

Turkish Education System



Kindergarten (Not compulsory)	age 1-3 , Pre-School age 3-5, age 5
Primary Education	4 years of Primary School plus 4 years of Middle School
Secondary Education (High School)	4 years (In some schools plus 1 year of English Preparatory Class)
Vocational Schools (Associate Degree)	2 years (Can be transferred to universities)
Undergraduate	4 years
Graduate	Master's Degree: 2 years Doctorate Degree: 3-5 years

The Turkish education system is divided into three levels which make up 12 years of compulsory education. The first level in the education system is primary school education consisting of four years (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades).



The second level is middle school education consisting of four years (5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades). The third level is high school education consisting of four years (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades).

1. PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education is composed of a four-year primary school and a four-year middle school with different programs including schools with religious affiliations. Primary education is compulsory. Middle schools and religious middle schools have elective courses which meet the needs of different students in terms of their skills, development and choices.



2. SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary school education covers general, vocational, and technical high schools and is compulsory. These graduates receive a high school diploma. There are different programs at the high school level.

The details about the different high school types which offer different kinds of education are listed below:

- General High Schools*
- Vocational High Schools*
- Anatolian High Schools*
- Science High Schools*
- Religious High Schools*
- Fine Arts High Schools*
- Private High Schools*

General High Schools

Students who complete eight years of primary education can register at the general high schools. High school graduates take the university placement exams [Higher Education Exam \(YGS\)](#) and [Undergraduate Placement Exam\(LYS\)](#).



Vocational High Schools

The graduates of vocational high schools can study at vocational schools at the universities without taking any exam.



The vocational high schools can be grouped as Technical, Communication, Health, Tourism and Hotel Management, and Teachers' vocational high schools. The students at these schools may need to study for five years in total.

Anatolian High Schools

Foreign languages are taught extensively at these high schools. Some Anatolian high schools have one year of preparatory class in the foreign language in which the high school instruction is given. The number of lessons per week is more than other high schools and these schools also offer a second foreign language

Science High Schools

These high schools are for students who have a deep interest in the Sciences. Students studying at these high schools choose Science or Engineering departments at the universities.



Religious High Schools

These high schools raise the future Imams, preachers and teachers of the Koran. They were opened by the Ministry of National Education and offer programs to prepare students for higher education as well.



Fine Arts High Schools

These high schools are for students who have a special interest and talent in fine arts. The goal is to educate the students at early ages.



Private High Schools

These high schools are also called colleges in Turkey. At some of these high schools, classes like Mathematics and Science are taught in a foreign language which is the medium of instruction at those schools.

Parents pay a tuition fee to these schools and admissions to some private high schools are highly competitive. Examples of these high schools are Robert College, Saint Joseph Lycee, Austrian high school, etc.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION

Students who graduate from these high schools have the right to continue to higher education. To continue into higher education, students have to take the university entrance exams YGS and LYS given by the Assessment, Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM) and receive a certain score. The scores students receive from YGS and LYS and their high school GPA play an important role in being placed at higher education institutions.

After taking the YGS, some universities may want students to take a special talent exam. The higher education system in Turkey is composed of universities, institutes of technology, vocational schools, and other higher education schools like the military or the police academy.

Associate Degree

The graduates of vocational high schools can study at vocational schools at the universities without taking any exam. However, the graduates of other high schools have to take the YGS, and receive a certain score. The duration of the education at vocational schools is two years. At some vocational schools, there is a foreign language preparatory class. The graduates of these schools can take a [transfer exam \(DGS\)](#) to study at other universities.



Bachelor's Degree

To get a Bachelor's degree, four years of university education has to be completed. However, students studying Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Sciences will need to study for five to six years to receive a degree.

Master's Degree

Master's degree is awarded to students who complete two-year programs of classes with and without a thesis.

Master's programs with thesis usually require 21 credits of coursework and a thesis to be written in order to graduate.

Master's programs without dissertations require 30 credits of coursework and a final project in order to graduate.

Doctorate Degree

Students who have a Bachelor's or a Master's degree can apply for doctorate programs. Doctorate students are required to take a minimum of seven courses of 21 credits in total and have to pass the doctoral qualifying exam. After these items, students write their dissertation, and defend it in front of a jury.

Specialization in Medicine

The degree for specialization in Medicine is performed at schools of Medicine and hospitals, and is the equivalent of a doctoral degree. The graduates of schools of Medicine take the Examination for Specialty in Medicine (TUS) in the field of specialization. The candidates write a dissertation and defend it in front of a jury.

Competency in the Arts

After studying at a Fine Arts Faculty, students take an exam in the art branch that they have specialized in, create a work of art and write a scientific piece of work, and receive a doctorate degree.

UNIVERSITIES IN TURKEY

There are two types of universities in Turkey, state and foundation (private) universities. All Turkish universities are accredited by the [Council of Higher Education](#). Foundation universities are semi-independent universities that are not governed by the state. These universities have tuition fees.



Many foundation universities have graduate programs in Management and Computer Science. Some foundation universities are renowned for their programs in Engineering and Medicine. At many foundation universities, the language of instruction is English. These universities offer English preparatory class to students who are not proficient in the English language.

