

Australia: Global Assessment Certificate™ program (GAC)

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1 December 2016

Last verified

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New for 2016

Countries

- Australia
- International

Education context

The GAC is owned by ACT Education Solutions, Limited, a subsidiary of ACT, Inc., and has been delivered since 2002.

The GAC is accredited as Certificate IV in Foundation Studies – Global Assessment, in Australia: course code 10025NAT

The GAC is a foundation studies course which prepares international students for study in an English-medium western-style university setting. It equips students to:

- collect and critically analyse information from written, oral and digital sources,
- use effective oral, written and digital communication to present information
- apply study skills and strategies to enhance learning in a self-directed manner
- use technology collaboratively to aid research, reporting and presentation
- use mathematical ideas and techniques to solve problems
- apply principles of management and international business to analyse case studies
- investigate and report on scientific facts and issues
- investigate and report on issues related to self and society in local and global contexts
- work effectively and collaboratively with others in teams and groups

International students may take the course post-high school diploma – after Year 11 (Australia equivalent) or Year 12 – or concurrently with their senior high school curriculum.

In 2015, around 4,000 students completed the GAC in 12 countries.

Structure

The GAC is a one-year course-based programme which international students complete after or alongside the final years of high school.

There are three levels in the GAC. Level 1 comprises six compulsory modules. Levels 2 and 3 each comprise two compulsory modules of academic English and four specialisation modules making a total of 18 modules.

Each level is a minimum of 240 hours, plus a minimum of 120 hours of supervised independent study.

Students must pass every assessment in every level, before they can progress to the next level.

To ensure adherence to grading criteria, assessments are moderated at local, regional and global levels by AES academic staff.

The GAC modules are supported by resources such as the GAC Academic Writing Manual, the GAC Academic Research Manual and GAC Referencing Guide which are embedded into the programme.

Individual subject marks are indicated on the GAC transcript.

Subject areas

Level 1 compulsory modules comprise academic English, mathematics, computing, communication skills and study skills.

At Levels 2 and 3, academic English modules are compulsory. Students choose four specialisations from mathematics, business studies, science, computing, and social science.

Levels

Accepted by some UK universities as a group qualification satisfying HE general education requirements, as a one-year linear course.

Grading

In order for students to progress through the programme, they need to demonstrate competence in all the learning outcomes in all modules.

- Assessment events are mostly subjective and grading is based on detailed rubrics.
- Students must pass all assessment events with a score of 55% or higher.
- Many assessment events have both oral and written components.
- Assessment events are moderated by AES using a sample of 10% or more.
- If a student fails an assessment event, they will have one chance to resubmit their assignment or retake an examination.
- The maximum grade for resubmissions is a pass mark of 55%.

Assessment

Most modules have four or five assessment components, one of which is course work and includes class tasks, independent learning tasks, as well as journals, such as reflective learning journals and vocabulary notebooks.

Assessments take the form of research-based assignments such as essays, annotated bibliographies and reports; projects and practical assignments; oral presentations and other oral assessments; multiple-choice, short answer and case study examinations; tutorial exercises and computer-based tasks.

Assessments, grading keys, rubrics and, detailed instructions for assessors are provided in each module's assessment folder.

Assessors follow a moderation and assessment process, which is outlined in the training manuals.

Moderation is conducted at the centre-level, and regional and global levels by AES staff to ensure monitoring of, and maintenance of, academic standards.

Results are securely stored on the GAC database and grades are verified by AES academic staff before certification.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Grades from all assessment events for the module are added to create a percentage. Percentages for all modules are added, and a final percentage and GPA out of 4.0 is calculated:

GRADE	POINTS	DESCRIPTION	% GUIDE
A	4	Very High Achievement	94 – 100
A-	3.6	Very High Achievement	90 – 93
B+	3.3	Very High Achievement	87 – 89
B	3	High Achievement	83 – 86
B-	2.6	High Achievement	80 – 82
C+	2.3	High Achievement	77 – 79
C	2	Average Achievement	73 – 76
C-	1.6	Average Achievement	70 – 72
D+	1.3	Average Achievement	67 – 69
D	1	Average Achievement	60 – 66
D-	0.6	Pass	55 – 59

F

0

Fail

< 54

Guided/notional learning hours notes

A minimum of 720 classroom hours with a minimum compulsory 360 hours of independent study.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

The GAC is an accredited Foundation Studies programme (in Australia) that universities may recognize alongside High School results in terms of academic achievement, English Proficiency, or both.

UK universities may specify a percentage or GPA needed.

UK universities may specify a grade needed in Level 3 English modules in order to waive an English Proficiency Test.

Research by the University of Iowa, which has admitted hundreds of GAC graduates since 2007, indicates that GAC graduates are better prepared for tertiary studies than other international students, achieve a higher GPA, and often graduate with double or triple majors.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

All subjects are continually assessed. Statements of Attainment are issued after each level. Transcripts and certificates are issued on completion of the programme, which varies in timing from centre to centre and country to country. All assessment results are generated by the AES proprietary database – iTAP (International Targeted Admissions Profiler) www.itapglobal.com. (Log-in and password required).

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

From 2002 to 2015, a total of 8,872 students completed the GAC program with the following grade ranges.

GRADE	POINTS	DESCRIPTION	% Achieved Grade
A	4	Very High Achievement	4.30%

A-	3.6	Very High Achievement	4.30%
B+	3.3	Very High Achievement	44%
B	3	High Achievement	44%
B-	2.6	High Achievement	44%
C+	2.3	High Achievement	40.40%
C	2	Average Achievement	40.40%
C-	1.6	Average Achievement	40.40%
D+	1.3	Average Achievement	9.50%
D	1	Average Achievement	9.50%
D-	0.6	Pass	9.50%
F	0	Fail	1.80%

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The GAC program has been recognised by more than 120 universities around the world for admission (and/or credits) to undergraduate study including 67 in the United States, 22 in Australia and 14 in the UK.

The GAC is accredited at post-secondary level as a *Certificate IV –Foundation Studies* programme and recognised as equivalent to Year 12 (pre-university course) in Australia

GAC centres are entitled to administer The ACT (standardized university admission test in the US). GAC students typically sit the test during Level 3, or on completion of the programme.

Further information

For more information refer to: www.actinternationalservices.com/en/aesl/index.html and www.actinternationalservices.com/en/gac/

Bulgaria: Diploma za sredno obrazovanie (Diploma of Secondary Education)

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Last verified

18 July 2016

Country

- Bulgaria

Education context

Education is not compulsory after the age of 16.

Secondary education (grades 9 to 12, ages 16 –19).

Up until 2003 separate diplomas were awarded for the general and vocational pathway:

- *Diploma za zavarsheno sredno obrazovanie* (General)
- *Diploma za zavarsheno sredno spetsialno obrazovanie* (Professional / Vocational).

Since 2003, successful completion of secondary education culminates in the award of the *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma for Secondary Education), which is the same for general education and vocational education and training.

Students must pass State matriculation examinations (*Darzhaven Zrelosten Izpit* or *Matura*) in two subjects to achieve their *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma of Secondary Education).

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Diploma za sredno obrazovanie (Diploma of Secondary Education) is a group diploma awarded by secondary schools.

Students take a wide range of subjects. These include a combination of compulsory subjects, subjects selected from a restricted group (depending on the student's interests / capabilities and the school profile), and subjects chosen freely.

Compulsory subjects include arts, biology and health education, Bulgarian language and literature, chemistry and protection of the environment, ethics and law, foreign languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, etc.), geography and economics, history and civilization, informatics, information technologies, mathematics, philosophy, physical education and sport. physics and astronomy, psychology and logic, world and personality. Students must pass the State matriculation examinations (*Darzhaven Zrelosten Izpit* or *Matura*) in two subjects to achieve their *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma of Secondary Education).

Subject areas

- Arts
- Bulgarian language and literature
- Foreign languages
- Mathematics, informatics and information technologies
- Physical education and sport
- Science and ecology
- Social sciences and civic education

Levels

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

State matriculation examinations (*Darzhaven Zrelostest Izpit* or *Matura*) are regarded as comparable to A level grades whilst *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma for Secondary Education) overall is considered comparable to AS level grades.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Both the *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma for Secondary Education) and the State matriculation examination (*Darzhaven Zrelostest Izpit* or *Matura*) marks are expressed as scores out of 6, with 6 being excellent and 3 being the minimum pass mark:

- 6 *otlichen* (excellent)
- 5 *mnogo dobur* (very good)
- 4 *dobur* (good)
- 3 *sreden* (minimum pass mark)
- 2 *slab* (poor)

Assessment

Students are awarded a final average mark for their whole *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma for Secondary Education) / study course.

Students must pass the State matriculation examinations (*Darzhaven Zrelostest Izpit* or *Matura*) in two subjects to achieve their *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma of Secondary Education).

For the State matriculation examinations Bulgarian language and literature is a compulsory subject for all students. The other subjects are of the student's choice. Students get a mark for each State matriculation examination.

According to current national legislation, if a student fails in a State matriculation examination, he/she can sit for it an unlimited number of times.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Candidates are awarded a final average mark for their whole *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie* (Diploma of Secondary Education) / study course and a mark for each State matriculation examination.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Diploma za sredno obrazovanie (Diploma for Secondary Education) is regarded as comparable in size to three A levels or six AS levels.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

UK HEPs tend to focus on results within State matriculation examination subjects as well as average grades.

An offer of DSO 6 plus an excellent mark in each of the two State matriculation examination subjects (or 6+6+4 / 6+6+5 in three State matriculation examination subjects) would target the top 1 – 2% of the Bulgarian student population.

Some UK HEPs require students to undertake additional qualifications or entrance examinations.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

State matriculation examinations are held at the end of May every year and results are announced at the beginning of June.

Diploma za sredno obrazovanie (DSO) is issued in the second half of June.

Reporting and certification information

According to the Bulgarian Ministry of Education's website, in 2008:

- 76,013 students registered for the State matriculation examinations
- of them only 1,748 students registered for a third, voluntary subject (2% of total State matriculation examination students)
- only 845 (1%) passed the third examination successfully.

Information about the State matriculation examinations in May 2015:

- 52,856 students registered for the compulsory subject Bulgarian language and literature;
- 53,247 students registered for a second subject, which is of the student's choice. Students must sit for a second subject as well in order to achieve the *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie*;
- only 194 students registered for a third subject. Students do not have to sit for a third subject in order to achieve the *Diploma za sredno obrazovanie*.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Diploma za sredno obrazovanie (DSO) is a prerequisite for entry to HEPs in Bulgaria.

Few universities in Bulgaria currently use the overall results as an admission component. Most use grades in certain DSO subjects plus results in 1 / 2 / 3 State matriculation examination subjects which are weighted differently.

Because of the exam's challenging nature, students who sit a third State matriculation examination subject have a significant advantage in the university admissions process.

Further information

Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria: www.minedu.government.bg (in Bulgarian)

China: Gaokao

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also known as National Higher Education Entrance Examination, the National College Entrance Examination, or NCEE

Updated July 2016

Country

- China

Education context

Nine years of compulsory education, starting at six years of age. Generally this is divided into six years of elementary and three years of junior high school.

All students take the *Zhongkao* examination, a summative assessment of the compulsory phase of education and the entrance examination for senior high school.

Students at senior high schools generally choose to specialise in either a science or arts route for their final two years.

At the end of senior high school study students wishing to go on to higher education will take the *Gaokao*, the entrance examination to universities.

The subjects examined in the *Gaokao* tend to make up the overwhelming majority of the teaching time in the students' final year at school.

The total period of study for Chinese students taking the *Gaokao* is 12 years.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Originally a common national examination, since 1985 Shanghai and Guangdong have offered their own versions, followed by other provinces. In 2015, 15 provinces and municipalities offered their own versions of the exam, although they are taken on the same days and to the same timetables.

Across China, provincial governments administer one of a range of exam types. The format 3+X is the most common – where 3 is the three national compulsory subjects of Chinese, mathematics and a foreign language and X refers either to arts or science subjects, depending on student choice. This is used in most provinces, and in Beijing, Tianjin and Chongqing. Some provinces add local requirements, for example in Shandong the format is 3+X+1 where 3

represents the three national compulsory subjects, X the arts or science subjects, and 1 a basic living proficiency test.

In all cases Chinese, mathematics and a foreign language are mandatory – the foreign language is usually English, although this may be substituted with Japanese, Russian or French. There are six other subjects, divided into two groups: science (physics, chemistry, biology) and arts (history, geography and political education). Students choose to follow one or other of these routes, and some versions of the *Gaokao* have an integrated science or integrated arts test, which assesses all three component subjects at the same time.

Subject areas

- Chinese
- Foreign language (English, Japanese, Russian or French)
- Mathematics
- Science (chemistry, biology, physics) or arts (history, geography and political education)
- Local requirement (if applicable)

Levels

Broadly comparable to RQF Level 3 and SCQF Level 6/7 qualifications.

Regarded as similar level to the UK qualification benchmark of GCE AS. Institutions wishing to accept the *Gaokao* for direct entry to the first year of undergraduate programmes may want to consider a very high score (above 85%) in addition to a very high English level.

The information in this section is provided by the overseas authority or the British Council.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

The majority of *Gaokao* scores are out of 750, but there is some variation above and below this:

- 750 – used by the majority of provinces and based on 3+X subjects at 150 for each compulsory subject and 300 for integrated subjects.
- 485 – based almost entirely on the three compulsory subjects; other subjects are assessed by separate provincial examinations with up to 5 bonus *Gaokao* points awarded based on the number of “A” grades.
- 630 – based on three compulsory subjects and one integrated test and a mark out of 30 based on senior high school performance.
- 810 – based on compulsory subjects, integrated tests and additional local requirements
- 900 – based on compulsory subjects, integrated tests and additional local requirements.

The annual provincial cut-off for entry into Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 institutions is determined once all the *Gaokao* results are known. A matrix of provincial quotas, university quotas, and subject quotas is negotiated annually between universities and national and provincial authorities. Nationally, around 10% of candidates receive a Tier 1 score (allowing them to apply to Tier 1 universities), while a further 20% receive a Tier 2 score.

Results vary between provinces and between years. However, cut-off scores are given for each province's *Gaokao* – for the first and second tier universities. Students failing to achieve the cut-off score for first tier universities will not be admitted.

Assessment

The *Gaokao* examinations last nine hours spread over two days. The various examinations contain a mixture of different question types, including an extended essay-based question as part of the Chinese examination.

Taken at the end of high school, the *Gaokao* is taken over a two-day period across the country in June.

The tests comprise a mix of multiple-choice and short answer questions covering each of the subjects. The Chinese exam includes an essay-based section where the students are required to write an extended response to a stimulus scenario or question.

On completion, the test papers are computer scanned and managed by the Provincial Education Authorities. Multiple-choice questions are marked through a computer program and the sections of the exam requiring individual marking are sent randomly (electronically) to two teachers for marking. If the variation on the mark is greater than five points, the paper is sent to a third teacher for the final mark.

For the provinces that design their own *Gaokao*, the Ministry of Education (MoE) conducts an evaluation on the quality of the examination papers, after the *Gaokao* each year. The results are not made public but used as a quality assurance tool to ensure that each province is operating in accordance with the guidelines provided, and is consistent in student outcomes across provinces.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Each of the scores on the component examinations is combined to produce an overall *Gaokao* score. The total score will be placed in the context of the cut-off scores for the first and second tier universities. Students will be able to see their scores and to identify if they are eligible to apply for entry to Chinese universities.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Students generally work towards the *Gaokao* in their final year of high school. It is therefore considered similar in size to 4 AS qualifications (4 x 180 = 720 hours).

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
data	
<	

Key issues for UK HE admissions

The *Gaokao* is considered by many UK universities to be at a lower level than those qualifications traditionally used to demonstrate readiness for undergraduate study, with students completing 12 years of education. Many students from China who are applying to international universities will also take SATs or other internationally-recognised qualifications. The *Gaokao* is sometimes considered for entry to foundation degree programmes.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

The examination is held toward the beginning of June every year, with results published towards the end of June (22-25 June), depending on each province. There is a limited availability of an additional 'spring' occasion in Shanghai.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

Statistics are not available.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The *Gaokao* is a prerequisite for undergraduate university entrance in China, and scores will determine which university a student can apply to. There are cut-off scores for top tier, second tier and third tier universities, but even within these tiers Chinese universities' admissions decisions are based almost entirely on gaokao scores. The most elite Chinese universities, third tier, require significantly higher scores than the tier one cut-off.

Further information

Sources:

- <http://www.moe.gov.cn> (Ministry of Education, China)
- www.internationalnewsroom.com/gaokao-or-bust/
- http://sydney.edu.au/ab/committees/UG_studies/agendas/agendas2011/USC_06Sep11_6.3_Gaokao_Report.pdf

The Examination System in China: The Case of Zhongkao Mathematics Yingkang (2012) 12th
International Congress on Mathematical Education

Croatia: Državna matura / Svjedodžba o državnoj maturi

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

New for 2016

Country

- Croatia

Education context

Elementary education (ISCED Levels 1 and 2) is compulsory for all children and lasts eight years from age 6/7 to 15.

After completing elementary education, students have the opportunity to continue their education in secondary schools (ISCED Level 3), which is not mandatory.

There are three types of secondary education programmes (ISCED Level 3):

1. **Gymnasium programmes** (general education programmes lasting four years that end with državna matura - state graduation exam)
2. **Vocational programmes** (vocational education programmes lasting one to five years, depending on the end qualifications. Qualify students for the labour market and end with the final exam organised and conducted by the school)
3. **Art programmes** (art, music and dance programmes lasting four years, which end with the final exam prepared and conducted by the school).

Svjedodžba o državnoj matri is a secondary school-leaving certificate received by students in general education programmes (gymnasiums), upon passing the mandatory state graduation exam (državna matura) at the end of the final year of schooling.

Students within vocational and art education programmes lasting for at least four years can also take the state graduation exam (državna matura) if they wish to continue their education at institutions of higher education.

Curricula and qualifications are determined by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Structure

The state graduation exam (državna matura) consists of the compulsory and optional part:

- **Compulsory exams** are taken in the following core subjects: Croatian language, mathematics and a foreign language. Students attending classes in a language and script of national minorities must, in addition to the Croatian language exam, take an exam in the national minority language in which they are educated, whilst the third exam they choose is either mathematics or a foreign language.

- **Optional exams** can be taken in a maximum of six subjects from the list of optional subjects stated below.

Exams in the compulsory part can be taken at two levels: **A-higher** and **B-basic** level. Exams in foreign languages in the optional part are taken exclusively at the higher level.

Exam results are evaluated for admission to higher education institutions.

Compulsory subjects:

- Croatian language (and Serbian, Hungarian, Italian or Czech for minorities)
- Foreign language (English, German, Italian, Spanish or French) or Classical language (Latin or Ancient Greek for classical students)
- Mathematics

Optional subjects:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Geography
- History
- Politics
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Philosophy
- Logics
- Ethics
- Religious studies
- Computer science
- Visual arts
- Music
- Latin or ancient Greek

Levels

Considered to be broadly comparable to UK Level 3 qualifications.

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Exam results are expressed as numerical grades 1 – 5, with 5 being excellent, and 1 being fail:

- 5 – excellent
- 4 – very good
- 3 – good
- 2 – sufficient
- 1 – fail

Assessment

The državna matura (state graduation exam) is conducted by taking several written exams, which are equal for all students, and taken at the same time, under the same conditions for everybody.

The Croatian language exam has two parts: literature written exam and an essay.

A foreign language exam consists of three tests: a reading comprehension and writing test, and a listening comprehension test.

All other exams consist of only one part.

The državna matura (state graduation exam) is organised and conducted by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, an independent public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

For each exam within a state graduation exam (državna matura) each student receives a separate grade. Students are allowed to retake examinations they have failed.

Further enrolment into university programmes is conducted via internet. Lists of students with the right to enrolment are processed by the central computer for each university based on the results of the exams. The grades gained in the exams are converted into points for enrolment. Each university sets its own criteria of valuing these exams.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

For UK HE admissions purposes, the state graduation exam (državna matura) may be regarded as comparable in programme size with three A levels.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may set subject requirements in addition to the overall result of državna matura.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

There are two examination periods per year: June and August/September. Exams take place according to a calendar established by the Ministry each year. Results and certificates are usually published three weeks after the examination period.

Qualification dates notes

The state graduation exam (državna matura) was introduced in 2009/2010. Before then the final exams for students at the end of their final year of schooling were organised and conducted by schools.

Reporting and certification information

According to the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education's annual report 36,041 students took the state graduation exam (državna matura) in 2014/2015.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The državna matura (state graduation exam) allows access to HE. Students who have completed general education programmes (gymnasiums), and vocational and art programmes (vocational and art schools) lasting at least four years, can take the state graduation exam.

Admission to HE is competitive and based on the results of the state graduation exam (državna matura) and a grade point average (the arithmetic mean of all final grades in all subjects for all years of schooling). In addition, some higher education institutions may require entrance classification exams.

Further information

National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCVVO): www.ncvvo.hr.

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports: www.mzos.hr

Denmark: General upper secondary examination suite

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21 March 2017

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New for 2016

- **Stuentereksamen (STX): General upper secondary examination**
- **Højere Handelseksamen (HHX): Commercial general upper secondary examination**
- **Højere Teknisk Eksamen (HTX): Technical general upper secondary examination**
- **Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF): General upper secondary examination**
- **EUX: General upper secondary examination taken as a part of a vocational education.**

Country

- Denmark

Education context

Ten years of compulsory school consisting of one pre-school year (grade zero) and nine years in basic comprehensive school (Folkeskole) grade 1 – 9 (ages 7 –16). An optional 11th year is called grade 10.

English language as a subject is compulsory from grade 1.

Structure

The STX, HHX and HTX have a duration of three years.

The HF has a duration of two years based on 11 years of schooling (grade 10).

The EUX is taken by pupils attending vocational education. They can obtain an upper secondary qualification (EUX) along with the vocational diploma, by extending their studies with a number of general subjects from the STX/HHX/HTX programmes. The total duration of the general subjects correspond to the duration of the Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF). A separate diploma is issued.

Subjects can be taken at three levels: A (highest), B and C (lowest).

Subject areas

Stuentereksamen (STX)

- Including at least four subjects at A-level and normally three B-level and seven C-level subjects.

- Compulsory subjects and levels: Danish A, English B, 2nd foreign language B or A, history A, classical studies C, physics C, physical education (PE) C, an artistic subject C, mathematics C, religion C, social science, and in addition at least two of the subjects biology, chemistry and natural geography at C-level.
- As a main rule, each student must also complete biology, physics, chemistry or natural geography at B-level.
- The compulsory artistic subject is chosen from among visual arts, drama, media studies or music.
- The 2nd foreign language is chosen from among the following: French continued level B and A, German continued level B and A, French beginner level A, Italian A, Russian A, Spanish A or German beginner level A.
- Apart from the compulsory subjects, each student chooses a specialised study programme and electives, and each student also writes a specialised study project (SRP) in the third year, combining two or three subjects of their choice.
- Electives: Each student selects a number of elective subjects. The number varies according to the study field subjects taken by the student.

Højere Handelseksamen (HHX)

- Including at least four subjects at A-level, at least three B-level subjects and at least one C-level subject.
- Compulsory subjects and levels: Danish A, English A, 2nd foreign language B or A, business economics B, marketing B, international economics B, contemporary history B, mathematics C, commercial law C and social science C.
- Two foreign languages are selected from among the following options: French at continued level B and A, German at continued level B and A, French beginner level A, Italian A, Russian A, Spanish A or German beginner level A.
- As well as compulsory subjects, the students also choose their specialised study programme and electives, and, in addition, in the third year each student writes a specialised study project (SRP) combining two or three subjects of their choice.
- Electives: Each student selects a number of elective subjects. The number varies according to the study field subjects taken by the student.

Højere Teknisk Eksamen (HTX)

- Including at least three subjects at A-level, at least three B-level subjects and at least one C-level subject.
- Compulsory subjects and levels: Danish A, technical science A, English B, physics B, chemistry B, mathematics B, technology B, biology C, communication/IT C, social science C and history of technology C. Teaching is partly conducted as multi-subject courses within the framework of the study programme.

- Technical science A is selected from among the following options: construction and energy, design and production or process, food and health.
- As well as compulsory subjects, the students also choose their specialised study programme and electives, and, in addition, in the third year each student writes a specialised study project (SRP) combining two or three subjects of their choice.
- Electives: Each student selects a number of elective subjects. The number varies according to the study field subjects taken by the student.

Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF)

- Compulsory subjects and levels: Danish A, English B, mathematics C, physical education C, practical/musical subject C, natural science group of subjects (which includes biology C, geography C and chemistry C), and the culture and social science group of subjects (history B, social science C and religion C).
- As well as the compulsory subjects, the student must choose two to four electives, and each student must also complete a major written assignment during the second year within one to three subjects of their choice.
- Electives: The students choose from among a number of electives at C-, B- or A- level offered by the schools.

EUX

- Compulsory subjects and levels: Danish A, English B, mathematics C and social science C.
- In addition to the compulsory subjects, the students must take a number of subjects at A-, B- and C-level including at least two subjects at B-level. The number of subjects depends on the specific vocational programme.
- A written assignment.
- Completion of a major written assignment combining two to three subjects, including at least one subject at B-level and a subject from the vocational programme. The assignment forms part of the final examination.
- The total duration of the general subjects corresponds to the duration of the Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF).

Levels

- EQF Level 4

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 4. Satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

7-point grading scale. Pass level is 2:

7-point grading scale	Expected distribution of grade*	Relation to the ECTS-scale
12	10%	A
10	25%	B
7	30%	C
4	25%	D
2	10%	E
0	-	Fx
-3	-	F

The student's performance or proficiency is assessed according to academic targets set up for the specific subject or course (absolute grading method). The relative grading method must not be used. It is nevertheless expected that the overall distribution of grades over a certain period of time should reflect the distribution of grades mentioned.

Relation between the new and the former grading system:

7-point grading scale	Former 0 – 13 scale
12	13, 11
10	10
7	9,8
4	7
2	6
0	05, 03
-3	0

Pass level is 6 (former scale) and 2 (new scale).

