



INCA Comparative Tables

International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive

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Contents

Contents

| | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| Table 1 | General characteristics | 5 |
| Table 2 | Levels of control and administrative organisation | 6 |
| Table 3 | National education aims | 10 |
| Table 4 | Recent education reforms | 11 |
| Table 5 | Schooling: duration, phases | 16 |
| Table 5.1 | Compulsory education | 16 |
| Table 5.2 | Educational phases (not necessarily involving transfer from one school to another) | 19 |
| Table 6 | School structures, access, internal grouping and progression | 22 |
| Table 6.1 | School structures | 22 |
| Table 6.2 | Access | 24 |
| Table 6.3 | Internal grouping | 26 |
| Table 6.4 | Progression within phases | 28 |
| Table 7 | Subjects in the compulsory phase curriculum | 30 |
| Table 8 | Curriculum structure and organisation | 35 |
| Table 9 | National assessment and public examination arrangement | 39 |
| Table 9.1 | National standardised assessment system | 39 |
| Table 9.2 | National examination or certification framework to mark the end of an educational phase | 42 |
| Table 10 | Control and supply of school textbooks | 45 |
| Table 11 | Steps to becoming a teacher | 48 |
| Table 11.1 | Steps to becoming a primary school teacher | 48 |
| Table 11.2: | Steps to becoming a lower secondary school teacher | 50 |
| Table 12 | Special educational needs teacher training | 52 |
| Table 13 | Recruitment incentives to encourage individuals to train as teachers | 53 |
| Table 14 | Organising bodies responsible for initial teacher training | 54 |
| Table 15 | Organisation of school year and school day | 56 |
| Table 15.1 | Organisation of the school year | 56 |
| Table 15.2 | Organisation of the school week and day..... | 58 |

Introduction

INCA (www.inca.org.uk) is the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive. It provides regularly updated descriptions of government policy on education in Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and Wales. The INCA website makes particular reference to the curriculum, assessment and initial teacher training frameworks in place, and focuses on education provided in schools and to the 3-19 age range. Production of the website is supported by the Department for Education (DfE) in England. The website is managed and updated by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

The INCA project was originally commissioned by the, then, School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) in May 1996, as part of its work in monitoring the curriculum in England. The NFER was asked to undertake an international review of curriculum and assessment frameworks in 16 countries.¹ The project is ongoing and data on the Republic of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and, most recently, South Africa has since been added. The sections on initial teacher training, which were funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), were added to all the country descriptions in 2004 and 2005. Funding has been discontinued and these sections have not been updated since March 2009. Consequently, the information provided may have been superseded.

The aims of the INCA project are to:

- Build, maintain, update and develop an accurately researched and ready-to-use resource of 'country archives', comprising descriptions of government policy on the aims, organisation and control, and structure of the education system, on the curriculum and assessment frameworks, and on the initial teacher training systems in mainstream and special education across all countries of the international review.
- Provide comparative tables, thematic probes and thematic studies in specific areas of interest.
- Provide detailed information on specific areas to enable the DfE to evaluate the English National Curriculum and assessment frameworks.
- Help the DfE and policy colleagues analyse the outcomes of international comparisons.

¹ Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

These comparative tables, updated on a regular basis, aim to provide a readily comparable overview of the detailed descriptions of national education policy in the country archives. Whilst more manageable than the complete Archive, the comparative table format inevitably entails simplification of complex data, with the risk of distortion. The following therefore outlines the caveats which apply and the strategies adopted to minimise any negative effects:

- The concepts and categories are distinctively related to the curriculum and assessment framework in England and may not apply to other countries.
- The terminology used is that used in England. Explanatory notes are provided and the annotations respect, as far as possible, national terminology.
- In some cases, the Archive or the international comparisons used as sources (e.g. OECD) do not include information for all the countries in the study. Where comparable data are not available this is indicated in the tables.
- For those countries with devolved structures (Australia, Canada, Germany, South Africa, Switzerland, and the USA) it is not always possible to provide 'national' data. Readers should therefore recognise that the data may refer to specific states or provinces, as examples, and cannot necessarily be taken to reflect a national position. Such countries are identified with a dot in the left hand margin of a table.

