

## Introduction

**Euroguidance Hungary started operating in Szeged in 2000 in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Commission. Presently it operates as a unit of the Public Employment Service and the National Employment and Social Office. During the period of 2007-2013 the European Union background is provided by the Lifelong Learning Programme. The main objectives of the centre are to support vocational guidance, lifelong learning and international mobility, promote Hungarian and international counselling projects as well as language learning and employability.**

**On our website, [www.npk.hu](http://www.npk.hu), you can find lots of information on European education opportunities, higher education institutions as well as on vocational trainings. Visitors can also gain information on the conditions of entering the tertiary education and on the mutual recognition of qualifications.**

**In our brochure we present the structure of the Hungarian education system, from the nursery to entering and studying in the higher education, to foreign enquirers.**

# Hungarian Education System

## Basic facts about Hungary

Official name:	Republic of Hungary
Area:	93.030 km <sup>2</sup>
Population:	10,023,252
Population density:	108 /km <sup>2</sup>
Capital city:	Budapest
Time:	GMT + 1 hour
Official language:	Hungarian
Currency:	Forint (1€ = 270 HUF, 2009)
Number of students in higher education:	381 019

**Hungary is a member of the Schengen Area.**

## The Education System in Hungary

### Pre-primary education (ISCED 0-1)

This educational level is meant for children from 3 to 7 years of age. The pre-primary education (*óvoda*) is optional, except for the final year (beyond the age of 5), which is compulsory. During the last year at kindergarten, children are prepared for school.

### Primary education (ISCED 1+2)

In Hungary primary schools (*általános iskola*) provide basic education in two 4-year cycles. Children attend primary schools until the age of 14, after which they have to choose a secondary school. For both primary and secondary school teachers, the National Core Curriculum provides a framework to form their syllabi.

### Secondary education (ISCED 2-3)

Students can choose from the following secondary school programmes:

- › Vocational school programmes, special vocational school programmes (*szakiskolai és speciális szakiskolai programok*) (ISCED 3)
- › Secondary general school programmes (*gimnáziumi programok*) (ISCED 2+3)
- › Secondary vocational school programmes (*szakközépiskolai programok*) (ISCED 3)

The division of the twelve-year general education may vary: it can be divided either into 4 years of primary education + 8 years of secondary education or 6 years of primary education + 6 years of secondary education. On the basis of their received points, students gain admission to secondary schools after a central secondary school entrance exam.

### 1. Vocational schools

Students who do not intend to obtain a secondary school leaving certificate and wish to begin working immediately after the compulsory period of education, have the opportunity to attend a **vocational school**. During the first and second years of their studies (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades), students are taught only general subjects. They learn professional subjects from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade on. The professional orientation and preparation for the vocational training starts in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. However, the real vocational training begins in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, partly in the school-workshops, and partly in factories. The duration of the training in vocational schools is 4 years. It consists of 2 years of general studies and a 2-year vocational course.

### 2. Secondary general schools

The **secondary general schools** prepare for universities and colleges, provide high level foreign language teaching and a thorough general education. After the last year, students take **school-leaving examinations**. According to the two-level secondary school-leaving examination regulations, students have the opportunity to choose whether they take the standard-level exam or rather the high-level exam. The **standard-level exam** is focused on assessment of skills and abilities and will be useful for students intending to complete their studies and search for a job. In case of **high-level exam**, the encyclopaedic knowledge is more emphasized and the higher educational institutions admit their students according to their results. The successfully taken high-level exams in the necessary subjects replace the entrance examination. The general secondary schools offer four-year-long education – starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and finishing in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Bilingual schools offer 5-year programmes. In the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students learn mainly a foreign language and from the 10<sup>th</sup> year on certain subjects are taught in this foreign language.

