QUESTIONNAIRE ON NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION
BY THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION
(UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL)

1. NATIONAL LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES ESTABLISHING NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF EDUCATION

General

Organization and Financing of Education Act
School Inspection Act
Institutes Act
Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act
Scholarship Act
School Meals Act
Rules on in-service training of educational professionals
Modernisation of Educational Activities Rules
Rules on approving textbooks
Rules on the introduction of a new method for financing and organizing educational work in secondary technical schools, vocational colleges and halls of residence for secondary school students
Decree on the introduction and use of classification system of education and training

Single structure education (integrated primary and lower secondary education)

Elementary School Act
Rules on the Norms and Standards for Performing the Programme of Elementary School
Rules on the Assessment of Knowledge and Promotion of Pupils in the Elementary School
Rules on the implementation of differentiation at classes in elementary schools
Rules on National Examinations in Elementary Schools
Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the elementary school programme in bilingual elementary schools and elementary schools with Italian as teaching language

Upper Secondary Education

Gimnazije Act
Vocational Education Act
Matura Examination Act
Rules on secondary school enrolment
Rules on the Assessment of Knowledge in Secondary Schools
Rules on the General Matura Examination
Rules on the Vocational Matura Examination
Regulations on the Final Examination
2. NORMS, STANDARDS AND MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS

a) School infrastructure

The school infrastructure is stipulated by Guidelines for construction of school buildings in The Republic of Slovenia. The school area comprises:
- land under building
- functional and school courtyards with or without playground,
- school garden for practical lessons
- green areas
- sport facilities.

School buildings must ensure flexibility and adaptability. The school building comprises: entrance hall, rooms for all the cycles of (basic) school, common school places (library, multimedia classroom, toilets, multipurpose hall, kitchen etc.), administrative offices, sport facilities and others.

The guidelines give instructions for the calculation of the number of classrooms per school.

b) Class size and pupil-teacher ratio

The basic school comprises three three-year cycles. Children of the same age are grouped in years. Pupils of the same year are grouped in classes; in smaller schools there are also multi-year classes that combine pupils of two or three years.

There may be no more than 28 pupils in one classroom. For classes in bilingual schools (Slovenian/Hungarian), in schools where Italian is the language of instruction, in classes for pupils with special needs, for Roma pupils and in multi-year mixed classes, lower quotas apply. The quotas are determined by the Minister and published in relevant regulations.

Schools may group pupils in streamed groups or split them into smaller heterogeneous groups.

In the first three-year cycle, children are taught by a class teacher. In the first half of lessons in year one, a pre-school teacher is also present. In the second cycle, the class teacher still delivers most lessons; however,
individual subjects are gradually taken over by specialist teachers. In the third cycle, lessons are delivered by specialist subject teachers.


At the time of enrolment in General Upper Secondary Education students are generally of 15 years old. Education is organised in a single cycle of two to five years' duration, depending on the type of the programme. In individual classes pupils are of the same age. Generally teachers teach the same subjects to the same students for several school years.

The size of classrooms and division of students into groups are regulated by acts adopted by the school minister.

Students are distributed into groups of no less than 17 and no more than 32 students, while the groups can include even up to 33 or 34 students upon the consent of the school minister. If the group includes students with special needs the number of students in the group decreases.

In school year 2009/10 teacher on average taught 12 pupils (from 1th to 6th year 16 pupils, from 7th to 9th 8 pupils). In General Upper Secondary Education one teacher on average taught 13 students. (Source: Statistical office of RS)

c) Teacher qualification

Qualifications and working conditions of pedagogical staff in schools are prescribed by general national regulations (Employment Relationships Act, Civil Servants Act, Salary System in the Public Sector Act ...), as well as school education regulations. The Organization and Financing of Education Act prescribes all areas from pre-school teachers to teachers at vocational colleges. Thus, the school legislation prescribes:

— profiles of pre-school and other teachers who teach at each level of the education system (from pre-school to higher education);
— general qualification conditions (level, professional knowledge, knowledge of the language of instruction);
— competencies for making decisions about their qualifications according to the subjects or subject areas;
— undergoing traineeship and taking the teaching certification examination;
— competencies and procedures regarding employment and dismissal;
— specific characteristics of working conditions (field of work, teaching obligations, advancement), and
— professional development.

These areas are prescribed in greater detail by rules and regulations issued by the Minister of Education in cooperation with responsible councils of experts and after consulting with the teachers' union.

