



CARE EDUCATION FORUM

Basic Information on Care Education in Slovakia

Introduction

The health professions have evolved and continue to evolve, as well as the whole society and are diverse. The year 1951 was a milestone in the development of institutionalized health education in modern history. In this period, medical education consisted of secondary medical schools, which from 1953 were definitively transferred to the competence of the Ministry of Health and educational institutions for further education of doctors, pharmacists and secondary health workers. The mission of these educational institutions was and still is in principle to ensure high professional preparation and education of health professionals with an emphasis on high professionalism, strong moral conviction, empathy and a prompt and creative approach to individuals and groups in various difficult everyday situations. In the same year - on May 1, 1953 - the School Center of the Health Commission for Further Training of Doctors was also established. Later, under various names (Slovak Institute for Further Education of Physicians - 1956, Institute for Further Education of Physicians and Pharmacists - 1964, Institute for Further Education of Health Care Workers - 1991, Slovak Postgraduate Academy of Medicine - 1988, Slovak Medical University - 2002), this educational institution operated and operates in the system of further education of health professionals.

At present, professional competence for the performance of the medical profession is also acquired by employees through the so-called undergraduate studies, i.e. by obtaining a university education of the first or second degree in accredited health study fields of higher education institutions (<https://www.health.gov.sk/?zoznam-vysokych-skol-a-ich-fakult-pripravujucich-zdravotnickych-pracovnikov-v-zdravotnickych-studijnych-programoch>) or after obtaining a higher professional education, a complete secondary vocational education, or secondary vocational education in medical fields of study included in the network of secondary medical schools (<https://www.health.gov.sk/?szs>). Since 2003, secondary medical schools have been transferred to the founding competence of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic managing the professional component of education and determining the network of fields of study.

Act No. 578/2004 Coll. on Health Care Providers, Health Care Professionals, Professional Organizations in Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts, as amended, defines continuous education as the continuous renewal, deepening and maintenance of acquired professional competence in accordance with the development of the relevant fields throughout the performance of the health profession. Continuous education for health care workers of the relevant health profession is provided by the employer, professional societies of the Slovak Medical Society and the chamber in which the health care worker is registered, independently or in cooperation with educational institutions or other internationally recognized professional societies or professional associations and providers.

The evaluation of continuing education is carried out by the Chamber responsible for keeping the register independently or in cooperation with an internationally recognized organization for the allocation of credits for the continuing education of health professionals in the relevant health profession. The criteria and method of evaluation of continuing education of healthcare professionals are to be implemented in accordance with the Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic No. 74/2019 Coll. on the criteria and method of evaluation of continuous education of healthcare professionals (<https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2019/74/20190315>).



Basic Vocational Education - Practical Nurse

The field of study Practical Nurse (*praktická sestra*) prepares healthcare professionals who are qualified to perform nursing, assistant and administrative activities and tasks in the preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic regime of health care in health care facilities. (e.g. <https://szsba.edupage.org/a/studijne-odbory?eqa=dGV4dD10ZXh0L3RleHQxJnN1YnBhZ2U9MiZza2dkeWVhcy0yMDI0>)

Graduation

This two-year study ends with a school-leaving examination or a final post-secondary examination in vocational subjects. The content and form of the school-leaving examination are determined by the legislative regulations of the Ministry of Education. The proof of achieved education is the certificate of the school-leaving examination.

Study content

- 1st year

Theoretical education and practical training are taught in the following subjects: Latin Language, Anatomy and Physiology, Pathology, Preventive Medicine, Health and Clinic of Diseases, Nursing, Nursing Techniques, Administration and Medical Documentation and Nursing Care (Professional Clinical Practice).

- 2nd year

Health and Social Services Organization, First Aid, Psychology, Pedagogy and Professional Communication, Health Ethics, Health and Disease Clinic, Nursing and Nursing Care (Professional Clinical Practice).

Graduates of the field of study are prepared for:

- implement planned nursing care services in individual phases of the nursing process, especially in satisfying the bio-psycho-social needs of the patient, within their competences,
- cooperate with other health professionals in the diagnostic and therapeutic regime of general and specialized outpatient and inpatient health care,
- participate in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention,
- provide professional first aid,
- perform administrative work and work with the information system of the medical facility.

The graduate can find employment in all sections of outpatient and institutional health care, where he works in the nursing team. Through professional practice and further study, he deepens and increases his qualifications.

