



European
Commission

Compulsory Education in Europe 2015/16

Eurydice – Facts and Figures

Education and
Training



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Country codes

BE	Belgium	PL	Poland
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	PT	Portugal
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	RO	Romania
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	SI	Slovenia
BG	Bulgaria	SK	Slovakia
CZ	Czech Republic	FI	Finland
DK	Denmark	SE	Sweden
DE	Germany	UK	United Kingdom
EE	Estonia	UK-ENG	England
IE	Ireland	UK-WLS	Wales
EL	Greece	UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
ES	Spain	UK-SCT	Scotland
FR	France		
HR	Croatia	BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
IT	Italy	CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus	IS	Iceland
LV	Latvia	LI	Liechtenstein
LT	Lithuania	ME	Montenegro
LU	Luxembourg	MK*	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HU	Hungary	NO	Norway
MT	Malta	RS	Serbia
NL	Nederland	TR	Turkey
AT	Austria		

* ISO code 3166. Provisional code which does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place on this subject at the United Nations.

Student's age-groups and duration of compulsory education, 2015/16

	Full-time education/schooling										Additional compulsory part-time	
	Starting age				Ending age					Duration (in years)	Ending age	
	4	5	6	7	14	15	16	17	18			
BE fr			6			15					9	18
BE de			6			15					9	18
BE nl			6			15					9	18
BG				7			16				9	na
CZ			6			15					9	na
DK			6				16				10	na
DE (12 Länder)			6			15					9	18
DE (5 Länder)			6				16				10	19
EE				7			16				9	na
IE			6				16				10	na
EL		5	6			15					10	na
ES			6				16				10	na
FR			6				16				10	na
HR		6	7			15					9	na
IT			6				16				10	na
CY	4 years + 8 months		5 years + 8 months			15					10 years + 4 months	na
LV		5		7			16				11	na
LT				7			16				9	na
LU	4		6				16				12	na
HU		5	6				16				11	na
MT		5					16				11	na
NL		5	6						18		13	na
AT			6			15					9	na
PL		5	6				15				10	18
PT			6						18		12	na
RO			6				17				11	na
SI			6			15					9	na
SK			6				16				10	na
FI				7			16				9	na
SE				7			16				9	na
UK-ENG		5					16				11	18
UK-WLS		5					16				11	na
UK-NIR	4						16				12	na
UK-SCT		5					16				11	na
BA		5	6				15				10	na
CH (2 cantons)			6			15					9	na
CH (7 cantons)		5	6			15					10	na
CH (17 cantons)	4		6			15					11	na
IS			6				16				10	na
LI			6			15					9	na
ME			6			15					9	na
MK *	5 years + 7 months						16	17	18		11/12/ 13	na
NO			6				16				10	na
RS	5 years + 5 months		6 years + 6 months			14 years + 5 months					9 years	na
TR		5 years + 6 months				17 years + 6 months					12	na

ISCED 2011 level 0 | ISCED 2011 level 1 | na Not applicable

* Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: ISO code 3166. Provisional code which does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place on this subject at the United Nations.

Belgium

Compulsory education lasts until the age of 18. However from age 15, only part-time schooling is compulsory. Students are therefore allowed to opt for a structured learning path which combines part-time vocational education in an educational institution and part-time employment.

Germany

- 12 *Länder*: Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bayern, Hamburg, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen (at *Gymnasium*), Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein.
- 5 *Länder*: Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Nordrhein-Westfalen (at other lower secondary education institutions apart from *Gymnasium*) and Thuringen.

Netherlands

The typical age to enter ISCED 1 for children is 5 years old. It is compulsory for young people to attend full-time education until the end of the school year in which they turn 16. However compulsory education still applies to students aged below 18. Under-18s who have finished their period of compulsory education are required to continue their schooling until they obtain a basic qualification. The aim is to ensure that young people do not leave school without at least a HAVO, VWO or MBO level 2 certificate, either in full-time education or in part-time education if they wish to combine their studies with work.

Poland

A reform introduced in 2013 led to the gradual lowering of the beginning of compulsory full-time education in primary school from 7 to 6 years. Before 2014, admission of 6-year olds to grade 1 of primary school was left to the parents' discretion. In 2014, education in primary schools became compulsory for 6-year old children born in the first half of the year 2008, i.e. children born before the end of June 2008. Starting in 2015, all six-year-olds will commence compulsory schooling.

Therefore, there are exceptionally three cohorts of children who had commenced compulsory education in grade 1 of primary school at the age of 7: two born in 2006 and 2007 and half a cohort born in 2008. For these cohorts, full-time compulsory education will last for 11 years as they had already spent 2 years in compulsory pre-school education. As for all the other children (before and after the reform), the duration of full-time compulsory education remains the same and lasts for 10 years.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The ending age for compulsory education may vary from 16 to 18 years age depending on the type of programme. The lowest ending age (16) applies to students attending the two years vocational programme *strucno osposobuvanje* while the ending age of 17 applies to those attending the three years vocational programme *strucno obrazovanie za zanimanja*. The highest ending age of 18 applies to students attending general secondary education or a four years programme of vocational education.

Switzerland

- 2 cantons: Graubünden and Uri.
- 7 cantons: Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schwyz and Zug.
- 17 cantons: Aargau, Bern, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Fribourg, Geneva, Glarus, Jura, Neuchâtel, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Solothurn, Thurgau, Ticino, Valais, Vaud and Zurich.

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