

SLOVAK SCHOOLS

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The Slovakian school system can be subdivided into three sectors. The elementary sector, called ISCED 0, is represented by the nursery school, which can be attended by children under the age of six. The compulsory education, lasting ten years, starts at the age of six.

Compulsory education starts in primary school. Primary school contains two stages: the primary level, which is called ISCED 1 (*primárne vzdelávanie*) and the secondary (school) level 1, which is called ISCED 2 (*nížšie sekundárne/stredoškolské vzdelávanie*). Both stages are closely connected. Students between the age of six and ten attend the primary level, which consists of four grades (1 to 4). The secondary level 1, following primary level, contains five grades (5 to 9), which are attended by students at the age of ten to fifteen. Primary school lays the foundations for further studies and practical experiences. Secondary school ends with a compulsory all-Slovakian test (monitor), examining the proficiency level of all students in mathematics and the Slovak language.

The Secondary level 2, which is called ISCED 3 (15/16-17/18 year-old students) is subdivided into three levels: high school, secondary professional school (*Stredná odborná škola*) and conservatory. Depending on the students' individual start of high school, either after the ISCED 1 or ISCED 2, high school contains four or eight grades, respectively. Students accomplish the general qualification for university entrance by taking the school-leaving exam at the end of high school. Secondary professional school (2 to 5 grades) is a preparation for certain professional disciplines and provides theory instruction as well as practical training. Conservatory imparts artistic and artistic-pedagogical education. Education and learning are realized in these stages with the help of educational programs.

The students, that have already passed their school-leaving exam, extend their specialized education in the post-secondary level, called ISCED 4.

The tertiary sector, ISCED 5 (including conservatories, colleges and universities), offers education at specialist colleges, bachelor programs (period of study: three to four years), master of engineering (period of study: one to three years), studies to get one's doctorate (period of study: six years) and the PhD program (period of study: three to five years).

The subject local studies (Vlastiveda), which is taught in primary school, is seen as the first contact between students and geography. However, geography is not taught as an independent subject until the secondary level 1, in which it is taught at least one hour per week. Students acquire basic geographical knowledge at this stage of their education. These basics can be expanded in high school because geography is an obligatory subject in the first, second and third grade. Studies for geography are offered by universities for student teachers and students who are about to take their diploma.