Higher professional education

A certified general nurse is a qualified health worker with a higher professional education, who is competent to perform nursing activities requiring highly professional erudition, independence at work and decision-making. He/she must be able to carry out managerial, research and educational activities.



The profession of a certified general nurse presupposes a previous broad general education completed by a school-leaving examination, which allows you to build a professional and deepen the personal profile of the graduate.

A Certified General Nurse is prepared to:

- manage highly professional nursing activities within primary, secondary and subsequently health care,
- monitor nursing problems of patients and ensure a comprehensive nursing process,
- work creatively in a team and manage the nursing team,
- creatively direct the formation of his/her own personality, especially in the direction of self-awareness and behavior, communication, development of professional skills and moral qualities,
- master the methods of education with a focus on health education,
- manage socio-legal counselling in the care of the sick at all ages,
- work in research in the field of nursing as a field and in the field of health education.

A graduate of the field of study can find employment as a certified general nurse in nursing practice in inpatient workplaces of health care facilities, in primary health care, in management, research and education. He can also work privately independently within the framework of the applicable regulations.

Output Standards of Knowledge

For the qualified performance of these activities, the graduate must have a broad professional profile with the necessary previous general education, be sufficiently adaptable in related fields, think logically, be able to transform the acquired knowledge and skills into professional attitudes and activities, be able to work independently and in a team, constantly educate, purposefully, prudently and decisively act in accordance with legal standards.

Skills Output Standards

For the successful completion of the Diploma General Nursing study, the following output standards of skills are determined (to be practically mastered): nursing activities within primary, secondary and follow-up health care and to be able to make independent decisions in this area and be responsible for them, diagnostic, therapeutic, nursing, rehabilitation and educational procedures and techniques, monitoring nursing problems and ensuring a comprehensive nursing process while individual diseases and conditions, in all age categories and in individual medical disciplines, the application of nursing models in the care of the sick, individual examination methods and procedures used in the assessment of health and health status, methods and techniques of research work and their application in nursing research, the application of knowledge from law and legislation, qualified first aid in accidents, life-threatening conditions, in the case of mass disabilities and when hit by weapons of mass destruction, single and double-entry bookkeeping, computer work.

Output standards of personality quality

A graduate of this field of study should meet the output standards of personality quality, which are an important sign of the quality of an expert, in order to successfully complete the study.

A characteristic feature of the graduate's personality is his moral, ethical and humane approach to people, especially to the sick, based on love for people and an effort to help them, to be able to accept them in the most difficult life situations and to accept their rights to individualized care, participation in it, including



decision-making, to ensure their privacy, to be able to understand them and solve their problems, to show them respect, empathy, comfort and emotional support, to take into account his personality, his way of perceiving health and illness, his experience and behavior under the influence of changes in his health condition, to get him to cooperate and to enable him to actively participate in the treatment.

Admission Requirements

Graduates of secondary schools completed with a school-leaving examination who have met the conditions of the selection procedure can be admitted to the 1st year of higher professional study.

Organization of study

The scope, content and organization of the study corresponds to standards No. 77/452/EEC, 77/453/EEC and 81/1057/EEC.

The prescribed criterion is a full-time preparation of at least three years.

Studies are organized in 40 weeks a year. 35 contact hours per week, i.e. lectures, exercises, seminars, consultations, are supplemented by up to 40 hours per week in the 1st and 2nd year, and up to 38 hours per week in the 3rd year, i.e. independent work of students on assigned projects, studies, individual internships and practice, study of professional literature.

Studies can be organized in blocks that are part of individual subjects. Several teachers are involved in the teaching of some subjects. During their studies, students are required to complete all compulsory subjects listed in the curriculum and can also choose from optional subjects. Students will write down all subjects in the Statement of Study.

Students must complete 90% of the clinical exercises in the year in order to continue their studies and 90% of the clinical exercises throughout their studies in order to take the graduate exam.

The study is completed by a graduate examination, which consists of the defence of a graduate written thesis and a comprehensive theoretical and practical examination in the field.

Educational institutions

Higher professional education in the field of study of Certified General Nurse can be obtained in the Slovak Republic at:

- Stredná zdravotnícka škola v Bratislave, Strečnianska 20 (<http://www.szsba.sk/php/aktuality.php>)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola v Trnave, Daxnerova 6 (<https://szstt.edupage.org/>)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola v Nitre, Farská 23 (<http://www.szsmitra.sk/>)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola v Žiline, Hlboká cesta 23 (<https://szshlbokaza.edupage.org/>)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola M. T. Schererovej v Ružomberku, Dončova 7 (<https://szsmtsrbk.edupage.org/>)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola v Košiciach, Kukučínova 40 (http://www.kukucinka.sk/?Content_PostWithQuickMenu-view=category)
- Stredná zdravotnícka škola sv. Alžbety v Košiciach, Mäsiarska 25 (<http://szssvalzbetyke.edupage.org/sprava/>)



University education - 1st degree (Bachelor - Bc.)

