



Slovenia

This report describes the structure of the national higher education system in Slovenia, focusing on the institutional types as defined by national categories. It builds on the Eurydice Report on the national higher education system and complements it with quantitative information on the role of higher education institution (HEI) types in national systems, based on data derived from the European Tertiary Education Register (<http://www.eter-project.eu>) for the period 2014-2020.

Types of Higher Education Institutions

According to Eurydice¹, tertiary education in Slovenia includes:

- short-cycle higher vocational education at EQF level 5, provided by higher vocational colleges (HVCs); and
- higher education at EQF levels 6 to 8, provided by higher education institutions.²

Higher education is regulated by the Higher Education Act. The studies are organised by both public and private universities, and other higher education institutions (in ETER they are called “Free-standing higher education institutions” following their official national designation, “samostojni visokošolski zavod”), namely at faculties, art academies, and professional higher education institutions. Under special conditions, it is allowed to form an international association of universities (see below).

The Slovenian types of higher education institutions can be further described as follows:

- **Universities** are autonomous institutions of higher education and research having a special status. They are tasked to foster the development of science, professionalism, and arts. Through their faculties, academies of arts and professional HEIs they communicate important findings in several research areas and/or academic disciplines. The educational process is set up to provide students with the knowledge and competencies needed for continuing education or entering employment. A university can be established only after study programmes for all three study cycles, at least four academic disciplines within the Frascati classification and at least five educational areas at the second level within the KLASIUS classification (compatible with the ISCED-F classification) have been accredited.
- **Free-standing higher education institutions**, which can be broken down further into:

¹<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/slovenia/types-higher-education-institutions>

² Since December 2022, these two sectors have been under the auspices of different ministries (Ministry of Education for short-cycle higher vocational education, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation for higher education). Due to these separate responsibilities, amongst others, the current ETER data only includes higher education and no data on HVCs. It should be noted that certain providers offer both higher education and short-cycle higher vocational education programmes; for these cases only the higher education programmes are covered by ETER data.

- **Faculties** undertake research and educational activities for one or more related or interconnected scientific disciplines. Faculties can be set up only after the requirements for at least two cycles (the first and second, or second and third cycle) had been met.
- **Academies of arts** undertake educational activities in arts for one or more related or interconnected artistic disciplines. Academies of arts can be set up only after the requirements for offering study programmes for at least two cycles (the first and second, or second and third cycle) had been fulfilled.
- **Professional HEIs** undertake educational activities for one or more related or interlinked trades or occupational fields. Professional HEIs can be set up only after the requirements for at least the first cycle had been met. They can also pursue activities in research and arts, but this must be determined in their memorandum of association and all the relevant requirements met. If the memorandum of association determined and the accreditation procedure verified that the institution has at its disposal adequate higher education teaching staff and meets the requirements for scientific research or arts, the professional HEI can also offer master's study programmes; otherwise, it may provide such programmes in cooperation with universities, faculties or art academies.
- An **international association of universities** headquartered in the Republic of Slovenia can be set up with a written agreement by at least one Slovenian university and one non-domestic accredited university. Co-founders can include other universities or university networks and research organisations. To set up the international association of universities, the Slovenian public universities need consent from the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. An international association of universities headquartered in the Republic of Slovenia can apply for funding of their operations from a special budget line. If such an association of universities offer study programmes which had been accredited in the EU member countries; these programmes are considered accredited in Slovenia, too. However, they must be notified by the SQAA and entered into the register of HEIs with the ministry responsible for higher education.
- **Transnational higher education** in Slovenia can be pursued or organised following the agreement between HEI which had been accredited in the Republic of Slovenia and non-domestic HEI which offers officially recognised study programmes, and issues official documents in the country of their association. In the Republic of Slovenia accredited HEIs can also provide transnational higher education abroad, namely following the agreement with the relevant non-domestic HEI. They can also issue the Slovenian official document. The SQAA determines the obligatory elements of the agreement on pursuing transnational higher education.

Main institutional characteristics. Legal status and the right to award a PhD

Table 1 provides a quantitative overview of the main institutional characteristics of the 46 HEIs in Slovenia by HEI type. Out of the 46 institutions, 39 are Free-standing higher education institutions and 7 are Universities.