Further information on grades and distribution of GPA:

http://ufm.dk/en/education-and-institutions/the-danish-education-system/grading-system/karakterer_gym_en.pdf

Assessment

Marks are awarded on a 7-point scale from -3 to 12. In STX, HHX and HTX each student regularly receives term marks in all subjects, and the teacher also gives final marks when a subject is completed. In addition, all students receive marks when they sit for a final examination. The examinations are state controlled and written examination papers are marked by two external examiners. Oral examinations are marked by the teacher and one external examiner, who has the ultimate say in the assessment. Previously they were graded by both the teacher and external examiners.

Certain examinations are compulsory for all students in the upper secondary education programmes. In addition, the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality annually decides which subjects form part of the examination for the individual student. Towards the end of the education programme, all students must submit a major written assignment or project, which forms part of the examination.

The examinations can be written, oral, case-based and project tests, or take mixed forms. At most of the examinations, the students have full access to all types of aids, including IT, but they are not allowed to communicate with other persons during the examination. Some examinations grant students full internet access and the exam formats are designed accordingly.

The Ministry formulates all written examination questions and appoints external examiners for all examinations, both oral and written.

The examination average is crucial to the pupil's future opportunities in the education system, as it forms an important part of the basis for admission to higher education. The examination average is raised for students who have taken more subjects at A-level than the education programme requires.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

An examination certificate is issued when the student has achieved a minimum of 02 (pass) in weighted average of the concluding term marks and examination marks. When the examination average is calculated, the marks are weighted differently depending on the level of the subject completed.

The examination average is based on terminal marks awarded by the school and the examination marks.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

STX and HHX: A minimum of 2,470 60-minute lessons. In addition, students must allocate time for unsupervised homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as for examinations.

HTX: A minimum of 2,630 60-minute lessons. In addition, students must allocate time for unsupervised homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as for examinations.

HF: A minimum of 1,625 60-minute lessons. In addition, students must allocate time for unsupervised homework with written assignments, preparation of texts, research etc. as well as for examinations.

EUX: The total duration of the general subjects corresponds to the duration of the Højere Forberedelseseksamen (HF).

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to consider setting subject requirements in addition to the overall result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Final year exams are taken in May or June.

Certificates are issued by the end of June.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

Two average grades are reported on the certificate:

Temporary weighted average mark (*Foreløbigt eksamensresultat*):

The average is weighted on the basis of subject levels and types.

Weighted average mark (*Eksamensresultat*): This final average mark is the one used for admission to higher education in Denmark. It is calculated by raising the temporary weighted average mark by a factor of 1.03 for students who have taken one more subject at the highest level than required by the programme, and by a factor of 1.06 for students with two or more extra subjects taken at the highest level. For students who have not taken more subjects at the highest level than required, the temporary weighted average mark and the weighted average mark are identical.

Further information about the GPA distribution: http://ufm.dk/en/education-and-institutions/the-danish-education-system/grading-system/karakterer_gym_en.pdf

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The five examination programmes outlined above are the usual university entrance qualifications in Denmark. Access is granted on the basis of the GPA. In addition to the GPA, the applicants must meet the specific subject demands set by the HEIs.

Further information

<http://eng.uvm.dk/upper-secondary-education/about-upper-secondary-educa...>

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Denmark:Overview>

Europe: European Baccalaureate (EB)

Last updated

8 September 2017

Last verified

11 August 2016

Country

- Europe

Education context

The European Baccalaureate (EB) is a group diploma awarded by the 14 Type 1 European schools of the European Union, which were established to educate the children of parents working in European Union institutions. In addition Accredited European Schools (currently 12) have been or are in the process of being established, six of which will already have students taking the European Baccalaureate in 2016.

There are currently around 25,000 pupils in the system as a whole, and approximately 2,000 pupils take the final examination every year.

All lessons and periods in the secondary section are of 45 minutes duration.

The EB examines the final two years of a seven-year secondary education.

Only marks received in Year 7 (Year 13 in the English system) count towards the final qualification.

A significant and mandatory element of study is undertaken from Year 3 (Year 9 in the English system) and assessed at the final European Baccalaureate in the first modern foreign language, including at least the first modern foreign language itself, history and geography.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Students take a core of compulsory subjects (including mathematics and at least one science course) and must choose a minimum of two 4-period options. In addition they may choose 3-period advanced courses in some subjects and additional complementary courses.

The minimum number of lesson/periods per week is 31 and the maximum is usually 35 or 36.

Students must pass each year – if not they must repeat the year, and ultimately leave the school if they fail the same year twice.

Students take at least 10 subjects and their final Baccalaureate is based on assessment across these.

There are no individual subject pass certificates, but individual subject marks are indicated on the final Baccalaureate certificate.

Subject areas

- Language 1
- Language 2 (the first modern foreign language)
- Mathematics (3 or 5 periods)
- Sport
- Religion or ethics
- Biology
- History
- Geography
- Philosophy
- Language 3
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Art
- Music
- Language 4
- Latin
- Ancient Greek
- Economics
- Advanced language 1

- Advanced language 2
- Advanced mathematics

Complementary courses vary considerably between schools, but might include

- Laboratory physics
- Laboratory chemistry
- Laboratory biology
- Computing
- Introduction to economics
- Sociology
- Art
- Music
- Physical education
- Drama
- Politics
- Language 5

Levels

Broadly comparable to UK Level 3 qualifications. Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements in all member states of the European Union.

Grading

Candidates are awarded a final overall mark expressed in points with two decimal places.

The pass level is set at 60 out of 100 (6 out of 10).

From 2021, the overall pass mark will be reduced to 50 out of 100.

Candidates also receive a mark out of ten for each individual subject. This is calculated as a weighted average of all the assessed components of the subject.

Assessment

The assessment structure below is correct for students obtaining the EB from 2014 onwards. The detailed provisions concerning the EB, including those students who obtained the EB in 2013 or before, can be seen at <https://www.eursec.eu/en/Office/reports-statistics>

The EB is a group diploma and the final mark is based on:

- internal school examinations of all subjects studied (excluding religion / ethics) in Year 7, which is the final year of their EB course.

- internal continuous assessment during Year 7 (excluding religion / ethics).
- three final oral exams set by the teacher and marked by the teacher and an external examiner appointed by the examining board. These are in:
 - mother tongue: the first modern foreign language (or history or geography, which are studied in the first modern foreign language).
 - Advanced mathematics (compulsory if taken) or a 4 period option / elective subject (if not taken as a written exam) or a 2 period subject. The list of possible subjects is restricted.

Complementary courses cannot be offered in the final written or oral examinations.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The detailed provisions concerning the EB, including those students who obtained the EB in 2016 or before, can be seen at <https://www.eursec.eu/en/Office/reports-statistics>

Summary from 2014 EuropeanBaccalaureate

- 30% of final grade based on internal school examinations.
- 20% of final grade based on internal continuous assessment.
- 35% of final grade based on five final written exams set by the examining board and assessed externally.
- 15% based on three final oral exams set by the teacher and checked by the external examiner and relevant inspector.

Resit arrangements

No examinations can be retaken to improve marks.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

The EB is a full-time two year programme.

A student taking the minimum number of periods and lessons would receive over 1,500 hours of guided learning during the two year programme. For the purposes of comparison, a candidate studying the compulsory Maths 5 and 3 period courses would have at least 240 and 144 hours of guided learning respectively during the two year EB programme.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs tend to focus on the overall result plus marks in the most relevant subjects. When assessing the overall result it should be borne in mind that students have to perform well across a wide range of academic subjects (i.e. at least 10 subjects) to obtain a good score.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

All subjects are continually assessed. Some are additionally assessed tests during normal lesson time. Five final written exams are taken in June of the final year. Three final oral exams are taken in June / July of the final year.

All subjects in which a written examination may be taken in the Baccalaureate are examined in January of the final year.

European Baccalaureate results are published in early July.

Qualification dates notes

This is a current qualification.

The first awards of the EB were made in 1959. Assessment arrangements were updated for 2013/14.

Reporting and certification information

More detailed information is available in the Department for Education document for admissions officers of university and other higher education institutions (July 2013).

The average overall mark in the EB across the schools has risen only very slightly over time, and is just over 77 (out of 100) over the last five years.

The number of students obtaining marks of 8 or 9 for individual subjects over the last five years remains stable.

Over a five-year period (2011–15) students achieved:

Percentage of students	Student achievements
2%	0 – 60 (fail)
20.7%	60 – 70
35.7%	70 – 80
34.1%	80 – 90
7.5%	90 – 100

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Article 5 (2) (b) of the Statute of the European Schools, an international treaty to which the UK has acceded, provides that holders of the EB shall: ‘have the same right as nationals with equivalent qualifications to seek admission to any university in the territory or the Contracting Parties’. In this context ‘university’ applies to all HEPs.

Further information

Department for Education information for admissions officers of university and other higher education institutions (July 2013) – www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-on-the-european-baccalaureate

The European Schools website, which includes links to each individual school and syllabuses – www.eursec.eu/

University of Cambridge: International Examinations External Evaluation of the European Baccalaureate (2009) Final Report: www.eursec.eu/Documents/External%20Evaluation%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf

PISA Report on the European School of Luxembourg(2006): www.euroschool.lu/luxschool/pisa/EE_PISA_2006.pdf

PISA Report on the European School of Culham(2012): www.esculham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/PISA-Based-TestforSchools_The-European-School-Culham-report-ebook-1.pdf

Report on the European Baccalaureate 2015 www.eursec.eu/Documents/2015-09-D-7-en-4.pdf

France: Baccalauréat Français International (BFI) (assessed from 2024)

Last updated

17 April 2023

The *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI) is the international version of the French *Baccalauréat Général* (see France: *Baccalauréat Général*) taken at the end of secondary education by students enrolled in the international track of the French *baccalauréat* and is thus acceptable as a group certificate satisfying general university entrance requirements.

Country

- France

Purpose

The international track of the French *baccalauréat* is offered in a variety of languages called section languages: three varieties of English (British, American and Australian) and 14 other languages (Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish).

The *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI) aims to provide a broad, balanced, and academically challenging curriculum that equips students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in higher education and life beyond, combined with a strong competence in at least two languages.

Depending on the school's academic organisation, students may be enrolled in a bilingual BFI (French + the section language) or trilingual BFI (French + the section language + an additional language taught at a high level of competence). Schools in particularly multicultural contexts may even offer a quadrilingual BFI, to allow their students to make the most of their linguistic skills.

Increased subject specialisation in three Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) in *Première* (Year 12) and two Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) in *Terminale* (Year 13) offers additional depth and enhances progression opportunities. The addition of further "BFI Subjects" (Literature, Language & Culture, History-Geography and *Connaissance du Monde* or Global Issues) taught in another language is an important facilitator of international mobility. For example, the British version of the BFI is widely accepted by British and other Anglophone universities as proof of English language competence without the need for further proficiency tests. Linguistic performance is assessed following expectations of first language usage of academic English, with an expected level of C1/C2.

Education context

The *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI) is a recent iteration of the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (OIB) established in 1981 by the French government in response to the growing demand for more widespread bilingual education and in recognition of a need to make additional provision for foreign nationals and bilingual families living in France. The BFI was devised to offer students with linguistic skills or an interest in multicultural education a wider

range of subjects and of languages taught at a high level of academic and linguistic competence. The first cohort of BFI students will graduate in June 2024.

The BFI is based upon partnerships between the French government and foreign governments/partner authorities or awarding bodies. National assessment criteria appropriate to university-entrance level in each partner country is applied.

The partner authority for the British BFI in 2024 is Cambridge Assessment International Education. In the British version of the BFI (bilingual or trilingual version), all pupils are required to write and speak in an extended analytical mode at university entrance level in English as well as French.

Candidates for the *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI) must be enrolled in an officially recognised “international section” which they can join at various points in the French education system: *école primaire* (primary school), *collège* (middle school), or *lycée* (upper secondary school).

In 2022, there were 4,863 candidates for the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* in all the section languages, the forerunner of the *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI), with just over 1,817, the largest cohort, sitting the British version of the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat*.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

In addition to the core curriculum and their Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) taught in French, students enrolled in the BFI study further subjects (“BFI Subjects”) in another language:

- The **compulsory core curriculum** includes: French Literature (*Première* /Year 12), Philosophy (*Terminale* /Year 13), two foreign languages, History-Geography-Civics (taught as one subject in France), Physical Education and Science.
- In addition to the core curriculum, students choose three **Special Subjects** (*Spécialités*) in *Première* /Year 12 (each subject being taught for 4 hours per week) and retain two of these in *Terminale* /Year 13 (both subjects being taught for 6 hours per week). The *Spécialités* are chosen from a range of subjects (see below the list of *Spécialités* to choose from).
- The **BFI subjects** studied in at least one other language include: History-Geography; Literature, Language and Culture and a module called “*Connaissance du monde*” (similar to “Global Issues”) which combines the study of major contemporary issues with a personal research project developed with an international partner (an organisation or individual native to the other language).

Note: in the BFI’s trilingual pathway (*Parcours Trilingue*), students can opt to take Literature, Language & Culture in a third language instead of their section language, in which case the expected level of linguistic performance is C1. Students in this pathway reach a high level of linguistic skills in three languages: French, the section language and a third language.

Note: in the BFI's trilingual pathway (*Parcours Trilingue*), students can opt to take Literature, Language & Culture in a third language instead of their section language, in which case the expected level of linguistic performance is C1. Students in this pathway reach a high level of linguistic skills in three languages: French, the section language and a third language.

Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) BFI students can choose from include:

- Ancient language Literature and culture (Latin or Greek)
- Art
- Engineering Sciences
- History, Geography & Political Sciences
- Humanities, Literature & Philosophy
- Information Technology
- Life and Earth Sciences (Biology, Geology, Environment)
- Mathematics
- Physics/Chemistry
- Social and Economic Sciences
- Sports, sport practices and culture

Not all subjects or combinations of subjects will be available in each school.

Finally, further options in languages, art, music and mathematics may also be taken. They are assessed internally by continuous assessment.

Levels

- Level 3

Level 3 of the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general university entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level, you may wish to refer to UK-ENIC, which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

The British version of the BFI is widely accepted by British and other Anglophone universities as proof of English language competence without the need for further proficiency tests.

Linguistic performance is assessed following expectations of first language usage of academic English, with an expected level of C1/C2.

Students enrolled in a trilingual BFI pathway will present a multilingual linguistic profile, with a high level of linguistic competence in three languages (French, the section language and an additional foreign language). C1 or C2 are the targeted levels of achievement depending on the status of each language.

Grading

All students achieve an overall score out of 20 for their *Baccalauréat* – this includes fractions.

A Pass (*Passable/Sans mention*) requires an average of 10 points or more.

In addition, honours grades (*mentions*) are awarded on the basis of the average point score achieved:

- *Très bien* (Distinction) = average of 16 or more points
- *Bien* (Merit) = average of 14 points or more but fewer than 16
- *Assez bien* = average of 12 points or more but fewer than 14

In practice, the top mark-band (16–20) is awarded to a small percentage of candidates. In 2022, for example, 14.2% of all *Baccalauréat Général* candidates in France achieved a *mention très bien* (an overall average mark of 16/20 or better)^[1]; 24.5% achieved a *mention bien* (between 14/20 and below 16/20).

Note that for OIB candidates in 2022 the percentage for *mention très bien* was 35% and the percentage for *mention bien* was 37%; note also that 16/20 in an individual subject within the *Baccalauréat* is given the same UCAS tariff as a grade ‘A*’ at A Level and that 15/20 is rated as equivalent to a grade ‘A’ at A Level.

^[1] [DEPP, NI-23-09-resultats-definitifs-session2022-baccalaureat-pdf.pdf](#)

Assessment

There are two rounds of external examinations within the *Baccalauréat* programme: the first at the end of *Première* (Year 12), followed by final examinations towards the end of *Terminale* (Year 13). The examinations are either written or oral, or both. These are centrally organised and administered by the French Ministry of Education.

BFI students take compulsory, externally assessed examinations in seven subjects which count for over three-quarters of the final overall mark: in addition to the four examinations taken as part of the standard French *Baccalauréat Général* (French Literature, Philosophy and two Special Subjects), they also take written and oral examinations in the two BFI subjects, English Literature, Language & Culture and History-Geography, together with an oral examination in *Connaissance du Monde* (Global Issues), at the end of *Terminale* (Year 13). The BFI subject examinations account for more than 40% of the final overall mark.

The remainder of the curriculum is internally assessed through continuous assessment.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Subjects are weighted slightly differently in the BFI (BFI Subjects being given extra value) compared to the standard French *Baccalauréat Général*:

Subject	Coefficient (weighting)	Coefficient (weighting)	Coefficient (weighting)
	Baccalauréat Général	bilingual BFI (*British version)	trilingual BFI (*non British version with English literature, language and culture as a second language)
Special Subject 1	16	16	16
Special Subject 2	16	16	16
Special Subject Oral	10	10	10
French Literature	10	10	10
Philosophy	8	8	8
Language A	6	20 (*A Level style English Literature, Language & Culture, First Language English)	6
Language B	6	6	20 (*A Level style English Literature, Language & Culture,)
History-Geography	6	20 (*A Level style, First Language English)	20 (section language)

General Science (incl a compulsory module in Mathematics where the student is not taking Spécialité Mathematics)	6	6	6
Physical Education	6	6	6
Special Subject dropped at the end of première	8	8	8
Citizenship	2	2	2
Connaissance du Monde (Global Issues)	-	20 (*First Language English)	20 (section language)
(Optional Special Subject in section language)	-	(20)	(20)
Total	100	148 (168)	148 (168)

Resit arrangements

A candidate who narrowly misses the overall pass mark of 10/20 can take supplementary oral examinations in up to two subjects shortly after results have been published in July. The marks gained in these oral examinations (called *rattrapage*) replace the original written marks in these subjects and may allow the candidate to achieve an overall pass.

Candidates wishing to improve their overall score in the *Baccalauréat* or individual subjects must re-sit the whole diploma the following year; this is rare.

Guided/notional learning hours

2240 hours

Guided/notional learning hours notes

A BFI course represents an average of 1,120 hours per year, making a total of 2,240 hours for the two examined years of the BFI (32 weeks, with between 32 - 38 hours a week), compared to a yearly average of 1,920 hours for the standard *Baccalauréat Général*.

For UK HE admissions purposes, the BFI is regarded as comparable in programme size with four A levels hence given a combined multiplier of 16.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may wish to set subject-specific requirements in addition to an overall Diploma result. As far as assessment in the *Baccalauréat Général* is concerned, candidates are assessed on national examinations relying on national curricula published by the French ministry of education. Individual assessors apply marks according to a national grading scale under supervision of inspectors from the French ministry of education who ensure an objective 'harmonisation' of the assessment and equality between candidates. Equally, results in the BFI Subjects (English Literature, Language & Culture and History-Geography) are the product of different examinations under supervision of the French inspectorate working with Cambridge inspectors.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Baccalauréat examinations take place at the end of *Première* / Year 12 and towards the end of *Terminale* / Year 13. Results are published in early July.

Students receive official results in mid-July, when they are made available online and on school notice boards. Official transcripts (*Relevés de notes*) are available from school offices.

Qualification dates notes

The *Baccalauréat* was created in 1808. The most recent far-reaching reform, which changed the structure of the qualification and abolished the three subject-based streams (ES, L and S), came into effect in 2021.

Reporting and certification information

Results of *Baccalauréat* 2022 (source Note d'information - N°23.09 - mars 2023^[1])

Baccalauréat	Candidates	Très bien	Bien	Assez bien	% Awards	Pass	Overall outcome
Général	379 188	14,2	24,5	30,3	69	27	96
Technologique	145 882	2,1	11,5	30,8	44,4	46	90,4
Professionnel	208 034	4,2	15,8	29,9	49,9	32,4	82,2
TOTAL	733 104	9	19,4	30,3	58,7	32,3	91

[1] [DEPP, NI-23-09-resultats-definitifs-session2022-baccalaureat](#)

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The *Baccalauréat* admits to all faculties in French universities, but universities may redirect students to appropriate courses depending on their results.

Further information

For more information about the international variant of the French *Baccalauréat Général*, the *Baccalauréat Français International* (BFI), please consult <https://eduscol.education.fr/3043/le-baccalaureat-francais-international-bfi> or the Cambridge Associate, ASIBA: www.asiba.fr.

France: Baccalauréat Général

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- France

Education context

From age 15 students enter the *Lycée* period of education (upper secondary) for three years:

- seconde (15 –16)
- première (16 –17)
- terminale (17 –18)

There are three types of *Lycée* – the *Général*, *Technologique* and *Professionnel* (vocational). *Général* and *Technologique* courses are provided in standard high schools, whereas the vocational courses are provided in professional high schools.

Baccalauréats are available to students achieving in all three courses. In 2013, 38% of French students took the *Baccalauréat Général*, 15.6% took the *Baccalauréat Technologique* and 20.1% took the *Baccalauréat Professionnel*.

Around 95% of French students passing the *Baccalauréat Général*, 85% of those passing the *Baccalauréat Technologique* and 25% of those passing the *Baccalauréat Professionnel* will go on to higher education. The third course is primarily designed for students going on to further education.

Structure

The *Baccalauréat Général* is examined over two years (*première* and *terminale*). All students choose one of three ‘pathways’ (*séries*) within the Baccalaureate – ES (Economics & Social Sciences), S (Scientific) or L (Humanities), which determines the focus of study, particularly in the final year.

There are two stages of compulsory examination – initial exams in French language and literature and either history / geography (for students in the Science pathway) or science (for those in the Economics & Social Sciences and Humanities pathways).

There are seven compulsory final examinations, plus the students’ choice of specialisation (see additional information below for detail).

All students take philosophy in the final year. There is a required option for further specialisation within the chosen pathway which includes an additional two hour class in the chosen area and increases the weight of these subjects within the final *Baccalauréat* – see additional information below.

Results are based on the candidate's average score across all examinations.

Subject areas

All students study French language and literature and philosophy in the first year of examinations and complete a small-group interdisciplinary project. Those students choosing the ES and L pathways will study science in their first year, and those opting for the S pathway must study history / geography in the first year. In the final year PE / sport is compulsory for all students.

The focus of each of the pathways is described below, details of subject options are provided in the section for 'further information'.

Scientific (S):

- emphasis on mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geology – focus on abstraction, rigor, reasoning and experimentation.

Economics & Social Sciences (ES):

- emphasis on socio- economic environment – history, geography & maths – focus on analysis & exploration.

Humanities (L):

- emphasis on language and literature, history, geography & arts – focus on analysis & synthesis, critical thinking.

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

All students achieve an overall score out of 20 for their *Baccalauréat* – this includes fractions.

In addition, students who pass each stage of the *Baccalauréat* examinations first time are eligible for the honours grades. These are awarded on the basis of the average point score achieved.

- *Tres bien* (very good) = average of 16 or more points.
- *Bien* (good) = average of 14 points or more but fewer than 16.
- *Assez bien* (Good enough) = average of 12 points or more but fewer than 14.

Exceptional marks (usually above 18) can receive unofficial *félicitations du jury* (jury's congratulations). There are no fixed criteria for obtaining this accolade; it is rewarded at the marking panel's discretion.

Sans mention are those students who have achieved a pass, but without the honours grades – either because of a lower score or because they did not pass the component examinations at their first attempt.

Assessment

There are two rounds of external examinations within the *Baccalauréat* programme, a round at the end of the *première* (penultimate) year, and final tests at the end of the *terminale* year.

The examinations are either written or oral, or a combination, with the emphasis on written. These are centrally organised and administered by the French Ministry of Education.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

All assessed subjects are marked out of 20, and the *Baccalauréat* score is the student's overall average score (out of 20). Scores include fractions.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is an average of 960 hours per year, making a total of 1,920 for the two examined years of the *Baccalauréat*. (32 weeks, with between 27 – 32 hours a week).

For UK HE admissions purposes, the *Baccalauréat* is regarded as comparable in programme size with three A levels hence given a combined multiplier of 12.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
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data

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Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may wish to set subject requirements in addition to an overall Diploma result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Baccalauréat exam dates in 2016 were 15-22 June. Results are published from 5 July.

Students receive official results in mid-July, when they are made available online and on school notice boards. Official certificates are available from school offices.

Qualification dates notes

The *Baccalauréat* was created in 1808. Since 1995 the *Baccalauréat Général* has been organised into three pathways (series).

Reporting and certification information

Results of *Baccalauréat* 2012 (2011) (source *Note d'information* 13.02 – National Ministry of Education)

Pathway	Total students	Pass rate	Tres bien	Bien	Assez bien	Sans mention
ES	96,496	89.1	5.1	13.8	28.8	52.3
L	46,457	86.9	5	12	26.3	56.7
S	150,884	90.8	12.5	20.5	28.6	38.4
All 2012	293,837	89.6	8.9	17	28.3	45.8
All 2011	283,821	88.3	7.5	15.4	27.6	49.5

Progression information/access to HE within home country

In theory the *Baccalauréat* admits to all faculties in French universities, but in practice, the specialisation can be important and thus a Science pathway *Baccalauréat* is almost essential for medicine.