Regulations on education determine the qualifications of the teaching staff and those working conditions that are typical of a particular area of education. Teachers in basic and upper secondary schools – with a few exceptions – are required by law to have Bologna second cycle qualifications or equivalent. Teachers and pre-school teachers at all levels of public education are public servants.

Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovenia:Teachers_and_Education_Staff

d) Working conditions for teachers and their professional development

Teachers at all levels of public education are public servants. Their salaries, labour relations and retirement are unified across the state. The Employment Relationships Act determines employment with contracts, single 40-hour weekly workload, types and forms of labour relations, payments, holidays and similar subjects. Individual rights from labour relations are subject to negotiations between the government and unions and are regulated by
collective agreements. A special law regulates the obligatory pension and disability insurance by virtue of intergenerational solidarity.

Working conditions in schools are roughly determined by general labour legislation, legislation on public servants and school legislation. Individual aspects such as traineeship, teaching certification examination and advancement are stipulated by executive acts issued by the Minister of Education. The scope of individual rights is subject to negotiations between the Minister and teachers’ unions. Negotiations are concluded with the Education Collective Agreement.

The right and duty of teachers to continual professional development is stipulated by law and more specifically by regulations. The law determines the right of pedagogical staff to 5 days of in-service training a year or 15 days over three years. The Ministry of Education organises and finances in-service training for pedagogical staff. The aim is the professional development of pedagogical staff, the development of public schools as well as the entire educational system, thereby improving its quality and efficiency.

The regulations regarding the professional development of teaching staff issued by the Minister of Education manage the organisation and financing of the programmes, decision-making bodies and their authorities, as well as the awarding and recognition of points for advancement of pre-school teachers and teachers.

e) School curricula content and pedagogical materials

Education programmes, subjects, number of lessons

The basic school programme is laid down by the syllabus and curricula for compulsory and elective subjects and includes guidelines and educational concepts that define other methods of work with children, cross-curricular contents and other documents that assist teaching staff in their work. The programme also stipulates the skill requirements for specific subject teachers.

In accordance with the Basic School Act, the following subjects are mandatory in the basic school: Slovenian language; two foreign languages, history, social sciences, geography, civic and patriotic education and ethics, mathematics, natural sciences, environmental education, technical education (including ICT), chemistry, biology, physics, visual arts, music, sports education, technology and home economics.

For pupils in the third cycle, schools provide a range of elective subjects. The basic school curriculum specifies:
— the number of mandatory and elective subjects and subject areas for each year;
— elective subjects;
— the number of hours dedicated to class;
— the scope of extra-curricular non-mandatory basic school programme;
— the minimum number of lessons required to realise the curriculum.

A school is free to organise the weekly number of lessons for each school year in a different way from what the curriculum stipulates (flexible time-table). Schools in ethnically mixed areas follow an adapted curriculum.

Textbooks and other study materials used in schools are approved by the National Expert Council for General Education. Textbooks are forwarded into approval by authors, translators, companies, institutes, or other legal or natural persons; most frequently by publishing houses. There are several textbooks available for individual subjects. The school makes an autonomous decision on the textbooks, study notebooks and other teaching aids used in the school and must seek approval from parents for its selection. Pupils may borrow textbooks from textbook banks operating in schools. There are no specific guidelines for textbooks, but writing or revising textbooks has to be in accordance with legislative objectives and aims included in the curricula and subject syllabuses.
f) Teaching-learning process

Knowledge standards, objectives and main contents for each subject are stipulated by subject syllabi. Within this framework, teachers make autonomous decisions with regard to teaching methods and adjustments of contents for specific circumstances. Annexes to the syllabi include special didactic recommendations whose purpose is to encourage teachers to apply such didactic techniques that promote the pupil's active participation in knowledge acquisition and development of skills, and focus on the learning process. Homework is an integral part of the learning process in which pupils revise and test their knowledge and skills and develop strategies of independent learning.


g) School-management, including student and parents participation

Administrative bodies in basic schools include school boards and head teachers. The school board includes representatives of the founder, staff and parents; in upper secondary schools it also includes a student representative. The founder – the municipality or the government – participate in the management of schools through their representatives on the board and directly through administrative procedures. A school board has the responsibility to appoint and dismiss the head teacher; to adopt the school programme, the annual work plan and reports on its realisation.

School bodies include parent councils who have the right to give their consent to the extracurricular programme and to appoint their representatives to boards, but otherwise play only an advisory role. They provide school bodies with recommendations and views. Since 2008, parents have the right to adopt their own programme of cooperation with the school and can join local and national associations.