The comparative tables list countries in 'country blocks'; UK and Ireland, Europe, and 'the rest of the world'. These groupings were chosen to allow for easy comparisons between countries, especially the home countries² and Ireland, and to ensure consistent groupings where it was considered necessary to split tables.

| United Kingdom and Ireland | Mainland Europe | | Rest of the world | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| England | France | Netherlands | Australia | New Zealand |
| Ireland | Germany | Spain | Canada | Singapore |
| Northern Ireland | Hungary | Sweden | Japan | South Africa |
| Scotland | Italy | Switzerland | Korea | USA |
| Wales | | | | |

In addition to the table itself, each section contains explanatory notes and references to the sections of the online Archive from which the information in the table is sourced.

As in the Archive, the term 'student' is used for pupils at all stages in the education system.

The principal source of information for the tables is the online Internet Archive (www.inca.org.uk). All sources in the Archive are referenced, so that users can evaluate the content and locate sources, where needed. A full list of sources for each country is available in the online Archive.

Additional summary information for all Archive countries is included in the 'system summaries'. These concise briefings provide an overview of the education system in a particular country. To access the system summaries, from the INCA website homepage (www.inca.org.uk), select the country of your choice from the 'Select country' drop-down menu, then 'System summary' under 'Select subject/chapter heading', then 'mainstream' or 'special' and click 'Go'.

² England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

Table 1
General characteristics

| | Population (thousands) 2007 | Population density (per km ²) 2007 | % of population aged under 15, 1960 | % of population aged under 15, 2007 | % of men under 25 unemployed, 2008 | % of men under 25 unemployed, 1998 | % of women under 25 unemployed, 2008 | % of women under 25 unemployed, 1998 | % of total labour force unemployed, 2007 | % of total labour force unemployed, 1997 | % GDP on education, public and private, 2006 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| United Kingdom | 60,975 | 249 | 23.3 | 17.6 | 16.0 | 13.9 | 12.0 | 10.5 | 5.3 | 7.1 | 5.91 |
| Ireland | 4,339 | 62 | 30.5 | 20.4 | 13.1 | 11.9 | 7.6 | 11.1 | 4.6 | 10.4 | 4.67 |
| France | 61,938 | 113 | 26.4 | 18.3 | 18.2 | 21.8 | 18.0 | 30.0 | 8.2 | 11.2 | 5.92 |
| Germany | 82,257 | 230 | 21.3 | 13.4 | 10.7 | 9.7 | 10.0 | 8.2 | 8.7 | 9.9 | 4.78 |
| Hungary | 10,056 | 108 | 25.3 | 15.1 | 19.1 | 15.8 | 20.9 | 11.7 | 7.4 | 8.9 | 5.64 |
| Italy | 58,880 | 195 | 23.4 | 14.1 | 18.9 | 27.2 | 24.7 | 39.0 | 6.2 | 11.8 | 4.93 |
| Netherlands | 16,382 | 402 | 30.0 | 18.0 | 5.7 | 7.8 | 5.5 | 8.5 | 3.2 | 5.5 | 5.60 |
| Spain | 44,874 | 89 | 27.3 | 14.6 | 23.7 | 27.0 | 25.8 | 43.0 | 8.3 | 20.7 | 4.66 |
| Sweden | 9,148 | 20 | 22.4 | 16.9 | 19.2 | 17.3 | 19.6 | 16.1 | 6.2 | 10.2 | 6.33 |
| Switzerland | 7,551 | 183 | 23.2 | 15.0 | 6.7 | 4.4 | 7.4 | 7.0 | 3.5 | 4.1 | (:) |
| Australia | 21,072 | 3 | 30.2 | 19.4 | 9.1 | 15.4 | 8.6 | 13.8 | 4.4 | 8.5 | 5.71 |
| Canada | 32,927 | 3 | 33.7 | 17.1 | 13.1 | 16.6 | 10.0 | 13.6 | 6.0 | 9.1 | 6.48 ³ |
| Japan | 127,771 | 338 | 30.2 | 13.5 | 7.9 | 8.2 | 6.6 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 3.4 | 4.99 |
| Korea | 48,456 | 486 | 42.3 | 18.0 | 11.5 | 20.5 | 8.0 | 12.7 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 7.35 |
| New Zealand | 4,228 | 16 | 32.9 | 21.0 | 11.4 | 15.6 | 10.6 | 13.5 | 3.6 | 6.6 | 6.26 |
| Singapore | 5,184 ⁴ | 7,126 ⁵ | 39.1 ⁶ | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) |
| South Africa | 49,991 ⁷ | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) | (:) |
| USA | 301,290 | 32 | 31.0 | 20.2 | 14.4 | 11.1 | 11.2 | 9.8 | 4.6 | 4.9 | 7.38 |