The first level of study belongs to the group of professionally oriented studies as preparation for the performance of a regulated profession. The duration of study is 3 academic years. A graduate of the study program Nursing in the field of nursing can find employment as a nurse, a bachelor in nursing practice in inpatient workplaces of health care facilities, in outpatient health care, in social care facilities, in home nursing care and in the community. He can also work independently within the framework of applicable legislation. A nurse can continue her education in specialized studies, continue in higher education in the 2nd and 3rd level and in continuing education. The graduate will receive a complete university education of the first degree in the field of nursing with a focus on the performance of the medical profession of nurse for the provision of nursing care in the system of health care provision in the Slovak Republic and the EU.

Knowledge

The graduate has general knowledge at the level of synthesis from a study program that integrates knowledge from nursing science, biomedical sciences, social sciences and human sciences. From the relevant scientific disciplines, it identifies the basic conceptual apparatus by which it describes the organs and systems of a healthy and sick person from the anatomical, physiological, pathophysiological and clinical point of view, dealing with its psychological processes and properties, the influences of the social and cultural environment, as well as its spirituality, faith and worldview. It draws conclusions and connections between them in the context of nursing care. It explains the legal and ethical standards that are necessary for the practice of the nursing profession.

Based on analytical, critical and conceptual thinking, the graduate identifies and practically solves professional problems in nursing practice. It modifies general and professional knowledge in solving specific professional problems and applies procedures, methods and means in accordance with the standards and norms of the profession. By applying the method of the nursing and educational process, it maintains and supports the optimal health status of individuals, families and communities in life situations requiring comprehensive nursing care, gaining their active participation in the process of maintaining and promoting health, treatment and care during illness and death. She continuously develops her clinical and communication skills. It analyses and solves ethical problems at the level of mastering the theoretical foundations of the field of study, the basic knowledge of partial disciplines belonging to these areas. The graduate is characterized by independence in solving specific problems within the assessment of patient needs, planning, providing and documenting nursing care. It is characterized by autonomy and responsibility in decision-making and implementation of preventive, supportive, therapeutic and rehabilitation care for individuals, families and groups.

Skills

A graduate of the nursing study program has the skills and is ready to provide nursing care to a person, family and community in accordance with the defined competencies of nurses. He/she is able to solve and objectively evaluate situations in favor of the patient's health and recovery. She has communication skills that she uses in everyday interactions with patients and members of the medical team. The graduate has digital skills at the appropriate level for the relevant level of study, which can be used in the performance of the profession.



Competence

A graduate of the nursing degree program is proactive in protecting and promoting the health of individuals, families, groups, and communities. He/she demonstrates the ability to work as a team, think critically, and make erudite decisions in the provision of safe nursing care. The graduate speaks one world language, which he actively uses in clinical practice. He/she knows and follows the legislation that is necessary for the performance of the medical profession of a nurse.

Prospects of graduates

Graduates of nursing - 1st degree are able to meet the requirements of a discipline that integrates nursing theories with scientific knowledge from other disciplines, necessary for the provision of health services to the public within the framework of prevention, as well as care in illness, rehabilitation and follow-up care. Graduates are able to provide care to an individual, family, group, or community in health or illness and contribute to health, healing, or a dignified natural death. Graduates of nursing studies can find employment in outpatient and institutional health care. They can practice independent nursing within the framework of the legislation in force. They have the prerequisites for continuing in specialization and certification studies, successful graduates who have obtained the title of "Bachelor" (Bc.) can continue in the follow-up study program at the second level of education in the field of nursing (Mgr.). The study meets the requirements set out in Directive 2013/55/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council for the preparation of caregivers and enables employment in the labour market within the European Union.

