAPTER Promoting participation in VET

Currently the enrolment in VET in Slovenia is 64.7% and The Slovenia’s Development Strategy 2030 (SVRK, 2017) does not have a specific target connected to the enrolment in VET, as the enrolment in VET is above EU average (see Chapter 1.5.5). VET is mostly school based (PTI and SSI VET programmes enable access to tertiary education) and one of the strategic goals is to increase the share of the population with tertiary education to 35%. The participation in VET is supported by many different regulations and activities on a National level whereas the latest support was the reintroduction of apprenticeship in 2017 (see Chapter 2.2.1.1).

4.1. Incentives for VET learners

4.1.1. Scholarships

Traditionally, the State regulates the scholarship system for all students regardless of the type of educational programme and student’s age. All students in upper-secondary and tertiary education coming from economically weaker families are eligible for State social scholarship (državna štipendija). It ranges from EUR 95 for underage students (depending on social status) and up to EUR 190 for students aged 18 or more (depending on social status). Students get a rise in the scholarship in the second and further years of education up to 40 € monthly if they achieve good results. Talented students can get a higher scholarship (Zoisova štipendija) as an incentive to achieve exceptional results, and performance in terms of knowledge, research and art. It amounts to EUR 120–140 for upper secondary and higher education students respectively. The amounts are doubled if they study abroad; extra funds are also available for housing and special needs. Each student can get one of these two scholarships.

VET learners are also eligible for the following two types of scholarship. First is for shortage professions (štipendija za deficitarne poklice). The purpose is to encourage enrolment into shortage occupations or the ones that are dying out and promotion of VET. Each year 1 000 scholarships are offered amounting to a EUR 100 per month. The list of professions for which a grant is offered changes annually and is prepared by the ESS based on the current situation on the labour market and of expected trends in education. The second is Intern scholarships (kadrovska štipendija) that employers grant directly to students. In this way the employers may have tailor made workers that they need in the future and the students are offered a first contact with the company, first work experience and also assured first employment. After completed education, the company is obliged to employ the grant receiver, who is obliged to accept the position offered in accordance with the Scholarship contract (36). The duration of employment usually equals the duration of receiving the

(36) The contract precisely defines the rights and obligations of the student during and after receiving the financial support. The contract should contain the precise amount the student will receive the method, the date and the time of receiving it; the cases for termination of the scholarship; in what time...
scholarship. Employers can use a support information system operated by twelve regional developmental offices and apply for the State subsidy. An Intern scholarship must not be lower than the State social scholarship. On average, it is the highest, but many goes unclaimed. Students can get one of these two scholarships in addition to state social scholarship or the scholarship for talented students. (Public Fund, 2018)

4.1.2. Co-financing of scholarships for raising educational levels

The purpose of the tender is to increase participation in lifelong learning as well as improve competences the adult needs for successful entering into the labour market, increased employability, mobility, personal growth and functioning in modern society. One of the criteria for applying is completed vocational upper secondary education or less. Persons who completed only basic education and/or are 45 years of age are at an advantage. All programmes of upper secondary VET, general upper secondary education, Matura course, vocational course, foreman, shop manager and master craftsman exam are eligible.

After completing the education programme, they can apply to have their scholarship reimbursed. In the period 2014–22, the co-financing amounts to a maximum of EUR 2 500 (Public Fund).

4.1.3. Co-financing of non-formal education and training

The purpose is to increase lifelong learning as well as improve competences the employees need to meet the requirements of the labour market, increased employability, mobility, personal growth and functioning in the modern society.

Some of the aims are:

- encouraging lifelong learning of employees,
- raising awareness about the importance of investing into personal and career development to increase the competitiveness on the labour market,
- developing the competences of employees to keep employment and prevent unemployment.
- Improving motivation and flexibility of employees (generic competences),
- increase mobility on the labour market and possibilities for employment (career development).

All trainings providing knowledge that is largely transferable to other companies or work positions (computer skills, languages, communication…) is eligible. Eligible participants are:

a. regularly employed individuals;
b. self-employed;

after the end of schooling the employer must offer the scholarship receiver employment, and the salary offered for the position; cases should be defined in which the individual is not obliged to accept employment or when the company is not obliged offer employment;
c. self-employed people in culture.

The last tender (2018) enabled reimbursement of training costs of EUR 813.33 per person, who applied for the co-financing (Public Fund).

4.1.4. Textbooks, commute and school meals

The government funds preparation of textbooks for professional modules in VET programs, because of the lack of economic interest of publishing houses due to low number of students. CPI coordinates the preparation of textbooks, with about EUR 52 000 support of the costs of preparation for around four textbooks in one year. Most VET schools have an organized so-called school textbook fund with initial financial support of the State and offer students rental of textbooks for maximum one third of its cost. Economically weaker families can ask the school for a lower borrowing fee.

