

## EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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**ANNOTATION:** Each country in Europe has a different education system and curriculum. And these have evolved over the centuries, based mainly on changing economic, cultural, social, and political conditions. So what does the education system look like in Poland today? In the European Union, there's no uniform educational policy. No higher institution intervenes or imposes specific requirements regarding education in these countries.

**KEY WORDS:** Educational establishments, potential, cultural and social, fundamental, religion or ethics.

The European Schools are official educational establishments controlled jointly by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. In all these countries they are legally regarded as public institutions. The mission of the European Schools is to provide a multilingual and multicultural education for nursery, primary and secondary level pupils. The European School system consists of two years of early education (nursery cycle), five years of primary and seven years of secondary education.

Pupils are admitted to the nursery school at the beginning of the school year in September of the calendar year in which the child reaches four years of age and pupils shall be admitted to primary year 1 at the beginning of the school year in September of the calendar year in which the child reaches six years of age.

Early Education is designed to: prepare children for a happy, healthy, responsible, and successful life develop children's personality and abilities support children's learning potential build up respect for others and the environment respect and appreciate children's own cultural and social identity, its values and those of others promote a European spirit.

Early Education is a fundamental part of life long education and learning and its central role is to support children's growth into ethical and responsible members of society. Teaching and learning in the early years supports and monitors children's physical and psychological wellbeing, including social, cognitive and emotional development and helps to prevent any difficulties that may arise by creating the best possible learning opportunities. Teaching and learning in the early years is holistic and different areas of development are not separated. In this document as well as in daily school life children, their experiences and actions are central.

It is important to strengthen children's healthy sense of self-esteem with the aid of positive learning experiences and to provide opportunities for diverse interaction with other people. Children's world of experiences shall be enriched and they should be assisted as they seek to find new areas of interest.

Pupils normally enter the secondary school in the calendar year in which they turn 11, following the successful completion of the European School's primary course or an equivalent course duly certified by an officially recognised school.

The seven years of secondary education are organised in the following way: for the first three years, pupils follow a common curriculum, in what is known as the observation cycle. Most subjects are taught in the mother tongue. As from the 2014-2015 school year, all pupils will begin to study a second foreign language (L3) from secondary year 1 onwards. In secondary year 3, all pupils study human sciences and religion or ethics in their first foreign language (L2).

In secondary year 2, Latin is offered as an option. In secondary year 3, pupils who chose Latin in year 2 continue to study it. For the other pupils, ICT is offered as an option.

In years 4 and 5 the compulsory course in integrated science is subdivided into physics, chemistry and biology, and pupils may choose between the advanced or the normal course in mathematics. Other options include economics, a third foreign language and Ancient Greek.

Years 6 and 7 form a unit which leads to the European Baccalaureate. Although there is a core of compulsory subjects, including mother tongue, Language 2, mathematics, a science, philosophy, physical education, history and geography, students have a wide range of further options and may choose to study some subjects for two periods, four periods or at an advanced level.

Pupils are regularly assessed and reports are issued three or four times a year. Assessment is based on both course-work and examinations, although formal examinations do not form part of the observation cycle. Criteria established by the Board of Governors are used to decide whether a pupil may move up to the year above at the end of the school year.

In each country there are five stages of education: early years, primary, secondary, further education (FE) and higher education (HE). The law states that full-time education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16. In England, compulsory education or training was extended to 18 in 2015. This full-time education does not need to be at a school and some parents choose to home educate. Before they reach compulsory school age, children can be educated at nursery if parents wish; the four governments all provide some form of universally available education for children from the age of three years old. Further education is non-compulsory, and covers non-advanced education which can be taken at further

(including tertiary) education colleges and higher education institutions (HEIs). The fifth stage, higher education, is study beyond A levels or BTECs (and their equivalent) which, for most full-time students, takes place in HEIs such as universities and colleges.

The National Curriculum, established in 1988, initially provided a framework for education in England and Wales between the ages of 5 and 18. Although the curriculum is compulsory, some private schools, home educators and (in England) academies and free schools design their own curricula.

Following devolution in 1999, the Welsh Government took responsibility for education in Wales and the curriculum began to differ from that of England. The National Curriculum for Wales was established and is now being succeeded by the Curriculum for Wales.

In Scotland, the equivalent is the Curriculum for Excellence. Scotland's qualifications system of National, Highers and Advanced Highers are very similar to Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2) courses in England.

Further education refers to post-secondary education in England and Wales. FE covers a wide curriculum of study and apprenticeships, including A-levels, BTEC, NVQ, and others, ranging from entry level to top level (3, equivalent to A level) that leads to higher education. The sixth form is post-16 study taken after completing GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) at school; academic further education are generally offered by sixth form colleges or by 11–18 schools with an attached sixth form. Further education colleges generally provide a wider curriculum and more vocational education, although not limited to it. Tertiary colleges provide both academic and vocational courses.

In the United Kingdom, higher education is offered by universities and other institutions (colleges, institutes, schools, and academies) and includes both research-oriented and higher professional education. Universities provide programmes that lead to a degree (bachelor's, master's, or doctorate) and non-degree programmes that lead to a vocational qualification such as a certificate or diploma. British higher education is valued around the globe for its quality and rigorous academic standards. Several British universities are ranked among the top universities in the world, including the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, Imperial College London, and UCL.

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