

HUNGARY

Introduction

The Hungarian educational system is one of the most decentralised educational systems in Europe. The administrative responsibilities are shared horizontally between the Hungarian Ministry of Education and other Ministries (the Ministry of Employment and Labour, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Interior), vertically between the central, local and institutional levels.

The financing of education is primarily a state responsibility. Most students attend public-sector schools, which are organised by the public authorities, primarily by the local governments. Public financing consists of three elements: normative financing, supplementary normative grants and earmarked grants. Private-sector educational establishments, which are set up and run by other authorities (church-maintained schools, schools maintained by foundations and NGOs), receive over 50% of their subsidies from the public authorities.

Pre-primary education

Age	from 3 to 7 years
Duration	Average 3 years
Description	Children from the age of 3 attend pre-primary schools until they are mature enough to go to primary school at the age of 6 or 7. The aim of pre-primary schools is to prepare children for social life and for schooling, to develop personal skills and abilities. Attendance is compulsory from the age of 5. Pre-primary schools are part of the public education system and are coeducational.
Timetable	Activities take a maximum of four hours a day.
School year and holidays	The school year lasts from the beginning of September until the end of June. There is also a holiday at Christmas and at Easter.
Subjects	Activities carried out in pre-primary education aim to develop different forms of communication and to improve the use of the mother tongue. Pre-primary schools work on the basis of their own educational program (which has to be in accordance with the principles set forth in the core program).
Exams	There are no exams in pre-primary schools.
Schools	Most of the pre-primary schools are maintained by the local governments. They are obliged to admit children belonging to there are free of charge. There are also private, church-maintained and foundational pre-primary schools, usually charging fee.

Primary education

Age	Starts at the age of 6 or 7
Duration	8 years in general (can be 4 or 6 years depending on the type of

	secondary education)
Description	From 1998 full-time compulsory education runs up to age of 18. The eight-grade primary school was set up in 1945 and its main task is to provide basic knowledge and skills. The basic requirement for attending a primary school is a certificate of maturity for school issued by the pre-primary school. They are generally not attached to pre-primary schools or upper secondary schools, but many of them operate special classes in the 9 th and 10 th grades to provide vocational education.
Hungarian name	Általános iskola
Timetable	Since the amendment to the law in 1996, the school year consists of 185 days. The maximum number of daily teaching hours are: for grades 1 to 3 – can not be more than four lessons; for grades 4 to 6 – four or five lessons. The weekly average must not exceed 4.5 lessons per day. In grades 7 and 8, the maximum is five lessons daily. The school can also organise extracurricular non-compulsory activities.
School year and holidays	The school year consists of 185 days. It starts in the beginning of September, ends in the middle of June. Besides the Summer holiday there is a holiday at Christmas, at Easter and in Autumn. Pupils are also off on official National Holidays.
Subjects	A three-level structure comprising the National Core Curriculum, the Frame Curricula and local curricula provide a regulatory framework for teachers to develop syllabi. The following subjects are taught in most of the schools as obligatory: Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Grammar, Physical Education, Music, History, Foreign Languages.
Exams	Pupils are assessed by the teachers throughout the school year (written and oral tests). Since September 2003 all pupils must be individually assessed in writing, expanding the traditional numeric marking framework [scale 1-5(1= fail, 5= excellent)]. End-of –term and final marks are given in each subject based on continuous assessment. All schools are required to elaborate a comprehensive evaluation and assessment regulation. On completion of the basic education pupils are not required to sit for an examination. The period of compulsory education lasts for 12 years, therefore pupils must move up to the secondary education for a minimum of 4 years.
Schools	Most of the primary schools are maintained by the local governments. There are also private, church-maintained and foundational primary schools.

Upper secondary education

From 1998 full-time compulsory education runs up to age of 18. In the first 10 years at school pupils receive basic education. At the end of this period students take the secondary school leaving examination or the basic literacy examination. Compulsory education may be completed at an upper secondary general school or at a vocational school (short-term secondary vocational training school or four-year secondary vocational training school). To complete the compulsory education period students take the upper secondary school leaving examination or get a vocational qualification.