All upper-secondary schools have to organize one meal per day for students at school. The State subsidizes the cost for economically weaker families. All students have a subsidized cost for daily commute with their public transportation and can apply for a student job, a form of employment adapted to their circumstances (short period, during school vacation, part-time etc.). Employers are not obliged to award VET students financially for their work-based learning period at their companies but are obligated to award apprentices (see Chapter 2.2.1.1.).
4.2. Incentives for enterprises

4.2.1. Connecting the VET system to labour market needs

The aim of the programme is to offer companies support by co-financing the cost of the implementation of WBL for upper secondary and Higher Vocational education programmes. The application for co-financing is coordinated by the schools, while the employers are the beneficiaries. The programme is going to last until 2022 (Public Fund).

4.2.2. SERFA project

The project aims to better understand the problems faced by SMEs and co-design the services, tools and products that will help remove these barriers. To this end, the project partners have designed a step-by-step procedure called a “Pathway to apprenticeship”, containing useful information, links and tools to ease a company’s way into apprenticeship and implement it. The support tools developed are for example: how a company should start planning for an apprenticeship, how to advertise taking on an apprentice, how to choose the right candidate (including guidance for an interview), how to prepare an apprenticeship contract, how to include an apprentice into the work process and possibilities for employing an apprentice.

CPI cooperates with the Business Chamber of Slovenia in this project. Together they have organised a workshop called “Shape your winning strategy for attracting apprentices”.

Chamber has continued the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. Currently five companies act as ambassadors.

The Business Chamber of Slovenia also set up a portal dedicated to apprenticeship where they offer information for students, parents and employers. They also offer a list of companies who plan to take on apprentices in the next school year, information on WBL is also offered. They offer information about mentor training (see the next Subchapter).

4.2.3. Training of Mentors

CPI in cooperation with external experts prepared a programme for training of mentors of students (37) during in-company training. Two ESF projects are financed from 2014 onwards, ran by the Consortium led by the Ljubljana Biotechnical school is responsible for provision of this training (38). The other one is run by the Consortium led by the School Centre Kranj.

Training is free of charge for trainees and aims to equip the mentors with the basic competences, pedagogic/andragogic knowledge needed for working with students on WBL and PRI. The programme includes basic developmental characteristics of the youth,

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(37) Students in Upper Secondary VET and Higher Vocational Education
(38) http://www.usposabljanje-mentorjev.si/index.php/program-usposabljanja/
psychological and pedagogical elements of learning and teaching, communication skills, health and safety at work, as well as relevant legislation. The mentors also get to know the importance of a good organisational culture for successful work as well as a way to include the student into the work process, how to prepare documentation for an efficient management, monitoring and validation of students. The programme lasts for 50 hours for WBL mentors and 60 hours for practical training mentors in higher vocational education (CPI, 2016c).

4.2.4. CPI support to employers

CPI supports employers directly and indirectly. Two publications were issued to help employers with practical training:

(a) “Connecting practical training in school with work process” (2007) is a publication based on the needs and questions of companies and teachers as well. The guidelines also contain drafts of the various documents needed for the successful implementation of practical training. It also contains explanations and definitions of basic terms like what is a learning contract, differences between an individual and collective contract (see Chapter 2.2.1), what is verification of the learning places, personnel and physical conditions in the company and so on.

(b) Guidelines for in-company mentors (2011) were also prepared, offering explanation of basic purposes and aims of WBL, and everything an employer has to know when taking on a student for WBL or apprenticeship. Examples and samples of documents are offered in a separate publication. Similar publications have been published for WBL organisers and students as well.

Indirect support goes through WBL organisers in the school who act as a link between schools and employers. Many employers turn to them with their problems and questions, and the WBL organisers turn to CPI for answers. CPI offers counselling and cooperates with other responsible institutions, including chambers to provide reliable information. CPI organizes annual national conferences for the WBL organizers, where they can exchange information, get information etc.

Some schools organise annual and or biannual meetings for mentors and employers (before and/or after WBL). CPI advisors also attend these meetings to support the schools and employers in the WBL implementation. The advisors offer information on pertinent legislation, required documentation, good practices from the schools and similar.