(:) Not available

Sources/Further information

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) (2009). *OECD in Figures 2009*. Paris: OECD [online].

Available: <http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/0109061E.PDF> [9 November, 2010]

Singapore : Data is taken from the Statistics Singapore website (<http://www.singstat.gov.sg/>)

³ 2006 data

⁴ 2011

⁵ 2000

⁶ 1970 figure

⁷ Mid-year estimate 2010 - <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022009.pdf>

Table 2

Levels of control and administrative organisation

| | National level | Second level | Third level | Institutional level | Notes |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--|
| England | Ministry | 152 local authorities (LAs) | | School governing bodies | Devolved responsibility to schools/school governing bodies. Legislation allows for the creation of integrated children services departments, at local (second) level, responsible for education, children and young people's health and social services. |
| Ireland | Ministry | | | Boards of management | Ministry formulates policy, monitors quality, allocates resources and is responsible for some organisational and administrative functions. Boards of management are an initiative to devolve more responsibility to schools. |
| Northern Ireland | Ministry | 5 Education and Library Boards (ELBs) | | School governing bodies | It is intended to establish a single Education and Skills Authority (ESA) which will replace the five ELBs. |
| Scotland | Ministry | 32 local authorities | | School boards | Devolved responsibility to local authorities/schools. |
| Wales | Ministry | 22 local education authorities (LEAs) | | School governing bodies | Devolved responsibility to schools/school governing bodies. |

Continued

| | National level | Second level | Third level | Institutional level | Notes |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| France | Ministry | <i>Académies</i> | <i>Régions, départements or communes</i> | | Ministry defines national policies, guidelines and curricula. Devolved responsibility (via <i>académies</i>) to <i>régions</i> for upper secondary education, <i>départements</i> (lower secondary) and <i>communes</i> (pre-primary/primary). |
| • Germany | (National) federal government | 16 <i>Länder</i> | Local school districts | | <i>Länder</i> set guidelines; local school districts recruit staff, determine curricular content, choose texts etc. Standing Conference of Ministers of Education & Cultural Affairs of the 16 <i>Länder</i> is main instrument of cooperation at national level. |
| Hungary | Ministry | 3000+ municipalities or counties (local authorities) | | Schools | Policy determined at national level; organisational decisions at local and school level. |
| Italy | Ministry | 20 regions | Provinces and municipalities/communes | School councils | Centralised policy making. Increasing delegation of administrative powers from central government via regions, provinces and municipalities/communes to schools. |
| Netherlands | Ministry | Provinces | Municipalities (local authorities) | c. 6300 competent authorities (school boards) | Devolution of financial and management responsibility to the competent authorities. |
| Spain | Ministry | 17 Autonomous Communities | Local (municipal) authorities, e.g. Municipal School Councils | Governing/educational coordination bodies, e.g. school councils of individual schools | Ministry responsible for general regulation of system, policies and guidance. Autonomous Communities oversee implementation of nationally defined standards, adapt these to local situation, set up teaching establishments, administer personnel etc. Schools are autonomous in organisational, educational and financial affairs. |
| Sweden | Ministry | 3 national agencies, plus county administrations | 290 municipalities | School principals | Municipalities decide how schools are run, following national Ministry guidelines. |
| • Switzerland | Confederation | 26 cantons | c. 2600 municipalities | School board/teachers | Educational goals defined by cantons. Very few national agreements, although there are national standards for the general and vocational leaving examinations (around age 18). Recent increased movement towards further harmonisation of the education system; ongoing discussions. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) is the main instrument of cooperation between cantons. Most cantons mandate municipalities to set up schools. |

