Types of institutions

Upper secondary schools may offer only one programme (less often and typical for larger cities) or they may offer several programmes in an equal or different degree of difficulty. Single-programme schools are most often gimnazije. Schools tend to offer several programmes because they want to embrace wider educational interest in a given geographical area: from short upper secondary and upper secondary vocational to upper secondary technical education programmes, and the gimnazija programmes.

If a school offers a variety of programmes and the size of the school dictates it, the school can be organised in a school centre. Typically, it is divided into internal organisational units. Those units are relatively autonomous in managing the pedagogical process, but as to finances, material and staff they are managed at the level of the legal entity.

Geographical accessibility

The public network of schools and total number of student places in the country allow access to upper secondary education to all candidates who have completed basic education (ISCED 1 and 2).

The state allocates programmes so to provide regions with the programme offer that would meet with the interest of candidates and at the same time, secure the economy with human resources. Larger regional centres offer greater variety of programmes. Those studying in more distant locations have the option to reside in upper secondary student residence halls.

Requirements and choice

In principle, students who successfully complete the nine-year basic education can continue to any upper secondary school. Pupils who complete at least grade 7 in the nine years of compulsory basic education and thereby fulfil the basic school obligation, and those who complete the basic school with lower educational standard can continue only to short upper secondary vocational education.

The gimnazija programmes are open to candidates who have successfully completed a basic school. Some programmes may also have additional entry requirements, such as classical or foreign languages, or artistic talent, and to enrol in sports classes, candidates must provide evidence of their sporting achievement.

The general education includes also the one-year matura course programmes. They are designed primarily for those who have successfully completed the four-year upper secondary technical education and want to sit the general matura and enrol in a university study programme. Moreover,
the *matura* course is open to candidates who have completed:

- three-year upper secondary vocational school or four-year upper secondary technical school
- year three of a *gimnazija* programme and discontinued education for at least one year
- basic school and have passed the examination in compulsory and non-compulsory optional *matura* subjects at the level of *gimnazija* year three
- officially recognised programme of private *gimnazija* that provides minimal knowledge as approved by the Council of experts of the Republic of Slovenia for general education ([1]) but failed to pass *matura*.

**Upper secondary technical education** is open to candidates with certificates in basic school and short upper secondary vocational education.

**Upper secondary vocational education** is open to candidates with certificates in basic school and short upper secondary vocational education.

**Two-year vocational and technical education** is open to candidates with certificate in upper secondary vocational education.

**One-year vocational course** is open to candidates who have completed successfully *gimnazija* year four or final year of the upper secondary technical education programme.

**Short upper secondary vocational education** is open to candidates who have fulfilled the basic school obligation and successfully completed at least basic school grade seven or have completed the basic school programme with lower educational standard adapted to SEN children.

With the vocational and technical education programmes, it is possible to define special talents or psychophysical skills, in so far as they are required for successful education and pursuit of a specific activity or profession.

Registration procedures are governed by the Rules on enrolment in upper secondary schools ([2]). It is adopted by the Minister of education. There is a shared call for application. The enrolment for each school is specified by its relevant school body, but the Minister of education has to approve to the number of places. The call for application contains:

- information about:
  - school
  - education programmes
  - duration of education
  - number of places
  - entry requirements, and
  - measures to be taken in the event of too many or too few applications
- selection criteria in case of cap on places
- time limits and procedures for application and enrolment
- identification of the documents to be submitted by the candidates at the time of registration, and
- other guidance and information relevant to candidates and decision on education.

The [Ministry responsible for education](https://www.mps.gov.si) draws up and advertised no later than six months before the beginning of school the combined call for *gimnazija* programmes and *matura* course, short upper secondary and upper secondary vocational programmes, upper secondary technical and vocational-technical programmes, and vocational course.
After advertising the places, schools organise an information day (normally, within 10 days of the call) for candidates to learn about:

- educational opportunities and requirements
- qualifications acquired in the programme
- opportunities for continuing education
- enrolment requirements
- selection procedure in case of cap on places
- time limits of the enrolment, and
- and other relevant information for deciding for the programme.

The Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenian [4] and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia [5], too organise an information day for vocational programmes for which one advertised learning posts with an employer.