4.3. Guidance and counselling

In 2008, the education ministry established the Expert Group for Lifelong Career Guidance. The purpose of the group is to promote integration and effective collaboration between users, politicians and experts in the field of career guidance in Slovenia. The tasks of the expert group are to coordinate policies and monitor Slovenia’s participation in international networks, to coordinate project preparation, monitor the implementation of training, prepare reports and proposals for solutions to policy makers, to consult on the preparation of policies,
design a draft for a National Strategy, and to oversee existing and emerging quality systems and the annual reporting of the members to their institutions.

The main providers of career guidance services are schools, the ESS and The Adult Education Guidance Centres (ISIO). Professional counsellors are employed in all settings. They provide a broad range of guidance services (e.g. personal, social and vocational).

Guidance in schools is provided by school counsellors who work in school counselling services. Most schools have at least one school counsellor, while larger schools have two or three. Career guidance is not a compulsory part of the education pathway. The National Education Institute is responsible for the professional framework for school counselling work and for the professional support for school counselling services.

Guidance in the ESS is provided by 59 local offices and career centres throughout Slovenia and is coordinated by the ESS.

Career counsellors in the ESS and career centres provide a guidance service (giving information, advice and counselling, e-counselling, group information sessions, job-search seminars and guidance in employment programmes) for unemployed (80%) and learners (15%). The ESS also provides limited guidance activities for school students in primary and secondary schools.

Guidance in higher education is provided by career centres, which organise and perform various activities for students, graduates and prospective employers. With the help of co-financing from the ESF, career centres have played an active role in the development and implementation of higher education activities since 2010. These activities are designed to contribute to the better recognition of students and future graduates, knowledge, key skills and competences, their successful transition to the labour market and higher employability.

The main tasks of career centres are activities focused on students and graduates to raise their awareness, and help them acquire and develop knowledge, skills and competences for lifelong learning, career development and establishing high quality and effective links between the worlds of knowledge creation and application.

Career centres enable young people to establish the professional contacts they need to help them in their search for a high standard of study practice, student work, traineeship and, last but not least, their first jobs. They cooperate in various ways with employers, representatives of work organisations, companies and public services.

Guidance in AE is provided by ISIOs and by other public educational organisation as a part of the learning process. ISIOs have been functioning under the auspices of fourteen regional Folk High Schools. They provide adults with free, impartial, confidential and high quality information and guidance for their education and learning. ISIOs are open to all adults in the region, but particular attention is given to those groups of adults who are marginalised, have more difficulties accessing learning and are less educated and less proactive about their education. Each year around 25 000 adults search for information, advice or counselling via ISIOs. Their work is supported by the SIAE.
4.3.1. VET promotion

CPI uses various media to communicate information on VET to students and parents: skills competitions, short films on national television about various occupations, websites, and other promotional materials (e.g. Sloveniaskills, www.mojaizbira.si, occupations playing cards).

The website www.mojaizbira.si (39), has been designed to support learners, parents, adults, and counsellors. It provides information on professions, school programs available as well as schools. It combines information from the education ministry, the SIAE, various chambers, the ESS and many other institutions and is helpful to beneficiaries to make well-informed decisions regarding further educational or professional development.

The project aims to develop a long-term communication strategy with national as well as commercial media, developing video material for YouTube and TV presenting skills of young professionals, a national campaign is also planned using TV, radio, printed media, internet, etc. Another activity is Get to know the future professions, where a travelling exhibition is planned to present the future professions. Visits to workshops and companies will be organised for students and their parents. A big part of the promotion strategy is also the organisation of the Slovenia skills competition, Sloveniaskills competition is organised every two years by the CPI. The competitors are young experts aged 17–24 and the winners go onto Euroskills. An example of activity that has been organised in 2017 is the Stone Festival (Festival kamna), dedicated to stone and stonemasonry in the Karst region. It also featured the Sloveniaskills competition in stonemasonry.

(39) http://www.mojaizbira.si/
### List of acronyms and abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Slovene</th>
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<td>AE</td>
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<td>Center za informiranje in poklicno svetovanje - CIPS</td>
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<td>Inštitut za makroekonomsko analize in razvoj</td>
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<td>Work-based learning</td>
<td>Praktično izobraževanje v podjetjih</td>
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51
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Eurydice. *Slovenian overview: Key features of the education system*: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/slovenia_en


Websites:

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<tr>
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## Annex 1. Tables and figures

### Table 1. Employment rate by age group and highest level of education; in%

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Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); extracted on: 17.7.18; last updated: 5.7.18

### Table 2. Unemployment rate by age groups and highest level of education; in%

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Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); extracted on: 17.7.18; last updated: 5.7.18

### Table 3. Share of long-term unemployed in total unemployment (15–74 age group), in%

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Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); extracted on: 17.7.18; last updated: 5.7.18