Continued

| | National level | Second level | Third level | Institutional level | Notes |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| • Australia | National (commonwealth) government | 6 states and 2 territories | Districts | School councils | Responsibility for education rests with the states and territories. The commonwealth (federal) Government promotes national consistency and coherence. Collaboration takes place through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). |
| • Canada | Confederation | 10 provinces and 3 territories | Local school boards/districts | | Responsibility for education rests with the provinces and territories. The Council of Ministers of Education Canada, CMEC, ensures national-level communication, but has no direct control. |
| Japan | Ministry | 47 prefectures | 3400+ municipal/local boards of education | School principals | Ministry oversees; prefectures operationally responsible for upper secondary, municipalities for compulsory education. |
| Korea | Ministry | 7 Municipal and 9 Provincial Education Authorities (MPEAs) or Metropolitan Offices of Education (MPOEs) | Around 180 local offices of education (LOEs) (school district offices of education) | 'School management committees' | Gradually increasing budgetary, administrative and curricular powers delegated to MPEAs and MPOEs. |
| New Zealand | Ministry | | | Boards of Trustees | Ministry provides policy advice, allocates resources, develops curriculum and monitors effectiveness. Boards of Trustees (elected by parents) develop school charter including aims/objectives. |
| Singapore | Ministry | | | School principal or, increasingly, superintendent in charge of 'cluster' of 13/14 schools. | School principal determines institutional programme/structure, based on national Ministry guidelines. Development of school clusters aims to confer greater authority to school superintendents. |
| • South Africa | National ministry | 9 provinces | | School governing bodies | The National Ministry has exclusive responsibility for tertiary education and shares responsibility with the provinces for all other levels of education. The nine provinces implement education policy devised nationally and make funding decisions. Significant responsibility is devolved to school governing bodies. |
| • USA | Federal government | 50 states | Local district school boards | School | Individual states provide policy guidelines; local districts operate schools within these guidelines. Some national (federal) initiatives influence state policy guidelines. |

Notes

Sweden

There are three national agencies concerned with the phases and types of education covered by the INCA website: the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten*). In addition, the International Programme Office for Education and Training (*Internationella programkontoret*) is the central authority supporting schools' international activities. There are two further agencies (the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education – *Högskoleverket* and the National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges) which are concerned with higher education.

Sources/Further information

For further information about the contents of this table, see the following sections and their subsections of the full Archive:

Levels of control and administrative organisation

Organisation/control/funding ⇒ 2.1 Organisation and control of system/structure and 2.1.1 Control

Table 3

National education aims

Table 3 summarises the general aims, purposes, goals and principles of education, as stated in the documents consulted for the INCA Archive. It does not reflect the emphasis placed on each area by the individual country. Individual country archives should be consulted for this purpose.

| | Excellence/raising standards | Individual development | Values/ethics/morals | Emotional/spiritual development | Social development | Personal qualities | Equal opportunity/multi-culturalism | National economy | Preparation for work | Basic skills – literacy/numeracy | Scientific/technological skills | Foundation for future education | Knowledge/skills/understanding | Citizenship/community/democracy | Cultural (heritage literacy) | Creativity | Non-mother tongue language | Environment/sustainable development | Health/physical/leisure | Lifelong learning | Parental participation | Special learning needs (including gifted) |
|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| England | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Ireland | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| N. Ireland | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Wales | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Scotland | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| France | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Germany | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Hungary | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Italy | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Netherlands | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Spain | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Sweden | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Switzerland | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Australia | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Canada | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Japan | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Korea | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| New Zealand | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Singapore | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| South Africa | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| USA | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables, see the following section of the full Archive:

Table 3 National Education Aims

Context and principles of education ⇨ 1.2.1 Aims, objectives, values, principles

Table 4

Recent education reforms

Table 4 provides an overview of the timing of the introduction and review of legislation and key initiatives in six key areas. Dates in blue indicate the current key legislation or initiative. Dates in a normal font imply that the major legislation has been amended without changing the major direction of the legislation/initiative. Dates included in the table only cover legislation/initiatives which are already in force. Pending legislation or initiatives awaiting implementation are covered in footnotes.

| | Length of compulsory education | Promote pre-school education | Primary curriculum | Secondary curriculum | Standardised national assessment | Examinations |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| England | 1973 2008 | 1998, 2006 | 1988 1995, 96, 97, 98 2000 | 1988 1995, 96, 97 2000, 02, 2006 , 08 | 1988 1996, 97 2002, 2004 , 2008 | 1988 2000 , 2008 |
| Ireland | 1937, 1998 2000 | 1994, 1999 2009 | 1971 1999 | 1989 1994 1995 | 1989 1999 2007 | 1989 1995 |
| N. Ireland | 1973 1989 | 1998 | 1989 2004 2006 | 1989 2006 | 1989 1996, 98 2006 | 1989, 1998 2000, 02, 04, 05 2006 , 2008 |
| Scotland | 1947 1980 | 1947 1968 | 1989 2000 2004 | 1977, 1987 1999, 2000 2004 | 1991 2003 2004 , 2005 | 1980, 1992, 99 2002, 04, 05 |
| Wales | 1973 | 1998 2001 2008 | 1988 1995, 96, 97 2000, 01, 03 2008 | 1988 1995, 96, 97 2000, 01, 03, 04 2008 | 1988 1996, 97, 99 2001 2004 , 06 | 1988 1996, 97 2000, 01, 2007 , 2008 |

Continued

| | Length of compulsory education | Promote pre-school education | Primary curriculum | Secondary curriculum | Standardised national assessment | Examinations |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| France | 1936 1959 | 1989 | 1991, 95 2002, 05 , 06, 2008 | 1995, 99 2001, 05 , 06, 09, 10 | 1985, 89 | 1985, 87 1999 2001, 05 |
| • Germany | n/a | 1993, 96 | 1994 | 1993, 96 | 2002 | 1971 1994, 97, 99 2005 |
| Hungary | 1993, 96 | | 1993, 95, 99 2007 | 1993, 95, 99 2000, 2007 | 1993, 95, 96, 99 2004 | 1993, 96 2002 |
| Italy | 1999 2006 | 1968 1991 | 1985 1991 2004, 07 | 1979 2001 , 04, 07 | 1977 1996, 97 2007 | 1979 1992, 97 2004 |
| Netherlands | 1981 | 1981 | 1993, 95, 98 2003, 06 | 1993, 98, 99 2003, 06 | 2006 | 1998, 99 |
| Spain | 1990 | 1990 2006 | 1990 2006 | 1990, 92, 93 2006 | 1990 2006 | 1990 2006 |
| Sweden | 1985 | 1991, 98 | 1965 1994, 98 | 1965 1994, 98 2000 | 1995 2000, 09 | 1969 1995 2000 |
| • Switzerland | 1970 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1968 1994 2002 | 1968 1994 |
| • Australia | n/a | n/a | 1991 2011 | 1991 2011 | 1991, 97 2008 | n/a |
| • Canada | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1989 2003, 07 | n/a |
| Japan | 1947 2006 | 1947 2006 | 1989 1998 | 1989 1998 | 1964 2007 | 1994 |
| Korea | 1949 1997 | 1969 1982 1999 2007 | 1992 1997 2007 | 1992 1997 2007 | 1987 1995, 99 2000 | 1974 1991, 95, 97, 98 |
| New Zealand | 1993 | 1989 1996 2002 | 1991, 93 2007 | 1991, 93 2007 | 1995, 97 | 2002 , 07 |
| Singapore | 2000 | 2000 | 1997 2001 , 08 | 1997 2001 , 02 | 1997 2001 | 2002 , 03 |
| • South Africa | 1996 | 2002 | 1998 2002, 2010 | 1998 2002, 2010 | 1998 2005 | 1995 2001, 08 |
| • USA | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1969 2002 | n/a |