Educational institutions

University education of the 1st degree in the field of study of nursing can be obtained in Slovakia at:

- Jesseniova Lekárska fakulta v Martine Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave (<http://www.jfmed.uniba.sk/novyweb/novahomepage.htm>)
- Lekárska fakulta Univerzity Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach (<http://www.upjs.sk/lekarska-fakulta>)
- Fakulta ošetrovateľstva a zdravotníckych odborných štúdií Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4320>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva v Banskej Bystrici Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4323>)
- Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety Bratislava (<http://vssvalzbety.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave (<http://www.truni.sk/index.php?page=76>)
- Fakulta sociálnych vied a zdravotníctva Univerzity Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre (<http://www.fsv.ukf.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Trenčianskej univerzity Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne (http://www.tnuni.sk/index.php?start=1&poradie_d=47&zcs=1)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Katolíckej univerzity v Ružomberku (<http://www.fz.ku.sk/index.php/studium/bakalarske-programy.html>)
- Fakulta zdravotníckych odborov Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove (<http://www.unipo.sk/fakulta-zdravotnictva>)



University education - 2nd degree (Magister - Mgr.)

The second level of study belongs to the group of professionally oriented studies as preparation for the performance of a regulated profession. The duration of study is 3 academic years. A graduate of the Master's degree programme in Nursing in the field of nursing can find employment as a nurse in nursing practice in inpatient workplaces of health care facilities, in the management and organization of nursing care, as a professional representative of continuous health care, in outpatient health care, in social care facilities, in home nursing care and in the community. He/she can also work independently within the framework of the applicable legislation (independent medical practice as a licensed nurse or a nursing care provider based on a permit to operate a medical facility). A nurse can continue her education in specialized studies, continue in higher education in the 3rd level and in continuous education. The graduate will receive a complete university education of the 2nd degree in the field of nursing with a focus on the performance of the medical profession of nurse for the provision of nursing care in the system of health care provision in the Slovak Republic and the EU.

Knowledge

- has extensive knowledge of medical disciplines that are the starting point for nursing,
- is proficient in the latest expanding information on nursing theory, the nursing process, evidence-based nursing, individual subjects in relation to clinical and community nursing,
- has extensive knowledge in the field of health education and management,
- has a wide range of information and knowledge from the humanities that are related to nursing, is able to use them consistently in the conditions of practice,
- knows medical devices related to the provision of nursing care,
- Introduces and evaluates a quality system of nursing care.

Skills

- manages nursing care as a manager within institutional and outpatient health care, in home nursing care agencies, but also as a nursing care manager for a selected group of patients or in professional organizations,
- manages, plans, organizes and controls the fulfilment of strategic and operational goals in the field of nursing,
- cooperates in ensuring compliance with the minimum requirements for personnel and material and technical equipment of the workplace and ensures effective management of the provision of nursing care,
- controls and methodically directs the management of medical documentation within the scope of nursing care,
- approves educational plans, local standards and nursing care maps, checks their adherence,
- decides and is responsible for the implementation of interventions and the application of drug treatment to the person that correspond to the person's needs and are in accordance with the treatment plan determined by the doctor,
- indicates the treatment of a primary healing wound,
- introduces and evaluates the quality system of nursing care, etc.



Educational institutions

University education of the 2nd degree in the field of study of nursing can be obtained in the Slovak Republic at:

- Jesseniova Lekárska fakulta v Martine Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave (<http://www.jfmed.uniba.sk/novyweb/novahomepage.htm>)
- Lekárska fakulta Univerzity Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach (<http://www.upjs.sk/lekarska-fakulta>)
- Fakulta ošetrovatelstva a zdravotníckych odborných štúdií Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4320>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva v Banskej Bystrici Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4323>)
- Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety Bratislava (<http://vssvalzbety.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave (<http://www.truni.sk/index.php?page=76>)
- Fakulta sociálnych vied a zdravotníctva Univerzity Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre (<http://www.fsv.ukf.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Trenčianskej univerzity Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne (http://www.tnuni.sk/index.php?start=1&poradie_d=47&zcs=1)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Katolíckej univerzity v Ružomberku (<http://www.fz.ku.sk/index.php/studium/bakalarske-programy.html>)
- Fakulta zdravotníckych odborov Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove (<http://www.unipo.sk/fakulta-zdravotnictva>)



Further education of nurses

Subsequently, after acquiring professional competence to perform the health profession, health care workers can specialize in the system of further education of health care workers or be certified and acquire professional competence to perform specialized and certified work activities. Further education of health professionals is provided by:

- **specialization studies** (<https://www.health.gov.sk/?akreditacia>),
- **preparation for the performance of certified work activities** (<https://www.health.gov.sk/?akreditacia>),
- **continuous education** (<https://www.health.gov.sk/?sustavne-vzdelavanie-zdravotnickych-pracovnikov>).