### Table 4. Long-term unemployment rate (15–74 age group), in%

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Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); extracted on: 17.7.18; last updated: 11.7.18
Table 5. Educational structure of employed and unemployed population, Slovenia, 2012, 2016 and 2017, (%)

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Table 6. Educational structure of employees, total and by activity (NACE Rev.2), 2016, (%)

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Table 7. Young people enrolled in ISCED 3, by field of education, Slovenia, 2012/13 – 2017/18

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<tr>
<td>Social sciences, business and law</td>
<td>5 570</td>
<td>-24.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3 089</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, manufacturing and construction</td>
<td>17 456</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2 582</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and welfare</td>
<td>5 861</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>7 592</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 8. Young people enrolled in ISCED level 3 VET programmes by type of programme, 2012/13–2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>2017/18 Number</th>
<th>Growth (%)</th>
<th>Structure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 3, total</td>
<td>73 776</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET, total</td>
<td>47 724</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPI</td>
<td>1 027</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPI</td>
<td>12 289</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>30 798</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>3 397</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational course</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>-9.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SURS.

Table 9. Adults, enrolled in VET at ISCED 3, by type of educational programme, Slovenia, 2012/13–2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>2017/18 Number</th>
<th>Structure (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NB: According to data for 31 December. People in employment are people in paid employment and self-employed people, except for farmers.

Source: SURS.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Structure (%)</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 3, total</td>
<td>19 846</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVET, total</td>
<td>18 861</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPI</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPI</td>
<td>6 541</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>9 140</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTI</td>
<td>1 925</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational course</td>
<td>1 108</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: In school year 2015/2016 methodology changed. Adults who are self-educating are also included.
Source: Surs, Data Portal – Demography and Social Statistics – Education.

Table 10. Adults, enrolled in ISCED 3, by type of educational programme, Slovenia, 2012/13–2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Structure (%)</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISCED 3, total</td>
<td>19 846</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET programmes that do not provide direct access to ISCED 5–8 (NPI and SPI)</td>
<td>6 688</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET designed to provide direct access to ISCED 5–8 (SSI, PTI and vocational course)</td>
<td>12 173</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General programmes</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: In school year 2015/2016 methodology changed. Adults who are self-educating are also included.
Source: Surs.

Table 11. Participation of employed and unemployed people in formal or non-formal education and training, 2012–17, (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed people</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal or non-formal education and training</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education and training</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-formal education and training</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployed people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployed people</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal or non-formal education and training</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education and training</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-formal education and training</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey); extracted on: 19.6.18; last updated: 20.4.2018.

Table 12. IVET programmes in Slovenia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No. of prog. (40)</th>
<th>Entry requirements (41)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>NQF</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Access to further education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short vocational upper secondary (nižje poklicno, NPI)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fulfilled(42) basic education obligation (9 years of regular schooling or schooling for special needs learners)</td>
<td>15–17</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Vocational (SPI) and technical (SSI) upper secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational upper secondary (srednje poklicno, SPI)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Successfully completed elementary school or short vocational upper secondary education</td>
<td>15–18</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Vocational technical (PTI) and technical (SSI) upper secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical upper secondary (srednje strokovno oz. tehnško, SSI)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Successfully completed elementary school or short vocational upper secondary education</td>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vocational matura</td>
<td>Higher vocational, first cycle professional and academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational technical upper secondary (poklicno tečaj, PTI)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Successfully completed vocational upper secondary education</td>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vocational matura</td>
<td>Higher vocational, first cycle professional and academic (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational (višje strokovno, VSI)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>General or vocational matura OR 3 year working experiences, master craftsman, foreman or managerial examination and vocational matura general subject exams</td>
<td>19–21</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>First cycle professional and academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational course (poklicni tečaj, PT)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Successfully completed 4 years of general upper secondary education or final year of technical or vocational technical upper secondary education</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>Access to vocational matura</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Website of education ministry in Slovenia.

Table 13. Adults enrolled in IVET programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults in VET programmes</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPI</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPI</td>
<td>6 522</td>
<td>6 541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(40) Number of programmes refers to number of different professions. Many programmes are adjusted to SEN (see section 2.2.1.2) and/or to minority (section 2.1.). Therefore, all together we have 13 NPI programmes (five adjusted), 92 SPI (16 adjusted), 60 SSI (12 adjusted), 39 PTI (9 adjusted).

(41) Specific programs may have additional entry requirements.

(42) Attending nine years of basic education is obligatory; this requirement is deemed fulfilled when the learner is enrolled in basic education for nine years. Basic education is successfully completed when the learner achieves the minimum learning outcomes.