Further information

Examination subjects by pathway

L (Humanities) pathway Compulsory exams: Initial exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
French language and literature	Written	4 hours
French language and literature	Oral	20 minutes

Science	Written	1.5 hours
Interdisciplinary project (TPE) – group work	Oral	30 mins for group of three candidates

Compulsory exams: Final exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
Literature	Written	2 hours
History & geography	Written	4 hours
Modern language 1	Written and oral	3 hours and 20 mins
Modern language 2	Written and oral	3 hours and 20 mins
Foreign language and literature	Oral	10 mins
Philosophy	Written	4 hours
PE / Sport	Controlled assessment	n/a

Specialisation exam – candidate choice (one subject)

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
Classics – Latin	Written	3 hours
Classics - Greek	Written	3 hours
Modern language 1 or 2 in more depth	Oral	30 mins
Modern language 3	Oral	20 mins
Mathematics	Written	3 hours
Key contemporary rights and issues	Oral	20 mins
Fine arts	Written & practical	3.5 hrs and 30mins

Cinema	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins
Art history	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins
Music	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins
Theatre	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins
Dance	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins
Circus skills	Written & oral	3.5 hrs and 30mins

Other exam type

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
PE / Sport (2)	Controlled assessment	n/a

ES (Economics & Social Sciences) pathway. Compulsory exams: Initial exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
French language and literature	Written	4 hours
French language and literature	Oral	20 minutes
Science	Written	1.5 hours
Interdisciplinary project (TPE) – group work	Oral	30 mins for group of three candidates

Compulsory exams: Final exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
History & geography	Written	4 hours
Mathematics	Written	3 hours
Economics & social science	Written	4 hours (or 4 hours +1 hour)

Modern language 1	Written and oral	3 hours (written)
Modern language 2	Written and oral	2 hours (written)
Philosophy	Written	4 hours
PE & Sport	Controlled assessment	n/a

Specialisation exam – candidate choice (one subject)

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
Economics in depth	Written	1 hour
Mathematics	Written	Integrated into final mathematics exam above
Social science and politics	Written	1 hour

Other exam type

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
PE / Sport (2)	Controlled assessment	n/a

S (Science) pathway. Compulsory exams: Initial exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
French	Written	4 hours
French	Oral	20 minutes
History and geography	Written	4 hours

Final exams

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
History and geography (from 2015)	Written	3 hours
Mathematics	Written	4 hours

Physics & chemistry	Written & practical	3.5 hours + 1 hour
Earth/life sciences	Written & practical	3.5 hours + 1 hour
Or ecology/agronomy	Written & practical	3.5 hours + 1 hour
Or engineering science	Written & practical	4 hours + 20 mins
Modern language 1	Written & oral	3 hours (written)
Modern language 2	Written & oral	2 hours (written)
Philosophy	Written	4 hours
PE/Sport	Controlled assessment	n/a

Specialisation exam – candidate choice (one subject)

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
Mathematics	Written & practical	Integrated into final exam above
Or physics / chemistry	Written & practical	Integrated into final exam above
Earth/life sciences	Written & practical	Integrated into final exam above
Computer science	Oral	20 mins
Ecology & agronomy	Oral	30 mins

Other exam type

Title of exam	Type of exam	Length of exam
PE/Sport (2)	Controlled assessment	n/a

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid145/le-baccalaureat-general.html#un-bac...> - par-serie

France: Baccalauréat Général (assessed from 2021)

Last updated

15 August 2020

Last verified

15 August 2020

The French Baccalauréat, established by Napoleon I in 1808, is a group award taught and examined during the final two years of secondary education.

There are three different types of Baccalauréat, usually offered in separate schools:

- **Baccalauréat Général:** academic subjects
- **Baccalauréat Technologique:** technical vocational subjects in the applied sciences, design and applied arts, hospitality science and management or artistic performance studies in music and dance
- **Baccalauréat Professionnel:** general and vocational subjects including management, administration and logistics

An international variant of the Baccalauréat Général is also available to bilingual students enrolled in an international section (see France: Option Internationale du Baccalauréat, OIB).

In 2019, a total of 743,594 candidates took the French Baccalauréat with 398,153 (53.5%) taking the *Baccalauréat Général*, 155,661 (21%) the *Baccalauréat Technologique* and 189,780 (25.5%) the *Baccalauréat Professionnel*. In the same year, there were 4,059 candidates for the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (all 16 language versions) with just over 1,400 sitting the British version of the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat*, the largest cohort.

Country

- France

Purpose

The French Baccalauréat Général aims to provide a broad, balanced, and academically challenging curriculum that equips students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in higher education and life beyond. Increased subject specialisation in three Special

Subjects (*Spécialités*) in Première (Year 12) and two Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) in Terminale (Year 13) offers additional depth and enhances progression opportunities.

Education context

From age 15, students enter the *Lycée* period of education (upper secondary) for three years:

- Seconde (Year 11, aged 15 –16 years)
- Première (Year 12, aged 16 –17 years)
- Terminale (Year 13, aged 17 –18 years)

The majority of French students passing the *Baccalauréat Général* and the *Baccalauréat Technologique* will go on to higher education. The *Baccalauréat Professionnel* is primarily designed for students going on to further education.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

The new *Baccalauréat Général* (examined from 2021) is structured around a compulsory core curriculum and Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) allowing a higher degree of subject specialisation. Therefore, it remains a ‘grouped’ award requiring competence in a range of subjects whilst also allowing a degree of specialisation in certain (chosen) subjects.

The compulsory core curriculum includes: French Literature (Première / Year 12), Philosophy (Terminale / Year 13), two foreign languages, History-Geography (taught as one subject in France), Physical Education and Science.

In addition to studying the compulsory core curriculum, students choose three Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) in Première / Year 12 (each being taught for 4 hours per week) and retain two of these in Terminale / Year 13 (both being taught for 6 hours per week).

Compulsory final examinations in four subjects count for 60% of the final overall mark: French Literature is examined in written and oral examinations at the end of première / Year 12; the two Special Subjects (representing just over 30% of the final overall mark in themselves) and Philosophy are then examined during Year 13; an oral examination is also taken based on a personal project, developed by the student and relating to one or both of the Special Subjects, at the end of Terminale / Year 13.

The remainder of the curriculum is assessed through continuous assessment: a combination of results in nationally set and anonymously marked tests (30%), and marks awarded by teachers during the two years of study (10% of the final mark).

Subject areas

In addition to the core curriculum outlined above, students choose from the following Special Subjects (*Spécialités*):

- Art
- Engineering Sciences
- Foreign Language and Literature
- History, Geography & Political Sciences
- Humanities, Literature & Philosophy
- Information Technology
- Life and Earth Sciences (Biology)
- Mathematics
- Physics/Chemistry
- Social and Economic Sciences

Students select three Special Subjects in Première / Year 12 (each taught for 4 hours per week) and reduce to two in Terminale / Year 13 (each taught for 6 hours per week).

Not all subjects or combinations of subjects will be available in each school.

Additional options in languages, art, music and mathematics may also be taken but are not examined. They are, however, assessed in the termly marks (teacher assessments) which are given for all subjects and which collectively form 10% of the final overall mark for the Baccalauréat.

Levels

Level 3 of the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general university entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

All students achieve an overall score out of 20 for their *Baccalauréat* – this includes fractions.

A Pass (*Passable/Sans mention*) requires an average of 10 points or more.

In addition, honours grades (*mentions*) are awarded on the basis of the average point score achieved:

- *Tres bien* (Distinction) = average of 16 or more points
- *Bien* (Merit) = average of 14 points or more but fewer than 16
- *Assez bien* = average of 12 points or more but fewer than 14

Assessment

There are two rounds of external examinations within the *Baccalauréat* programme accounting for 60% of the overall mark: the first at the end of *Première* (Year 12) followed by final examinations towards the end of *Terminale* (Year 13). The examinations are either written or oral, or both. These are centrally organised and administered by the French Ministry of Education. The remainder of the overall mark (40%) is provided by continuous assessment (see 'Structure' above).

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

All assessed subjects are marked out of 20, and the *Baccalauréat* score is the student's overall average score (out of 20). Scores include fractions.

Results are based on the candidate's average score across all components, calculated according to the following Coefficients (weightings):

Subject	Coefficient
Special Subject 1	16
Special Subject 2	16

Special Subject Oral	10
French Literature	10
Philosophy	8
Language A	5
Language B	5
History-Geography	5
Science	5
Physical Education	5
Special Subject dropped at the end of première	5
Teacher Assessment – average of all subjects	10
Total	100

Resit arrangements

A candidate who narrowly misses the overall pass mark of 10/20 can take supplementary oral examinations in up to two subjects shortly after results have been published in July. The marks gained in these oral examinations (called *rattrapage*) replace the original written marks in these subjects and may allow the candidate to achieve an overall pass.

Candidates wishing to improve their overall score in the Baccalauréat, or in individual subjects, must re-sit the whole diploma the following year, but this is rare.

Guided/notional learning hours

1960 hours

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is an average of 960 hours per year, making a total of 1,920 for the two examined years of the *Baccalauréat*. (32 weeks, with between 27 – 32 hours a week).

For UK HE admissions purposes, the *Baccalauréat* is regarded as comparable in programme size with three A levels hence given a combined multiplier of 12.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may wish to set subject-specific requirements in addition to an overall Diploma result.

It is important to note that assessment in the *Baccalauréat Général* is not subject to the same moderation processes as in the UK: individual assessors are free to apply their own marks after an initial period of 'harmonisation'. Equally, unlike with A Levels, examination results for Special Subjects are the product of a single examination rather than a number of components and therefore may not always be a reliable reflection of a candidate's ability in the subject.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Baccalauréat examinations take place at the end of *Première* / Year 12 and towards the end of *Terminale* / Year 13. Results are published in early July.

Students receive official results in mid-July, when they are made available online and on school notice boards. Official transcripts (*Relevés de notes*) are available from school offices.

Qualification date

Starting from 01 Sep 2021

Qualification dates notes

The *Baccalauréat* was created in 1808. The most recent far-reaching reform, which changed the structure of the qualification and abolished the three subject-based streams (ES, L and S), came into effect in 2021.

Reporting and certification information

Results of *Baccalauréat* 2019 can be found here: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/cid132806/le-baccalaureat-2018-session-de...>

Progression information/access to HE within home country

In theory the *Baccalauréat* admits to all faculties in French universities, but universities may redirect students to appropriate courses depending on their results.

Further information

For more information about the international variant of the French *Baccalauréat Général*, the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (OIB), please see France: Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) or consult ASIBA: www.asiba.fr.

France: Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) (assessed from 2021)

Last updated

18 August 2020

The Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) is a special version of the French Baccalauréat Général (see France: Baccalauréat Général) taken by students enrolled in an ‘international section’ and is thus acceptable as a group certificate satisfying general university entrance requirements.

A fully bilingual as well as bicultural qualification, the OIB evaluates candidates’ performance in a dual curriculum taught and assessed in two languages (French and one of 16 ‘section’ languages), both at first language level.

Country

- France

Purpose

The Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) aims to provide a broad, balanced, and academically challenging curriculum that equips students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in higher education and life beyond. Increased subject specialisation in three Special Subjects (Spécialités) in Première (Year 12) and two Special Subjects (Spécialités) in Terminale (Year 13) offers additional depth and enhances progression opportunities. The addition of Language and Literature and History-Geography taught in the section language is an important facilitator of international mobility. For example, the British version of the OIB is widely accepted by British and other anglophone universities as proof of English language competence without the need for further proficiency tests. Linguistic performance is assessed following expectations of first language usage of academic English, with an expected level of C1 and above.

Education context

The *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (OIB) was established in 1981 by the French government in response to the growing demand for more widespread bilingual education and in recognition of a need to make additional provision for foreign nationals and bilingual families living in France.

The OIB is based upon partnerships between the French government and foreign governments/partner authorities.

The OIB qualification is offered in 16 languages. National assessment criteria appropriate to university-entrance level education in each partner country is applied.

The partner authority for the British OIB is Cambridge Assessment International Education. In the British version of the OIB, all pupils are required to write and speak in an extended analytical mode at university entrance level in English as well as French.

Candidates for the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (OIB) must be enrolled in an officially recognised 'international section' which they can join at various points in the French education system: primary, collège (middle school), or lycée (upper secondary school). Here, they study a bilingual curriculum.

In 2019, there were 4,059 candidates for the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (all 16 language versions) with just over 1,400 sitting the British version of the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat*, the largest cohort.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

The OIB is structured in the same way as the new French Baccalauréat; that is, around a compulsory core curriculum and Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) which allow a higher degree of subject specialisation - see 'France: Baccalauréat Général'.

In addition, students following the OIB programme study Language & Literature and History-Geography in the section language.

Subject areas supplementary

Students select three Special Subjects (*Spécialités*) in Première / Year 12 (each taught for 4 hours per week) and reduce to two in Terminale / Year 13 (each taught for 6 hours per week).

Special Subjects students can choose from include:

- Art
- Engineering Sciences
- Foreign Language and Literature
- History, Geography & Political Sciences
- Humanities, Literature & Philosophy
- Information Technology

- Life and Earth Sciences (Biology)
- Mathematics
- Physics/Chemistry
- Social and Economic Sciences

Not all subjects or combinations of subjects will be available in each school.

Candidates for the British version of the OIB study two additional A-Level-standard subjects: English Language & Literature and History-Geography. The two subjects are produced in partnership between the French Ministry of Education and Cambridge Assessment International Education. They are taught and examined in English at first-language level. Cambridge Assessment International Education provides quality assurance to align the examinations to the UK A Level.

Finally, further options in languages, art, music and mathematics may also be taken but are not examined. They are, however, assessed in the termly marks (teacher assessments) which are given for all subjects and which collectively form 10% of the final overall mark for the Baccalauréat.

Levels

Level 3 of the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general university entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

The British version of the OIB is widely accepted by British and other anglophone universities as proof of English language competence without the need for further proficiency tests.

Linguistic performance is assessed following expectations of first language usage of academic English, with an expected level of C1 and above.

Grading

All students achieve an overall score out of 20 for their *Baccalauréat* – this includes fractions.

A Pass (*Passable/Sans mention*) requires an average of 10 points or more.

In addition, honours grades (*mentions*) are awarded on the basis of the average point score achieved:

- *Tres bien* (Distinction) = average of 16 or more points
- *Bien* (Merit) = average of 14 points or more but fewer than 16
- *Assez bien* = average of 12 points or more but fewer than 14

In practice, the top mark-band (16–20) is awarded to a small percentage of candidates. In 2019, for example, 11.7% of all *Baccalauréat Général* candidates in France achieved a *mention très bien* (an overall average mark of 16/20 or better), while 12.3% of A level candidates in England achieved 3 A*/A grades or better.

Assessment

There are two rounds of external examinations within the *Baccalauréat* programme: the first at the end of *Première* (Year 12), followed by final examinations towards the end of *Terminale* (Year 13). The examinations are either written or oral, or both. These are centrally organised and administered by the French Ministry of Education.

OIB students take compulsory, externally assessed examinations in six subjects which count for three-quarters of the final overall mark: in addition to the four examinations taken as part of the standard French *Baccalauréat Général* (French Literature, Philosophy and two Special Subjects), they also take written and oral examinations in the two OIB subjects, English Language and Literature and History-Geography, at the end of *Terminale* (Year 13).

The remainder of the curriculum is assessed through continuous assessment: a combination of results in nationally set and anonymously marked tests (15%), and marks awarded by teachers during the two years of study (10%).

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Subjects are weighted slightly differently in the OIB compared to the standard French *Baccalauréat Général*:

	Coefficient	Coefficient
Subject	Baccalauréat Général	OIB (*British version)

Special Subject 1	16	16
Special Subject 2	16	16
Special Subject Oral	10	10
French Literature		
	10	10
Philosophy	8	8
		15
		(*English Language & Literature examined at
Language A	5	A Level standard)
Language B	5	5
		15
		(*examined at
History-Geography	5	A Level standard)
Science	5	5
Physical Education	5	5
Special Subject dropped at the end of première	5	5
		10
		(*including two subjects examined at
Teacher Assessment – average of all subjects	10	A Level standard)
Total	100	120

Resit arrangements

A candidate who narrowly misses the overall pass mark of 10/20 can take supplementary oral examinations in up to two subjects shortly after results have been published in July. The marks gained in these oral examinations (called *rattrapage*) replace the original written marks in these subjects and may allow the candidate to achieve an overall pass.

Candidates wishing to improve their overall score in the Baccalauréat or individual subjects must re-sit the whole diploma the following year; this is rare.

Guided/notional learning hours

2240 hours

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is an average of 1,120 hours per year, making a total of 2,240 hours for the two examined years of the OIB (32 weeks, with between 32 - 38 hours a week), compared to an average of 1,920 hours for the standard Baccalauréat Général.

For UK HE admissions purposes, the OIB is regarded as comparable in programme size with four A levels hence given a combined multiplier of 16.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may wish to set subject-specific requirements in addition to an overall Diploma result. It is important to note that assessment in the Baccalauréat Général is not subject to the same moderation processes as the UK: individual assessors are free to apply their own marks after an initial period of 'harmonisation'. Equally, unlike with A Levels, examination results for Special Subjects are the product of one examination rather than a number of components and therefore may not always reflect be a reliable reflection of a candidate's ability in the subject.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Baccalauréat examinations take place at the end of Première / Year 12 and towards the end of Terminale / Year 13. Results are published in early July.

Students receive official results in mid-July, when they are made available online and on school notice boards. Official transcripts (*Relevés de notes*) are available from school offices.

Qualification dates notes

The *Baccalauréat* was created in 1808. The most recent far-reaching reform, which changed the structure of the qualification and abolished the three subject-based streams (ES, L and S), came into effect in 2021.

Reporting and certification information

Results of *Baccalauréat* 2019 (source Note d'information - N°19.28 - juillet 2019 can be found here: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/cid132806/le-baccalaureat-2018-session-de...>

It is generally expected that the success rate will fall as a result of the reform.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

In theory the *Baccalauréat* admits to all faculties in French universities, but universities may redirect students to appropriate courses depending on their results.

Further information

For more information about the international variant of the French Baccalauréat Général, the *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* (OIB), please consult the Cambridge Associate, ASIBA: www.asiba.fr.

Germany: Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife (Abitur)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- Germany

Education context

The role of the federal government in education is limited and specialised. Legislative and administrative responsibility rests firmly with the federal states (*Bundesländer*).

There is a broad uniformity in the educational systems of the 16 states, although nomenclature and periods of study may vary.

Lower and upper secondary education usually covers eight or nine years to grade 12 / 13.

The *Realschulabschluss* is awarded in grade 10 across most states. This is seen as acceptable at grades 1 – 4 in lieu of GCSE on a subject for subject basis (except English language).

In most states, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife (Abitur)* is obtained after the successful completion of 12 / 13 consecutive school years.

Structure

The *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* is awarded in grade 12/13 and represents the assessment of the two final years of upper secondary schooling including final examination (*Abiturprüfung*).

Subjects are chosen from three subject areas, all of which must be represented and studied throughout the school career up to, and including, the *Abitur* examination itself:

- i. languages, literature, arts
- ii. social sciences
- iii. mathematics, natural sciences, technology.

At least two subjects are taken as main intensive courses (*Leistungskurse*) of which one must be German or a foreign language or mathematics or a natural science; the other subjects are taken as basic courses (*Grundkurse*).

Two states (*Länder*) Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, have abandoned the differentiation between these course types and all Abitur subjects are taught on the same level.

Subject areas

English (in some states, French) is compulsory to *Realschulabschluss* level but need not be a major component of the *Abitur* examination.

Nonetheless, one foreign language must be studied during the final two years to the *Abitur* level and is part of the overall result.

Levels

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Germany uses a 6-point grading scale to evaluate the performance of schoolchildren generally up to grade 10:

1. *sehr gut* (very good)
2. (good)
3. (satisfactory)
4. (adequate)
5. *mangelhaft* (poor) (fail)
6. *ungenügend* (very poor) (fail)

In the upper secondary level grades (*Oberstufe*, grades 11-13) are converted to numbers (points) in order to calculate the average for the *Abitur*.

Upper secondary level grades	<i>Abitur</i> average
1+	15 points
1	14 points
1–	13 points
2+	12 points

2	11 points
2-	10 points
3+	9 points
3	8 points
3-	7 points
4+	6 points
4	5 points
4-	4 points
5+	3 points
5	2 points
up to 5 –	1 point
6	0 points

Abitur subject grades are expressed as marks out of 15 points, whilst overall *Abitur* grades are expressed using the six point scale to one place after the decimal point e.g. 2.3.

The final *Abitur* grade is rounded down to 1.0 even if a student has received 1+ (=15 points) in every subject.

When the points system is used, a grade of 4 (5 points) is the lowest passing grade for subjects, and 4- (4 points) the highest failing grade.

Some states use a more granular scale of 1- (= 1.25), 1-2 (= 1.5), 2+ (= 1.75) or decimal grading (1.0, 1.1, 1.2 and so on).

The best possible grade of 1.0 can be achieved if the overall score achieved ranges between 823 and 900 points. The percentage of students achieving 1 is normally only around 0.3–2% (see Certification information).

Assessment

The *Abitur* examination comprises at least four and at most five components (in most states, three written examinations and one oral).

The first and second written examinations are in subjects taken as main intensive courses (*Leistungskurse*); the third written examination and the oral one are taken in one of the subjects taken as basic courses (*Grundkurse*).

Depending on the legislation in place in some states, a fifth subject can be examined in either written or oral form, or particular achievements (e.g. a year paper or results of a project) may be incorporated into the *Abitur* examination.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The final grades of the *Abitur* are based on the marks obtained in the examinations and on class performance in all subjects (up to 10) during the last two years of upper secondary education.

Each semester of a subject studied in the final two years yields up to 15 points for a student, where main intensive courses count double. The final examinations each count quadruple.

The exact scoring system depends on the federal state (*Bundesland*) in which the *Abitur* is taken. Passing the *Abitur*, in general, requires a composite score of at least 300. Students with a score below that minimum fail and do not receive an *Abitur*.

There are some other conditions that the student also has to meet in order to receive the *Abitur*, e.g. taking mandatory courses in selected subject areas, and limits to the number of failing grades in core subjects.

Students often have the option of omitting some courses from their composite score if they have taken more courses than the minimum required.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

For UK HE admissions purposes, the *Abitur* is regarded as comparable in programme size with 3 A levels.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

The *Abitur* is a broad qualification more akin to a Baccalaureate qualification than the UK A level.

Where specific subjects are required at A level, HEPs often require students to take these subjects as *Leistungsfächer* (LK) – main intensive courses, as opposed to basic course. See the subject score alignments under grade bands.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Abitur examination dates and publication of the results vary from state to state. Due to Germany's federal structure there is no single results day for the whole country.

Each of Germany's 16 states is fairly autonomous in the organisation of its education system. Therefore, there are 16 education ministries and 16 education ministers. The federal constitution gives the individual states their cultural sovereignty.

Although the states have taken steps to ensure a high degree of uniformity in their individual systems, there are some major differences. As a result, there is no single Germanywide date when school examination results are published – dates vary from state to state, and might even vary in different counties or cities within the same state.

Qualification dates notes

Current.

Reporting and certification information

There are no national figures available on grade distributions.

As a rough guide, it is estimated that less than 2% of *Abitur* candidates achieve a 1, whilst 12 – 30% achieve between 1.0 and 1.9.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* admits to all courses offered by German HEPs.

The *Zeugnis der Fachgebundenen Hochschulreife* (often referred to as *Fach-Abitur*) is used in admissions to subject specific courses at universities or *Fachhochschulen* (universities of applied sciences), depending on the focus of the courses taken at school.

When applications outnumber the places available, the number of places will be restricted (*numerus clausus*) and a centralised selection process will take place (for selected subjects only).

The centralised selection process for admissions is currently operated for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy.

This process incorporates three main quotas. For 20% of the places, the average grade (*Durchschnittsnote*) of the entry qualification is the highest priority criterion, for another 20%, the waiting time after gaining the HE entry qualification is the main selection

factor. The remaining 60% are selected by the universities themselves. The average grade of the entry qualification must have a major significance among the selection criteria. Complementary criteria include the final grades for specific subjects, the results of admissions tests, professional experience and interviews.

The majority of the other courses are covered by similar local/ regional selection processes.

Further information

Eurydice <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Overview>

Greece: Apolytirion of Geniko Lykeio (previously Apolytirion of Eniaio Lykeio)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- Greece

Education context

Education is compulsory for all children aged five to 15 years.

One year of compulsory pre-primary education (*Nipiagogio*).

Six years of compulsory primary education (*Dimotiko*).

Three years of compulsory lower secondary (*Gymnasio*).

Three-year post-compulsory phase *Eniaia Lykeia* (Upper Secondary School) which culminates in the *Apolytirio of Geniko Lykeio* (previously *Eniaio Lykeio*).

Post-compulsory secondary education also includes vocational training institutes (IEK).

The second and third years of the upper secondary school allows students to specialise within one of three option streams (see 'Structure' below), although there is also a common core of general education.

Structure

The *Apolytirion* is taken in the final year of the post-compulsory phase, with students specialising in one of three pathways (Humanities, Science, Economics & IT). Students also follow a common core of general education. In addition, students choose one elective subject within their pathway.

Overall the students will be assessed in 14 subjects, as a combination of oral and written school-based assessment. Note, only 13 of these subjects count towards a student's average grade for the *Apolytirion*. Physical education, although a requirement, is not included.

Note: a version of the *Apolytirion* is now awarded in Greece which does not require assessment at national level. This is made clear on the certificate – see additional information below for wording in Greek and English.

Subject areas

The *Apolytirion* (graduation certificate) is now based on the performance of the student's final year marks/results, which includes the average of two oral and one written examination. All subjects are set and examined internally and marked by the individual schools.

General Education subjects (15 hours per week)

Biology	Foreign language (*)	Greek literature
History	Mathematics & statistical Elements	Modern Greek
Physical education (**)	Religious affairs	Social sciences history

(*) English / French / German, (**) no final examination is required

Three option streams: Humanities, Sciences and Economics & IT (15 hours per week)

Humanities	Sciences	Economics & IT
Ancient Greek	Applications development in programming environment	Applications development in programming environment
History	Biology	History
Latin	Chemistry	Mathematics

Literature	Mathematics	Principles in Economic Theory
Sociology	Physics	Sociology

Electives (2 hours per week)

Freehand drawing	History of Art	Linear drawing
Principles in Business Management	Second foreign language English / French / German	

To receive the *Apolytirion*, students must achieve a minimum overall average of 9.5/20.

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements for undergraduate degrees at a mark of 17 or above and at 14 or above for foundation degree entry.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Pass mark is 10 out of 20 for each subject. See section ‘Certification Information’ for information on grade distributions.

Assessment

All subjects have a combination of:

- **Oral grade** (*continuous assessment*). The school year is divided into two terms – students are assessed each term for each subject at school level. These assessments are called the ‘oral grades’ and cover a range of aspects of student achievement: participation, learning capacity, diligence and interest, written assignments, homework, overall performance. Oral grades are at subject level and based on the average score of the two terms.
- **Written grade** (*examination*). The written grade is the one achieved by students in their final exams at the end of the academic year. These will be internally assessed and marked (13 subjects).