### 3. Secondary vocational schools

**Secondary vocational schools** offer the opportunity to learn a profession and provide general education as well. In the 9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grades, students are taught mainly general subjects. This is a preparatory phase for the secondary school-leaving exam and further studies. The vocational orientation starts in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. From the 11<sup>th</sup> grade on, theoretical and practical basic knowledge is taught in workgroups. The real vocational training begins only after the secondary school leaving exam (ISCED 4). Students complete their studies with final exams in the prescribed vocational subjects.

### College basic and supplementary programs (ISCED 5)

These programmes are offered cooperating with secondary vocational schools for students with a secondary school leaving certificate. During the training students get credit points, which are taken into account when they apply for places at universities and colleges.

### Higher education (ISCED 5-6)

#### Institutions

In Hungary most universities and colleges are financed by the state; a smaller number are controlled by various churches and there are a number of private colleges operating in Hungary as well. There are also some foreign higher education institutions in Hungary. In the country there are altogether 77 universities and colleges (18 state universities, 14 state colleges, 25 religious col-

leges/universities institutions, 14 private and foundation schools and 6 colleges of foreign countries established in Hungary) In the 1990s, several higher education institutions merged.

#### Academic year

The academic year consists of two terms, the spring (February–June) and the autumn (September–January) term. Both terms have a 6-week team period.

#### Tuition fee

Foreign citizens taking part in foreign language programmes (English, German or French) have to pay a tuition fee. More information on the tuition fees can be found on the homepage of the individual university/college or on the homepage of the National Higher Education Centre ([www.felvi.hu](http://www.felvi.hu)).

#### Admission requirements

The precondition for admission to colleges and universities is either a Hungarian secondary school leaving certificate (*Érettségi bizonyítvány*), or its foreign equivalent, or a degree obtained in higher education. From the school year of 2005/2006 a new type of school-leaving examination was introduced (see 2. *Secondary General Schools*). The secondary school leaving examination also functions as an entrance exam (at standard and advanced level). The tertiary institution determines the grade requirements of the secondary school leaving examination and the necessary level of secondary school performance.

In the academic year 2006/2007, the structure of the Hungarian higher education system started to replace the dual education form accepted in the European Union. Due to the Bologna process the new multi cycle system offers education at Bachelor level that lasts 6-8 semesters (ISCED 5A), which can be followed by Master level course(s) (ISCED 5A) for another 2-4 semesters. The third cycle provides doctoral training (ISCED 6). The first university students to receive Hungarian BA degrees in the new system graduated in the academic year 2008/2009.

Students complete their studies with the final examination which consists of the preparation and the defence of the thesis and of the oral or written state board examinations prescribed by the qualification requirements. Additionally, universities provide three-year training for doctoral degree, which can be either a PhD (doctor of philosophy) or a DLA (doctor of liberal arts).

#### How to apply?

Foreign candidates generally should submit the following documents:

- › Photocopies of certificates of their highest qualification

- > If the candidate has not yet obtained a secondary school leaving certificate, school reports for the last two years including all graded results
- > A curriculum vitae in English
- > A medical certificate
- > Two recent passport-size photographs
- > Letters of recommendation (e.g. from school)
- > At certain universities, certification of language competence (TOEFL Test)
- > Photocopy of passport with personal data.

Citizens of the member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein) do not need a student visa to enter to Hungary. Citizens from third countries accepted by an institute of higher education in Hungary are required to obtain a **student visa** (from the Hungarian Embassy or Consulate before entering the country). The **D5** is a multiple entry student visa, which entitles you to enter and leave Hungary as many times as you want until it is valid. During the first year of your stay in Hungary your student visa will have to be replaced by a residence permit. While applying for the visa, students must have a passport valid for at least 18 months, but preferably valid until the end of their entire study. To receive a student visa, it is necessary to present the "Letter of Acceptance" from the university.

On entering the country, it is necessary to apply for a residence permit from the Hungarian Police Authorities for Foreign Citizens within 14 days.

For further information visit the website of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([www.kulugyminiszterium.hu](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu)).

