

# Republic of Slovenia

## Demographics for Slovenia

Population:	2,011,070 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$39.41 billion
Currency (inc code):	Tolar (SIT)
Language(s):	Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian, others
Internet country code:	.si

Over the last decade, the Slovene education system has experienced thorough and all-encompassing modernization. The philosophy, values and principles forming the basis for the renewal are: accessibility and transparency of the public education system, legal neutrality, choice at all levels, democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, and quality of learning to take precedence over the accumulation of facts (Figure 1).

The education system in Slovenia includes:

1. Pre-school education.
2. Basic education (single structure of primary and lower secondary education).
3. (Upper) secondary education:
  - short-term vocational education and secondary vocational education;
  - secondary technical education and secondary general education.
4. Post-secondary vocational education.
5. Higher education:
  - undergraduate education (of the professionally oriented and academic type);

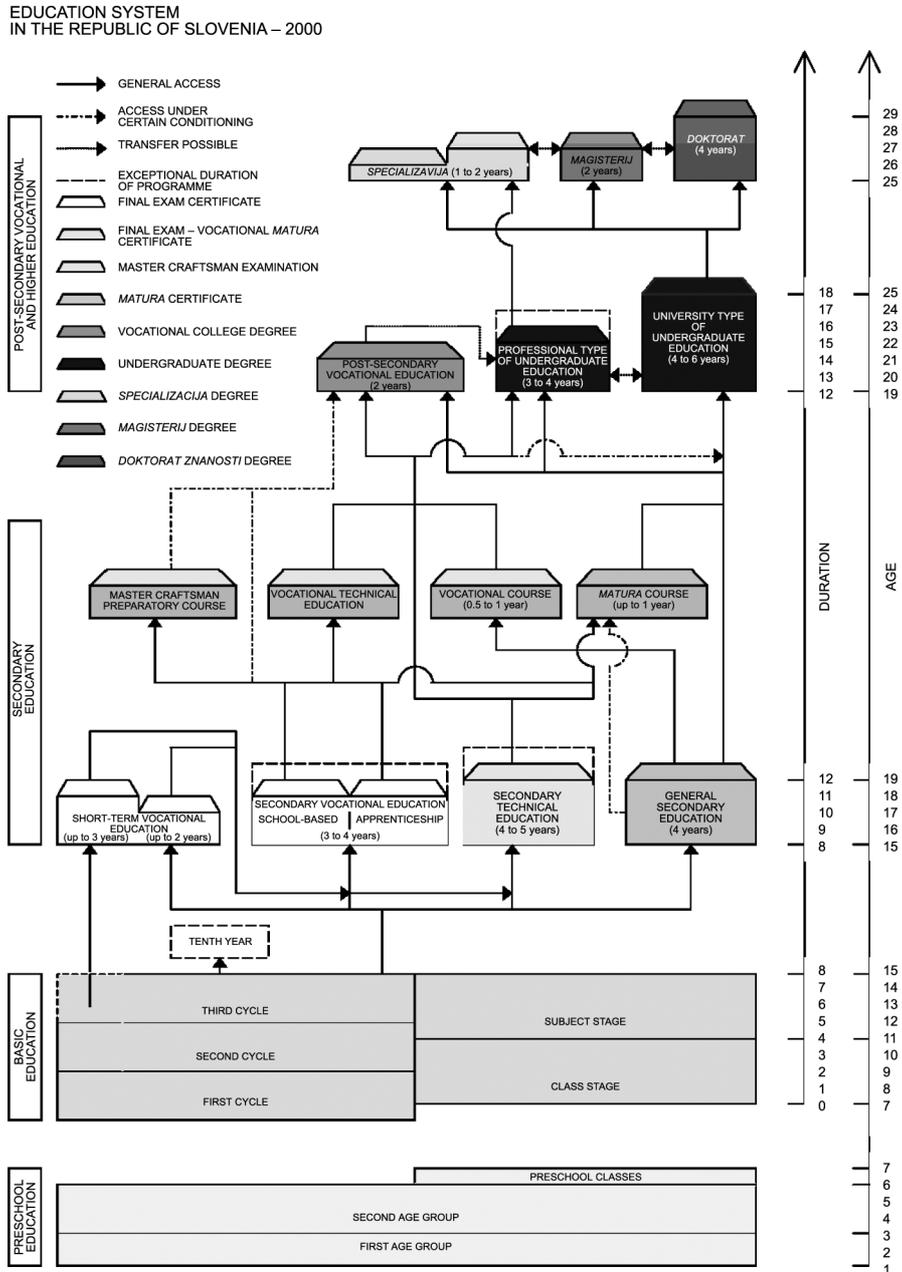


Figure 1. Education system in Slovenia (taken from diploma supplement document)

- postgraduate education at levels:
  - specialization and Master's;
  - PhD.