Therefore the *Apolytirion* itself does not qualify Greek students to access tertiary education in Greece.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The *Apolytirion of Geniko Lykeio* contains an overall grade that is printed on the certificate. This grade is based on the average of the oral and written examinations for each subject, and is out of 20.

The certificate also provides the following information:

- results of school level examinations – 13 subjects, assessed at school level
- a grade for the student's overall 'conduct' – based on a range of assessments of behaviour, punctuality, attitude etc.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Thirteen subjects internally assessed / examined.

13 subjects assessed at school level – subjects studied over one year = 30 hours per week $1576 / 10 = 158$ hours per subject.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Offers may require an overall mark for the *Apolytirion*, but often requirements for individual scores on subjects taken through the national (Pan-Hellenic) assessment may also be required. Students following the *Apolytirion* will have studied a broad range of subjects at a lower level than some UK level 3 qualifications. Additional evidence of study at a higher level may be requested in some cases, or foundation degree level study. Note that national examinations within the specialist pathway are different to those within the general pathway with the same name (more specialised). The certificate will include the subjects examined at school level only from the academic year 2015/16.

Older students holding the *Apolytirion* with the phrase below have achieved their qualification without the *Pan-Hellenic* (national) examinations. *Apolytirion* without *Pan-Hellenic* examinations does not allow access to Greek universities.

Το απολυτήριο χορηγήθηκε σύμφωνα με τις διατάξεις του Ν.3966 / 2011, άρθρο 59, Παράγραφος 12 – (The Apolytirion was issued according to the provisions of Law 3966 / 2011, Article 59, paragraph 12.).

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Pan-Hellenic exams are taken in May.

There is no fixed date for the publication of results for the *Apolytirion of Geniko Lykeio*. In general, results are announced between the end of June and early to mid July.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

% distribution of candidate results by score in *Pan-Hellenic* (national) examinations 2015

Pathway / subject	Score range (%)				
	18-20	15-17.9	12-14.9	10-11.9	<10
General Education					
Biology	25.36	22.91	16.41	9.2	26.12
History	4.68	9.93	11.05	9.36	64.98
Mathematics & Elements of Statistics	17.31	16	13.99	8.33	44.36
Modern Greek Language	0.99	24.23	41.24	17.93	15.61
Physics	45.53	26.81	11.19	4.92	11.55
Theoretical					
Ancient Greek	0.95	9.65	20.78	18.96	49.66

History	13.38	21.46	15.1	8.9	41.15
Latin	11.71	20.41	18.41	11.14	38.33
Modern Greek Literature	3.16	16.85	25.04	16.28	38.67

Science

Biology	20.05	30.25	23.67	9.71	16.31
Chemistry	34.93	23.97	13.01	6.63	21.47
Mathematics	4.53	18.7	23.35	14.42	39
Physics	5.18	14.24	20.81	12.37	47.4

Technological I

Chemistry - Biochemistry	20.81	19.71	16.19	8.37	34.91
Electrology	26.32	16.74	18.83	10.79	27.31
Mathematics	4.07	15.2	19.27	13.11	48.35
Physics	5.29	13.33	16.3	10.57	54.52

Technological II

Application Development in a Programming Environment	14.93	18.54	15.76	10.72	40.06
Mathematics	1.3	6.22	11.77	10.74	69.97
Physics	1.25	4.04	8.32	7.22	79.16

Principles of Business Administration	35.28	18.94	15	10.81	19.97
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Elective

Principles of Economic Theory	30.62	22.42	13.37	6.99	26.6
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Progression information/access to HE within home country

For access to Greek

- State universities (universities, polytechnics, school of fine arts, HOU)
- State Technological Institutions (TEIs, schools of pedagogical education)
- Military, Police and Naval Academies
- Ecclesiastical schools
- School of Tourism

secondary school leavers must take nationally set examinations (pan-hellenics). Each student is allowed to choose one stream/pathway.

Students can be examined in a minimum of four subjects. If they wish to open their way to more disciplines, they may take one more examination from another stream/pathway. There are three compulsory examinations in each stream/pathway as per below table:

Humanities	Sciences	Economics & IT
Ancient Greek (C)	Applications development in programming	Applications development in programming environment (C)
History (C)	Biology	History
Latin	Chemistry (C)	Mathematics (C)
Literature	Mathematics	Modern Greek (C) (General education)

Modern Greek (C) (General education)

Modern Greek (C) (General education)

Principles in economic theory

Sociology

Physics (C)

Sociology

(C) Compulsory subjects per pathway

Students applying to Greek universities will have a *Vevaiosí Prosvasis* (Certificate of Access to HE). The *Vevaiosí Prosvasis* uses information from the assessment for the *Apolytirion*, but weights the average achieved in oral assessments for subjects at 30% and the average of written grades in the *Pan-Hellenic* subjects at 70%, to provide an admission grade.

Further information

www.minedu.gov.gr (Greek Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs)

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- Hong Kong

Education context

Following the implementation of the new academic structure in 2009, Hong Kong provides 12 years of free primary and secondary education – six-year primary; three-year junior secondary; three-year senior secondary education.

The HKDSE is taken at the end of senior secondary education (year 12).

Structure

The HKDSE examination comprises three categories of subjects: Category A Senior Secondary (SS) subjects, Category B Applied Learning subjects and Category C Other Language subjects.

Most Secondary Six students take four core subjects (Chinese language, English language, mathematics and liberal studies) and two to three elective subjects from Category A, B or C (core subjects are in Category A).

HKDSE standards are overseen by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

Apart from language-related subjects and Chinese history, all subjects can be taken either in English or Chinese – with common examination papers and marking systems across both languages. The language used in the examination is not recorded on the certificate.

Subject areas

There are three categories of subject within the HKDSE.

Category A: Senior Secondary subjects – academic focus.

- **Core subjects common to all:** Chinese language, English language, mathematics (in mathematics students may choose the compulsory part only or compulsory plus extended (M1 / M2) which are more advanced), and liberal studies.
- **20 elective subjects:** biology, business, accounting and financial studies, chemistry, Chinese history, Chinese literature, design and applied technology, economics, ethics and religious studies, geography, health management and social care, history, information and communication technology, literature in English, music, physical education, physics, science – integrated science / combined science, technology and living, tourism and hospitality studies, visual arts.

Category B: Applied Learning subjects – strong elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields.

- Applied science
- Business, management & law
- Creative studies
- Engineering & production
- Media & communication
- Services

Details about the Applied Learning courses on offer is available

at: http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/assessment/subject_information/category_b_subjects/

Category C: Other Language subjects – assessed through the GCE AS level exam (CIE).

- French
- German
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Spanish
- Urdu

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Category A subjects: there are five levels of performance, of which 5 is the highest and 1 the lowest. The grading from levels 1–5 are standards referenced. Within level 5 there are additional grades of 5* and 5**. 5** is awarded to the highest achieving 10% of level 5 candidates, and level 5* to the next highest achieving 30% (approximately) of level 5 candidates.

Category B subjects: 'Attained' and 'Attained with Distinction' reported on certificate. Standards of 'Attained' are initially determined by course providers and moderated by panels of judges with reference to the performance descriptors of individual subjects. Candidates awarded 'Attained with Distinction' are deemed to have performed at a level comparable to level 3 or above for Category A subjects.

Category C subjects: results reported A–E as for GCE AS and at the same level.

Assessment

Category A subjects – assessed through combination of externally set and marked examination and school-based assessment (SBA) – HKEAA responsible for grading of all Category A subjects. Reported at levels 1–5**.

HKDSE assessment is standards-referenced. Details about standards-referenced reporting is available at http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/assessment/the_reporting_system/

The majority of assessment is external – comprising a variety of essay questions, structured questions, short questions, and multiple-choice questions, depending on

the subject. Assessment requirements for subjects are available at http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/assessment/subject_information/

Some HKDSE subjects have an SBA component. All SBA is school-based, coordinated and moderated. This forms a 15–20% typically of the total marks of a subject.

Category B – assessment undertaken by course providers, moderated by HKEAA.

Category C – these are examined through the CIE GCE AS level.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

There is no overall grade for the HKDSE as a whole. For each subject achieved the HKDSE certificate lists both subject level results as well as component level results (if any). SBA is an integral part of Category A subjects, so SBA results are not reported separately.

Moderated SBA results are combined with public examination results to form an overall component level (for Chinese Language, English Language and Combined Science only) or subject level as appropriate. Subject results are reported by level 1–5** (Category A subjects), Attained / Attained with Distinction (Category B subjects), grade a – e (Category C subjects). Mathematics is reported separately for compulsory and extended parts.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Size is based on the individual subject components.

The curriculum guides indicate that, for English and Chinese language, the recommended lesson time is around 310 to 375 hours.

For mathematics compulsory part, there should be around 250 to 310 hours of lesson time. If the elective module (M1 or M2) is included, the lesson time required would be around 375 hours.

For liberal studies and Category A elective subjects, the recommended lesson time is 250 hours.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
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data

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
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data

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
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data

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Key issues for UK HE admissions

Universities and colleges may wish to make offers based on particular subjects offered within different categories.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Exams taken April / May, results mid – July

Qualification dates notes

First examinations for HKDSE were in 2012. HKDSE replaces the HKCEE and HKALE.

Reporting and certification information

Total no. of candidates who sat the 2015 HKDSE = 72,859

Total no. of Category A subjects sat = 396,505

5**	5* or above	5 or above	4 or above	3 or above	2 or above	1 or above	U
1.20%	4.80%	12.00%	33.70%	59.50%	83.30%	95.20%	4.80%

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Universities and colleges offering four-year degrees in Hong Kong admit mainly on the basis of four core subjects (minimum requirement 'level 3 in Chinese language; Level 3 in English language; level 2 in mathematics (compulsory part); Level 2 in liberal studies') plus one to two elective subjects.

Further information

Information about structure/standards etc. of

HKDSE: <http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/introduction/>

Information on

results/statistics: http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/assessment/exam_reports/exam_stat/

Hungary: Érettségi bizonyítvány

Last updated

23 August 2017

Last verified

23 August 2017

New for 2017

Country

- Hungary

Purpose

The Érettségi bizonyítvány examination is taken on completion of secondary education and allows the holder to access higher education (HE). It is awarded to those who successfully complete the maturity examination. Holders may also pursue vocational education and training, or enter the labour market if they studied in a vocational/technical stream.

To go on to higher education (i.e. ISCED 6), learners have to obtain the Érettségi bizonyítvány with examinations in a number of compulsory and elective academic subjects (issued by gimnázium or szakgimnázium). To go on to post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4) and higher vocational education and training (ISCED 5) programmes, students are required to take the school-leaving exam in the professional trade-specific subject that is related to the field of their further vocational training.

Education context

Completion of secondary studies is a prerequisite for taking the secondary school-leaving exam. The content and structure of primary and secondary education are controlled by the National Core Curriculum of 2012 (commonly referred to as NAT 2012) and the CXC Act of 2011 on Public Education. The content-related exam requirements candidates have to meet are based on the national curriculum.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

The Érettségi bizonyítvány is a linear, standalone qualification, similar to the German Abitur, and is a pre-condition for entering higher education and certain paths in VET. Although there is only one qualification awarded to candidates, there are some differences in the exam subjects taken, depending on the type of school they studied at.

In academic upper secondary schools (gimnázium), candidates take only academic subjects as exam subjects (mandatory ones and one freely elected). In secondary vocational schools (szakgimnázium), besides mandatory academic exam subjects, candidates have to take a mandatory professional exam subject (linked to a given trade group) which is not freely elected.

The secondary school leaving exam, both in academic or professional subjects, can be taken at an intermediate and an advanced level, and the level is then indicated in the qualification with respect to the subject. To gain access to HE in Hungary, students only need to pass exams at intermediate level, although it helps individual applications if subjects are taken at advanced level (see 'Progression information/access to HE within home country' section).

The qualification is unified, meaning that the examination requirements are the same both in upper secondary schools (gimnázium) and secondary vocational schools (szakgimnázium). The awarded qualification certificate is the same too, however the exam subjects are different in gimnázium and szakgimnázium for reasons explained above.

To obtain the general certificate of secondary education (gimnáziumi érettségi bizonyítvány), one has to successfully complete primary and secondary studies comprising at least 12 grades.

The notion of 'awarding organisation' is slightly different in Hungary inasmuch as individual schools issue the certificate linked to the qualification.

Subject areas

1. Hungarian language & literature
2. History
3. Mathematics
4. Foreign languages
5. Elected subjects (mandatory to choose) e.g. trade-specific professional subjects in secondary vocational schools, or other taught subjects in upper and secondary school.

For an exhaustive list of electives and mandatory subjects, visit the website of the Educational Authority (in Hungarian only): www.oktatas.hu/kozneveles/erettsegi/erettsegi_vizsgatargyak

Levels

The advanced/intermediate secondary school leaving certificate Érettségi bizonyítvány corresponds to Level 4 of both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Hungarian Qualifications Framework.

Grading

Oral and written exams are both graded according to the same structure. There is a five-element grading scale with 5 as the best and 1 as the fail mark.

Qualification grade structure

5 (excellent)

4 (good)

3 (average)

2 (pass)

1 (fail)

There is no overall final grade, however there is a final grade for each subject taken. Students taking school-leaving exams are evaluated both by marks awarded and by indicating exam results in percentages. In the case of intermediate level exams, the following percentages/marks can be awarded:

- 80-100% equals *excellent* (5)
- 60-79% equals *good* (4)
- 40-59% equals *average* (3)
- 25-39% equals *pass* (2)
- 0-24% equals *fail* (1)

Advanced level exams are evaluated differently, as follows:

- 60-100% equals *excellent* (5)
- 47-59% equals *good* (4)
- 33-46% equals *average* (3)
- 25-32% equals *pass* (2)
- 0-24% equals *fail* (1)

The results in each exam subject have to be indicated in full numbers on a scale:

- from 1-150, accounting for both oral and written exam results

- from 1-100, accounting for only written exam results
- from 1-50, accounting for only oral exam results

Assessment

Oral examinations at intermediate level are assessed locally by an exam board, and written examinations at intermediate level are assessed according to a centrally defined assessment key. Advanced level examinations are assessed fully externally.

For the internal assessment part, there is a centrally defined guide for correcting and assessing written exam papers. The external assessment part, the written examination, lasts for 240 minutes, and is assessed by independent (i.e. external) assessors. The oral examination is evaluated by an exam board consisting of three examiners.

There is no synoptic assessment.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Each assessment component contributes to the overall grading in the following way:

- Written examination 66%
- Oral examination 33%

Resit arrangements

Individual units can be retaken in cases where candidates could not finish the exam on time (i.e. exceeded the time limits of the examination) beyond his/her fault. Both written and oral exam units can be re-taken and the number of times one can retake units is not limited.

Although the qualification (Érettségi bizonyítvány) can be attained once, the number of retakes in every subject is not limited. Successful retakes are testified by additional certificates that are only valid when attached to the original qualification document (i.e. Érettségi bizonyítvány). There are no constraints on the number of retakes.

The secondary school leaving exams can be taken twice a year in the official examination periods.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

In Hungary, the total qualification time coincides with the guided learning hours, i.e. the sum of 'subsidised children's and students' weekly activity time' (See CXC Act of 2011 on Public Education attachment no. 6). This timeframe encompasses the time for instruction, teaching, supervision, etc. There are 361 weekly mandatory learning hours in total encompassing all 12 grades, thus the respective total qualification time is 12,996 hours (from ISCED 1 – ISCED 3). (CXC Act of 2011 on Public Education attachment no. 6 contains a detailed division of weekly guided learning hours.)

The learning hours per school grade/year are as follows:

Grade	Annual learning hours (36 weeks in the academic year)
1.	900 hrs
2.	900 hrs
3.	900 hrs
4.	972 hrs
5.	1,008 hrs
6.	1,008 hrs
7.	1,116 hrs
8.	1,116 hrs
9.	1,260 hrs
10.	1,296 hrs
11.	1,260 hrs
12.	1,260 hrs

Key issues for UK HE admissions

The Érettségi bizonyítvány is awarded upon completion of the secondary education and is the pre-requisite for moving on to higher education. Additionally, students' admission score to higher education (each institution in higher education sets a minimum limit i.e. a score which applying students should meet in order to get into a programme at a given institution) is based on their results at the secondary school-leaving exam.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Assessment

The assessment takes place at a fixed time, i.e. in the official examination periods. The first exam period for the secondary school-leaving exam is at the end of the academic year, i.e. late May, early June.

The assessment of written exams takes place during and after the written examinations. The oral exams are assessed during the oral examinations.

Candidate results

The results are shared after closing the oral examinations.

Candidates receive their certificates at the official announcement of results after the oral examinations are closed (finished).

Reporting and certification information

Statistical data is published annually on the official website of the Hungarian Educational Authority. The data is available to the public. The currently available data dates back to 2005. The link to the content in PowerPoint format (only in Hungarian) is: www.oktatas.hu/kozneveles/erettsegi/prezentaciok_tanulmanyok.

In 2016, 110,625 people took the secondary school-leaving exam. 69,257 people were awarded the Érettségi bizonyítvány certificate.

Year	People taking school-leaving exam	Certificates awarded
2015	114,360	71,419
2014	116,939	76,111
2013	131,696	76,303
2012	136,250	82,172

The Hungarian Educational Authority publishes data on its official website. The published data is freely available to anyone visiting the website.

In 2017, the number of candidates in secondary vocational schools taking exams in trade-specific professional subjects has also been published on the official [website](#) of the Educational Authority.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

In Hungary, the Érettségi bizonyítvány is a pre-condition to enter higher education (both short cycle and bachelor, and unified programmes). The deadline for submitting application forms to higher education institutions is 15 February.

Examinees taking advanced level exams in subjects other than in the field of art, art mediation, and the Physical Trainer Bsc, may obtain additional points for higher education entry (50 per subject, max. 100), if their exam result in the given subject reaches at least 45%. Annex III. of the 423/2012 Government Decree on the application procedure to higher education lists which fields and degree programmes set advanced level school-leaving exams as a recommended HE admissions prerequisite. It also postulates the subjects in which to take the advanced level school-leaving exam.

Further information

As of 1 January 2016, taking part in a voluntary project lasting 50 hours is a pre-condition for the secondary school-leaving exam. This regulation does not apply to those in adult education and with special educational needs exempted by a board.

See 20/2012 EMMI Decree for further details on secondary school-leaving exam regulations.

For further information concerning the national qualifications framework and the Hungarian educational system (including ISCED classification), please consult the [2015 Referencing Report](#).

India: Higher Secondary School Certificate

Last updated

8 January 2018

Last verified

8 January 2018

Updated 2016

Country

- India

Education context

Secondary education in India begins after eight years of elementary education and is divided into two years of secondary education (classes IX and X) and two years of senior secondary education (classes XI and XII).

At the end of the secondary phase (class X), students take a set of externally administered examinations from either a state or national (All-India) examination board. Students who pass the secondary examinations earn a certificate usually called the Secondary School Certificate or SSC. These students are eligible for senior secondary school.

After two years of senior secondary school, students are again examined by their school's affiliated board and, if successful, awarded the Higher Secondary (School) Certificate (HSC / HSSC). There are also examinations administered internally by individual secondary schools at the end of class XI.

There are a total of 31 state examination boards and three national boards. Secondary schools are affiliated to either the state board relevant to their location or one of the national boards:

- Central Board of Secondary Education Board (CBSE)
- Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE)
- National Institute of Open Schooling Board (NIOS)
- State Government Boards

See 'Further information' section for a full list of national and state education boards.

The overall number of students taking the Standard XII (HSC) Examination in 2014 - 15 was almost 11.42 million. Over 88 % of those students took state boards with just 11.93 % taking either the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and NIOS exams.

Students who pass the HSC examinations are eligible for university admissions.

Higher Secondary Certificates may also be known as:

- Higher / Senior School Certificate / Examination (most state boards)
- Pre-University Certificate (some state boards)
- Intermediate Exam (some state boards)
- All India Senior School Certificate (CBSE)
- Indian School Certificate (CISCE)
- Certificate of Vocational Education (CISCE)
- Senior Secondary Examination (All-India) (NIOS).

Awarding organisation

- Education authority

Structure

State examinations vary considerably and generally require students to be examined in four or five subjects.

CBSE requires students to take five subjects which are externally assessed in Year XII, plus some internally assessed subjects (general studies, work experience and physical and health education). Students must pass each subject to gain their full qualification.

CISCE award a pass certificate to candidates who pass four (or five) subjects (which must include English) at the same examination sitting and pass the internally assessed socially useful and productive work (SUPW) / work experience and community service. Students must pass each subject to gain their full qualification.

Subject areas

Subjects covered by state boards vary considerably.

CBSE requires students to take and pass examination in five subjects: two languages (to include English or Hindi) plus three electives from: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, biotechnology, engineering, graphics, economics, political science, history, geography, business studies, accountancy, home science, fine arts, agriculture, computer science / informatics practices, multimedia and web technology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, physical education, music and dance, entrepreneurship, fashion studies, creative writing and translation studies. Students are also required to pass internally assessed subjects.

A PDF detailing CBSE Class XII curriculum and grading guidelines for 2016/17 is available

at: http://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/Curriculum16/SrSecondary/Initia...

CISCE requires students to take and pass four (or five) subjects, which must include English, at the same examination sitting and pass the internally assessed SUPW / work experience and community service.

A PDF detailing CISCE class XII curriculum and regulations for 2015-16 is available at <http://www.cisce.org/pdf/ISC-Class-XII-Syllabus-2016/1.%20ISC%20Syllabus%20Contents.pdf>

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

Regarded as similar to GCE A levels and Scottish Highers.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

The most common grading scale used by most state secondary boards is percentile based:

Grading scale	Percentage
First division	60+%
Second division	45 – 59%
Third / pass	33 – 44%
Fail	0 – 32%
Minimum pass mark	30 – 40%

Special awards, indicated as distinction, honours or merit certificates are given for grades higher than 70% or 75%, depending on the board. First division with distinction is particularly common.

Some state boards may use a relative scale to assess candidate performance rather than use a fixed scale.

CBSE / AISSCE

CBSE uses a relative scale with nine positional grades in each subject, which are based on the performance of ALL the candidates who passed the exam in that subject in a given year.

Positional grades are given with marks of 0 – 100, but are based on a comparative curve rather than on absolute grade ranges. Therefore, the CBSE positional grades are a good indication of the quality of the student in relation to his or her peers in that particular year. The minimum pass for CBSE subjects is 33%.

All students that pass are given a grade based on their rank order A –1, A –2, B –1, B –2, C –1, C –2, D –1, D –2, with A –1 representing the top eighth of candidates and D –2 representing the bottom eighth of those who pass. E indicates a failed candidate.

CISCE / ISC

ISC examinations are marked on a percentage basis. The pass mark is 40% which is higher than for most state boards.

CISCE also gives a positional classification on the basis of marks earned in each subject, but according to set rigid ranges as opposed to the performance curve of the CBSE.

Grades are awarded ranging from 1 to 9. Grade 1, 2, 3 indicate very good, 4, 5 or 6 indicates a pass with credit, 7 or 8 indicates a pass, and 9 a failure.

The positional grades are provided on a separate 'Pass Certificate' that accompanies the mark sheet.

Assessment

In Year XI subjects are assessed internally.

In Year XII subjects are assessed by external examinations set by either state or national awarding organisations.

Some subjects also include practical externally set assessments which are mandatory.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The syllabus prescribed for Class XI is examined internally by the school and the syllabus for Class XII is examined externally by the council.

Pass certificates are awarded to candidates who pass four / five examined subjects and additional locally assessed subjects.

Some boards require all examinations to be taken in one sitting.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Individual HSSC subjects are regarded as comparable in size to Scottish Highers.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

The National Council of Educational Research and Training has highlighted that a “widespread disparity in standards of examinations among 34 boards conducting examinations at the end of Classes X and XII has been experienced and no common or national standards of achievement are available for equating them”.

Over 90% of students are awarded the HSSC by state examination boards.

However, a disproportionate number of students taking CBSE and CISCE examinations progress to HE within the UK and the US.

HEPs may wish to establish whether applicants have been taught and assessed in the English medium as practices vary across boards and centres.

International qualifications such as the IB, US qualifications and the UK GCE A levels are gaining popularity in schools across India.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams are held in March and April and results are made available from the second week of May.

There are many state government boards in India. The majority of the boards declare their results in May and June.

The Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) board conducts three examinations:

- the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE - Class/Grade 10);
- the Indian School Certificate (ISC - Class/Grade 12);
- the Certificate in Vocational Education (CVE - Class/Grade 12).

Results are available in May.

Qualification dates notes

Current

Reporting and certification information

Results for CBSE and CISCE examinations can be accessed online. In both cases, you will need the student roll number (ID number) to verify results.

The CBSE also administers Teacher, All-India Engineering and Medical/Dental Entrance Examinations. Those results can also be accessed from the website.

CBSE: cbseresults.nic.in

CISCE: <http://cisce2017rprod090.azurewebsites.net/> (graduates: cisce.examresults.net)

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Students who pass the HSC are eligible for university admissions, although some selective colleges or universities require separate admissions examinations.

A score of at least 80% in the HSSC from state boards of education may satisfy entry requirements, provided an appropriate standard of English has been attained.

Students with high scores (75%) from the CBSE and CISCE boards may satisfy entry requirements, provided an appropriate standard of English has been attained.

Admission to professional programs (engineering, architecture, medicine etc) is through competitive state – or national-level entrance examinations. These include the Joint Entrance Examination (Indian Institutes of Technology), the All-India

Pre-Medical / Pre-Dental Examination, and the All-India Engineering Entrance Examination.

Some universities in India are changing their three-year programmes to four-year degrees (replicating the US model) which may lead to an adjustment of entry criteria, e.g. University of Delhi.

Further information

World Education News & Reviews: www.wes.org

Central Board of Secondary Education: www.cbse.nic.in/welcome.htm

Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations: www.cisce.org

List of Boards of School Education recognised by Council of Boards of School Education in India*.