While all but one University are PhD awarding, only around a third (14) of the Free-standing higher education institutions grant doctoral degrees. Among the 39 Free-standing higher education institutions, 31 are private, 7 are private-government dependent and one is public. Universities are relatively equally distributed among the three legal statutes. Two institutions are privately owned, two are private-government dependent, and the remaining three are public.

Table 1. Institutional type and legal status by HEI type, 2020

Category		N	Public	Private	Private-government dependent	PhD awarding
Free-standing higher education institution	Samostojni visokošolski zavod	39	1	31	7	14
University	Univerza	7	3	2	2	6
Total		46	4	33	9	20

Note: Numbers reflect inclusion of institutions in ETER

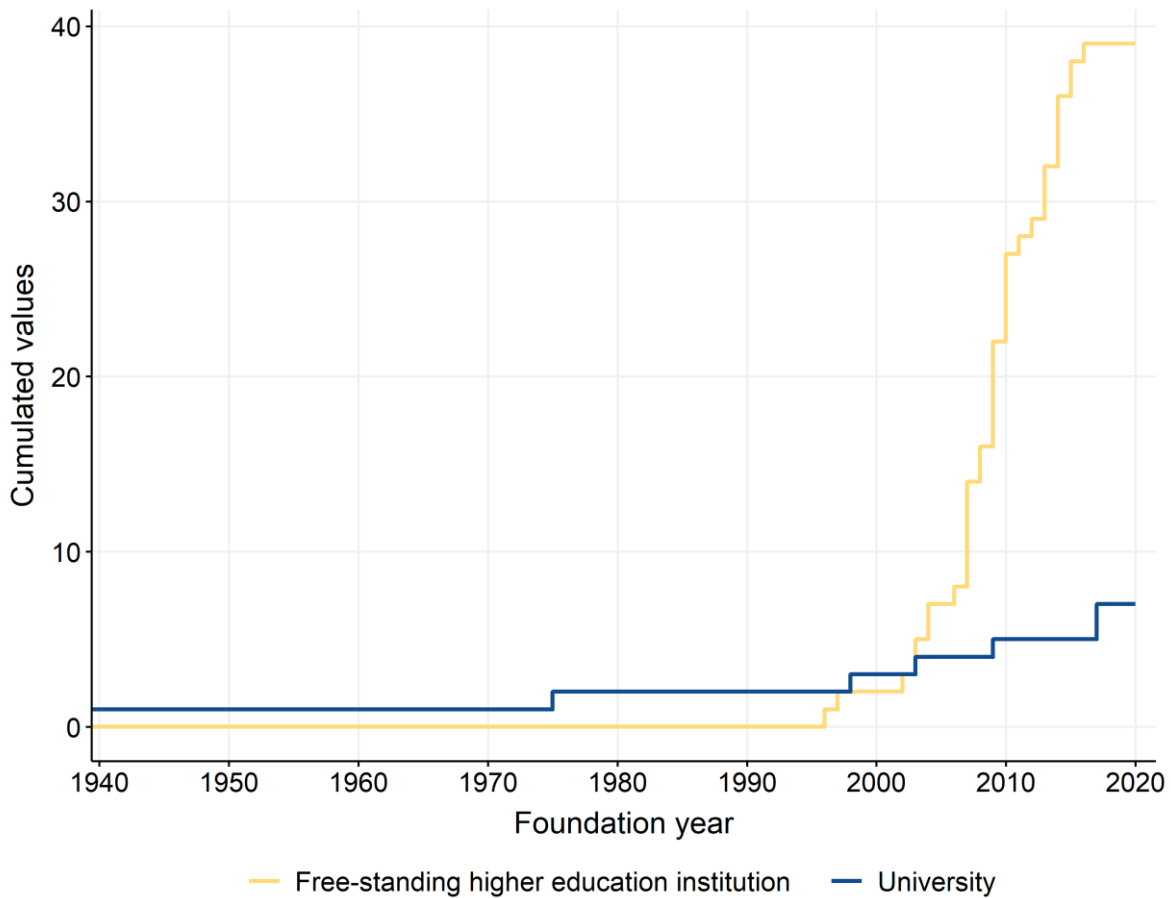
Institutional history. Older and younger institutional types

Figure 1 uses data on the HEI foundation year providing information on the history of Slovenia's higher education system and its evolution over time.