Specific parts of system:

6. Adult education.
7. Music and dance education.
8. Special needs education.
9. Modified programs and programs in ethnically and linguistically mixed areas.

### **Primary and secondary education**

Students enter the schooling system at the age of six. Primary education is divided into three three-year cycles. Primary schools provide a compulsory and an extended curriculum. The compulsory curriculum must be provided by all schools and studied by all pupils. Schools must also provide the optional elementary school curriculum but pupils are free not to participate in it.

Secondary education follows the compulsory general education. Programs in secondary education vary in content, duration and goals.

General secondary school programs are divided into two groups: general and professionally oriented. The program lasts four years and ends with an external examination at national level.

Secondary vocational and technical education offers five types of educational programs that vary in length of study and curriculum. However, all these programs prepare students for the entry to the labor market or further education in vocational colleges or a professionally oriented higher education.

The planning, programming and provision of vocational and technical education are a joint responsibility of social partners (employers and trade unions) and the state.

### **Higher education**

Higher education includes academic university studies and professionally oriented studies. Faculties and art academies, which are members of universities, and independent faculties established as private institutions offer both types of program, while professional colleges provide only professionally oriented programs. In addition to teaching, higher education institutions also carry out research and art activities. Study is organised at two levels. At the undergraduate level, students obtain a Bachelor title. At the postgraduate level, students are awarded a second-degree title, the title of specialist, or the academic title of either a Master's degree or PhD.

Vocational colleges are an integral part of vocational education and training. These colleges offer practically based programs. Owing to its specifics and

requirements, post-secondary vocational education it is organised parallel to higher education and not as an integral part of it.

Higher education is provided at:

1. State universities, which are divided into: faculties, art academies and professional colleges.
2. Independent higher education institutions (higher education institution which is not a member of university):
  - public professional colleges can also be organised outside the universities;
  - private faculties and professional colleges; according to the law it is also allowed to establish private universities and single art academies.

The responsibility to secure minimum standards (ex-ante control) in higher education lies with the Council for Higher education of the Republic of Slovenia, which is a consultative body of the Government and consists of the representatives of universities and independent higher education institutions and of other experts. It is authorised to accredit new HE institutions, to evaluate new study programs of universities and to issue opinions on them, to accredit state approved programs of single higher education institutions.

### *Admission*

Applicants must have completed the “maturity exam” to be accepted for an academic course. The entrance requirement for some courses can also consist in a test of certain skills, such as art and music talent and psychological and/or physical abilities.

The entrance requirements for postgraduate studies are defined in the curriculum. In most cases, the most important criterion is the average grade achieved as an undergraduate. Participation in research work and work experience may also be required. Higher education institutions define their own admission requirements, in compliance with the law, in each study program separately.

The academic year lasts from October 1 to September 30 and is usually divided into two semesters. Organised courses (lectures, seminars and exercises) usually last from 20 to 30 hours a week, 30 weeks annually.

### **Management education**

Management education in Slovenia is provided by a wide range of organizations. Almost all management education that leads to a degree is provided by state universities and independent higher institutions. There are also numerous post-secondary vocational education institutions that offer

two-year courses in management/business, but these are not an integral part of higher education.

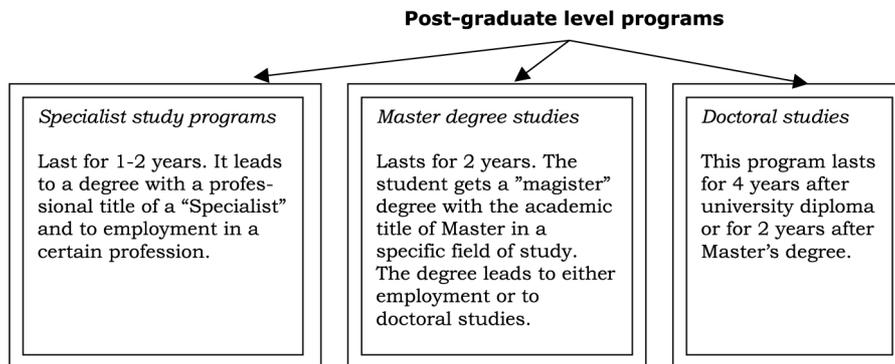
Only a small part of non-degree management education, such as open short courses, in-company courses and consultancy, is provided by the state universities and even then these activities are organized within separate centres located at the university. Other providers of non-degree management education include a major (international) private business school, associations, Chambers of Commerce, corporations and different consulting companies.