Notes

- England** The Education and Skills Act 2008 introduced a requirement for all young people to participate in (at least part-time) education and training until their 18th birthday. The first cohort to be affected by the changes began secondary education (Year 7, age 11) in September 2008. The minimum age at which young people can leave learning will be raised in two stages – to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015. In 2006, the weekly free entitlement of 12.5 hours of early education and childcare for three- and four-year-olds was extended from 33 weeks per year to 38 weeks. Since 2010, all three- and four-year-olds have been entitled to 15 hours of free early education and childcare provision. In September 2008, a new secondary curriculum came into force and 14- to 19-year-olds began to have access to a range of new specialised diplomas. Also in that month, revised GCE A Levels began to be introduced. A review of the National Curriculum for primary and secondary education began in January 2011.
- Ireland** The Education (Welfare) Act of 2000 raised the school leaving age from 15 to 16 or the completion of three full years of second level education. This was implemented in the 2002/03 school year. The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill 2011 is currently before Parliament. This provides for a single qualifications authority for compulsory, further and higher education. A framework for early learning (*Aistear*) was launched in 2009. In 2007, all children at the end of Year 1 or the beginning of Year 2, and at the end of Year 4 or the beginning of Year 5 of primary education began to take standardised tests in reading (English) and maths. Reviews of the curriculum (led by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, NCCA) are currently underway; all are at different phases of development.
- Northern Ireland** Under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, revised statutory curriculum and assessment arrangements for compulsory primary and secondary education were implemented gradually from September 2007. Revised GCE A Levels were introduced in September 2008.
- Scotland** The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 empowered local authority social work departments to set up day nurseries to care for children across the whole pre-school age group and to provide pre-school education for the older child. A new curriculum for three- to 18-year-olds was proposed in the 2004 document 'A Curriculum for Excellence'. Schools began to adopt this new curriculum from August 2009. The curriculum phase of the Curriculum for Excellence Programme has now been implemented. The Programme will continue until 2016, when the implementation of the new qualifications which are being developed by the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) is completed.
- Wales** A new 'foundation phase' of education for three- to seven-year-olds began to be introduced in September 2008. At that time, a revised curriculum for three- to 19-year-olds also began to be introduced. Changes to the national assessment system in Wales mean that statutory assessment at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages seven, 11 and 14 respectively) is by teacher assessment only. Following a successful pilot, the Welsh Baccalaureate (16+) qualification was also introduced in a staged roll-out from September 2007. Revised GCE A Levels were introduced in September 2008.
- France** Compulsory schooling was extended to age 14 in 1936 and to 16 in 1959. Following extensive revisions, and the development of the *socle commun* (the common basis of knowledge and skills), a new primary programme of study was introduced from the beginning of the 2008 school year. Similar new programmes of study were introduced to lower secondary education at the start of the 2009 school year. Phased introduction of the new upper secondary curriculum started in August 2010.
- Germany** National tests to assess performance against common standards in primary and lower secondary education are being introduced gradually. The results of the first standardised tests were published in 2010. The process began in the 2004/05 school year, based on an agreement of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Culture of the 16 German *Länder* first signed in 2002.
- Hungary** The school leaving age was raised to 16, as a result of 1993 legislation, and to 18 in 1996.
- Italy** Legislation makes provision for compulsory education to last 10 years, from age six to 16; this came into effect from the 2009/10 academic year. In 2004, the *primo ciclo* (first cycle of education), consisting of five years of primary education and three years of lower secondary was introduced. Schools are currently required to apply the 2007 Guidelines for the Curriculum, whilst bearing in mind some aspects of the 2004 guidelines. Reform of the upper secondary curriculum is also imminent.
- Netherlands** The Primary Education Act 1981, which lowered the starting age of compulsory education from six to five years, abolished separate nursery schools and brought provision for four- and five-year-olds into primary education, came into effect in 1985.