Upper secondary education

Age	10-18; 12-18 or 14-18
Duration	8, 6 or 4 years
Hungarian name	Gimnázium
Description	Gimnázium is generally chosen by pupils who wish to obtain the secondary school leaving certificate. There are three main forms of this type of school, which cover different age groups. In the 8-grade general secondary school pupils study between ages 10 and 18, the 6-grade gimnázium covers ages 12-18, while the 4-grade gimnázium is for ages 14-18. The majority of upper secondary general schools are coeducational.
Timetable	In grades 7 and 8, the maximum is five lessons daily. According to current legislation, in the 9 th and 10 th grades working hours should not exceed a daily average of 5.5 hours, and from the 11 th grade they should not exceed six hours.
School year and holidays	The school year consists of 185 days. It starts in the beginning of September, end in the middle of June. Besides the Summer holiday there is a holiday at Christmas, at Easter and in Autumn. Pupils are also off on official National Holidays.
Subjects	<p>The structure comprising the National Core Curriculum, the Frame Curricula and local curricula provide a framework for teachers to develop syllabi. Schools can define and adopt local curricula and syllabi for each class and each subject. The revised National Core Curriculum breaks away from the former practice of curricular regulation, which used to define in detail the educational aims, tasks, content, subjects, number of teaching hours.</p> <p>Teachers are free to choose educational methods they want to apply, however these have to be discussed with the head of school and the teaching staff. There is no definite rule as to which textbook to use, however they have to be listed in the official national register of textbooks.</p> <p>The following subjects are taught in most of the schools as obligatory: Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Grammar, Physical Education, Music, History, Foreign Languages.</p>
Exams	In most general secondary schools there are entrance examinations. Studies in secondary schools are completed with the upper secondary

	school leaving examination. Since 2005 a dual school leaving examination has been introduced, which also functions as higher educational entrance examination.
Schools	In most general secondary schools education is free of charge, private upper secondary general schools, which are mostly maintained by churches and foundations, NGOs, may charge fees.

Vocational training

Secondary vocational school:

Age	From 14 to 18/19
Duration	4-5 years
Description	Secondary vocational schools provide general upper secondary and vocational education.
Hungarian name	Szakközépiskola
Timetable	The maximum number of teaching hours devoted to theoretical subjects is 7 per day. In the first two years of secondary vocational school 18 to 20 teaching hours, and in the second two grades 12 to 14 teaching hours are devoted to general subjects out of a weekly total of 30 to 32 teaching hours.
School year and holidays	The academic year for all levels consists of 185 days. Besides the Summer holiday there is a holiday at Christmas, at Easter and in Autumn. Pupils are also off on official National Holidays.
Subjects	The curriculum is determined by the type of school and is based on the requirements of the National Register of Qualifications and governed by the regulations of the upper secondary school leaving examination. The choice of methods and books is narrower in this field of education than in general education. Schools are free to define their own timetables and the actual time devoted to different subjects may vary.
Exams	To gain entry students may have to pass the entrance examination. There are 2 or 3 training cycles. At the end of the 2 nd or 3 rd cycle pupils receive a certificate of completion. This is necessary to take the final exam, which may be either secondary vocational school leaving examination or vocational examination.
Schools	There are public secondary vocational schools (no fees are payable) and private ones (fees are payable).

Short-term vocational training school:

Age	From 14 to 16
Duration	1-2 years full- or part time education
Description	The short-term vocational training schools provide vocational and

	practical skills and prepare pupils for the vocational examination. In these schools a dual system operates, both theoretical and practical education is provided.
Hungarian name	Szakiskola
Timetable	
School year and holidays	The academic year for all levels consists of 185 days. Besides the Summer holiday there is a holiday at Christmas, at Easter and in Autumn. Pupils are also off on official National Holidays.
Subjects	Curricula for vocational education schools are varied, depending on the specialisation. General curricular subjects are taught according to the National Core Curriculum and the local educational programs. The choice of methods and books is narrower in this field of education than in general education. Schools are free to define their own timetables and the actual time devoted to different subjects may vary.
Exams	Provided that there is a certificate proving the completion of the first eight grades there are no special admission requirements, however applicants must undergo a medical examination. At the end of the educational program pupils can take a final examination focusing on a particular profession/trade. Those, who have taken the vocational examination can obtain further educational qualifications (e.g. secondary school leaving examination).
Schools	There are public short-term vocational training schools (no fees are payable) and private ones (fees are payable).