#### Foreign language programmes

During recent years, the number of **courses in foreign languages** has risen significantly (English, German and French). Competence in Hungarian language is not a criterion, with the exception of courses provided completely or partly in Hungarian. There are foreign language programmes, particularly at the medical, economic and technical universities and colleges, where knowledge of Hungarian is not needed. Most institutions offer a good opportunity for student mobility (e.g. SOCRATES, ERASMUS and CEEPUS).

#### Credit Transfer System

The obligatory use of the **ECTS** (European Credit Transfer System) compatible credit system was introduced in September 2003. One credit corresponds to 30 hours of student workload. The minimum number of credits for a college-level degree is

180 for a three-year training, 240 credits for a four-year training; in case of a university-level degree it is 240 for a four-year training, 300 credits for a five-year training, and 360 credits for a six-year training; for obtaining a further specialisation degree it is 60 while for the doctoral degree it is 180.

#### System of assessment

The students are assessed on the basis of five grades: excellent (5), good (4), fair (3), pass (2), and fail (1) or with the classification: excellent, satisfactory, fail.

#### Degrees

The degrees available at universities and colleges are as follows:

- > Bachelor degree, particularly at colleges: 3-4 years (*Főiskolai oklevél*)
- > Master degree, at universities: 4-5 years; master degree at medical universities: 6 years (*Egyetemi oklevél*)
- > Doctorate, (PhD - *doktori fokozat*); Doct. of Liberal Arts (DLA – *mester fokozat*): 3 years

#### Accreditation and quality assurance

Standards of higher education and its quality endorsement are based on the operation of the **Hungarian Accreditation Committee** and the **Higher Education and Scientific Council**. The approval of both bodies is necessary to introduce of a new course at any state or private-run higher education institution.

#### Studying Hungarian

Most universities offer Hungarian language courses for students. They also have the opportunity to take part in a Hungarian language preparatory year before they start their studies.

**For more information, see:** [www.bbi.hu](http://www.bbi.hu)

#### Further information on educational issues:

Ministry of Education and Culture:	<a href="http://www.okm.gov.hu">www.okm.gov.hu</a>
Hungarian Accreditation Committee:	<a href="http://www.mab.hu">www.mab.hu</a>
National Higher Education Centre:	<a href="http://www.felvi.hu">www.felvi.hu</a>
Tempus Public Foundation:	<a href="http://www.tka.hu">www.tka.hu</a>
(Leonardo da Vinci National Agency):	<a href="http://www.tpf.hu">www.tpf.hu</a>
National Institute of Vocational Education:	<a href="http://www.nive.hu">www.nive.hu</a>
National Institute of Public Education:	<a href="http://www.oki.hu">www.oki.hu</a>
Sulinet (National Schoolnetwork):	<a href="http://www.sulinet.hu">www.sulinet.hu</a>
Hungarian Scholarship Board:	<a href="http://www.scholarship.hu">www.scholarship.hu</a>
Ploteus Portal:	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus">http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus</a>
Euroguidance Hungary:	<a href="http://www.npk.hu">www.npk.hu</a>
Study in Hungary:	<a href="http://www.studyinhungary.hu">www.studyinhungary.hu</a>

If you have further questions, please contact us:

**National Employment and Social Office  
Euroguidance Hungary**

1089 Budapest, Kálvária tér 7.

Mailing address: 6721 Szeged, Bocskai u. 10-12. Hungary

Phone: +36 (62) 555-580 Fax: +36 (62) 555-581

Web: [www.npk.hu](http://www.npk.hu) E-mail: [info@npk.hu](mailto:info@npk.hu)

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National Employment and Social Office

This project has been founded with the support of the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission can not be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

Published by:  
**National Office for Employment and Social Affairs  
Euroguidance Hungary**  
Publisher in charge: Pirisi Károly  
Year of Publishing: 2009.