National Boards

1. Central Board of Secondary Education
2. Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations
3. National Institute of Open Schooling

State Boards

1. Andhra Pradesh Board of Secondary Education
2. Board of Secondary Education, Assam
3. Bihar School Examination Board
4. Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Pradesh
5. Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan
6. Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education
7. Goa Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education
8. Gujarat Secondary Education Board
9. Haryana Board of School Education
10. Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education
11. Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education
12. Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board
13. Kerala Higher Secondary Examination Board
14. Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education
15. Meghalaya Board of School Education
16. Mizoram Board of School Education
17. Nagaland Board of School Education
18. Orissa Board of Secondary Education
19. Orissa Council of Higher Secondary Education
20. Punjab School Education Board
21. Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Education
22. Tripura Board of Secondary Education
23. Telangana Board of Intermediate Education
24. Telangana Board of Secondary Education
25. Uttarakhand Board of School Education
26. West Bengal Board of Primary Education
27. West Bengal Board of Secondary Education

- 28. West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education
- 29. West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schooling
- 30. West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education
- 31. West Bengal State Council of Vocational Education and Training

Iran: Pre-University Certificate (pishdaneshgahi)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

New for 2016

Country

- Iran

Education context

The structure of public education system in Iran changed in 2013. It used to be like this, but since it will continue to stay the same in terms of the end of high-school qualifications system until 2019, the old system is described below:

- five years of primary education
- three years of middle school
- three years of secondary education
- one year of pre-university

In this system all students who intend to participate in university, have to obtain the Pre-university certificate (pishdaneshgahi). Students make choices of a track in upper-secondary. They either choose to study the theoretical track (including five sub-tracks of empirical science, mathematical sciences, humanities, islamic sciences, art) or the technical and vocational tracks. The ones who take technical and vocational tracks will finish public education with only three years in secondary education (i.e. grade 11) and they obtain a diploma to start work immediately (that reflects the original philosophy of technical and vocational education, although more recently students mainly continue into higher education technical institutes, and delay their entry to the labour market).

Students who choose to study one of the five sub-tracks of the theoretical track are eligible to take the entrance national examination for universities (konkoor) if they have already obtained their pre-university certificate. The pre-university, similarly, continues with those five sub-tracks of theoretical track.

The new structure which started with adding Year 6 to primary education took effect from 2013. Since then pupils stay one more year in primary school (six years of primary). The first cohort with this new system are now (academic year 2015 - 2016) in grade 9, so they will be the first cohort with the new structure as following:

- six years of primary education
- three years of lower secondary education
- three years of upper secondary education.

In this new system, there is no qualification called pre-university anymore, and pupils will finish public education in Grade 12 (i.e. the third year of upper secondary), and they will be given a certificate of completion of public education. With this certificate, they can sit for the national entrance exam for universities and continue into higher education. In this new structure, again, students who intend to study in one of the theoretical sub-tracks make choices from among five sub-tracks (empirical sciences, mathematical sciences, humanities, islamic sciences, art). The number of years of schooling stays the same in both the old and new structure, i.e. 12 years.

Structure

The pre-university certificate represents the completion of one year of schooling after the end of general high school (i.e. Grade 11). This extra one year of schooling was designed for students who intend to enter universities. In fact, this one year of pre-university is aimed at preparing students for university education, therefore subjects are taught at more advanced and abstract level. It is done by the schools and within the schools, but with greater emphasis on more conceptual level and using more professional teachers.

Subject areas

Overall there are five sub-tracks (empirical sciences, mathematical sciences, humanities, Islamic sciences, art) for pupils to take at pre-university grade and in each of these five sub-tracks, students have to pass a combination of generic subjects (eight credit units) and specialised subjects (16 credit units).

Each of these sub-tracks has pre-specified subjects that students have to take. Between the five sub-tracks, there are some common subjects and some specialised subjects.

Subjects for empirical sciences:

- Persian language, foreign language, Islamic sciences, physics, mathematics, generic maths, biology, chemistry, geology.

Subjects for mathematical sciences:

- Persian language, foreign language, Islamic sciences, analytical geometry and linear algebra, physics, chemistry, differential calculus and integral, discrete mathematics.

Humanities:

- Persian language, Persian literature, foreign language, Arabic, geography, history, philosophy, social sciences, basic mathematics, Islamic sciences, Quran.

Islamic sciences:

- ethics, the principles of beliefs, formal logic, principles of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), philosophy, Persian studies, Persian literature, Arabic literature, foreign language.

Art:

- Persian language, foreign language, Islamic sciences, introduction to art courses, Persian art, history of art, art workshop, human and space and design, introduction to Iranian art and cultural heritage.

Levels

Acceptable as group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

The grading is based on a 20 point marking system. 20 (excellent) is the best mark and 10 is the pass rate. Below 10 students fail subjects and have to retake the exam. A pupil can obtain the pre-university degree only if s/he has passed all subjects (24 credit units) and their GPA should not be below 10. In the pupil's certificate, a GPA grade is also reported which is the GPA of all grades obtained from all subjects. This overall GPA is calculated by multiplying the obtained grade in a given subject by the credit unit of that subject, divided by 24.

Assessment

Four of the main (core) subjects in each of the sub-tracks explained above, are assessed nationally by external examinations. These subjects are the core subjects of each sub-track. For example for mathematical sciences there are the four subjects: differential calculus and integral, physics, Persian language, Islamic sciences.

The rest of the subjects are assessed internally by each school.

All examinations include written forms.

Students sit for the exam twice in one year of the pre-university grade: At the end of the first semester (January) they sit for some of the subjects from which four are taken externally and nationally. At the end of the second semester (July) they sit for another set of subjects, again four of them are taken externally and nationally. The final certificate of pre-university shows the list of all subjects taken in the two semesters. The first semester could be considered similar to AS (as the subjects deal with less

advanced topics) and the second semester could be considered similar to A2 in the UK system.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The overall grade in a specific subject is calculated from these three marks: the formative assessment mark that teachers give to each pupil based on their active participation during the academic year, their mark in the first time point of assessment (i.e. January) , and their summative assessment mark which is through a formal test. The final summative assessment has the highest credit (i.e. 6) in comparison with formative assessment (i.e. 1) and time one assessment (i.e. 2).

For practical subjects, the formal final tests are given by external or internal examiners using practical measures.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

It is equal to A-level in the UK system.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to consider setting subject requirements in addition to the overall result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Students sit for the exam twice in one year of the pre-university grade: at the end of the first semester (January) they sit for some of the subjects and at the end of the second semester (July) they take the rest. All subjects are pre-specified and they are all to be examined. If a pupil fails in any of the subjects during these two points, the learner can take part in the September assessments. If, at that point, not all specified subjects to obtain the pre-university degree have been passed, the learner has to sit for the failing subjects through a different scheme (called adult education or distance education). These two schemes are separate from the mainstream education in Iran, but they are regulated and governed by the Ministry of Education.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

In the last academic year (2014 - 2015), 340,000 pupils obtained the Pre-university certificate; from which 131,000 were male (less than 40%) and the rest (majority) were female. In addition, nearly half of the pupils obtained their Pre-university certificate in empirical sciences and the other 50% were distributed among the other four sub-tracks. Pupils are mainly interested in empirical sciences, followed by mathematical sciences, humanities, art and finally Islamic sciences.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The Pre-university certificate is a national exam used to admit into subject specific courses to enter higher education institutions in the country. All holders of this certificate sit for different entrance exams (depending on their sub-track) which are held nationally on a single day or two consecutive days (August). Clusters of university courses require one of the five sub-tracks. For example, medical courses are offered to those pupils who have studied experimental sciences at pre-university grade. More recently pupils have been given a choice to change their sub-track at pre-university grade through taking some exams (usually main subjects of the intended sub-track).

Further information

The Pre-university certificate (pishdaneshgahi) will cease to be awarded in 2019.

Irish Leaving Certificate

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

(last award 2016)

Updated July 2016

Country

- Ireland

Purpose

The Leaving Certificate (Established) is a two-year programme that aims to provide learners with a broad, balanced education while also offering some specialisation towards a particular career option.

Education context

The programme is taken in almost all schools and by an annual cohort of around 55,000 students.

Students following the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish. Most students take seven subjects for examination.

Each subject within the Irish Leaving Certificates can be taken at Higher or Ordinary level.

The median age on completion is 18, and 96% of candidates are aged 17, 18 or 19 years. The majority of candidates (55%) have completed six years of post-primary education, with almost all of the remainder having completed five.

A variation of the Leaving Certificate is the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) which concentrates on technical subjects with additional vocationally focused modules.

An alternative to the established Leaving Certificate is the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA). This is a stand-alone pre-vocational programme designed to prepare students for working life through a two-year cross-curricular course. LCA is not recognised for direct entry to HE courses.

Structure

Students following the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish.

Most students take seven subjects for examination. In 2013, 8% took six subjects, 54% took seven, and 31% took eight.

Irish Leaving Certificate subjects can be taken at one of two levels (tiers): Higher or Ordinary. In addition, Irish and Mathematics are available at Foundation Level (a lower tier than Ordinary Level).

Over 30 curricular Leaving Certificate subjects are available to schools.

The Irish Leaving Certificate (ILC) is awarded by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Subject areas

- Accounting
- Agricultural science
- Ancient Greek
- Applied mathematics
- Arabic
- Arts
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Classical studies
- Construction studies
- Design and communication graphics
- Economics
- Engineering
- English language
- French
- German
- Hebrew studies
- History

- Home economics
- Irish
- Italian
- Japanese
- Latin
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physics
- Physics and chemistry
- Religious studies
- Russian
- Spanish
- Design and technology

In addition to these curricular subjects, the State Examinations Commission provides, on a non-curricular basis, mother-tongue examinations (at Higher Level only) to native speakers of recognised languages of the European Union. A total of 16 non-curricular EU languages are currently offered and candidates may only take one of these examinations.

Levels

The Leaving Certificate caters for a broad range of candidate achievement and therefore spans Levels 4 and 5 on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This corresponds with Levels 2 and 3 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Irish NFQ Levels 4 and 5 are referenced to EQF Levels 3 and 4. Please see the Irish EQF referencing report

at: <http://www.qqi.ie/Documents/Referencing%20Irish%20NFQ%20to%20the%20Euro...>

As the number of subjects studied is greater, Higher Level examinations in individual subjects in the Irish Leaving Certificate are considered to be of a somewhat lower standard than GCE A level.

Examinations at Ordinary Level are of a lower standard than those at Higher Level, but there is some grade overlap between the higher grades at Ordinary Level and the lower grades of Higher Level. For the purposes of admission to Irish higher education courses,

Ordinary level grades A1 to C2 receive similar recognition to Higher Level grades C3 to D3 as shown in below 'Key issues for UK HE admissions'. Ordinary Level grades A1 to C2 represent a similar standard of achievement to NQF Level 3 while those at Ordinary Level C3 or below represent a similar standard of achievement to NQF Level 2.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Results of the Leaving Certificate examination subjects are given in the form of grades. Each grade represents a percentage range of marks as below.

Percentage range	Grade
90 – 100	A1
85 – 89.99	A2
80 – 84.99	B1
75 – 79.99	B2
70 – 74.99	B3
65 – 69.99	C1
60 – 64.99	C2
55 – 59.99	C3
50 – 54.99	D1
45 – 49.99	D2
40 – 44.99	D3
25 – 39.99	E
10 – 24.99	F

0 – 9.99

No grade

Assessment

Each subject is assessed by an external examination at the end of the two-year programme of study. All examinations include at least one written paper. Subjects with additional components are as follows:

There are oral and aural tests in Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Japanese.

There are practical examinations in engineering, construction studies, art and music.

There is practical course work in engineering, construction studies, agricultural economics, agricultural science, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme modules, history, geography, religious education, design and communication graphics, home economics and technology.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Students are certified in individual subjects (at Higher or Ordinary Level in each subject) within the Leaving Certificate.

No overall grade is given on the basis of average performance across subjects. However, Irish universities and other HEPs convert candidates' top six grades into a number of points for the purposes of admissions. See below section for 'Key issues' for details of relative treatment of grades achieved at Higher and Ordinary Levels.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Ordinary Level - each subject requires a minimum of 180 hours guided learning hours (GLH)

Higher Level - each subject generally requires 240 GLH.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Leaving Certificate - Higher Level (Ireland)

Grade	Points
A1	36
A2	30
B1	30
B2	24
B3	24
C1	18
C2	18
C3	12
D1	12
D2	9
D3	9

Leaving Certificate - Ordinary Level (Ireland)

Grade	Points
A1	12
A2	10
B1	10
B2	8
B3	8

Grade	Points
C1	6
C2	6
<	

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Most UK HEPs require six ILC grades at Higher Level as an alternative to three GCE A levels.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Written examinations take place over 13 weekdays commencing in early June. Examinations results are issued mid-August annually.

Full examinations timetables and schedules are available at www.examinations.ie/index.php?l=en&mc=ex&sc=tt

Qualification dates notes

This is a current qualification.

Reporting and certification information

The programme is taken in almost all Irish schools and by an annual cohort of around 55,000 students.

Grade distributions for the last ten years are available here: www.examinations.ie/index.php?l=en&mc=st&sc=r14

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Admission to university studies in Ireland is predominantly on the basis of the Leaving Certificate examination. The minimum entry requirement of the National University of Ireland (NUI) is six subjects, including Irish, English and a third language.

There are variations between institutions, but, in general, for direct entry into an Honours degree programme, a minimum of grade C3 at Higher Level in two subjects is required and a minimum of grade D3 in other specified subjects. Entry to Ordinary Level degree programmes in the Institutes of Technology does not include a requirement to have taken any examinations at Higher Level.

The supply-and-demand situation between university courses is broadly similar to that in the UK. Overall demand exceeds supply in certain disciplines and competition is

strong. This is reflected in stringent entry requirements for areas such as medicine and law, which may involve five or six A grades in Higher Level subjects.

In practice, a rank order of candidates who satisfy eligibility requirements is established by converting Leaving Certificate grades for the six best subjects into a points score.

The points allocations have been collectively agreed by the third-level institutions involved in the Irish Central Applications Office (CAO) scheme, although the relativities that they imply have no official standing in the eyes of the State Examinations Commission or the Department of Education and Skills.

100 points are awarded for grade A1 at Higher Level and 60 points for grade C3. One sitting only of the Leaving Certificate Examination is counted for points purposes. Since 2012, an extra 25 points are awarded to students who attain a Grade D3 or better in Higher Level mathematics.

For the purpose of this conversion of grades to points, the participating institutions have long established the following linkages in relative value between grades awarded at Higher and Ordinary Levels. These alignments are based on overall level of achievement and are not subject to a subsequent adjustment for qualification size:

- Higher C3 equates to Ordinary A1
- Higher D2 equates to Ordinary A2
- Higher D3 equates to Ordinary B1.

The above are the only overlapping grades on the points scale and this approach matches the new total Tariff point alignments, but the CAO scale extends beyond this – Irish universities do not award points for grades below D3 at Higher Level, but do award points for grades below B1 at Ordinary Level.

Statistics on the distribution of total CAO points obtained by the full cohort of candidates in any year are available at: <http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=points&bb=mediastats>

Further information

Curriculum and syllabus: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-...>

Details of examinations, including open archive of examination papers, marking schemes, and Chief Examiner reports: www.examinations.ie

Further information on school and college level options: www.careersportal.ie

Information on qualifications, entry requirements, etc.: www.qualifax.ie

Irish Leaving Certificate (new grading scheme from 2017)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- Ireland

Purpose

The Leaving Certificate (Established) is a two-year programme that aims to provide learners with a broad, balanced education while also offering some specialisation towards a particular career option.

Education context

The programme is taken in almost all schools and by an annual cohort of around 55,000 students.

Students following the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish (although students may be exempted from the Irish requirement in certain, very limited, circumstances). Most students take seven subjects for examination.

The median age on completion is 18, and 96% of candidates are aged 17, 18 or 19 years. The majority of candidates (55%) have completed six years of post-primary education, with almost all of the remainder having completed five years.

A variation of the established Leaving Certificate is the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) which concentrates on technical subjects with additional vocationally focused modules.

An alternative to the established Leaving Certificate is the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme (LCA). This is a stand-alone pre-vocational programme designed to prepare students for working life through a two-year cross-curricular course. LCA is not recognised for direct entry to HE courses in Ireland.

Structure

Students following the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme are required to study at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish.

Most students take seven subjects for examination.

Irish Leaving Certificates subjects can be taken at one of two levels (tiers): Higher or Ordinary. In addition, Irish and Mathematics are available at Foundation Level (a lower tier than Ordinary Level).

Over 30 curricular Leaving Certificate subjects are available to schools.

The Leaving Certificate is awarded by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Subject areas

- Accounting
- Agricultural science
- Ancient Greek
- Applied mathematics
- Arabic
- Arts
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Classical studies
- Construction studies
- Design and communication graphics
- Economics
- Engineering
- English
- French
- German
- Hebrew studies
- History
- Home economics
- Irish
- Italian
- Japanese

- Latin
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physics
- Physics and chemistry
- Religious studies
- Russian
- Spanish
- Design and technology

In addition to these curricular subjects, the State Examinations Commission provides, on a non-curricular basis, mother-tongue examinations (at Higher Level only) to native speakers of recognised languages of the European Union. A total of 16 non-curricular EU languages are currently offered and candidates may only take one of these examinations.

Levels

The Leaving Certificate caters for a broad range of candidate achievement and therefore spans Levels 4 and 5 on Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This corresponds with Levels 2 and 3 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Irish NFQ Levels 4 and 5 are referenced to EQF Levels 3 and 4. Please see the Irish EQF referencing report at: <http://www.qqi.ie/Documents/Referencing%20Irish%20NFQ%20to%20the%20European%20QF%20for%20Lifelong%20Learning.pdf>

As the number of subjects studied is greater, Higher Level examinations in individual subjects in the Irish Leaving Certificate are considered to be of a somewhat lower standard than GCE A level.

Examinations at Ordinary Level are of a lower standard than those at Higher Level, but there is some grade overlap between the higher grades at Ordinary Level and the lower grades of Higher Level. For the purposes of admission to Irish higher education courses, Ordinary Level grades O1 to O3 receive similar recognition to Higher Level grades H5 to H7 as shown below, see 'Key issues for UK HE admissions'. Ordinary Level grades O1 to O4 represent a similar standard of achievement to NQF Level 3 while those at Ordinary Level O5 or below represent a similar standard of achievement to NQF Level 2.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Results of the Leaving Certificate examination subjects are given in the form of grades. From 2017, each grade will represent a percentage range of marks as below.

Percentage range	Grade
90 – 100	H1 / O1
80<90	H2 / O2
70<80	H3 / O3
60<70	H4 / O4
50<60	H5 / O5
40<50	H6 / O6
30<40	H7 / O7
0<30	H8 / O8

Assessment

Each subject is assessed by an external examination at the end of the two-year programme of study. All examinations include at least one written paper. Subjects with additional components (all of which are externally assessed) are as follows:

There are oral and aural tests in Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Japanese.

There are practical examinations in engineering, construction studies, art and music.

There is practical course work in engineering, construction studies, agricultural economics, agricultural science, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme modules, history, geography, religious education, design and communication graphics, home economics and technology.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Students are certified in individual subjects (at Higher or Ordinary Level in each subject) within the Leaving Certificate.

No overall grade is given on the basis of average performance across subjects. However, Irish universities and other HEPs convert candidates' top six grades into a number of points for the purposes of admissions. See below 'Key issues for UK HE admissions' for details of relative treatment of grades achieved at Higher and Ordinary Levels.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Ordinary Level – each subject requires a minimum of 180 hours guided learning hours (GLH)

Higher Level – each subject generally requires 240 GLH.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Leaving Certificate - Higher Level (Ireland) (first awarded in 2017)

Grade	Points
H1	36
H2	30
H3	24
H4	18
H5	12
H6	9

Leaving Certificate - Ordinary Level (Ireland) (first awarded in 2017)

Grade	Points
O1	12
O2	10
O3	8
O4	6

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Key issues for UK HE admissions

Most UK HEPs require six ILC grades at Higher Level as an alternative to three GCE A levels.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Written examinations take place over 13 weekdays commencing in early June. Examinations results are issued mid-August annually.

Full examinations timetables and schedules are available at www.examinations.ie/index.php?l=en&mc=ex&sc=tt

Qualification dates notes

New from 2017.

Reporting and certification information

The programme is taken in almost all Irish schools and by an annual cohort of around 55,000 students.

Grade distributions for the last ten years are available here: www.examinations.ie/index.php?l=en&mc=st&sc=r14

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Admission to university studies in Ireland is predominantly on the basis of the Leaving Certificate examination. The minimum entry requirement of the National University of Ireland (NUI) is six subjects, including Irish and English, with a third language also required in some cases.

There are variations between institutions, but, in general, for direct entry into an Honours degree programme, a minimum of grade H5 at Higher Level in two subjects is required and a minimum of grade H6 in other specified subjects. Entry to Ordinary Level

degree programmes in the Institutes of Technology does not include a requirement to have taken any examinations at Higher Level.

The supply-and-demand situation between university courses is broadly similar to that in the UK. Overall demand exceeds supply in certain disciplines and competition is strong. This is reflected in stringent entry requirements for areas such as medicine and law, which may involve five or six H1 grades in Higher Level subjects.

In practice, a rank order of candidates who satisfy eligibility requirements is established by converting Leaving Certificate grades for the six best subjects into a points score.

The points allocations have been collectively agreed by the third-level institutions involved in the Irish Central Applications Office (CAO) scheme.

100 points are awarded for grade H1 at Higher Level and 56 points for grade H5. One sitting only of the Leaving Certificate Examination is counted for points purposes. Since 2012, an extra 25 points are awarded to students who attain a Grade H6 or better in Higher Level mathematics.

For the purpose of this conversion of grades to points, the following are the linkages in relative value between grades awarded at Higher and Ordinary Levels. These alignments are based on overall level of achievement and are not subject to a subsequent adjustment for qualification size:

- Higher H5 equates to Ordinary O1
- Higher H6 equates to Ordinary O2
- Higher H7 equates to Ordinary O3.

The above are the only overlapping grades on the points scale and this approach matches the new total Tariff point alignments, but the CAO scale extends beyond this – Irish universities do not award points for grades below H7 at Higher Level, but do award points for grades below O3 at Ordinary Level.

Statistics on the distribution of total CAO points obtained by the full cohort of candidates in any year are available

at: <http://www.cao.ie/index.php?page=points&bb=mediastats>

Further information

Curriculum and syllabus: <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Senior-Cycle-/>

Details of examinations, including open archive of examination papers, marking schemes, and Chief Examiner reports: www.examinations.ie

Further information on school and college level options: www.careersportal.ie

Information on qualifications, entry requirements, etc.: www.qualifax.ie

Italy: Diploma di Esame di Stato conclusivo dei corsi di istruzione secondaria superiore

Last updated

13 December 2018

Last verified

13 December 2018

Updated July 2016

Country

- Italy

Education context

Diploma di Esame di Stato is the upper secondary school leaving certificate (formerly known as *Diploma di Maturità*).

Students obtaining the Diploma from either *licei* or technical and vocational *istituti* satisfy the minimum requirements to access HE.

The central government determines basic curricula for each type of *licei/istituti* and gives guidance on teaching methods.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Core subjects common to all institutions are Italian, history, a modern foreign language, mathematics and physical education.

Optional subjects depend on the type of secondary school, e.g. classical, languages, scientific, technical, professional, teaching, and artistic.

Optional teaching cannot exceed 30% of the total teaching timetable in the second two-year period and 20% of the total amount of the final year.

Subject areas

Core subjects common to all institutions are:

- Italian
- history
- modern foreign language

- mathematics
- physical education

Optional subjects depend on the type of secondary school, e.g. classical, languages, scientific, technical, professional, teaching, and artistic. For example, in *Liceo Artistico*, students follow Italian language and literature, foreign language and culture, history and geography, history, philosophy, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, chemistry of materials, history of arts, drawing and graphics, geometry, sculpture and plastics, arts, sports, Catholic religion or alternative activities.

Levels

Considered to be broadly comparable in standard to UK Level 3 qualifications.
Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

Grading

The final mark of the Diploma comes from the sum of the average marks achieved by each student in the last three years of upper secondary school and the marks achieved in the three exams.

- 100 (maximum) ... 60 (minimum pass).

For students who reach 100 points without any bonus, the commission can add the *lode* (cum laude) praise.

Assessment

Diploma di Esame di Stato awarded from 2019

Final year examinations are organised by the Ministry of Education University and Research (*Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca*), and consist of two written tests and an oral one covering all subjects.

The First written test aims at verifying the mastery of the Italian language or of the language of teaching, as well as expressive, logical-linguistic and critical abilities of the candidate. The first test is going to be held in all high schools on **19th June 2019**.

The second test has become **multi-disciplinary**; it will comprise more than one subject according to every stream or area of study: e.g. *Liceo Scientifico* (Scientific Lyceum), this second exam will be based on Mathematics and Physics rather than Mathematics only. The second test is going to be held in all high schools on **20th June 2019**.

The Third test – oral interview: requirements still to be confirmed. The date of this third and final test varies in each high school. Most students will complete their final test **by the third week of July**.

The former third written test used in the previous academic years has been abolished.

Diploma di Esame di Stato awarded until 2018

Final year examinations are organised by the Ministry of Education University and Research (*Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca*), and consist of three written tests and an oral one covering all subjects.

The first written test aims at verifying the mastery of the Italian language or of the language of teaching, as well as expressive, logical-linguistic and critical abilities of the candidate.

The second test is about one of the subjects chosen by the examiner.

The third test reflects teaching and organisation autonomy of the school and is strictly related to school offer. This latter is a multidisciplinary test about the subjects of the last grade. It consists of open ended and multiple choice questions and the solution of problems or practical and professional cases as well as in the development of projects. It may also test knowledge of a foreign language.

The texts for the first and second written tests are selected by the Minister and sent to the schools by the Ministry of Education; the text of the third written test is developed by the examination board.