Specialization Studies

Specialized study of nurses in Slovakia is an advanced form of professional education, the aim of which is to deepen and expand the competencies of nurses in specific areas of health care. It is intended for nurses who have already obtained at least the qualification of a general nurse by completing a bachelor's degree and have experience in the field (for some types of courses, a completed 2nd degree of study is required). Specialization studies enable nurses to carry out activities with a higher degree of independence, decision-making and responsibility.

This study is carried out in accordance with Act No. 578/2004 Coll. and is organized by accredited educational institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives. It usually lasts between 18 and 24 months, depending on the specialisation chosen, and consists of a theoretical and a practical part.

The most common specializations include intensive nursing care, anesthesiology and intensive care medicine, paediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatry, operating theatres and community nursing. After successful completion of studies and the final examination, a nurse acquires a specialization that entitles her to perform professional tasks in the field with a higher degree of independence, or to act as a mentor, coordinator or head nurse.

Specialized studies are also part of lifelong learning, which is mandatory for nurses, and is linked to a credit system for evaluating further education. This system ensures that nurses maintain and update their expertise in line with medical developments and practice requirements.

Educational institutions

Specialization studies in the Slovak Republic can be completed at:

- Jesseniova Lekárska fakulta v Martine Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave (<http://www.jfmed.uniba.sk/novyweb/novahomepage.htm>)
- Lekárska fakulta Univerzity Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach (<http://www.upjs.sk/lekarska-fakulta>)
- Fakulta ošetrovateľstva a zdravotníckych odborných štúdií Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4320>)



- Fakulta zdravotníctva v Banskej Bystrici Slovenskej zdravotníckej univerzity v Bratislave (<http://www.szu.sk/obsah.html?cast=1-4323>)
- Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety Bratislava (<http://vssvalzbety.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave (<http://www.truni.sk/index.php?page=76>)
- Fakulta sociálnych vied a zdravotníctva Univerzity Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre (<http://www.fsv.ukf.sk/>)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Trenčianskej univerzity Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne (http://www.tnuni.sk/index.php?start=1&poradie_d=47&zcs=1)
- Fakulta zdravotníctva Katolíckej univerzity v Ružomberku (<http://www.fz.ku.sk/index.php/studium/bakalarske-programy.html>)
- Fakulta zdravotníckych odborov Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove (<http://www.unipo.sk/fakulta-zdravotnictva>)

Continuous education

Continuous education of healthcare professionals is regulated by Act No. 578/2004 Coll. § 42 on Health Care Providers, Health Care Professionals, Professional Organizations in Health Care and on Amendments to Certain Acts.

Continuous education is the continuous renewal, deepening and maintenance of acquired professional competence in accordance with the development of the relevant fields throughout the entire period of the health profession. The participation of a healthcare professional in a professional and scientific event aimed at the presentation of a pharmaceutical product with the participation of pharmaceutical manufacturers is not considered to be continuous education.

Continuous education for health care professionals of the relevant health profession is provided by the employer, professional societies of the Slovak Medical Society and the chamber in which the health care professional is registered (Section 62 (2) to (12)), independently or in cooperation with educational institutions or other internationally recognized professional societies or professional associations and providers, and paragraph 4 does not stipulate otherwise.

More information: <https://www.sksapa.sk/vzdelavanie-1/sustavne-vzdelavanie>.



Expected changes in nurse education

The education of nurses could undergo a change. The Minister of Education (Tomáš Drucker) is considering that they would no longer need a university degree for their work. Under the new law, five years of secondary vocational school could be enough. According to the Chamber of Nurses and Midwives, this will not solve the problem of their shortage. "I would like to point out that it is not about abolishing the university education of nurses and nursing now, but about whether we are going to add the possibility of having the basic regulated profession at the level of a nurse even after completing a 5-year, let's say, secondary vocational education," Minister Drucker explained. If students decide to continue their studies at university, they could have some credits recognized from high school. A bachelor's degree would thus last two years instead of three years. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education want to solve the shortage of nurses in this way as well. In Slovakia today (April 2025), there is a shortage of more than 13,000 of them. However, the Chamber of Nurses and Midwives cannot imagine solving the situation by shortening the bachelor's degree in nursing.

"Not everyone is set up in such a way that they can study the whole university and then start working. We have practical nurses who would like to supplement their education. We have people who have worked in another industry and would like to get into healthcare. These, I would call it, less standard ways could attract more people to healthcare," summed up INESS analyst Martin Vlachynský.