Founded in 1919, after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the establishment of the State of Slovenes, Croates and Serbs in 1918, the University of Ljubljana (*Univerza v Ljubljani*) is the oldest Slovenian University. Until 1975 when the University of Maribor (*Univerza v Mariboru*) was founded, it was the only Slovenian University. After 1996 with the establishment of the first Free-standing higher education institution, the GEA Faculty of Entrepreneurship (*Gea College - Fakulteta za podjetništvo*), the rise of this HEI type began. In fact, between 1996 and 2020 a sharp increase from one to 39 institutions is visible.

Contrarily, the number of Universities rose more modestly increasing from two institutions in 1998 to seven in the reference year 2020. The two most recent additions, University of Novo mesto (*Univerza v Novem mestu*) and New University (*Nova Univerza*), were created as a merger of previously four/three free-standing faculties and have been recognised as Universities since 2020.

Figure 1. Foundation year of HEIs by type

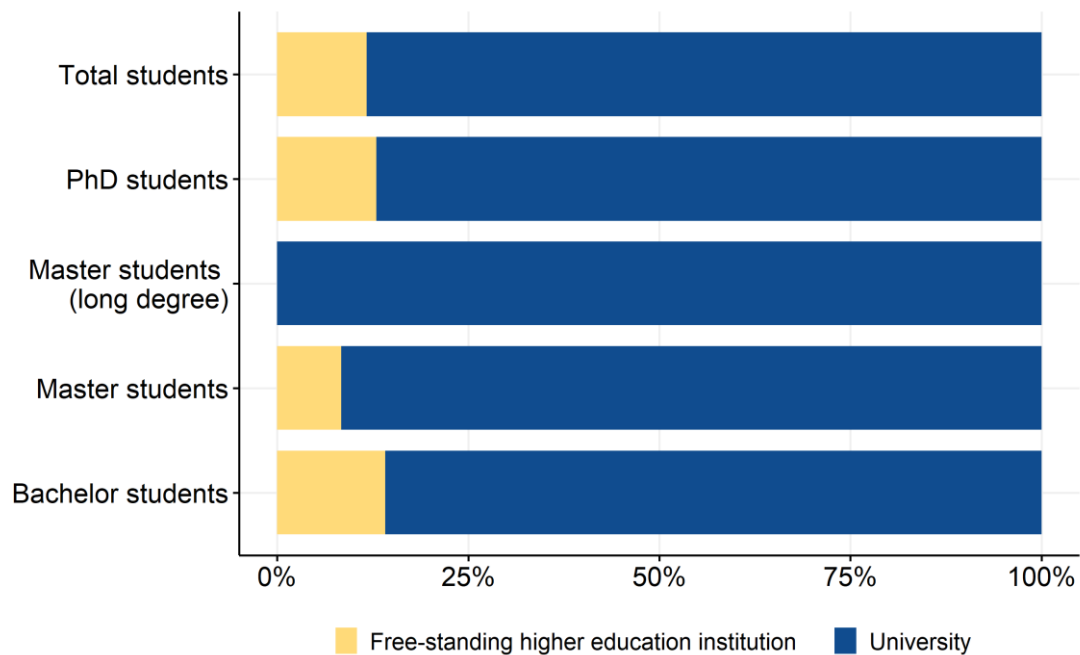


Students

Shown in Figure 2, with 88% of the students (ISCED 6-7) enrolled in Universities, they are the leading actor in the national higher education system. The system is highly concentrated on a few large institutions: the University of Ljubljana accounts for 55% of students alone, and 84% of all students are enrolled in the three largest Universities (Ljubljana, Maribor and Primorska). Contrarily, Free-standing higher education institutions, even though much larger in number, enrol just 12% of the student population. This difference in the share of students is also visible when differentiating between educational levels. Free-standing higher education institutions account for about 14% of bachelor students and 8% of master students. Accordingly, the universities enrol 86% of bachelor and 92% of the master students in Slovenia. Integrated programmes leading directly to a Master (“ISCED 7 long degree”) are only offered by the two major Universities (Ljubljana and Maribor). New enrolments are primarily in the fields of teacher training, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and theology³. Similar shares can be found for the PhD students, where 87% are enrolled at Universities and 13% at Free-standing higher education institutions.