The oral test has a multidisciplinary approach and is about the study programmes of the last school grade.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Diploma di Esame di Stato awarded from 2019

Every final high school exam in Italy will be graded out of 20 from 2019 (1/20 to 20/20 rather than 15/15). The score is calculated by adding up:

- **Credits** – up to 40 points from internal school marks, the top score for students who receive average grades during their final three years of school is 8–10:
- **Written tests** – The candidate sits two written tests. For each test the pass mark is 12 points, the top mark is 20 points.
- **Oral examination** – the pass mark is 12 points, the top mark is 20 points.

Bonus – an extra 5 points can be awarded to the candidate's final score by the examining commission. In order to get the extra 5 points, the candidate needs to obtain a scholastic credit of at least 30 points and an overall result in the examination tests of at least 50 points.

Diploma di Esame di Stato awarded until 2018

The score is calculated by adding up:

- **Credits** – up to 25 points from internal school marks, the top score for students who receive average grades during their final three years of school is 8–10:
- **Written tests** – the overall pass mark is 30 out of 45 points. The candidate sits three written tests. For each test the pass mark is 10 points, the top mark is 15 points.
- **Oral examination** – the pass mark is 20 out of 30 points.

Bonus – an extra 5 points can be awarded to the candidate's final score by the examining commission. In order to get the extra 5 points, the (A) score must be at least 15 points, and the (B) + (C) score must be at least 70 points. (A) + (B) + (C) + (D) = final score.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

In their third and fourth years students get a minimum annual taught time of 792 hours a year. In the fifth grade this increases to 891 hours a year.

Whilst the course is taken over three years, the resulting Diploma qualification is regarded as comparable in size to three A levels (size band 4) for UK HE admissions purposes.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some universities or colleges may wish to set subject requirements (based on results of written tests) in addition to an overall Diploma result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Tests take place according to a calendar established by the Ministry each year. Results are usually published in mid-July.

Qualification dates notes

Diploma di Esame di Stato has been available since 1999 (100 marks = maximum score).

Previously students took the *Diploma di Maturità* (60 marks = max score).

Reporting and certification information

Information on distribution of qualification results / percentage scores will be added when this is available.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

In Italy, all students who have obtained an upper secondary school leaving diploma are entitled to access university. However, in some faculties, such as architecture or medicine, there are restrictions on admissions and it is necessary to pass an admissions test.

Further information

Eurydice <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Italy:Overview>

Italian Ministry for Education www.istruzione.it (Italian language)

Latvia: Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību (Certificate of General Secondary Education)

Last updated

9 August 2017

Last verified

9 August 2017

Updated July 2016

Country

- Latvia

Education context

General upper secondary education programmes last for three years (grades 10 – 12).

Since 2001/ 2002 general upper-secondary schools have offered four educational programmes:

- general education programmes with no emphasis on any particular subject group
- humanities and social science programmes with emphasis on languages and social sciences
- mathematics, natural sciences and technology
- vocationally oriented subjects (such as music, sport, economics which do not lead to professional qualifications).

All four education programmes have eight compulsory subjects and at least four elective subjects.

The number of instruction hours for each subject differs according to the education programme chosen.

The National Centre for Education, *Valsts izglītības satura centrs (VISC)* is responsible for the development, administration and grading of centralised examinations and for issuing the *Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts* (Certificate of the Centralised Exams). Until 2009 these functions were executed by the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations (ISEC).

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Security Marking: Public

Document Owner: Qualifications Service Delivery Partner

Page **121** of **191**

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To be awarded the Certificate of General Secondary Education Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) and qualify to continue their education, students must complete courses in all subjects (minimum 12) and pass at least four final examinations, including three compulsory subjects and at least one elective.

The three compulsory examinations are in Latvian language, mathematics and a foreign language of the student's choice (English, German, French and Russian). All compulsory examinations are centrally set and marked.

The elective examinations are chosen from examinations administered by the National Centre for Education (VISC) or it can be a school-based examination in a subject taught not less than 105 hours.

The results of the centrally marked examinations are issued in the form of the Certificate of the Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*), which is an appendix to the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

Final marks in all subjects and the results of internally marked state examinations are noted on Sekmju izraksts (Statement of Records), which is an appendix to the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

Final centralised examinations are seen as preparation for university, and are externally set, marked and graded.

Subject areas

In all education programmes there are eight compulsory subjects: Latvian language, literature, first foreign language, second foreign language, mathematics, Latvian and world history, sports, informatics.

Depending on the education programme, the number of elective subjects vary from four to seven.

The compulsory examinations are in Latvian Language, mathematics and a foreign language (English, German, French and Russian) of the student's choice.

Centralised examinations (compulsory):

- Latvian (written)
- Mathematics (written)
- Foreign language – English, German, French, Russian (written and oral)

Centralised examinations (elective):

- Latvian & world history (written)
- Chemistry (written)

- Biology (written)
- Physics (written)

Centrally set examinations (administered and marked by school):

- Informatics (combined)
- Geography (written)
- Economics (written)
- Russian language/ literature (written)

Levels

Level 3 - acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) records individual grades for components of study on a 10-point grading scale (see Assessment section below).

Pre-2012 external examination results in the Certificate of the Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*) were reported on a six-grade scale A, B, C, D, E, F – where A is the highest and F is the lowest level. Passing a centralised examination required an overall score of at least 5%. Students with a score below that minimum failed the examination and did not receive the Certificate of the Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*) and the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

From 2012 / 2013 student results in the centralised examinations are reported in the form of percentages. The Certificate of the Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*) indicates the percentage of the resulting total subject score as well as each part of the exam percentage scores. Passing a centralised examination requires an overall score of at least 5%. Students with a score below that minimum fail the examination and do not receive the Certificate of the Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*) and the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

Results in locally marked and graded examinations are expressed using a 1-10 point scale. A student has failed the exam if the received grade is lower than 4.

From 2013 centralised examination results in foreign languages (in addition to percentage score) are reported in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) proficiency levels:

Total score in percentage	CEFR level
95 – 100%	C1
70 – 94%	B2
40 – 69%	B1

Foreign language exam scores below 40% will be reported as percentage only.

Assessment

The Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) records individual grades for components of study on a 10-point grading scale.

A 10-point grading scale is used to evaluate educational achievements of pupils in upper-secondary education (years 10 – 12) in all the subjects taught:

Grading scale	Educational achievements of pupils
10	distinction (izcili)
9	excellent (teicami)
8	very good (ļoti labi)
7	good (labi)
6	almost good (gandrīz labi)
5	satisfactory (viduvēji)
4	almost satisfactory (gandrīz viduvēji)
3	weak (vāji)
2	very weak (ļoti vāji)

1

very very weak (ļoti, ļoti vāji)

Centralised state examinations (*centralizētie eksāmeni*) – external national examination and marking (on a normative scale of 0% – 100%)

School examinations – centrally set, but administered and marked at school level (1 – 10 point scale)

For centrally set exams which are administered and marked by the school, VISC provides common marking criteria and tables for converting exam scores to a 10 point scale.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) is awarded to students who have received positive assessment (at least 4 points) in all (no less than 12) subjects taught according to the chosen education programme and have passed at least four final examinations.

In subjects where centralised examinations are organised, students' achievements are certified by the Certificate of Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*). Exam results in this certificate serve as selection criteria for the enrolment of students in higher education programmes. From 2012 /2013 student performance in centralised examinations has been reported only in percentages. Passing a centralised examination requires an overall score of at least 5%. Students with a score below that minimum fail the examination and do not receive the Certificate of Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*) and the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

A student who has not received evaluation (a yearly mark) in one of the subjects, or has been evaluated with a mark lower than '4' in a subject or a state examination, receives only a school report (*liecība*) and is not awarded the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*).

Guided/notional learning hours notes

The minimum total number of 40-minute lessons per week is 36 at grade 12 (24 hours per week).

The regular school year lasts 36 weeks, from the beginning of September until the end of May.

It is therefore estimated that students taking 12 subjects undertake approximately 216 hours per subject across years 10 – 12 (three years).

The number of instruction hours for each subject differs according to the education programme chosen.

There are subjects (e.g. Latvian, mathematics, foreign languages, physics, chemistry, history) that are taught more hours and there are subjects (e.g. ethics, health study, psychology, music) that are taught only 50 hours. Each student's study time during the three years of secondary education for each student may vary also because educational establishments are allowed to set additional hours for those subjects the school specialises in.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS Tariff points

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
data	

Unknown qualification

Grade	Points
data	

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Key issues for UK HE admissions

Compared to the UK, the Latvian upper secondary education system places a greater emphasis on breadth than depth, with students taking 12 subjects, as opposed to three A levels and an AS level, or five Scottish Highers.

Historically some HEPs have accepted students with *Atestāts* 8+ in final exam subjects in lieu of GCE A level grade ABB entry requirements (7+ in lieu of BBB).

Other HEPs take the view that *Atestāts* subjects do not sufficiently prepare students for entry to degree programmes, particularly those that set high grade subject- specific entry requirements for A levels. These may require additional evidence of student ability and achievement as evidenced through admissions tests or additional international qualifications. Some may recruit *Atestāts* students to an additional foundation/access year prior to undergraduate studies.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Examinations are taken in March (foreign languages) and May until early June (other subjects). The Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) is issued by the end of June.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

Pre-2012 centralised examination results:

Examination	A (%)	B (%)	C (%)	D (%)	E (%)	F (%)
Latvian	80 – 100	65 – 79	50 – 64	36 – 49	21 – 35	5 – 20
Foreign Lang	84 – 100	68 – 83	52 – 67	36 – 51	19 – 35	5 – 18
History	79 – 100	59 – 78	41 – 58	28 – 40	20 – 27	5 – 19
Mathematics	85 – 100	62 – 84	40 – 61	23 – 39	12 – 22	5 – 11
Physics	83 – 100	65 – 82	46 – 64	30 – 45	19 – 29	5 – 18
Chemistry	87 – 100	76 – 86	58 – 75	41 – 57	22 – 40	5 – 21
Biology	86 – 100	75 – 85	60 – 74	44 – 59	30 – 43	5 – 29

From 2013 centralised examination results are reported in percentages (individual components and an overall result for the exam).

From 2013 students taking centralised examinations in foreign languages are given a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level.

From 2016 centralised examinations in foreign languages can be substituted with an international language proficiency examination which meets the requirements set by the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No 543, available at <http://likumi.lv/ta/id/276818>.

After each examination session VISC prepares and provides statistical data, available on its website: www.visc.gov.lv (in Latvian).

Reporting centralised examination results from 2013

From spring 2013 onwards centrally marked examination results have been expressed in percentages instead of the A – F grade scale.

For each, a centrally marked total percentage and a percentage for each part of the exam will be reported. The percentage score shows a proportion of correct answers scored in points, against the maximum points possible in the whole exam or part of the exam.

From 2013, centralised exam results in foreign languages (in addition to percentage scores) will also contain information on the proficiency levels B1, B2 or C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR).

In 2010 VISC carried out a study to determine if foreign language exams complied with CEFR requirements and could be used to assess school-leavers language proficiency according to CEFR levels. Experts from the University of Latvia carried out a thorough study analysing foreign language tasks and results. The study concluded that the foreign language exams were capable of providing tasks for the C1, B2 and B1 levels.

From 2013 the percentage scored in foreign language exams are being expressed in CEFR levels as: 95–100% C1, 70–94% B2, 40–69% B1.

Centrally set exams which are administered and marked by the school, and exams set, administered and marked by the school, are all assessed on a 10 point scale.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Every student who has met the criteria below is entitled to continue studies in any higher education program in Latvia:

- received the Certificate of General Secondary Education (*Atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību*) with positive assessment (of at least 4 points) in all subjects taught according to the chosen programme, certified by the Statement of Records (*Sekmju izraksts*);
- achieved a score of at least 5% in centralised national examinations, certified by Certificate of Centralised Exams (*Vispārējās vidējās izglītības sertifikāts*).

Students are admitted to HE in an open and equal competition on the basis of the centralised examinations results, except for people who studied before 2004, those who obtained upper-secondary education abroad, or people with special needs.

A higher education institution may set additional entry requirements, providing they are coordinated with the Council of Higher Education.

Further information

Sources:

- Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Latvia: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/en/>
- National Centre for Education: www.visc.gov.lv (in Latvian)
- VIAA State Education Development Agency: <http://www.viaa.gov.lv/eng/>

Lithuania: Brandos Atestatas (Maturity Certificate)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated July 2016

Country

- Lithuania

Education context

Compulsory education starts at age seven. There are four years of primary education, followed by six years of compulsory lower-secondary education.

Compulsory education finishes at age 16 in Lithuania – this may be followed by further study in secondary or vocational schools.

Secondary education is optional and usually lasts for two years. Students follow individual education plans and programmes may include vocational training modules.

Structure

The *Brandos Atestatas* summarises the completion of a two-year programme of study of compulsory and optional subjects studied at general level (*bendrasis* 'B') or extended level (*išplėstinis* 'A'). Foreign languages are studied to Common European Framework (CEFR) levels (at A1, A2, B1, B2).

In general students study seven to eight subjects. Students aiming for university will tend to choose between four to five subjects at level A and three to four subjects at level B.

There is a minimum of 28 lessons per week. Level A qualifications generally have more taught time than level B, except in the case of foreign languages. Students who plan to enter university tend to take up more subjects overall and more at level A, thus they tend to have more hours (around 32 on average).

Achievement in all subjects is subject to internal assessment.

To be awarded the *Brandos Atestatas* students have to pass all internal assessment successfully and, in addition, at least two school or state level *Matura* examinations. School level examinations and state level examinations do not depend on the level of the course followed. But there is a tendency to take level A courses for those subjects that are chosen as state level exams (around four courses).

State level *Matura* examinations are seen as preparation for university, and are externally sat, marked and graded.

Subject areas

Subjects are drawn from seven streams: languages, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences, arts, technology, ethics / religion, and sports.

The state-level *Matura* exams can be taken in: biology, chemistry, physics, geography, information technologies, history, mathematics, foreign language (English, French, German, and Russian). Lithuanian language and literature is compulsory.

The school-level *Matura* exams can be taken in: minority (native) languages (Belorussian, Polish, Russian and German), musicology, arts, and technology.

Levels

Considered to be broadly comparable in standard to UK Level 3 qualifications.
Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Brandos Atestatas records individual grades for components of study as follows. All subjects studied in the two year programme (internal assessment).

Level of achievement	Pass	Name	Lithuanian
High	10	Excellent	Puikiai
	9	Very good	Labai gerai
Average	8	Good	Gerai
	7	Highly satisfactory	Pakankamai gerai
	6	Satisfactory	Vidutiniškai
Sufficient	5	Sufficient	Patenkinamai
	4	Insufficient	Pakankamai patenkinamai

Level of achievement	Pass	Name	Lithuanian
Unsatisfactory	3	Highly insufficient	Nepatenkinamai
	2	Poor	Blogai
	1	Very poor	Labai blogai

Students achieve a grade for each subject, plus an average grade for all subjects studies studied – the ‘*Metinis*’. The information will also indicate whether the subject was studied at the extended (A) or general (B) level. Foreign languages indicated according to CEFR levels (A1, A2, B1, B2).

All School-level Matura examinations (locally assessed) results can be allocated a written grade (*išlaikyta / neišlaikyta*) or points.

Result	Points
Pass (<i>Išlaikyta</i>)	4–10
No pass (<i>Neišlaikyta</i>)	1 – 3

Until 2012 the state level Matura used a normative scale to rank pupil achievement nationally using a 1–100 scale for all those passing. From 2013 a criterion-referenced assessment system has been introduced with a scale for the state Matura exam from 16–100.

Result	Level of achievement	Foreign language level according to CEFR	Points
Pass (<i>Išlaikyta</i>)	High	B2	86-100
Pass (<i>Išlaikyta</i>)	Average	B2	36-85
Pass (<i>Išlaikyta</i>)	Sufficient	B1	16-35
No pass (<i>Neišlaikyta</i>)	Unsatisfactory	-	1-15

Pre-2013 pass results were graded 1–100. 1 = lowest pass grade. 100 was awarded to the top 1% of students achieving the highest results nationwide and so on. 1 was

awarded to the 1% of students achieving the lowest pass rate (norm-referenced achievement).

Assessment

All subjects studied are internally assessed, this may include examinations (1–10 scale).

School *Matura* examination – externally set, locally marked (municipal evaluation centres) (1–10 scale).

State *Matura* examination – external national examination and marking (Pre-2013 on a normative scale of 1–100, post-2013 on a criterion referenced scale 16–100).

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The *Brandos Atestatas* lists:

The *Metinis* – individual results of internal assessment of all subjects the student studied in the final two years (11 – 12th) year. Graded on the scale 1–10. Also recorded is the course level followed (A or B). Foreign languages are studied according to CEFR levels (indicated as A1, A2, B1, B2).

Results of school level *Matura* (if taken). Graded on the scale 1–10.

Results of state level *Matura* (if taken). Graded on the scale 16–100 from 2013, previously from 1–100 – see above.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is a minimum of 28 lessons per week. Students who plan to enter university tend to take up more subjects and more at level A (which tend to be larger), thus they have more hours (32 average per week).

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to make offers based on particular subjects offered at different levels. Students will receive internally-assessed grades for non-*Matura* subjects which may also have been studied at the higher (A) level. In Lithuania there is a focus on state-level examinations for university entrance.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Examinations are taken from May until early June. Certification for the *Brandos Atestatas* is by mid-July.

Students can obtain their examination results from the National Examination Centre on request, before certificates are issued.

Qualification dates notes

Pre-2013 the State *Matura* pass grade was based on a 1–100 normative scale. From 2013 this is criterion-referenced with a range from 16–100.

Reporting and certification information

Results are available for the State *Matura* examinations at <http://www.nec.lt/529/> (in Lithuanian). These show pass rates and max-min scores over the previous three years, and results by grade for each subject (by municipality).

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Brandos Atestatas allows access to HE. Admission is competitive, based on the results of the compulsory state level Lithuanian language exam, and three other state level exams or average grades in three subjects. The subjects required depend on the course to be followed at university.

Further information

Source: National Examination Centre, for more information: <http://www.nec.lt/naujienos/>

New Zealand: National Certificate of Educational Achievement Level 3 (NCEA Level 3)

Last updated

30 October 2017

Last verified

20 April 2018

New for 2017

Country

- New Zealand

Purpose

Schooling is compulsory for students aged six to 16 in New Zealand. Most children start school at age five. Secondary education runs from Year 9 (around 12-14 years old) up to Year 13 (around 16-18 years old).

Students generally work towards the [National Certificates of Educational Achievement \(NCEA\) Levels 1, 2, and 3](#), which can be achieved through instruction in English and te reo Māori.^[1]

NCEA is a flexible qualification, catering for all students planning to go to either university or other tertiary study, into an apprenticeship programme, a practical training programme, or work.

Schools can offer multi-level study so students can study a mix of standards at different levels.

Typically, NCEA Level 1 is undertaken at Year 11, Level 2 in Year 12, and Level 3 in Year 13. NCEA Level 3 is taken by an annual cohort of around 45,000 students.

There are no compulsory subjects for NCEA, although most Year 11 students study programmes in English, mathematics and science.

NCEA certificates can be awarded with certificate endorsement and course endorsement(s), [vocational pathway awards](#), and students may also enter additional examinations for the award of [New Zealand Scholarship](#).

^[1] Māori are the tangata whenua (the indigenous peoples of New Zealand Aotearoa). New Zealand offers a parallel education system that recognises Māori world views and knowledge. Wharekura (secondary Māori immersion schools) are for students in Years 9 to 13. Learning is delivered through te reo Māori (the Māori language) and education is based on tikanga Māori (Māori values and principles). The majority of Māori students attend English language instruction schools.

Education context

The minimum requirement for admission to university in New Zealand is [University Entrance](#) (UE), which comprises NCEA Level 3 (including 14 credits achieved in each of three subjects from the university entrance [list of approved subjects](#)) and [literacy and numeracy requirements](#).

There is no formal entry requirement for non-university tertiary providers, although a number choose to use NCEA Level 3 and university entrance. Any requirements for entry to non-university degree programmes or other tertiary programmes are established at a programme level by the individual providers.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

NCEA is designed to acknowledge achievement across the learning areas of the [New Zealand Curriculum](#) and [Te Marautanga o Aotearoa](#) (the Māori-medium curriculum), and to provide a foundation for further study and employment.

Students are typically required to study between five and six subjects for each level of NCEA. Each subject is assessed against a number of standards. When a student achieves a standard, they gain a number of credits.

NCEA Level 3 is gained by acquiring a minimum of 80 credits, 60 of which must have been achieved at Level 3 or above, and the remaining 20 at Level 2 or above.

From 2014, NCEA Level 3 includes [literacy and numeracy requirements](#).

Subject areas

- Accounting
- Agriculture and Horticultural Science
- Art History
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- Chinese
- Classical Studies
- Construction and Mechanical Technologies

- Cook Islands Māori
- Dance
- Drama
- Design (Practical Art)
- Design and Visual Communication
- Digital Technologies
- Earth and Space Science
- Economics
- Education for Sustainability
- English
- English Language
- English for Academic Purposes
- French
- Geography
- German
- Hangarau (Technology)
- Hauora (Health)
- Health
- History
- Home Economics
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin
- Lea Faka-Tonga
- Legal Studies
- Māori Performing Arts and other Field Māori
- Mathematics with Calculus

- Mathematics
- Media Studies
- Music
- Music Studies
- New Zealand Sign Language
- Ngā Toi (The Arts)
- Painting (Practical Art)
- Pāngarau (Mathematics)
- Photography (Practical Art)
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Printmaking (Practical Art)
- Processing Technologies
- Psychology
- Pūtaiao (Science)
- Religious Studies
- Samoan
- Science
- Sculpture (Practical Art)
- Social Studies
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Statistics
- Technology
- Te Reo Māori
- Te Reo Rangatira
- Technology
- Tikanga-ā-Iwi (Social Science)

Note that subjects have been drawn from the [NCEA subject resources list](#) and the [2016 approved subjects](#) for university entrance list.

Levels

NCEA Level 3 caters for a broad range of candidate achievement, and is set at Level 3 on the [New Zealand Qualifications Framework](#).

NCEA Level 3 has wide international recognition. For details, including project reports, see [specific country requirements for the recognition of NCEA overseas](#).

Grading

There are two types of standards, achievement standards and unit standards, which carry grades ranging from (N) Not Achieved, (A) Achieved, M (Achieved with Merit), and E (Achieved with Excellence).

[Achievement standards](#) assess the subject achievement objectives in the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, and may be either internally or externally assessed.

[Unit standards](#) generally relate to industry training and other non-curriculum-based learning areas. All unit standards are internally assessed.

Assessment

NCEA assessment is standards-based, with some standards internally assessed and some externally assessed. Credits are awarded for each successful result in a standard, which contribute towards qualifications. External assessment occurs under a [national examinations system](#). In most subjects, students sit an examination at the end of the school year, which covers the externally assessed standards.

Examinations are written and marked by teachers contracted to NZQA for that purpose. All candidates for a subject will sit the examination at the same time, wherever they are. All their work will be marked to the same standard.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

Achievement of NCEA Level 3 is based on the results obtained in the examinations and through internal assessment in all subjects studied and assessed during the school year.

Credits gained at one level can be used for (or count towards) more than one NCEA certificate. They may also be used towards other qualifications. Many schools allow students to study a mix of standards at different levels, depending on their ability.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Students typically study five subjects for NCEA Level 3.

A year's work in a typical school subject is assessed by approximately 18 to 24 credits, and generally requires 180 to 240 guided learning hours (based on the notional learning time expected for students to meet the outcomes in the standards that make up the subject). One credit represents a notional ten hours of learning, practice, and assessment time.

This qualification does not currently attract UCAS Tariff points.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

NCEA Level 3 is comparable to the United Kingdom GCE A level (refer to previous section for 'Level notes').

Timing of assessments/results for learners

End of year examinations take place over three to four weeks commencing in early November. NCEA results are released online in mid-January annually.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Reporting and certification information

NZQA issues the certificates for NCEA Levels 1, 2, and 3.

NZQA publishes annual [secondary school statistics](#), including results for NCEA, University Entrance, literacy and numeracy requirements, NCEA certificate endorsements, course endorsements, and New Zealand Scholarship.

Subjects are made up of standards. A complete picture of the distribution of results for **all** subjects that can count towards NCEA Level 3 and university entrance can be found in the [secondary school statistics consolidated files](#).

NCEA endorsements recognise higher levels of performance by students. NCEA certificates and courses can be endorsed with Merit and Excellence.

[Certificate endorsement](#) at NCEA Level 3 enables students who gain 50 credits with Excellence at Level 3, to gain a certificate endorsed with Excellence. Candidates who gain 50 credits with Merit or Excellence at Level 3, can gain a certificate endorsed with Merit.

[Course endorsement](#) enables students to gain Excellence and Merit endorsement in individual courses (subjects). Students receive an Excellence endorsement for a course if they gain 14 credits at Excellence level, while students gaining 14 credits at Merit (or Merit and Excellence) will gain a Merit endorsement. To ensure students are capable of performing well in both modes of assessment, at least three of the 14 credits must be from internally assessed standards, and three from externally assessed standards.

More information on certificate endorsement (NCEA qualification endorsement statistics) can also be found at [secondary school statistics consolidated files](#).

Further information

The [NCEA subject resources](#) page provides details of examinations by subject, including past examination papers and marking schedules.

[Further information on NCEA](#).

Romania: Diploma de bacalaureat

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated 2016

Country

- Romania

Education context

The national pre-university educational system includes the following levels:

early education (age 0–6);

primary education including the preparatory grade and grades 1–4;

secondary education, comprising:

- lower secondary education (*gymnasium* – grades 5–8);
- upper secondary education, (typically at age 15), which can be:
 - **high school education** (grades 9–12/13) organised into two cycles: lower high-school (grades 9–10) and upper high-school (grades 11–12/13);
 - **vocational education and training** (3 years minimum, in vocational schools)
- **post-secondary, non-tertiary education** comprising post-high-school education.

High school education comprises the following pathways and profiles:

- **Theoretical pathway** (humanities and sciences profiles)
- **Vocational pathway** (military, theological, sports, arts, pedagogical profiles)
- **Technological pathway** (technical, services and economics, and natural resources and environmental protection profiles).

Compulsory education lasts 11 years (preparatory to grade 10, age 17).

