

Spain: Overview

The Spanish Education System accepts the need for combining **quality** and **equity** in the training provision, understood as two inseparable principles, and not as conflicting objectives. In this sense, the features that best define it within the European overview are:

- The promotion of the **evaluation** and the **innovation**: the Education Authorities are committed to know the status of the Education System in order to enhance the necessary innovation and improvement processes, the reflection on the practice and the self-evaluation.
- The guarantee that any student will be excluded and their continuity in post-compulsory studies: the principle of equity assures equal opportunities, education inclusion and non-discrimination, and it acts as an element for compensating social and economic inequalities. In basic education, the **attention to students diversity** is established as a key principle in every education intervention, trying to prevent and satisfy the temporary or permanent needs of each of them. In all the education stages, **compensating the inequalities** between people, groups or territorial scopes in disadvantaged situation implies the provision of the economic resources and the necessary support so that all the population will have the chance to receive quality education services.
- The **flexibility** that makes easier the mobility between the different training options, within the framework of lifelong training and learning: the passage from training to employment and vice versa allows young people having dropped out to continue and complete their studies, and adults to continue their lifelong learning. For this purpose, some links between the different kind of teachings are established, making easier the passage from ones to another ones and allowing the making up of training ways adapted to personal needs and interests.

The Spanish Education System provides the following **teachings**:

Pre-Primary Education is up to 6 years old. Although it is not a compulsory education stage, the second cycle is free in any publicly-funded school (public schools and publicly-funded private schools). Public schools providing it are called Pre-Primary Schools and those, also offering Primary Education are called Pre-Primary and Primary Schools.

Basic Education is compulsory and free in publicly-funded schools. It lasts ten years of schooling and it is divided into two stages:

- **Primary Education**, provided in Primary Education schools. It covers six academic years, usually studied between 6 and 12 years old.
- **Lower Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)**, studied in Secondary schools, between 12 and 16 years old. At the end of this stage, students receive the first official certificate, the Lower Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate, which allows them to access Upper Secondary Education or world of work.

Upper Secondary Education is also provided in Secondary schools. It lasts two academic years, usually studied between 16 and 18. It offers two possibilities: **Baccalaureate** (mainstream branch) and **Intermediate Vocational Training** (professional branch). This last one is also provided in Vocational Training integrated institutions and in National reference institutions.

Higher Education includes university and professional studies. **University studies**, provided in universities, lead to the obtaining of Bachelor, Master and Doctorate Degrees. **Advanced Vocational Training** is provided in the same schools than in those providing Intermediate Vocational Training.

Adult Education and Training covers different teachings provided by the Education and Labour Authorities, studied in studies from different nature. On-site teachings leading to the obtaining of official degrees of the Education System are provided in ordinary schools or specific schools for adults. Adult Education and Training is aimed at people over 18 and, as an exception, to workers over 16 who cannot attend school in ordinary regime, or at high performance athletes.

Apart from these studies, the Spanish Education System offers **Specialised Education**:

- **Language Education**, provided at Official Language Schools. Only students over 16 can take these studies.
- **Artistic Education**, including Elementary Music and Dance Education, Professional Artistic Education and Advanced Artistic Education. These studies are provided in different specific schools, according to every kind and level of education.
- **Sports Education**, organised in Intermediate and Advanced Vocational Training cycles and provided in the same institutions than those providing Vocational Training.

Regarding the **administration and management** of the Spanish Education System, it is necessary to highlight the meaningful decentralisation, that shares the competences between the State General Authority (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport) and the Autonomous Communities (Regional Ministries or Departments of Education). The State Education Authority executes the general guidelines of the Government on education policy and regulates the basic elements or aspects of the system. The Autonomous Education Authorities develop the State regulations and have executive and administrative competences for managing the Education System in their own territory. In addition, the schools have pedagogical, organisational and managerial autonomy for their resources. This autonomy is accompanied by the participation of the education community in the schools organisation, government, running and evaluation.

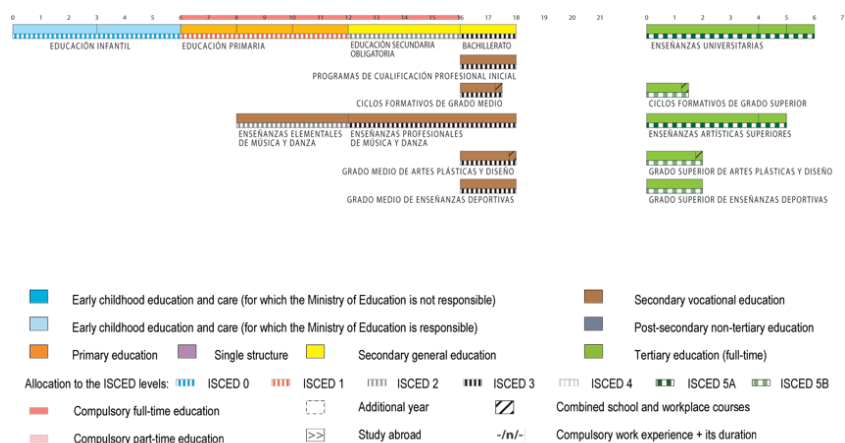
For further information, please consult the introduction articles of [Organisation and Governance](#) and of every education stage: [Early Childhood Education and Care](#), [Primary Education](#), [Secondary and Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education](#), [Higher Education](#) and [Adult Education and Training](#).

For a brief description of other main topics regarding the national education system, please read the introduction article of [Funding in Education](#), [Teachers and Education Staff](#), [Management and other education 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](#).

While Eurypedia provides comprehensive and comparable information, further information may also be found on the websites of the [Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport](#) as well as the [Education Authorities of the Autonomous Communities](#).

Structure of the national education system 2012/13



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.)