The head teacher has a double role: he or she is the pedagogical leader and the manager. The head teacher is directly responsible for the implementation of school regulations, however, within this framework, he or she is autonomous in making decision regarding the selection and employment of staff; supervision of teachers; making decisions with regard to their promotion to higher pay classes, and allocation of funds for material costs. Pedagogical staff are organised in professional bodies where they make autonomous decisions on professional issues, programme upgrades, disciplinary issues and they provide their recommendations to the head teacher appointment.

Source: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovenia:Administration_and_Governance_at_Local_and/or_Institutional_Level

h) Methods to evaluate student performance and assess learning outcomes

Student performance and learning outcomes are evaluated and assessed by numerical and descriptive marks; assessment is oral and written, projects, pupils and students products, presentation, art work etc. are assessed as well. Pupils are also assessed by National examinations in basic and upper secondary schools. The rules of assessment and examination are stipulated by laws, different rules and regulations. For more information, see Annex.


3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM USED TO COLLECT AND PROCESS INFORMATION AND TO ASSESS ADHERENCE TO NORMS AND STANDARDS

Quality Assurance

Responsibility for the quality of education in Slovenia is shared among...
— educational institutions,
— public institutes,
— evaluation bodies and agencies and
— the Government.

Responsibilities for administrative control lie with the inspection authorities while the use of public funds is supervised by the Court of audit. The Ministry of Education is responsible for promoting the processes of evaluation and quality assurance in pre-school education, basic and upper secondary schools and, to a certain extent also in short-cycle higher education programmes.

Self-evaluation of institutions, external evaluations of programmes and institutions and evaluation of the entire education system are stipulated by the law. Each year educational institutions must conduct a self-evaluation and report on it to their management bodies. Thereby they use traditional forms; i.e.
— annual analysis of overall students' success,
— reports of the school inspectorate,
— analyses of the results of external students' examinations and the findings of national and international research.

For co-ordination of processes linked to the quality of preschool institutions and schools the Minister of Education appointed the Council for Quality and Evaluation (2008), which replaced the previous Council for Evaluation. Once a year, the Council proposes evaluation study programme, gives opinion on plans and reports of public institutes on modernisation of educational work, and prepares annual reports about its work for the Minister and responsible expert councils.

Systematic external assessment of students as a form of external evaluation is stipulated by the law. It is important, both in the light of each individual institution and the annual evaluation of the basic school and upper secondary school system. Evaluation of the pre-university education system involves analysis of pupils' and students' achievements, findings of evaluation research and targeted research projects, as well as reports on the introduction of innovations in pre-school institutions and schools.

The regulations of the Ministry of Education and Sport impose on educational institutions the obligation to conduct ongoing internal evaluations and authorise public agencies and evaluation bodies to organise external evaluations.

For external evaluation of schools, the main method used is external assessment of knowledge at the end of the second three-year cycle in the basic school, upon completion of basic school and upon completion of upper secondary school. External administrative and educational evaluation of schools is also performed by the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport, a body within the Ministry of Education and Sport. Its organisation, areas of control and authorities are regulated by the School Inspection Act. The aim of school inspection is to ensure compliance and subsequently protection of pre-school children and other learners' rights. The areas of control include the organisation, financing and conduct of educational programmes.

Monitoring, defined as a procedure of the systemic collection of information on the implementation of new programmes and new programme elements aimed at resolving problems in educational practice as they arise, is a responsibility of the National Education Institute (general education programmes), the Institute of the RS for Vocational Education and Training (vocational education programmes) and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (adult education programmes).

Other forms of external evaluation of the education system include:
— analyses of national results and indicators in comparable international research projects (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, TALIS, SITES, CIVICS, EAG);
— analyses of results of basic, developmental and applicative research projects in all areas of education co-financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.
4. INITIATIVES AND DEVELOPMENTS AIMING TO PROMOTE QUALITY IN EDUCATION

During the last decade several new forms have been developed. The ministry implements them partly through projects and research and partly with systematic regulation. The latter comprise projects of self-evaluation and quality in educational institutions, external assessment in compulsory education and at the end of general and technical upper secondary education, monitoring and evaluation of novelties introduced in preschool institutions and schools; evaluation studies and international evaluations. The law obligates public research and development institutes to assess the effects of the introduction of novelties in school practice. Therefore their main task is to monitor the development of pre-school institutions and schools, provide them with professional support during the transfer of new findings into practice and assess the quality of practice implementation.
ANNEX:

Ad 2 h) Methods to evaluate student performance and assess learning outcomes

Assessment of pupils in basic schools

Teachers assess pupils throughout the period when the subject is taught. In the first cycle (years one to three), teachers assess pupils' progress with descriptive grades. From year four onwards, teachers assess how well pupils meet knowledge standards in accordance with the prescribed curriculum with numerical grades on a scale from 1 to 5, whereby 1 is a negative grade and all others are positive grades.