At the end of grade 8 (at age 15) the students can take a national test (called *Evaluare nationala* - the National Evaluation).

Graduates of grade 8 can continue their studies at high school or in vocational education and training.

For the final high-school grades (grade 12 grade for day courses, grade 13 for evening courses) there are 37 weeks (of which 33 are courses' weeks and 4 are for the *bacalaureat* examination).

Qualifications are set by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research according to the National Qualifications Register.

Modern/foreign languages (including English) are taught from primary level. In lower secondary education, pupils study two compulsory modern languages and in high school they can add a third modern/foreign language. Modern languages are also taught in vocational schools.

In pre-university education there are intensive and bilingual classes, especially at high school level. A bilingual programme means that the students may have (according to the profile) 5-6 classes of a foreign/modern language and they also study the Geography, History, Culture and Civilisation of the country whose language is studied.

A 10-point system is used in pre-university education, with 5 being the minimum pass mark.

Structure

High school graduates can take the *examen national de bacalaureat* in order to obtain the *diploma de bacalaureat*;

The *bacalaureat* exam is organised each school year in two sessions, high school graduates are allowed to sit one or the other.

To achieve the *bacalaureat* candidates must take three oral exams and three written exams.

Graduates having attended high school in minority languages (Hungarian, German etc.) take Hungarian/German etc. language and literature as an additional fourth oral and written examination.

The *bacalaureat* exam is a national examination and includes oral (A–D tests) and written (E tests) examinations. The tests' contents are devised under the coordination of The National Center of Evaluation and Examination. The C test evaluates the four linguistic competences in a foreign/modern language (reading, writing, listening and speaking) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Subject areas

Exam A and E a) – Romanian language and literature (compulsory)

Exam B and E b) – mother tongue and literature (Hungarian, German, Ukrainian, Turkish, Slovakian, Croatian, Serbian) for candidates having attended the high-school education in minority languages

Exam C – foreign languages (English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Hebrew) – compulsory

Exam D – digital competences – compulsory

Exam E c) – compulsory subject (history or mathematics) depending on the academic profile and specialisation

Exam E d) – subject of candidate's choice, depending on the academic pathway, profile and specialisation:

- humanities profile: geography, psychology, economics, sociology, philosophy, logic and argumentation;
- sciences profile and military profile: physics, chemistry, biology, informatics (computer programming);
- services and economics profile: geography, psychology, economics, logic and argumentation;
- technical profile/natural resources and environmental protection profile: physics, chemistry, biology;
- vocational pathway, excepting military profile: geography, logic and argumentation, psychology, economics, philosophy.

Levels

Considered to be broadly comparable in standard to UK Level 3.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

For the oral *bacalaureat* exams the candidate receives certificates for linguistic and digital competences recognition (including the descriptive supplement in Europass format), as follows:

- Certificate of linguistic oral competence in Romanian;
- Certificate of linguistic oral competence in the mother tongue for the graduates having attended the high-school education in minority languages (Hungarian, German etc.);
- Certificate of linguistic competences in a modern/foreign language;

- Certificate of digital competences.

The C test of the *bacalaureat* exam evaluates the four linguistic competences in a foreign/modern language (reading, writing, listening and speaking) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Written examination subjects are marked out of 100, then converted to the 10-point scale.

For each written exam of the *bacalaureat* exam, 5 (five) is the minimum pass mark but a student will be considered as having passed the *bacalaureat* examination if the final average (for written exams) is minimum 6 (six);

High school graduates are awarded with *Diploma de merit* if they accomplish two conditions:

- a minimum grade average of 9.5 at the end of grades 9-12/13;
- 10 as final grade average at the *bacalaureat* exam.

Assessment

The oral *bacalaureat* exams are:

- Exam A – Romanian language and literature, a public examination where the candidate is requested to answer questions in front of two teachers;
- Exam B – mother tongue and literature, similar to exam A but only for candidates having attended high school education in minority languages (Hungarian, German etc.);
- Exam C – foreign languages. Candidates choose between English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Hebrew, at the point of registration;
- Exam D – assessing digital competences;

The written *bacalaureat* exams are:

- Exam E a) – Romanian language and literature.
- Exam E b) – mother tongue and literature organised just like Exam E a) but only for students having attended high school education in minority languages (Hungarian, German etc.)
- Exam E c) – a compulsory subject (history or mathematics) which depends on the candidate's academic profile and specialisation.
- Exam E d) – a subject which depends on the academic profile and the qualification/specialization and is chosen by the candidate.

No computers are allowed in these exams, and they are manually graded by two separate correctors.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

To pass the *bacalaureat* examination candidates have to accomplish simultaneously the following conditions:

- attend/take oral exams A, B, C, D;
- attend all the written exams (E) and score at least 5 (five) in each;
- the final average (for written exams) is a minimum of 6 (six).

High school graduates who attended but did not pass the *bacalaureat* examination from 2003, are allowed to ask for recognition of the results of passed exams.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some UK HEPs regard the *bacalaureat* as acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

From 2010-11 the procedure for the *bacalaureat* exam followed a new set of elements for preventing fraud.

Candidates eliminated for fraud or attempts at fraud can no longer sit for the following exams of the same session, and the results of the passed exams are not recognized for the next *bacalaureat* session. Candidates eliminated for fraud are not allowed to sit for the next 2 sessions of the *bacalaureat* exam, and when they do, they sit for all exams.

Entry of candidates in the examination made without fulfilling the legal requirements or candidates receiving information, documents or other forms of aid obtained fraudulently, which helped them solve the exam topics, lead to the candidates' elimination. If a local grading committee detected fraud all candidates are declared rejected.

Candidates who violate the rules can be eliminated from the examination even if none of the prohibited items found during examination were used.

Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, to ensure a higher degree of objectivity, the evaluation/grading of the written exams is done in another county.

The whole process of preparing the *bacalaureat* can be audited, so as to ensure the security of items / subjects and assessment and grading standards/scales. Similarly, all activities of transfer / acquisition / distribution of variants of topics and grading scales are monitored in real time.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

For 2015-16 the two sessions of the *bacalaureat* exam were scheduled for the following periods: June 13th – July 16th and August 16th – September 1st, 2016.

Results for the first session of the *bacalaureat* exams were available from 12 July 2016. Results from the second session of the *bacalaureat* exams were available from 29 August 2016.

Following publication of each session's results, students have two to three days to make any queries about their results. Queries will usually be resolved within this timeframe, and final results are published on 16 July and 1 September 2016 respectively.

Qualification dates notes

Current

Reporting and certification information

- The results of the *bacalaureat* are published on <http://bacalaureat.edu.ro> (in Romanian)
- After declining between 2004 and 2010, the pass rate in the *bacalaureat* has increased from 45.7% in 2011 to 67.8% in 2015.
- The table shows the number of successful candidates with grades obtained:

Grades

Year	6-6.99	7-7.99	8-8.99	9-9.99	10
2013	30,136	27,023	25,511	16,264	126
2014	25,385	25,176	25,348	15,752	108
2015	26,063	28,738	31,512	21,937	81

Progression information/access to HE within home country

High school graduates are awarded with the high school graduation diploma (*diploma de absolvire a liceului*). These graduates can continue their studies in post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Access to higher education is only for high school graduates who have passed the *bacalaureat* exam.

The *bacalaureat* exams are monitored through a specific procedure designed by The National *Bacalaureat* Commission; the procedure involves video and audio cameras surveillance.

Further information

Eurydice: eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurypedia_en.php

For more information about education in Romania see the government website: www.edu.ro (in Romanian)

Singapore: Singapore-Cambridge GCE A level

Last updated

11 February 2019

Last verified

11 February 2019

Updated July 2016

Country

- Singapore

Education context

Primary phase – six years of compulsory education.

Secondary phase – four to five years students placed in Special, Express, Normal (Academic) or Normal (Technical) course depending on performance in primary school leaving examinations.

Students who have done well for their PSLE can also opt for the direct six-year Integrated Programme, which removes the GCE O-levels at the end of the fourth year. This is to allow the schools and students to use the time freed up from preparing for the GCE 'O' Levels to engage in other academic or non-academic curriculum. Students will have school-based assessments to measure their progress. The programme leads to A-level examinations or other qualifications (such as International Baccalaureate).

- Students in Special / Express courses take GCE O levels.
- Students on Normal courses take GCE N levels after four years and progress to GCE O levels in their fifth year.
- All students take part in at least one co-curricular activity.

Pre-university phase – two-year junior college or three-year centralised institute course. The current curriculum was introduced in 2006 to emphasise breadth of learning and flexibility. This involved the development of new syllabuses and examinations based on collaboration between the Singapore Ministry of Education (MoE), Singapore Examinations & Assessment Board (SEAB) and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Security Marking: Public

Document Owner: Qualifications Service Delivery Partner

Page **149** of **191**

Created:

Tuesday, 29
October 2024

The Singapore Cambridge GCE A level is conducted jointly by the Singapore Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). As a collaboration between the MOE and UCLES, the Singaporean A level is a different version of the international A level.

Under the curriculum candidates select subjects from three levels of study Higher 1 (H1), Higher 2 (H2) and Higher 3 (H3). H1 is broadly equivalent to AS and H2 to A level. H3 subjects are taken as an extension to H2 level (replacing the previous 's' paper) and allow more in-depth study and advanced content. They are not available in all subjects.

Subjects are divided into knowledge skills and content-based subjects. Knowledge skills subjects include General Paper, Knowledge and Inquiry and Project Work; content-based subjects are divided into languages, humanities and the arts, and mathematics and sciences.

The basic combination is:

- three H2 content-based subjects
- one H1 content-based subject
- H1 Mother Tongue (MT) language
- H1 General Paper (GP)
- H1 Project Work

Students must take at least one of the four content-based subjects from a contrasting discipline.

Students may also offer Knowledge and Inquiry in place of GP, or offer MT language & literature at H2 level. Academically strong students may also choose to take on an additional H1 or H2 subject OR up to two H3 subjects.

Subject areas

Discipline	Subject	H1	H2	H3
Knowledge Skills	General Paper	X		
	Project Work	X		
	Knowledge and Inquiry		X	

Languages	Chinese /Malay / Tamil	X		
	French	X		
	German	X		
	Japanese	X		
Humanities & the arts	Art	X	X	X
	Economics	X	X	X
	Geography	X	X	X
	History	X	X	X
	Literature in English	X	X	X
	China studies in English	X	X	X
	China studies in Chinese	X	X	
	India studies	X	X	
	English language & linguistics		X	
	General studies in Chinese	X		
	Chinese language & literature		X	X
	Malay language & literature		X	X

	Tamil language & literature		X	X
	Music		X	X
	Theatre studies & drama		X	
	Management of business		X	
	French		X	
	German		X	
	Japanese		X	
Mathematics & science	Biology	X	X	X
	Chemistry	X	X	X
	Physics	X	X	X
	Mathematics	X	X	X
	Computing		X	
	Principles of accounting		X	

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Grading of H1, H2 and H3 courses:

Security Marking: Public

Document Owner: Qualifications Service Delivery Partner

Page **152** of **191**

Created:

Tuesday, 29

October 2024

H1 and H2

A

B

C

D

E

S (sub-pass)

Ungraded

H3

Distinction

Merit

Pass

Ungraded

Students achieve a grade for each subject studied at each level.

Assessment

Examinations are taken in a single sitting at the end of pre-university education, with the exceptions below.

One H1 content-based subject may be sat at the end of the penultimate year of pre-university study (but not again in the final year).

H1 Mother Tongue language may be sat at the end of the penultimate year of pre-university study and again at the end of the final year, if required.

Project Work – examined at the end of the penultimate year of pre-university study only.

Most subjects have terminal examinations with a variety of forms, including structured questions, essay-based questions, and multiple choice. There may be only one paper or several.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The sub-components of any examination are combined to provide the overall grade. Students achieve a separate qualification for each subject studied.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Based on information provided, the H1 and H3 qualifications equate roughly to the size of an AS qualification (180 hours) and the H2 to the size of an A level (360 hours).

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Typically students will study three subjects to H2. Not all students will be offered the opportunity to take subjects at H3.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Mother Tongue languages – from June to September.

Other subjects – from late October to early December.

The results are usually released in March of the following year. Students will receive their result slips on the same day results are published. A level certificates will be available from May.

Further information is available from the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board

<https://www.seab.gov.sg/home/examinations/gce-a-level>

Qualification dates notes

Current. The current A level curriculum was introduced in 2006.

Reporting and certification information

For the exams taken in 2014, 91.4% of candidates achieved at least 3 H2 passes, with a pass in General Paper (GP) or Knowledge and Inquiry (KI). The total number of candidates was 14,185. More detailed information is not available.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The minimum threshold for application to Singapore universities is at least two H2 passes, an attempt in General Paper (GP) and a sub-pass in Mother Tongue Language (MT). The H2 subjects and GP must be taken at the same sitting.

Further information

Source: Ministry of Education: www.moe.gov.sg/education/pre-university/gce-a-level-curriculum

Spain: Título de Bachiller

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

New for 2016

The student receives the Título de Bachiller

The programme of study is referred to as Bachillerato.

Country

- Spain

Education context

The Spanish education system is decentralised into 17 autonomous regions. The Ministry determines core curricula as well as internal regulation and conditions for parity across regions. The regions can impose some of the subjects within the overall selection.

Regions are responsible for school inspections and quality assurance. The final diploma is valid throughout the country and awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

Structure

There are three possible options that students can take:

1. Science
2. Social sciences and humanities
3. Arts

The Bachillerato is a highly academic two-year programme of study which aims to prepare students for their chosen subjects at university, as well as achieve a comprehensive education, including optional subjects which may include other interests such as music or sports. Students do a minimum of 30 contact hours per week (there are slight variations between regions).

Subject areas

Regardless of which route, students do 9+ (8+ in Year 2) subjects:

- **Four compulsory core** (four hours per week each):

Science	Social sciences and humanities.	Arts
	Spanish	
	Foreign language	
	Philosophy (Year 1) – history (Year 2)	
Maths	Maths or Latin	Art fundamentals

Notes: *Maths curriculum differs for Sciences or Social sciences and humanities.

- **Two core** (four hours per week each), chosen from various options and slightly different in Years 1 & 2:

Science	Social Sciences and Humanities	Arts
Biology & geology (Year 1)	Contemporary history (Year 1)	Contemporary history (Year 1)
Technical drawing (Years 1 & 2)	Greek (Years 1 & 2)	Audiovisual culture (Years 1 & 2)
Physics & chemistry (Year 1)	Economy (Years 1 & 2)	Literature (Year 1)
Physics (Year 2)	Literature (year 1)	Performing arts (Year 2)
Chemistry (Year 2)	History of arts (Year 2)	Design (Year 2)
Biology (Year 2)	History of philosophy (Year 2)	
Geology (Year 2)	*Geography (Year 2)	

- **Two or three non-core subjects** (two hours per week each) out of a wider selection of options. Regions can add other specific subjects where one is the regional language.

- **One physical education** is compulsory and added to the list of non-core subjects for Year one.

Total: a minimum of nine+ in Year 1 and eight+ in Year 2, made up of six core and two or three non-core. More subjects could be added by regions, including local language.

Levels

Level 3 QCF qualification = Level 4 EQF qualification.

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

The Bachillerato is marked in a 0 – 10 grading scale. The overall grading system is not yet fully agreed or developed, but it is expected that it will not vary much from current system where a pass is 5 out of 10.

Assessment

Throughout the two years, schools evaluate students through a continuous evaluation system. Schools have independence on whether they use exams or other means of evaluation, but the norm is that both means are used for a final mark.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

60% is the average of individual subject marks at colleges, over the two years of the programme.

40% of the mark is a final state exam, currently under development.

Although it is not yet clear what the exact composition of the tests will include, the law (LOMCE) states that they must include an exam in at least seven subjects (four compulsory core, two chosen core and one non-core).

Guided/notional learning hours notes

The qualification takes two years and is comparable to three A levels (size band 4) for UK HE admissions purposes. Each year there are 35 weeks tuition at a minimum of 30 hours per week direct teaching hours, totalling over 2,000 teaching hours.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Some HEPs may wish to request specific marks in key subjects related to the course or degree the student is applying to, in addition to the overall Título de Bachiller result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Students have two calls to sit their final exams. These are expected to take place in late May and late summer. Results should be ready mid/late June and early September.

Qualification dates notes

The Título de Bachiller has been in operation since 1990 but the subjects, itineraries and weighting/testing system have varied slightly. This new system starts implementation in the academic year 2015/16, and the first cohort will be examined before summer 2017.

Reporting and certification information

Not available.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Students who have obtained the Título de Bachiller are entitled to direct access to university. Individual universities have the power to set specific entry requirements. Whatever these may be, 60% of the total access score must be students' marks in the Título de Bachiller.

Further information

Apart from Título de Bachiller, students can access University in Spain from various other qualifications:

- Técnico Superior de Formación Profesional (= HND)
- Técnico Superior de Artes Plásticas y Diseño
- Técnico Deportivo Superior

These students are normally granted some credits and start in year two or above at university.

Switzerland: Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis, certificat de maturité gymnasiale, attestato di maturità liceale (Baccalaureate)

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

New for 2016

Country

- Switzerland

Education context

The Swiss education system is characterised by federalism, and organised in a decentralised manner. The responsibility of the education in Switzerland is divided between the Confederation and the federal states (cantons).

There is a broad uniformity in the educational systems of the 26 cantons, although nomenclature and periods of study may vary.

Primary and lower secondary education usually covers nine years (six years primary school and three years lower secondary school; not counting two additional years of compulsory kindergarten).

On upper secondary level students have the choice between two pathways of general education (baccalaureate schools or upper secondary specialised schools) and vocational education and training (VET).

Education from primary level to the successful completion of a Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis and certificat de maturité gymnasiale and attestato di maturità liceale lasts a total of at least 12 school years. At least the final four years of this period are to be structured in a programme specifically designed as preparation for the Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis, certificat de maturité gymnasiale and attestato di maturità liceale.

In most cantons students enrol in a four-year baccalaureate programme from grade 9 onwards for four years.

The Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis, certificat de maturité gymnasiale and attestato di maturità liceale is awarded by the canton and recognised nationwide by the Confederation.

A Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis, certificat de maturité gymnasiale and attestato di maturità liceale can also be obtained in baccalaureate schools for adults or by taking

the central Swiss baccalaureate examinations (with previous autodidactic studies or attendance of a private baccalaureate preparatory school).

Structure

The ordinance on the recognition of baccalaureates and the identical regulation of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK/CDIP/CDPE) define the structure, subjects and assessment.

The cantonal baccalaureate schools teach on the basis of curricula, which have been adopted or approved by the canton, and are based on the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education framework curricula which apply nationwide.

The programme includes basic subjects, which all students have to complete, and an elective section consisting of a specialised subject and a complementary subject, and the baccalaureate essay.

Subject areas

There are ten basic subjects:

- First language
- A second national language
- A third language (a third national language, English, or Latin and Greek)
- Mathematics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- History
- Geography
- Artistic design and/or music

The specialised subject is selected from eight subjects or group of subjects:

- Ancient languages (Latin and/or Greek)
- A modern language (a third national language, English, Spanish or Russian)
- Physics and applied mathematics
- Biology and chemistry
- Economy and law

- Philosophy, pedagogy and psychology
- Artistic design
- Music

The complementary subject is selected from fourteen subjects. Not all subjects are offered at all schools.

The proportions of time allocated to the subjects are:

- Languages: 30% to 40%,
- Mathematics and natural sciences: 25% to 35%,
- Humanities and social science: 10% to 20%,
- Artistic design and/or music: 5% to 10%,
- 15% to 20% must be allocated to the elective section (specialised subject, complementary subject and baccalaureate essay).

The cantons fix the weekly teaching periods in line with these specifications.

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Switzerland uses a six-point grading scale:

- 6: Excellent
- 5.5: Very good
- 5: Good
- 4.5: Satisfactory
- 4: Pass
- 3.5 to 1: Fail

Assessment

During the programme all basic subjects, the specialised subject and the complementary subject are assessed by written and oral examinations. At the end of the baccalaureate programme, students sit a written baccalaureate examination in at

least five baccalaureate subjects; this may be supplemented by an oral examination. The baccalaureate examination subjects are the first language, a second national language, mathematics, the specialised subject and one more subject (according to cantonal regulation).

Also part of the final baccalaureate examination is the baccalaureate essay, a comprehensive, independently prepared paper, which students write and present. It is usually prepared in the second-last or last year of the baccalaureate programme.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The final grades for each of the assessed subjects are composed of the grade given in the school report of the last year (sometimes also the second last year) in which the subject was taught and – in the subjects of the baccalaureate examination – additionally of the grade awarded in the examination (arithmetic mean, rounded to the nearest full or half grade). The baccalaureate essay also contributes to the overall grade.

The Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis, certificat de maturité gymnasiale and attestato di maturità liceale is awarded if twice the sum of the deviation of all grades (usually for 12 subjects and the baccalaureate essay) lower than 4 is not higher than the sum of the deviations higher than 4; and not more than four grades are lower than 4.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

The cantons are free to fix the number of guided learning hours. On average students are given about 34 lessons a week (= 970 learning hours a year).

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to consider setting subject requirements in addition to the overall result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

The cantons (partially even the schools) are free to organise the dates of examination and publication of results. Most final examinations take place in June.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

The Gymnasialer Maturitätsausweis / certificat de maturité gymnasiale / attestato di maturità liceale entitles holders to enter cantonal universities or federal institutes of technology (ETH/EPFL) and universities of teacher education. Except for the disciplines medicine and sports no additional examinations or tests are to be taken. With additional requirements fulfilled (practical training), the baccalaureate also gives access to universities of applied sciences.

Further information

Eurydice: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Switzerland:Overview>

The Netherlands: Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO)

Last updated

8 September 2017

Last verified

1 August 2017

New for 2017

Country

- The Netherlands

Purpose

Primary education lasts eight years beginning at age four (with English introduced in the seventh year), after which pupils can choose between various streams of secondary education. Two of these streams, HAVO and VWO, offer general secondary education which prepares students for HE. The HAVO diploma is obtained after five years of study, and is the minimum entry requirement for admission to bachelor's programmes in the applied arts and sciences, in the type of higher education known as hoger beroepsonderwijs (HBO). HBO is in most cases offered by hogescholen (universities of applied sciences). The VWO diploma is obtained after completion of six years of study, and is required for admission to bachelor's programmes in research-orientated disciplines in the type of higher education known as wetenschappelijk onderwijs (WO). WO is offered by universiteiten (universities).

Education context

The VWO diploma grants access to both types of higher education in the Netherlands, i.e. to research-orientated bachelor's degree programmes, as well as bachelor's programmes in the applied arts and sciences. In some cases, the VWO may grant exemption from one year of study in a bachelor's programme in the applied arts and sciences.

For many bachelor's programmes, completion of a specific subject cluster is required for admission. For admission to a programme at a technical university, for example, the cluster science and technology is required. Students who have not completed this cluster can be admitted only after completing additional requirements.

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

The VWO diploma can be awarded after completion of one of two programmes: Atheneum or Gymnasium, the latter of which includes instruction in the classics (Latin and Greek). During the last three years of VWO (upper secondary education), students focus on completing the requirements of at least one of four subject clusters (profielen). Both Atheneum and Gymnasium students are required to complete a general education component as well as the subjects specific to their chosen cluster.

The four clusters are science and technology, science and health, economics and society, culture and society. Each cluster is designed to prepare students for related programmes of study at tertiary level, and fulfils entry requirements to HE in the Netherlands. Some subjects may be assessed internally in the penultimate year by means of examination, paper, or project.

A final examination consisting of eight subjects is taken by all VWO pupils nationally at the end of the last year. In addition, all VWO students must pass a maths quiz (rekentoets).

Subject areas

In the last three years of VWO, students complete the requirements for at least one subject cluster (profiel). The requirements, including the number of hours per subject according to the law on secondary education, are:

General Education Component: Atheneum

- Dutch language and literature: 480
- English language and literature: 400
- A second modern foreign language: 480
- Social studies:120
- General science:120
- Culture and fine arts:160
- Physical education:160

General Education Component: Gymnasium

- Dutch language and literature: 480
- English language and literature: 400
- Latin or Greek language and literature: 760
- Social studies: 120
- General science: 120

- Physical education: 160

Subject Cluster Requirements for both Atheneum and Gymnasium Cluster Science and Technology:

- Mathematics B: 600
- Physics: 480
- Chemistry: 440
- Choice of one of the following: nature, life, and technology: 440, computer science: 440, biology: 480, mathematics D: 440.

Subject Cluster Requirements for both Atheneum and Gymnasium Cluster Science and Health:

- Mathematics A: 520
- Biology: 480
- Chemistry: 440
- Choice of one of the following: nature, life, and technology: 440, geography: 440, physics: 480.

Subject Cluster Requirements for both Atheneum and Gymnasium Cluster Economics and Society:

- Mathematics A: 520
- Economics: 480
- History: 440
- Choice of one of the following: management and organisation: 440, geography: 440, social sciences: 440, modern foreign language: 480.

Subject Cluster Requirements for both Atheneum and Gymnasium Cluster Culture and Society:

- Mathematics C: 480
- History: 480
- Choice of one of the following: fine arts (art, music, drama, dance): 480, philosophy: 480, modern foreign language or Latin or Greek: 760.
- Choice of one of the following: geography: 440, social sciences: 440, economics: 480.

Levels

Acceptable as a group qualification satisfying general HE entrance requirements, and more specifically, entrance requirements to research-orientated higher education.

For further information on the qualification level, you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

10	uitmuntend	outstanding
9	zeer goed	very good
8	goed	good
7	ruim voldoende	very satisfactory
6	voldoende	satisfactory/pass
5	binja voldoende	almost satisfactory
4	onvoldoende	unsatisfactory
3	zeer onvoldoende	very unsatisfactory
2	slecht	poor
1	zeer slecht	very poor

It should be noted that grades of 1, 2, 3, 9, and 10 are rarely awarded.