(43) Access to the first academic cycle is open for some graduates of SSI and PTI programmes. Individual with a vocational matura can choose to pass additionally the 5th subject (math or second language) to expand opportunities for enrolment. He/she can also join a matura course to pass the general matura and get access to all academic programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Upper secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Public expenditure (EUR million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>2.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>2.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>2.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>2.038*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>1.938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Some totals do not match due to rounding and unallocated funds. *In accordance with the new definition of formal education (ISCED 2011), the expenditure on formal education from 2012 on considers also spending on educational programmes for the first age group.

Source: SURS.

Table 15. Companies whose employees were in CET during working hours and co-funded CET costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of companies</td>
<td>4 294</td>
<td>6 893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of employees</td>
<td>431 402</td>
<td>521 947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of learners</td>
<td>281 961</td>
<td>358 982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of learning</td>
<td>11 712 325</td>
<td>11 368 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs (in 000 EUR)</td>
<td>92 996</td>
<td>179 811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SURS.
Annex 2. Further explanations

General upper secondary programmes

Besides general upper secondary programme (splošna gimnazija) there are also general upper secondary programmes with some specification. Those can be for sports (športna gimnazija) or classical education (klasična gimnazija), but also for professional education (tehniška gimnazija). In professional ones, a part of the educational programme is focused on professional subjects that can also be a part of the general Matura examination. There are three types of professional orientation: economics, technical and artistic (music, dance, fine arts, and drama).

Professionally orientated general upper secondary programme is general educational programme, which prepares students for tertiary studies but also give some basis for studies in a specific discipline.

The Intercompany Training Centres (MIC)

An intercompany training centre (medpodjetniški izobraževalni center, MIC) is a part of a school or school centre's organisational structure. There are currently 20 MIC for different sectors in Slovenia. Most were established between 2010 and 2013, when they were funded by the EU Regional Development Fund, the education ministry, local businesses, municipalities and other sources. MIC encompasses various target groups, as outlined below, and represents a link between education, training, economy and development in the local area:

(a) VET students: implementation of vocational modules and, partly, work-based learning.
(b) Teachers of vocational modules: enhancing practical skills.
(c) Unemployed people: enhancing practical skills and facilitating requalification for increasing employment opportunities (in cooperation with the local ESS).
(d) Employees in SMEs: implementation of practical training and enhancing skills.
(e) Adults: lifelong learning activities.
(f) Basic education students: career orientation.

The Vocational Matura

The Vocational Matura is composed of four exams. The obligatory common exams include two exams. The first exam is on mother tongue and the second exam on the basic professional, theoretical subject regarding the education programme concerned. The second two exams are to some extend elective. The third exam is on mathematics or a foreign language, which is the student choice. The forth exam is on various forms of practical work as product, service or project work with a presentation or seminar, where the student can choose the topic in cooperation with teacher of vocational module.
The vocational Matura examinations rules are the same for all candidates. The written parts of the first and third exams are external and provided by the National Examination Centre (NEC), whereas the second and fourth exams and all oral parts of the exams are carried out and assessed on the school level by The School Examination Boards for the Vocational Matura. The schools with the same programme may cooperate in the provision of the examination.

For the fourth exam, employer representative as an external member may be part of the examination board. This member is required to possess, as a minimum standard, technical or professional upper secondary education in the appropriate field, at least five years of relevant professional experience, and to have met all the requirements for the vocational Matura set by the National Committee for the Vocational Matura.

The Matura course

The one-year programme of the Matura course is designed primarily for students who completed the four-year upper-secondary technical education and opt the education at the university level accessible by general Matura. It is open also for students who:

(a) graduated from a three-year vocational school,
(b) completed third year of the general upper-secondary education and suspended the education for at least a year,
(c) finished basic education and passed the examination at the level of the third year of the general upper-secondary education,
(d) completed the officially recognised general upper-secondary education programme of private school for which the respective council of experts determined that it provides for a minimum knowledge required for graduation but did not pass the Matura examination.

Programme for the initial integration of immigrants

Verified programme for the initial integration of immigrants comprises an initial module (60 hours) and a continuing module (120 hours), covers the Slovene language and brings the student up to speed with Slovenian history, culture and constitutional arrangements. After completion of the programme, the participants are entitled to a free first Slovene examination at the basic level. In five year, since the beginning of the programme (2012-17) 7 411 immigrants attended. They were citizens of 86 different countries, 62% was women and majority were 31-35 years old (The Report of Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants for 2017) (Ministry for Interior, 2017).