Teachers assess pupil's oral presentations, written work, art works, technical, practical and other projects. The pupil is assessed at least three times in a school year if no more than two lessons per week are assigned to the subjects, and at least six times in a year in all other subjects. The majority of grades must not be awarded on the basis of written work.

Following examination, grades are recorded in the assessment book. Parents are informed of their child's grades in parental consultation meetings during the school year, and by a written report at the end of the first assessment period. At the end of the year, pupils are given their annual report which includes their final grades for the year and a statement regarding their advancement to the next year. Parents have the right to appeal the final grade. Their appeal is considered by a three-member committee appointed by the head teacher.

At the end of year six and year nine, pupils are assessed in national examinations in the mother tongue and mathematics, in year six also in a foreign language, and in year nine in a subject determined by the Minister. Assessment in year six is not mandatory. Results do not affect pupils' grades; they are only additional information about their knowledge levels.

For pupils who need learning assistance, schools organise additional lessons, and for those who go beyond the prescribed knowledge standards, supplementary lessons are available. Schools are free to adapt assessment to pupils who are enrolled in music schools, promising athletes, pupils with special needs and, since 2008/2009, to foreign pupils.

The rules of assessment and examination are stipulated by the Basic School Act and by different rules and regulations.

Progression of pupils

Pupils from year one to year six progress from one year to another automatically. They may repeat a year due to poor school results, illness, move or other reasons, on the proposal of his or her parents and upon school's agreement with their proposal. When parents do not agree, the teachers' assembly can make a decision that, due to poor school results, a pupil enrolled in years three to six must repeat a year.

Pupils in years seven and eight may progress to the next year if they are awarded positive grades in all subjects at the end of the school year. If a pupil has three negative grades, he or she must repeat the year. Pupils with one or two negative grades must be given an opportunity to take a repeat exam at the end of school holidays. If they fail the exam, they must repeat the year. A pupil who has one or more negative grades in year nine is allowed to take a repeat examination in all subjects where he or she was awarded negative grades throughout the following school year.

Parents have the right to appeal against the decision that their child must repeat the year. Their appeal is considered by a three-member committee. The pupil who fails to complete year nine within nine years has the right to another two years of education in the basic school.
On a parental recommendation or with their consent, a pupil can advance from year to year faster if he or she posts above average results. Such pupil does not take any additional examinations. The decision is taken by the teachers’ assembly.

**Certification**

The pupil who successfully completes year nine is issued a final certificate which includes final numerical grades in all subjects, the pupil’s results in the national assessment expressed in percentage points, and a declaration that the pupil fulfilled the requirements of the basic school. A successful completion of the basic school is a prerequisite for enrolment in a short upper secondary vocational, an upper secondary vocational/technical or a gimnazija programme.

When a pupil attended basic school and failed to complete year nine, the school may issue, on the pupil's request, a certificate which confirms that he or she fulfilled the requirements of basic school education. This certificate is required to enrol in short vocational upper secondary courses.

Source:

**Assessment in general upper secondary education**

General rules on testing and assessing students’ knowledge are set in the Gimnazije Act and the Vocational and Technical Education Act, while details are laid down in the ministerial act Rules on the Assessment of Knowledge in Secondary Schools. On the basis of above-listed regulations, schools prepare their own assessment rules as specified by the headperson and upon prior review by the teachers’ assembly.

In general upper-secondary education, teachers assess and grade knowledge in all syllabi subjects and compulsory elective contents.

In short-cycle vocational and vocational upper-secondary education and technical upper-secondary education, knowledge is assessed and tested in all syllabi subjects and technical modules and extra-curricular activities. During industrial placement, employers test and assess the knowledge and notify the school of the results.

Teachers test the knowledge to establish if students attain learning objectives. They test the knowledge after they have worked through a specific subject matter and prior to a written assessment.

Teachers mark students' oral and written assignments, artistic and other products, term papers, projects and speech presentation, as well as services.

Assessment is public. Students are duly informed about learning objective, course material, methods, forms, criteria and terms of assessment, criteria for assessment, which study aids they can use and deadlines for grading of written work. Teachers inform students about the grades publicly during the period and allow them an insight into the corrected written exams. Parents and respective authorised tutors in resident halls for students, too, may ask to be granted an insight into the written exams.