Assessment

Students are assessed both internally by the school, and at the end of the sixth year via a centralised, national examination. To pass the national exam, the average grade cannot be lower than 5.5.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The final grade obtained for the VWO exam is determined by a student's marks on the final exam, the mark on the required math, quiz, and marks obtained in subjects that were not examined nationally. A final mark of 5 is permitted in only one of the subjects Dutch, English, and mathematics.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Qualification size as broken down under section 'Subject areas'.

This qualification does not currently attract UCAS Tariff points.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to consider setting subject requirements in addition to the overall result.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

Central, national exams start in mid to late May, the results are available approximately four weeks later.

Qualification dates notes

This qualification is current.

Further information

www.examenblad.nl/

<http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0004593/2015-11-25>

www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/voortgezet-onderwijs

USA: ACT

Last updated

10 April 2018

Last verified

10 April 2018

Updated 2016

Country

- USA

Education context

While the US Government provides funding and national standards for schools, authority over public (state-funded) school education in the US rests primarily with individual state departments of education. As most policies are set at the state and local levels, the school curriculum can vary from state to state and even between school districts within a state.

Formal education is generally mandatory from age 5 / 6 to 16, varying slightly by state. School-level education is organised into 'grades'. Grades K (kindergarten) – 12 correspond with Years 1–13 in the UK.

Age	Level of study	US grade	UK year
11 – 13	Middle school	6th – 8th	Years 7 – 9
14 – 18	High school	9th – 12th (freshman – senior)	Years 10 – 13

Although there is no national curriculum, the general content of the high school curriculum across the country has many consistencies. The state will usually set a list of basic required courses for high school graduation. These may include English, mathematics, foreign language, physical education, art and / or music, general science, and social studies (a subject that combines history, government and geography).

Students continue to have flexibility in choosing the level of their classes and elective subjects.

Many high schools will also have 'tracks' for students wishing to study a four-year university bachelor's degree (BA / BSc), pursue a vocational or technical degree at a two-year college, or enter the workforce following high school.

Students are generally assessed continually throughout the semester by a combination of tests, mid-term and final exams, essays, quizzes, homework assignments, classroom participation, group work, projects and attendance. This assessment culminates with a final grade for each course awarded at the end of the semester. Marks can be given as letters (A+, A, B+, B, etc), or as numbers out of 100%. These grades are averaged over the student's high school career, resulting in a Grade Point Average (GPA). Students may also receive a class rank, ranking his / her GPA amongst other members of his / her grade (year in school). On satisfactory completion of 12th grade and the state graduation requirements, the student receives a high school diploma (the requirements for which are set by each state).

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

The ACT is a standardised syllabus-based test aimed at university entrance.

There are two versions of the ACT, the ACT (without writing) and the ACT with writing. Both versions contain four multiple choice tests:

- English
- mathematics
- reading
- science

The ACT with writing includes an additional writing test.

Subject areas

The ACT is composed of four multiple choice tests.

Test area	No. of questions	Time allowed (mins)	Areas measured
English	75	45	Standard written English and rhetorical skills.
			Usage / Mechanics (45-60%)
			Rhetorical Skills (40-55%)

Test area	No. of questions	Time allowed (mins)	Areas measured
Mathematics	60	60	<p>Mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.</p> <p>Pre-algebra/Elementary Algebra (35-45%)</p> <p>Intermediate Algebra / Coordinate Geometry (30-40%)</p> <p>Plane Geometry / Trigonometry (25-35%)</p>
Reading	40	35	<p>Reading comprehension.</p> <p>Social Studies (25%)</p> <p>Natural Sciences (25%)</p> <p>Literary Narrative (25%) or Prose Fiction (25%) Humanities (25%)</p>
Science	40	35	<p>The interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.</p> <p>Test score based on all 40 questions.</p>
There is also an optional essay-based writing test.			
Optional Writing Test	1 prompt	40	<p>Writing skills emphasised in high school English classes and in entry- level</p>

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

Each ACT subject test score ranges from 1 to 36; all scores are integers.

The optional writing test is scored from 2–12. That score is the average of four domain scores – Ideas and Analysis, Development and Support, Organization, and Language Use and Conventions – which also range from 2–12.

Assessment

The mandatory subjects within the ACT (English, mathematics, reading, science) are all assessed through multiple choice tests ranging from 35 minutes to 60 minutes in length and between 40 and 75 items (see Structure, above). The optional writing test is a 40 minute essay-based test.

Tests are available on five occasions each year at designated test centres.

Each multiple choice question correctly answered is worth one raw point; incorrect answers are not penalised. Raw scores are converted to ‘scale scores.’ Composite scores and each subject test score range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). The composite score is the average of the four mandatory test scores, rounded to the nearest whole number. To improve the result, students can retake the test: 57% of students who retake the ACT improve their scores, 21% score the same, and 22% see their scores decrease.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The composite score is the average of the four test scores earned during a single test administration, rounded to the nearest whole number. Individual forms of the ACT tests are equated to ensure comparability across tests.

Students taking the optional writing test receive five additional scores reflecting performance on the writing test only: a writing test score (scaled 2–12) and four domain scores (also scaled 2–12).

Guided/notional learning hours notes

Although syllabus-based there is no formal teaching time associated with the ACT.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to make offers using a range of indicators – including GPA, AP results, ACT / SAT scores – for example requiring an overall GPA of 4.0 together with a score of 29 in their ACT.

Student choice – admissions tests in the US allow students to choose which results they allow universities to see. They may choose only to show their best results, or may prefer to show results from all test occasions. Some universities do request that all attempts are disclosed.

Superscoring – some US universities allow, or prefer, the process of ‘superscoring’ results of the admissions tests. This means that for students who have sat tests on more than one occasion, the university selects the best combination of subject scores achieved by the candidate, combining different subject scores from different test occasions if this provides a ‘better’ composite score than a single occasion. This advantages the student, by providing a higher ‘score’ but may also benefit the university in terms of measures of student average scores on entry.

Access to admissions tests – although it has traditionally been the case that students would have sat for either the SAT or the ACT tests, it is becoming increasingly common in the US for students to sit for both – this is seen as an advantage since some students perform significantly better in one compared to the other.

Equivalence to SAT: Because the SAT test changed significantly in March 2016, ACT does not recognize any “concordance” between ACT and new SAT scores at this time. Until such time that sufficient data exists to draw reliable conclusions, there is no concordance table that is reliable.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

ACT tests are available on five opportunities per year in September, October, December, April and June.

Scores are generally available for viewing 2.5 weeks after test dates; reports are released three – eight weeks after.

Qualification dates notes

Current. Established in 1959. Optional writing test available from 2005.

Reporting and certification information

2015 results – % of students at each score range

ACT points	English %	Mathematics %	Reading %	Science %
33 – 36	5	3	6	3
28 – 32	10	10	14	7
24 – 27	16	20	15	20
20 – 23	23	18	24	29
16 – 19	19	34	21	24
13 – 15	14	15	14	10
1 – 12	13	1	7	6

Source: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-car...>

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Students are assessed for university entry based on a variety of information including:

Grade Point Average (GPA) – the following is a general percentage letter grade scale for classes taken at US schools:

Letter grade	Percentage	GPA
A	90 – 100%	4.0
B	80 – 89%	3.0
C	70 – 79%	2.0
D	65 – 69%	1.0

Letter grade	Percentage	GPA
F (fail)	Below 65%	0

Class rank within the year group.

Rigour of classes taken (AP, honours, regular).

Admissions tests: ACT / SAT I / SAT II (subject tests) are used to supplement secondary school record and help admissions officers put local data – such as grades and class rank – in a national context.

Universities often require a threshold score in admissions tests.

The most competitive US institutions will require ACT students to take the ACT with writing. ACT or SAT I on their own are not normally sufficient for competitive HE admissions.

Further information

General information: www.act.org

Results: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-car...>

USA: Advanced Placement (AP)

Last updated

2 July 2018

Last verified

2 July 2018

Updated 2016

Countries

Education context

While the US government provides funding and national standards for schools, authority over public (state-funded) school education in the US rests primarily with individual state departments of education. As most policies are set at the state and local levels, the school curriculum can vary from state to state and even between school districts within a state.

Formal education is generally mandatory from age 5/6 to 16, varying slightly by state. School-level education is organised into ‘grades’. Grades K (kindergarten) – 12 correspond with years 1–13 in the UK.

Age	Level of study	US grade	UK year
11 – 13	Middle school	6th – 8th	Years 7 – 9
14 – 18	High school	9th – 12th (Freshman – Senior)	Years 10 – 13

Although there is no national curriculum, the general content of the high school curriculum across the country has many consistencies. The state will usually set a list of basic required courses for high school graduation. These may include English, mathematics, foreign language, physical education, art and / or music, general science, and social studies (a subject that combines history, government and geography).

Students continue to have flexibility in choosing the level of their classes and elective subjects.

Many high schools will also have ‘tracks’ for students wishing to attend a four-year university course (BA / BSc), pursue a vocational or technical degree at a two-year college or enter the workforce following high school.

Students are generally assessed continually throughout the semester via a combination of tests, mid-term / final exams, essays, quizzes, homework assignments, classroom participation, group work, projects and attendance. This assessment culminates with a final grade for each course awarded at the end of the semester. Marks can be given as letters (A+, A, B+, B, etc), or as numbers out of 100%. These grades are averaged over the student's high school career, resulting in a Grade Point Average (GPA). Students may also receive a class rank, ranking his / her GPA amongst other members of his / her grade (year in school). On satisfactory completion of 12th grade and the state graduation requirements, the student receives a high school diploma (the requirements for which are set by each state).

Awarding organisation

- International

Structure

Advanced Placement (AP) exams and courses were introduced to be at first year university standard. They were called Advanced Placement because if students did well enough they would bypass initial university requirements for initial study in relevant subjects. Although excellent performance does still allow for exemption from initial course study on some university courses, this is at the discretion of each US university, and the AP has become more associated with the high school provision for more able honours students – often becoming the de facto honours curriculum, and is commonly used as an admissions tool by universities. All AP courses are designed to be one-year courses.

High schools may seek AP authorisation of their courses, undergoing an audit process – this allows the use of the AP designation on students' transcripts. However, this is not required, and schools can develop their own courses for subjects and students can still sit for the AP exam. As a national course and examination the AP provides a national standard at a higher level than most high school courses that are familiar to universities.

Each subject has a Development Committee, composed of college faculty and secondary AP teachers. Their role is to:

- develop course description / curriculum
- determine general content and ability level of each exam
- determine requirements for course syllabi
- write and review exam questions

They also guide and review research and data analyses undertaken – including curriculum and standard-setting studies to ensure alignment of course and exam content.

Courses are typically taken over a year during the students' 10th, 11th and 12th grade of school – most commonly in the last two years of high school.

The AP examinations are based on the AP course curriculum and are generally three hours in length. Apart from studio art exams, which have portfolio assessments, AP exams contain multiple-choice and writing (free-response) sections. World languages also have a speaking component and the music theory exam has a sight-singing task.

These are summative examinations, taken in May, with results published in early July.

Subject areas

AP courses and examinations are currently available in 37 subjects:

Art history	
Biology	Macroeconomics
Calculus AB	Microeconomics
Calculus BC	Music theory
Chemistry	Physics 1 and Physics 2
Chinese language and culture	Physics C: electricity and magnetism
Computer science A	Physics C: mechanics
English language and composition	Psychology
English literature and composition	Spanish language and culture
Environmental science	Spanish literature and culture
European history	Statistics
French language and culture	Studio art: 2-D design
German language and culture	Studio art: 3-D design
Government and politics: comparative	Studio art: drawing
Government and politics: United States	United States history
Human geography	World history
Italian language and culture	AP Capstone: Research
Japanese language and culture	AP Capstone: Seminar
Latin	Computer Science Principles (starting 2016-17)

The new Physics courses and exams (1 and 2) underwent the AP Redesign process and the exams for Physics 1 and Physics 2 are very different compared to the old Physics B exam. Students must now demonstrate their mastery of the content, concepts and mathematical routines through application of the science practices. Students completing Physics 1 OR Physics 2 should be able to go on to the Physics C courses (these are Calculus-based). The College Board recommended that if universities use / used Physics B as an entry credential, they should accept Physics 1 or Physics 2 instead.

Physics 1 and 2 are sequential and Physics 1 has to be taken before Physics 2 (but the exams can be taken in the same year). They are both Algebra-based Physics courses and are both one-year courses. Physics C courses are Calculus-based.

Levels

Level 3 – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

AP exam scores are equated to ensure comparability over time and within a given year. They are reported on a 5 point scale:

5	Extremely well qualified*
4	Well qualified*
3	Qualified*
2	Possibly qualified**
1	No recommendation**

* Qualified to receive college credit or Advanced Placement.

** No recommendation to receive college credit or advanced placement.

These definitions are recommendations that the College Board provides to colleges and universities. However, each college decides for which scores it will accept for credit or placement.

Assessment

The AP examinations are generally three hours in length. Apart from studio art, which have portfolio assessments, AP exams contain multiple-choice and writing (free-response) sections. These are summative examinations, taken in May, with results published in early July.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

The assessment components (generally multiple-choice and free-response) scores are weighted and combined into a composite score. Information on weighting for different subjects is available

at: <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/descriptions/index...>

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is no official “guided learning hours” given for AP courses by the College Board. Size is based on a typical course teaching time of 135 hours per year, plus 30 hours study time – a total of 165 hours.

Key issues for UK HE admissions

Please note that UK universities create their own entry requirements using AP exams and generally require a high school diploma in addition.

Universities and colleges may wish to make offers using a range of indicators – including GPA, AP results, ACT/SAT scores – for example requiring an overall GPA of 4.0 together with qualifying scores on two AP tests (3 and above). UK universities generally require a high school diploma in addition to AP exam grades.

Student access to admissions tests: Not all schools and colleges in the US provide AP courses or tests; students may not have had the opportunity to take these. Students taking the AP tests will generally take them in only two or three subjects. It is also the case that it is becoming more common for students to take multiple admissions tests; this may include both the AP and SAT II tests.

Student choice: although a formal system of ‘student choice’ does not operate for AP results students may withhold scores from US universities.

Note that these tests are widely taken in Canada and were offered in more than 120 countries outside North America in May 2016.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

AP tests are administered over the first two weeks in May each year. Scores are reported in early July.

Given the number of exams and differences in state systems, students receive them throughout the month.

Qualification dates notes

Current - AP courses and exams are accredited by the College Board and administered by ETS – the College Board was formed in 1900 to develop common entrance exams for university. The College Board first acquired administration of the Advanced Placement programme in 1955.

Reporting and certification information

~4.7 million AP examinations were taken in 2016 by ~2.6 million students worldwide.

~20,000 high schools in the US and ~1,000 outside the US offered at least one AP course formally.

2014 largest subject grade distribution results:

Exam score	Calculus AB	English language	English literature	United States history
	% At	% At	% At	% At
5	24.6	9.6	7.7	11.0
4	16.6	17.9	17.8	21.3
3	17.7	28.4	29.6	20.1
2	10.7	30.1	33.0	28.0
1	30.5	14.1	11.9	19.6
Students (N)	294,072	505,244	397,477	462,766
3 or higher %	58.9	55.8	55.0	52.4
Mean score	2.94	2.79	2.76	2.76

<https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap> – all results available at this source.

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Students are assessed for university entry based on a variety of information including:

Grade Point Average (GPA) – The following is a general percentage / letter grade scale for classes taken at US schools:

Letter grade	Percentage	GPA
A	90 – 100%	4.0
B	80 – 89%	3.0
C	70 – 79%	2.0
D	65 – 69%	1.0
F (fail)	below 65%	0

class rank within the year group;

rigour of classes taken (AP, honours, regular).

Admissions tests: ACT/SAT I/SAT II (subject tests) / AP subject exams – used to supplement secondary school record and help admission officers put local data – such as grades and class rank – in a national context. Universities often require a threshold score in admissions tests.

Further information

Sources:

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/index.html (course information at subject level)

<https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/ap> (performance data)

AP Course Ledger (publicly available) listing all authorized AP courses by high school: <https://apcourseaudit.epiconline.org/ledger/>

USA: SAT and SAT Subject Tests

Last updated

1 December 2016

Last verified

1 December 2016

Updated 2016

Countries

Education context

While the US Government provides funding and national standards for schools, authority over public (state-funded) school education in the US rests primarily with individual state departments of education. As most policies are set at the state and local levels, the school curriculum can vary from state to state and even between school districts within a state.

Formal education is generally mandatory from age five/six to 16, varying slightly by state. School-level education is organised into 'grades'. Grades K (kindergarten) – 12 correspond with years 1 –13 in the UK.

Age	Level of study	US grade	UK year
11 – 13	Middle school	6th – 8th	Years 7 – 9
14 – 18	High school	9th – 12th (freshman – senior)	Years 10 – 13

Although there is no national curriculum, the general content of the high school curriculum across the country has many consistencies. The state will usually set a list of basic required courses for high school graduation. These may include English, mathematics, foreign language, physical education, art and / or music, general science, and social studies (a subject that combines history, government and geography).

Students continue to have flexibility in choosing the level of their classes and elective subjects.

Many high schools will also have 'tracks' for students wishing to study a four-year bachelor's degree (BA / BSc), pursue a vocational or technical degree at a two-year college, or enter the workforce following high school.

Students are generally assessed continually throughout the semester by a combination of tests, mid-term / final exams, essays, quizzes, homework assignments, classroom

participation, group work, projects and attendance. This assessment culminates with a final 'grade' for each course awarded at the end of the semester. Marks can be given as letters (A+, A, B+, B, etc), or as numbers out of 100%. These grades are averaged over the student's high school career, resulting in a Grade Point Average (GPA). Students may also receive a class rank, ranking his /her GPA amongst other members of his/her grade (year in school). On satisfactory completion of 12th grade and the state graduation requirements, the student receives a 'high school diploma' (the requirements for which are set by each state).

Structure

The SAT is a college readiness assessment connecting students to post-secondary education. It is widely used for university entrance in the US and around the world. They are independent of the high school syllabus taken by students.

A new version of the SAT was introduced in March 2016 in the US and in May 2016 outside the US for the first time. The specifications that follow refer to the new exam.

There are two types of SAT tests.

SAT

Designed to measure reasoning alongside a clearer, stronger focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings most important for college and career readiness and success, the test covers two areas:

- Evidence-Based Reading and Writing
- Mathematics

The Essay is an optional component of the SAT.

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Mathematics is made up of:

- 65-minute Reading test
- 35-minute Writing and Language test
- 25-minutes No Calculator Math test
- 55-minute Calculator Math test

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math test time: 3 hours

Optional Essay test time: 50 minutes

SAT Subject Tests

One-hour long content-based multiple-choice tests available in 20 subjects in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics, and science. For SAT

Subject Tests, students can take up to three tests per sitting but can take as many SAT Subject Test as they wish up to the 20 available in total.

Subject areas

SAT – test areas: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Mathematics, and optional Essay.

The SAT is on a 400 –1600 point score scale (sum of two sections).

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and the Math section are each scored on a 200 – 800 point scale.

Scores for the optional Essay section are reported separately. The Essay has three scores associated with it, and these scores are not added up to a total score. Students receive a score of 2 – 8 for each of the categories: Reading, Analysis, and Writing.

SAT Subject Tests: 20 specific subjects in five general subject areas of English, history, languages, mathematics, and science.

One-hour multiple-choice test scored on a 200 – 800 point scale.

Category	SAT Subject Tests	
English	Literature	
History	US history	World history
Mathematics	Mathematics Level1	Mathematics Level2
Science	Biology E / M	
	Physics	Chemistry
	Spanish	German
	Spanish with Listening	German with Listening
	Chinese with Listening	Italian
	French	Latin
	French with Listening	Modern Hebrew
Languages	Korean with Listening	Japanese with Listening
Levels		

Level 3 – acceptable as a group qualification satisfying HE general entrance requirements.

For further information on the qualification level you may wish to refer to [UK NARIC](#), which is the UK body responsible for providing comparability of overseas qualifications.

Grading

SAT

The redesigned SAT reports one total score, two section (domain) scores, three test scores (plus additional Essay scores), two cross-test scores, and seven subscores.

The SAT gives credit for every correct response but does not deduct points for incorrect answers (rights-only scoring).

Total score scale ranging from 400 to 1600 (sum of two sections). Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing; 200 to 800 for Math;

Essay results reported separately: 2 to 8 on each of three dimensions for Essay.

Average scores and percentiles are given at national, state and school levels so that student achievement can be compared and ranked. Benchmarks for each section of the SAT are provided to show college readiness. Detailed feedback in students' online score report show which skills need the most improvement.

Both the SAT and the PSAT were recently redesigned. The old SAT was on a 2,400 point scale (three sections with maximum scores of 800 on each). The new SAT is on a 1,600 point scale (two sections, maximum scores of 800 on each) and a stand-alone essay that receives additional scores.

The redesigned SAT Suite (three different exams) uses a common score scale, providing consistent feedback across assessments to help educators and students monitor growth across grades and to identify areas in need of improvement. The most difficult reading, writing, and math questions are not included on the PSAT, therefore the total number of points a student can score is reduced (from 1,600 to 1,520).

SAT Subject Tests

Raw scores are calculated based on the number of correct or incorrect questions. 1 point for correct questions, $\frac{1}{4}$ point deduction for each incorrect 5-choice questions, $\frac{1}{3}$ point deduction for each 4-choice questions, $\frac{1}{2}$ point deduction for each 3-choice questions. Raw scores are equated to a scaled score (reported on a 200 – 800 scale). No points are deducted for unanswered questions.

SAT Subject Test scores are reported on a scale from 200 – 800. Subscores on the Subject Tests are used to compute the total score, but their individual contributions differ between the different tests. Subscores are reported on a 20 – 80 scale. For the

French, German, and Spanish with Listening Tests, the reading subscore counts twice as much as the Listening subscore. For the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean tests, subscores are weighted equally.

Average scores and percentiles are given at national, state and school levels so that student achievement can be compared and ranked.

Assessment

The SAT has a range of assessment forms including multiple-choice, essay and student response (mathematics). The overall assessment time is three hours.

Test area	Points	Time allowed (mins)	Form of test
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	200 – 800		Multiple choice
			Passage based
			Key features: emphasis on words in context; emphasis on command of evidence; inclusion of informational graphics; and specified range of text complexity.
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	200 – 800	100 min	
		Reading test: 65 min	
		Writing & Language test: 35 min	
Mathematics	200 – 800		Multiple choice
			Student produced responses
			Four Content Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">Heart of AlgebraProblem Solving and Data AnalysisPassport to Advanced Math

- Additional Topics in Math

Prompts and passage based

Key features: use of common prompt; emphasis on analysis of argument; and use of clear, powerful evaluation criteria.

Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; students produce a written analysis of a provided source text.

	2 – 8 on each of three dimensions for	
Essay (optional)	Essay	50 min

The SAT Subject Tests are all multiple-choice although some languages have additional Listening elements. Each test is one hour long.

Contribution of assessment components to overall grade

SAT

Students will receive a score between 200 – 800 for each of the two sections (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Mathematics). These are combined to give a total score ranging from 400 to 1600.

Students who take the optional Essay will receive an additional separate score of 2 – 8 for each of the categories: Reading, Analysis, and Writing.

SAT Subject Tests

Students will receive a score between 200 – 800 for each Subject Test.

Guided/notional learning hours notes

There is no formal teaching time associated with any SAT test.

UCAS size bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

UCAS grade bands

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

Key issues for UK HE admissions

HEPs may wish to make offers using a range of indicators – including GPA, AP results, ACT / SAT scores.

Student choice – admissions tests in the US allow students to choose which results they allow universities to see. Students may choose only to show their best results, or may prefer to show results from all test occasions. Some universities do request that all attempts are disclosed.

Access to admissions tests – although it has traditionally been the case that students would have sat for either the SAT or the ACT tests, it is becoming increasingly common in the US for students to sit for both. This is seen as an advantage since some students perform significantly better in one compared to the other.

There are published equivalences ‘concordance’ of test scores for the redesigned SAT to old SAT and a derived concordance of the redesigned SAT and ACT test. These are summarised in the ‘Additional information’ section below and a reference to the full information about this agreement is also given.

Note that these tests are widely taken outside of the US, particularly in Canada, East Asia, and the Middle East.

Timing of assessments/results for learners

SAT tests are national and available on seven occasions each year (October, November, December, January, March, May and June) in the US and on six occasions outside the US (not March admin).

SAT Subject Tests are national and available on six occasions each year although not all subjects are available on each occasion (October, November, December, January, May and June).

Results are available about three weeks after the test is taken.

Students cannot take SAT and SAT Subject Tests on the same day.

Qualification dates notes

Current. SATs are owned and operated by College Board – formed in 1900 to develop common entrance exams. SAT first administered in 1926.

Reporting and certification information

SAT percentiles: This data will be available in Fall/Winter 2016.

SAT Subject Test data is available at: professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-subject/scores/data

Progression information/access to HE within home country

Students are assessed for university entry based on a variety of information including:

Academic performance: GPA – the following is a general percentage / letter grade scale for classes taken at US schools:

Letter grade	Percentage	Grade Point Average
A	90 – 100%	4.0
B	80 – 89%	3.0
C	70 – 79%	2.0
D	65 – 69%	1.0
F (fail)	Below 65%	0

Rigour of classes taken (AP, honours, regular).

Class rank within the year group.

Admissions tests – ACT or SAT/ SAT Subject Tests are used to supplement secondary school record and help admission officers put local data – such as grades and class rank – in a national context. Universities often require a threshold score in admissions tests.

Students may take two to three SAT Subject Tests of their choice.

ACT or SAT on their own are not normally sufficient for competitive HE admissions. Candidates would be expected to offer SAT Subject Tests and / or show quality/rigor of academic classes, such as APs.

Further information

Sources:

www.khanacademy.org/sat

collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/registercollegereadiness.collegeboard.org

Concordance:

The College Board provides concordance tools to help students, parents, college admission officers and others compare scores on the redesigned SAT with those on the

old SAT, given before March 2016. Because the two tests are different, their scores are not equivalent — concordance is the only way to make comparisons between them.

- Concordance to compare scores on the redesigned SAT with those on the old SAT, given before March
- Derived concordance between ACT and new SAT.

For detailed concordance tables and guides, see
collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/educators/higher-ed/scoring-changes/concordance