Undergraduate higher education programs are predetermined. Students enroll in a program and they can only select a few optional subjects. In higher (final) years of study, students can select optional subjects, which to a certain degree customize the programs.

As shown in Figure 2, postgraduate management studies can take one of two different forms: specialization or Master of Science/Art program. The first generally lasts from one to two years (if not defined differently). The Master of Science/Art title can be obtained only through a two-year program. Both programs must be formally executed by institutions registered for activities in postgraduate education.

The universities are offering various postgraduate programs, which satisfy the formal criteria for specialist or Master alternative. The universities that offer an MBA degree have decided to use the name “MBA” in a specific postgraduate program qualifying for MSc. It is very difficult to recognize a clear difference in positioning between the MSc programs having the additional attribute MBA and those MSc programs, which are purely academic.

The Law on Higher Education does not recognize the MBA program as such, since it neither mentions the acronym MBA, nor the wording that would correspond to the translation of the phrase “Master of Business Administration”. However, since the use of the name is not regulated, it is not explicitly forbidden either and could be attached either to a program leading to the professional title



**Figure 2.** Three parallel tracks of postgraduate education in Slovenia

of “specialist”, or to a program leading to the academic title “Master”. The only real restriction applies to the use of the Slovenian word “magister” (master) in the program title, or the claim that the program grants a degree.

Six institutions offer MBA programs, which are not listed in the register of officially recognized postgraduate programs. These are private schools that can be separated into two groups. The first group are schools or centers that offer an MBA program in cooperation with another foreign management education institution or as a consortium of different partners. The other group offers MBA and Executive MBA programs (and also other non-degree programs) as an independent institution with their own programs and faculty (or they invite professors from different world-renown business schools). All of them use the word MBA in the title of the program and upon graduation students get an MBA title though it is not equal to a Master’s title awarded by officially recognized postgraduate programs.

However this is about to change, as Slovenia has become a member of the European Union and adopted the Bologna declaration, which has brought major changes to the Slovenian higher education system. The changes have been already implemented in the undergraduate system of study (three years for an academic and professional title instead of four or five as it is now). The graduate study system is still in the process of reform.

The market recognition of the MBA programs in Slovenia however is different from the state one. The job market recognizes people who have finished these programs, as well as their colleagues who have completed the programs at the universities and received official degrees.

In Slovenia only one management education institution is AMBA as well as IQA accredited for its Executive MBA education. It is a private business school.

Doctoral study is generally organised strictly as individual academic and research activity under the supervision of a mentor. Some schools also started to offer some custom-designed quantitative and methodological courses, which complemented the individual programs of doctoral students.

In order to apply for the Doctoral study, students have to hold a Master’s degree unless they enroll in the direct Doctoral program that takes four years and consists of two parts. The first two years are carried out within the Master’s program, while in the second two years students conduct independent research work and participate in a research project. Students complete the Doctoral program when they fulfill all the course requirements (when enrolled in the direct doctoral program), publish two articles and write and defend their Doctoral dissertation. A successful defense results in the award of the degree (PhD).

### *Students*

In 2003, there were 1,714 graduate students and 23,511 undergraduate students in business and management programs in Slovenia. Combined, they represent 27 percent of the student population. In 2003 Slovenian institutions awarded

2,677 (48 percent of all Bachelor's degrees awarded in 2003) Bachelor's degrees, 1,033 (19 percent) university Bachelor's degrees and 300 (28 percent) Master's degrees in business and management. About 70 percent of all business Bachelor's degrees, 60 percent of business university Bachelor's degrees and about 50 percent of business Master's degrees are awarded to women:

- Number of institutions with undergraduate business degree programs: 5.
- Number of institutions with business Master's degree programs: 4.
- Number of institutions with business doctoral degree programs: 3.

### **Issues facing business schools**

Business schools in Slovenia cannot build on a long tradition of management education. Particularly in Slovenia (and other ex-Yugoslavian countries), with their specific form of political economy, i.e. self-management, education of managers was different from countries operating under the conditions of a market economy. Business schools are confronted with a huge challenge to close the gap after a 50-year period of relative isolation. The fast internationalization and globalization are adding another dimension to this challenge. Independent, relatively young management education institutions are succeeding to pick up faster by engaging foreign faculty and their methods of management teaching. More traditional organizations, such as universities, increasingly confronted with funding cuts, need more time to adapt to the new circumstances.

At the same time all institutions (with public programs) are obliged to develop their programs in accordance with the Bologna declaration. For management education in Slovenia, Bologna means both challenges and opportunities.

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