³ See <https://portal.evsi.gov.si/documents/10157/19bdd2e2-f375-4ef7-95b3-083805a45886> (University of Ljubljana) & <https://portal.evsi.gov.si/documents/10157/5804a052-b4de-4fe7-87d3-8b202008fa34> (University of Maribor)

Figure 2. Students by level and type of HEI, 2020



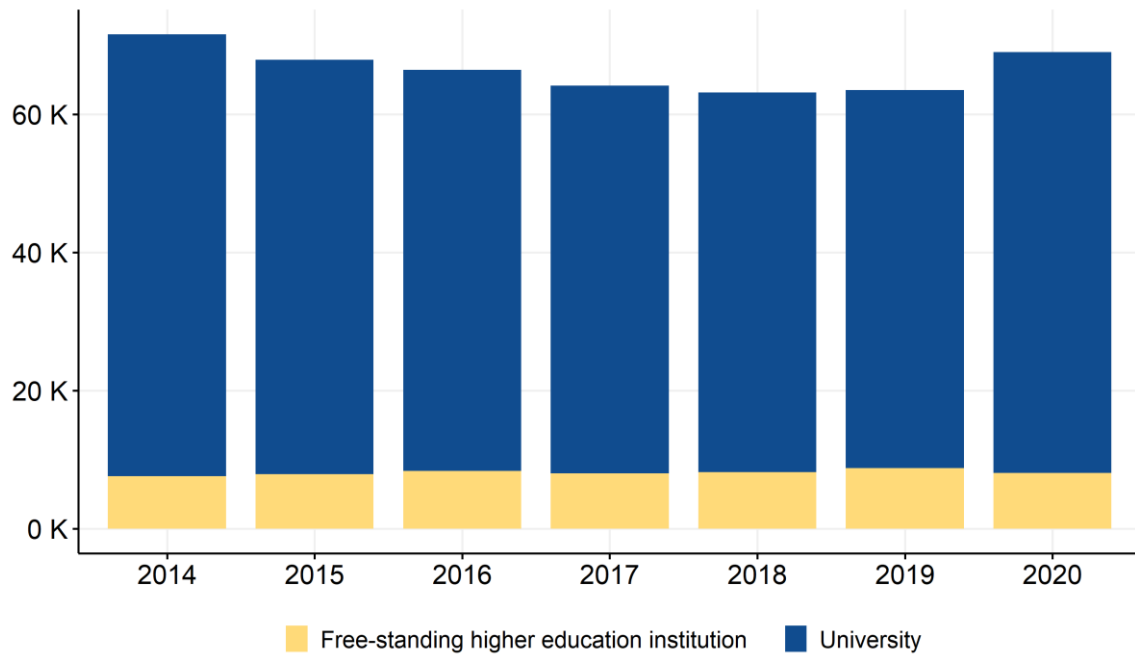
Note Total students include ISCED 6-7.

Changing roles over time

Figure 3 shows the evolution of the number of students over time differentiated by HEI type. Examining the overall number of students, we can see a decreasing pattern until 2019. In the following year the number of students increased again. This pattern is mainly driven by the student population enrolled in Universities, which experienced a fall by around 14% between 2014 and 2019 and rose again by 11% in 2020. Enrolment in Free-standing higher education institutions can be characterized by a more moving pattern. In fact, the number of students saw an increase between 2014 and 2016 (+10%), followed by a slight decline in the

subsequent year (-4%) with a resurgence until 2019 (+9%). In contrast to the Universities enrolment decreased again between 2019 to 2020 (-8%) in Free-standing higher education institutions.

Figure 3. Number of students enrolled by type of HEI, 2014-2020





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