

Slovak higher education system

To evaluate the quality of Slovak higher education institutions, a panellist needs to have an adequate understanding of the Slovak higher education system and its specificities. This section will give you a general overview of it.

A general prerequisite for admission to higher education studies is a school-leaving examination (*maturitná skúška*) taken at the end of secondary education.

Higher education in Slovakia provides **study programmes at three levels**:

1. Bachelor's study programmes
 2. Master's, Engineer's and Doctor's study programmes
 3. PhD. study programmes
- * NB: There are a few joint study programmes such as general or veterinary medicine that join the first and second levels together.

Consequently, the higher education institutions in Slovakia award the following **academic degrees**:

- **1st level** (National Qualifications Framework (NQF)/European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level: 6)
 - Bachelor "*bakalár*" (**Bc.**).
- **2nd level** (NQF/EQF Level: 7)
 - Master "*magister*" (**Mgr.**), in the field of the arts (**Mgr. art.**),
 - Engineer "*inžinier*" (**Ing.**) in technical, agricultural and economic fields; in the field of architecture and town-planning (**Ing. arch.**),
 - Doctor of general medicine (**MUDr.**),
 - Doctor of dental medicine (**MDDr.**),
 - Doctor of veterinary medicine (**MVDr.**).
- **3rd level** (NQF/EQF Level: 8)
 - Philosophiae doctor (**PhD.**),
 - Doctor of Arts (**ArtD.**),
 - Licentiate in theology (**ThLic.**), 1st part of a PhD. study in the field of Catholic Theology.

One of the local specificities of the higher education system is the so called **Examina rigorosa**. Holders of the academic degree of "magister" may take the examina rigorosa, which includes an exam and a defence of a rigorosa thesis. After its successful completion, higher education institutions award academic degrees such as: RNDr., PharmDr., PhDr., JUDr., PaedDr. and ThDr. Accreditation for this kind of degree programme will not be a subject of your evaluation.

The higher education system is based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The standard workload of a student studying in full-time form is 60 credits per academic year, 30 credits per semester and 20 credits per trimester.

At the end of a course, students are graded on their performance according to the following **grading scale** of A – Fx:

- **A** (excellent) = outstanding performance
- **B** (very good) = above average performance
- **C** (good) = average performance
- **D** (satisfactory) = acceptable performance
- **E** (sufficient) = performance fulfils only the minimum requirements
- **Fx** (unsatisfactory) = performance does not even fulfil the minimum requirements.

The academic year starts on **September 1** and ends on **August 31** of the following year. It is usually composed of two semesters (**winter** and **summer**) or of three trimesters. The organisation of the academic year is set by the statutes of the higher education institution or its faculty.

Higher education is provided in study programmes assigned to a field of study or a combination of fields of study. There are currently more than **7,000 accredited study programmes** in **48** different **fields of study**. These include programmes for full-time and part-time studying, and language variants of the same programme.

The higher education system in Slovakia is regulated by the following Acts and Regulations:

- Act No. 131/2002 on Higher Education
- Act No. 269/2018 on Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- Decree No. 614/2002 on Credit System of Study
- Decree No. 244/2019 on Study Fields System in Slovak Republic
- Decree No. 246/2019 on Habilitation Proceedings and Inauguration Proceedings.

Another specificity of the Slovak higher education system are **habilitation proceedings** and **inauguration proceedings**. Having obtained a 3rd level degree (PhD. or its equivalent) and having fulfilled the requirements for habilitation or inauguration proceedings, a scholar may apply first for a scientific-pedagogical title or artistic-pedagogical title of **“associate professor”** (*“docent”*) and later on for the title **“professor”** (*“profesor”*). The title of professor is the highest acknowledgment of expertise in a given field. This acknowledgment is confirmed by the fact that it is the president of the Slovak Republic who appoints them.

Please note that the Standards for Study Programmes allow HEIs to employ teaching staff in the position of associate professor or professor without the actual titles.

There are currently **34 higher education institutions** in the Slovak republic, of which 20 are public, 3 are state and 11 are private. Besides these, there are also 4 foreign HEIs but they are not subject to the Agency’s evaluation. The list of the 34 HEIs can be found [here](#).

Should you be interested in further information on the Slovak education system, please visit the websites of the [Slovak Academic Information Agency](#) or [EURYDICE](#).