At the end of every assessment term – except in the final year – the students receive a transcription of marks, findings, and completed obligations. At the end of each year, students receive the end-of-year report. If they fail to fulfil all obligations, they receive a notification on their success.

Students take the entrance examinations to meet additional enrolment qualification (talent, skills or language skills). Students take the subject examinations to advance more rapidly, improve their subject final mark or to change the education programme. Students who failed to obtain the final mark in a specific subject until the end of the year take extra examinations, and re-take examinations are available to students who failed in a specific subject at the end of the year.
Progression of students

Students progress if they receive positive marks in all subjects and fulfil all obligations. The students with a negative mark in up to three subjects at the end of school can sit re-take exams.

Students who fail to fulfil all obligations until the end of school can retake the year. The special needs students, students who are enrolled parallel in multiple programmes, prospective sportsmen, and students who failed to fulfil all study requirements on account of parenting, exceptional social and family circumstances, as well as illness or other valid reasons can retake the same year several times.

Head-teacher may decide whether a student who failed to fulfil all study requirements due to unknown reasons can progress to a higher year. In that case, the head-teacher sets out the terms and conditions for the student to fulfil the missing requirements.

Students can complete the education sooner as specified in the curriculum. It is the school faculty that decides on this option. To fulfil their requirements students sit the subject exams.

Certification

Students complete their education in upper-secondary general education with the general matura exam and the secondary school leaving certificate. The completion of education and general matura exam are regulated by the Matura Examination Act and ministerial rule Rules on the General Matura Examination. The certificates on education are regulated by two ministerial rules, namely the Rules on School Documentation in Secondary Education and the Rules on Forms of Public Documents in Secondary Education.

The general matura is an external examination at national level. Students take exams in five subjects. Three subjects (mother tongue, mathematics, and foreign language) are compulsory, while students may opt for two from the list of matura subjects. The Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education is responsible to compile such list, namely upon the proposal of the National Committee for the General Matura and with the consent of senates of universities and independent higher education institutions. Examinations in some subjects can be taken at two difficulty levels.

The National Committee for General Matura as appointed by the minister is responsible to administer the general matura examination at the national level. At individual schools, the administration of the matura examination is the responsibility of the school matura committee, presided by the head-teacher. Technical and professional support needed to set up the examination materials and execute the assessment is the responsibility of the National Examinations Centre.

The successful passing of the general matura examination grants candidates the right to enrol in university study programmes and all other tertiary education programmes.

Source:

Technical Upper secondary education

In the technical upper secondary education, students take the vocational matura exam at the end of the programme. Students who pass the vocational matura examination receive a school leaving certificate. There are two acts relevant for the vocational matura exam and successful completion of the education programme: the Matura Examination Act and the ministerial rule the Vocational Matura Rules.
Upon the completion of education at a technical upper secondary institution, the student takes the vocational matura exam as a form of final exam before the school examination committee of teachers and also (an option) external professionals that competent chambers of employers and representative unions nominate.

The vocational matura exam is a two-part examination, namely compulsory of written and oral exam in mother tongue and theoretical-technical subject and elective part of oral and written exam in foreign language or mathematics, and a seminar thesis or product or service with oral defence to demonstrate the practical skills for a chosen occupation.

Passing the vocational matura exam renders students the right to enrol in technical higher education programmes or technical short-cycle higher education programmes. Students may pursue their studies in certain university programmes, but they do have to take and pass another exam in one of the general matura subjects.


Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Students in vocational upper secondary and short upper secondary education complete their studies with a final examination and thereby receive a school leaving certificate. There is a ministerial rule relevant, namely the Regulations on the Final Examination; schools, too, dispose of their own rules that the head-teacher adopts upon prior opinion of the school teachers’ assembly.

Students who have successfully completed vocational upper secondary education take a final examination before a school examination committee that may comprise of external professionals as nominated by the competent chamber of employers and representative unions along with the teachers. Passing the final examination renders students the right to enrol in vocational-technical education programmes and after a certain period of experience the right to take the master craftsman exam.

Students who have successfully completed short vocational upper secondary education can take the final exam in the presence of an examination committee including teachers and can also include experts nominated by the relevant chamber of employers. Upon completion, the student receives the final examination certificate, which is a public document.

Upon completion of education, students in lower vocational education take the final examination before the school examination committee including teachers and can also include external experts nominated by the relevant chamber of employers and representative unions. The completed final examination grants candidates the right to enrol for the initial year of any other upper secondary education programme.