Students then enrol in the selected education programme in an upper secondary school at which they have registered. A cap may be placed on the number of students the school enrolls in the year one of the programme if the number of applications exceeds the staff and room capacities of the school. The Minister of education has to agree to the cap on places. The selection of candidates is administered by the Ministry of education, namely there are two rounds:

1. In the first round, the school selects based on the criteria set by the Minister of education, which apply the same for the whole country candidates, to fill 90 percent of places for newcomers.
2. In the second round, candidates who have not been selected in the first round may apply for the 10 percent of places remaining at all schools with cap on places, and available places at schools with too few applications.

Schools notify the candidates about the outcome of the selection procedure and give information about remaining places. Candidates may apply until such time all places are filled. Candidates who had to take remedial examination may enrol until August 31.

**Age and grouping of students**

Students, normally, enrol at the age of 15 years. There is one cycle of education. Depending on the programme, it may take 2 to 5 years for students to acquire their first vocational or technical qualification. Usually, a class is set up by students of the same age and teachers give lessons to the same students in the same subjects for several school years.

The Minister of education adopts the rules that govern the size of classes per type of education programme or grouping of students. Rules that govern upper secondary education:

- Rules on standards of implementing upper secondary education programmes and education programme for upper secondary student residence halls (sl [6]),
- Rules on standards for bilingual upper secondary schools (sl [7]), and
- Rules on standards for upper secondary schools with Italian-medium of instruction (sl [8]).

**Upper secondary general education (gimnazije)**

The normal class size is 30 students, 32 if so agreed by the Minister of education. With one SEN students in a class, the size is reduced to 26, with two to 23, with three to a maximum of 20 students.

If schools offer several gimnazija programmes and there are too few students to set up classes,
schools may group students into a composite class to receive joint lessons in the same or related content of the relevant timetable.

In a sports class dedicated to students with a status of prospective athlete, the minimum class size is 18 and a maximum 22 students in the year one. In higher years, the minimum class size is 13. If there are too few students, the class is shut and students redirected to the other classes of the relevant gimnazija programme.

Maximum group sizes for certain subjects:

- 16 students for informatics, biology, chemistry, physics and geography
- 16 students in technical gimnazije for practical instruction and laboratory classes
- 3 to 17 students for music classes in arts gimnazija, students take individual lessons in learning instrument and signing, and
- 20 students in sports (single-sex).

The maximum class size in the bilingual Slovenian-Hungarian gimnazija and in the gimnazija with Italian-medium of instruction is 16 or 24 students if there is enough space. If so agreed by the Minister of education, schools may set up classes of 5 or even fewer students. The maximum class size for informatics, biology, chemistry, physics and geography is 13 students.

All gimanzije receive funds for teaching foreign languages in additional groups, so school may offer a greater variety of foreign languages. Group sizes are defined according to the norms.

**Upper secondary technical education**

The maximum class size is normally 30 students. With one SEN student in a class, the size is reduced to 26, with two to 23 and with three to a maximum of 20 students.

The maximum group size for practical instruction in informatics, biology, chemistry and physics is 17 students.

The group size for practical instruction in school workshops is normally between 10 and 17 students. It depends on the nature of the lesson in particular, in terms of safety. For specific programme subjects (e.g. forestry, mining, glass blowing, agriculture, engineering, health and dental care) students are divided into even smaller groups.

In sports education, the class size is normally 20 and is single-sex.

The maximum class size in the bilingual Slovenian-Hungarian school is 16 students. If so agreed by the Minister of education, schools may set up classes of 5 or even fewer students. The maximum size group size for practical instruction in core academic subjects and in technical subjects is 13 students.

The maximum class size in the school with Italian-medium of instruction is 16 students. If so agreed by the Minister of education, schools may set up classes of 5 or even fewer students. The maximum size group size for practical instruction in core academic subjects and in technical subjects is 13 students.

**Upper secondary vocational education**

The maximum class size is normally 28 students. With one SEN student in a class, the size is reduced to 24, with two to 22 and with three to a maximum of 20 students.
The maximum group size for practical instruction in informatics and science, and technical subjects is 16 students.

The maximum group size for practical instruction in school workshops is 17 students in year one, 14 students in year two, 13 students in year three. Smaller groups are set up in specific programmes because of the safety issues (e.g. forestry, mining, glass blowing, agriculture, engineering, health and dental care) students are divided into even smaller groups.

In sports education, the class size is normally 20 and is single-sex.

If there are not enough students, the school may set up a composite class.

