

## The educational system in Estonia

		<b>Bakalaureuse- ja magistriõppe integreeritud õppekava</b> Integrated curriculum for Bachelor's and Master's study at universities	<b>Bakalaureuse- ja magistriõppe</b> Bachelor's and Master's study at universities	<b>Kutsekeskharidus</b> Vocational secondary education after general secondary education	<b>Rakenduskõrgharidusõpe</b> Applied higher education
	20+				
	19				
	18	<b>Kutsealane eelkoolitus</b> Basic vocational education and training	<b>Üldkeskharidus</b> General secondary education		<b>Kutsekeskharidus</b> Vocational secondary education
	17				
	16				
Compulsory Education	15	<b>Kutsealane eelkoolitus</b> Basic vocational education and training	<b>Põhiharidus</b> Basic education		
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## Explanation of the Estonian educational system

<b>1. Pre-school</b>	From the ages of 3 - 7, attendance is voluntary.
<b>2. Primary and lower secondary school</b>	Compulsory schooling begins at the age of 7 and continues until the conclusion of the 9-year basic education (the equivalent of lower secondary school in Germany) or until the age of 17. Compulsory schooling is divided into the primary level (primary school classes 1 - 4) and secondary level I (classes 5 - 9).
<b>3. Upper secondary education</b>	Upper secondary education is of 3 years' duration (classes 10 - 12) and is also state funded. Although the state stipulated curriculum is compulsory for all schools, schools are permitted to offer optional subjects and extended teaching within the compulsory subjects.  Upper secondary education concludes with five examinations, three of these being state examinations. Students receive 2 qualifications certificates (one school certificate and one state certificate), which jointly constitute a higher education entrance entitlement. The universities conduct additional entrance examinations.
	There are also Russian speaking schools at which some of the teaching takes place in Estonian. The proportion of the teaching conducted in Estonian is currently being increased in order to

	afford students greater opportunity, Estonian being the teaching language at universities and in vocational education and training.
<b>4. Vocational education and training</b>	<p>Takes place at vocational schools, which are predominantly state run (no dual system is in operation). Since 1996, the Ministry of education has contained a separate department for VET, which determines the political guidelines, stipulates rules and certifies private educational institutions. The ministries or local authorities are responsible for the outline curricula. The main focus of vocational education and training is the acquisition of occupational competences and practical experience.</p> <p>Vocational education and training may be pursued by both school leavers of lower secondary school and by those who have completed upper secondary education. There are two different training levels:</p> <p>Vocational secondary education: After conclusion of lower secondary school, duration 3 years, final certificate provides the entitlement to proceed to higher vocational education and training</p> <p>Higher vocational education and training: For pupils who have an upper secondary school leaving certificate, training being of only 2 years' duration and acknowledged by the award of a certificate in higher vocational education and training.</p> <p>The final certificates awarded by the vocational schools certify that a certain programme has been pursued at a certain level within a certain school rather than in themselves representing any formal qualification.</p>
<b>5. Higher education</b>	<p>Higher education courses of study may conclude with a degree or be pursued via a foundation course of study comprising 3 levels. It is possible to complete Bachelor degrees, Masters degrees and doctorates. Since the higher education reform of 2002/2003, achievements have been evaluated via the ECTS. The fact that Estonian curricula are in line with international standards means that these higher education degrees are also recognised abroad. Higher education courses of study are possible at universities or Universities of Applied sciences. The latter are more practically oriented, the qualifications they award are equivalent to a Bachelor degree and provide entitlement to embark upon a further Masters course of study at a university.</p>