

# Belgium-German-Speaking-Community: Overview

In Belgium the three Communities are responsible for education, but there are the following exceptions:

- the determination of the end and the beginning of compulsory school attendance,
- the minimum requirements for the issuing of diplomas,
- the regularisation of retirement for the employees in the educational system.

These three competences are in the hands of the federal state.

The liberty of education is determined in the [constitution](#) of the Kingdom of Belgium. The establishment of schools may not be subject to restrictive measures. Therefore it is possible to establish schools that are not connected to official authorities. Nevertheless, schools that issue recognised diplomas and wish to receive subsidies from the Community have to comply with the legal regulations. All educational facilities in the German-speaking Community are organised and financed by the Community (GUW= "Gemeinschaftsunterrichtswesen" / community education system) or are subsidised by the Community (OSUW= "Offizielles subventioniertes Unterrichtswesen" / officially subsidised education system and FSUW= "Freies subventioniertes Unterrichtswesen" / free subsidised education system).

The responsibility for a school rests on the natural person or the legal person of the maintaining body of the school. The maintaining bodies have a certain autonomy especially as far as educational methods are concerned.

Most children go to the "Kindergarten" from the age of three onwards, but compulsory school attendance starts only at the age of six with the entry into primary school. Until the age of 15-16 there is full time and until the age of 18 part time compulsory school attendance. Usually every student has gone through three years of "Kindergarten", six years of primary school and six years of secondary school. Secondary education offers three kinds of education: general education, technical schooling and vocational education.

If required, orientation to special schools is possible from pre-school age onwards.

There are only limited possibilities to attend tertiary education in the German-speaking Community. Students are trained to become teachers in "Kindergarten" or in primary school, nurses or accountants. To attend other courses of studies, students have to go to universities in the Belgian inland or abroad.

The German-speaking Community offers various formations and further education for adults as well.

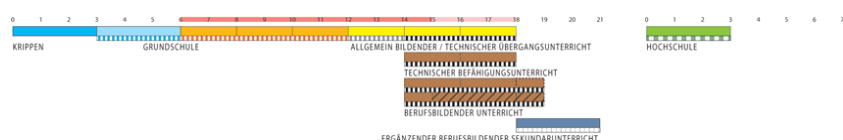
For further information, please consult the introduction articles of [Organisation and Governance](#) and of each educational level: [Early Childhood Education](#), [Primary Education](#), [Secondary Education and Post Secondary Non Tertiary Education](#), [Higher Education](#) and [Adult Education and Training](#).






















For a brief description of other main topics regarding the national education system, please read the introduction article of [Funding education](#), [Teachers and education staff](#), [Management and other educational staff](#), [Educational support and guidance](#), [Quality assurance](#), [Mobility and internationalisation](#).

For information on recently adopted or planned reforms and policy measures, please consult topic [Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments](#).

Additionally to the description on Eurypedia, there is information about the structure of the education system in the German-speaking Community on the ["Bildungsserver der DG"](#), which is designed by the ministry. All statistical data is available on the website [DGstat](#).

## Structure of the national education system 2012/13



 Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is not responsible)	 Secondary vocational education		
 Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is responsible)	 Post-secondary non-tertiary education		
 Primary education	 Single structure	 Secondary general education	 Tertiary education (full-time)
Allocation to the ISCED levels:  ISCED 0			
 ISCED 1			
 ISCED 2			
 ISCED 3			
 ISCED 4			
 ISCED 5A			
 ISCED 5B			
 Compulsory full-time education			
 Additional year			
 Combined school and workplace courses			
 Compulsory part-time education			
 Study abroad			
 -/n/-			
Compulsory work experience + its duration			

source: Eurydice

## Common European Reference Tools Provided by the Eurydice Network

- [National Student Fee and Support Systems](#)
- [Organisation of the Academic Year in Higher Education](#)
- [Organisation of School Time in Europe](#) (Primary and general secondary education)
- [Recommended Annual Taught Time](#) in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe (Presented by grades/stages for full time compulsory education as well as by subject and country.)
- [Teachers and School Heads Salaries and Allowances in Europe](#) (Salaries and allowances of teachers and school heads at pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education levels.)