The maximum class size in the bilingual Slovenian-Hungarian school and in the school with Italian-medium of instruction is 16 students; or 24 in programmes of gimanzija, matura course and vocational course if there is enough space. If so agreed by the Minister of education, schools may set up classes of 5 or even fewer students. The maximum groups size for practical instruction in core academic subjects and in technical subjects is 13 students.

**Short upper secondary vocational education**

The maximum class size is normally 20 students. With one SEN student in a class the maximum size is reduced to 16, with two to 14 and with three to a maximum of 12 students.

The maximum group size for practical instruction in school workshops is 10 students.

The maximum class size in the bilingual Slovenian-Hungarian school and in the school with Italian-medium of instruction is 14 students. If so agreed by the Minister of education, schools may set up classes of 5 or even fewer students. The maximum size group size for practical instruction is 10 students.

**Organisation of the school year**

The school start and end date are laid down by the Gimanzija Act ([9](#)) and Upper Secondary Vocational and Technical Education Act ([10](#)). The Minister of education issues a special shared rule on the organisation of school time. The Rules on the school calendar in upper secondary schools ([11](#)) provide for the division of the school year on examination periods, the duration and allocation of holidays and out-of-school days, the duration of breaks and the schedule of examinations.

Each year, no later than May 31, the Minister of education issues detailed instructions for the school calendar. The National General Matura Committee ([12](#)) and the National Vocational Matura Committee ([13](#)) define dates for general and vocational matura.

School year in upper secondary education starts September 1 and ends August 31 of the following calendar year. Organised educational activities (instruction or other forms of educational activities of the timetable) a maximum of 42 weeks in vocational and technical upper secondary schools and a maximum of 38 weeks in gimnaziye. Any other arrangement is subject to the approval of the Ministry.

The organised educational activities take from September 1 to June 24; after 25 June, only practical training with the employer can take place. Lessons for students in their final year end in the second half of May, with the exact date being set each year by the Minister of education.

Instruction and other forms of educational activites of the timetable normally include two assessment
periods. The first period runs from September 1 to January 15, the second from January 16 to the end of school. The council of school may, at the proposal of the assembly of teachers, decide on more assessment periods and schedule their duration.

Out-of-school days include public holidays and workfree days as set by law, school holiday (autumn, new year, winter, May 1, and summer), one day for systematic medical examinations, the day of the school as specified by the annual work plan, Saturdays, unless otherwise specified by the annual instructions of the Minister of education, and Sundays.

- Autumn holidays, including two public holidays (October 31 and November 1), of one week
- New Year’s break from December 25 until January 2
- Winter holidays of one week: from the third Monday in February in one part of the country, and the fourth Monday in the other part of the country
- May 1 break from April 27 until May 2
- Summer holidays from June 25 until August 31; except for those students who need to complete practical training with the employer after June 25.

Examination dates are during school time and in part, during holidays. There are three dates for vocational matura, final examination, retake or other examination, namely in the spring (after school ends), autumn (from August 16 to October 20) and winter (between February 1 and March 1). There are two dates for general matura, namely spring and autumn one.

School educational activities are defined with the school’s annual work plan. Head teachers develop the plan for each school year, and the school council adopts it.

**Organisation of the school day and week**

Lessons and other forms of educational activities of the timetable take 5 days a week (Monday to Friday) unless otherwise specified by the minister of education by means of instructions for each school year.

The instruction time may include up to 30 lessons/hours per week in core academic subjects and technical subjects or vocational modules, sports excluded. With other forms of educational activities, the weekly instruction time may be up to 36 lessons.

The school normally starts at 8 a.m. and ends around 2 p.m. The school council can define a different time, but only if so agreed with the council of parents and assembly of teachers.

If a school cannot organise instruction in the morning only and in one shift because of the high number of students, it organises the instruction in two shifts, namely organises one in the afternoon. Schools with two shifts, schedule the start as they see fit.

Law protects students in practical training with the employer. Student may put in a maximum of 8 hours a day, and practical training may take up to 36 hours per week. If students have 5 academic lessons in a given day, they cannot have practical training with the employer that day.

A school lesson is normally 45 minutes. During individual lessons in core academic subjects, students normally have 5-minute breaks, and a 30-minute break once a day (or at least 20-minute break) for lunch. A lesson of practical training with the employer is 60 minutes. If students train with the employer for 4 hours a day or more, they are entitled to a break of at least 30 minutes.