- Sweden** Compulsory education normally begins at age seven and lasts nine years. However, since 1991, six-year-olds have been able to enrol in Year 1 of compulsory education if places are available. Since 1998 it has also been possible to postpone a child's entry to Year 1 of compulsory education until the age of eight. National tests for children in Year 3 (aged nine-10) were introduced in the spring term of 2009. New syllabuses for all subjects in compulsory education and a new grading system were introduced in July 2011.
- **Switzerland** A national agreement on the objectives and content of education, including the introduction of curricular standards during compulsory education, is in the process of deliberation and ratification by the cantons.
 - **Australia** Education is the responsibility of individual States and Territories. There is collaboration through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment and Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). In May 2008, students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 (ages eight/nine, 10/11, 12/13 and 14/15 respectively) took the first (NAPLAN) national tests in literacy and numeracy. NAPLAN is the National Assessment Programme in Literacy and Numeracy. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has been charged with developing a national curriculum to be introduced from 2011; introduction may be delayed until 2012/2013 depending on the state or territory. Aligned to this will be a national assessment and reporting programme.
 - **Canada** Provinces and territories control education; there is some national influence through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) which is responsible for national-level communication. The CMEC-developed national School Achievement Indicators Programme (SAIP) (standardised lower secondary tests) was replaced by the Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme (PCAP) in spring 2007.
- Japan** In 2006, the Fundamental Law of Education was revised for the first time in 60 years. Following a review in 1998, revised courses of study were introduced at primary and lower secondary level in 2002. In 2009, these were reviewed again. As a result, the Education Ministry plans to fully implement new curriculum guidelines in elementary schools (six- to 12-year-olds) in the 2011 school year, in junior high schools (12- to 15-year-olds) in 2012, and in high schools (15- to 18-year-olds) in 2013. In March 2010, the Japanese Government also passed legislation to abolish tuition fees for public high schools (students aged 15 to 18+). New national standardised tests in Japanese and mathematics took place for all pupils in Year 6 (ages 11 to 12) and Year 9 (ages 14 to 15) in April 2007.
- Korea** The curriculum was last revised in 2007.
- New Zealand** A new curriculum was released in November 2007 and was introduced in schools between 2007 and 2010. The National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP), an assessment programme for small samples of primary age children and children at the primary-secondary transition stage, began in 1995 and has recently been discontinued. Voluntary assessment on school entry was initiated nationally in 1997. A National Assessment Strategy (for compulsory education) was introduced in 1999. A modular/cumulative National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) (15+) began to be introduced in 2002/3 although it was launched initially in 1998. National standards, which set out descriptions of what students should know and be able to do in reading, writing and mathematics at different points in their schooling from Years 1 to 8 (aged five/six to 13) were introduced in 2010.
- Singapore** Following legislation passed in 2000, six years of primary education became compulsory for children starting primary school in the 2003/4 school year. A new pre-school curriculum framework, drawn up in 2000, was launched in January 2003. Following a review of upper secondary education in 2002, a revised curriculum and more flexible educational pathways began to be introduced in junior colleges (ages 16 to 18) from 2006. In 2008, the Ministry of Education conducted a review of primary education; changes arising from this review are in the process of implementation.
- **South Africa** Following a review of the implementation of the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in 2009, a revised curriculum for all learners began to be introduced in 2011.
 - **USA** The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been assessing students' knowledge nationally in reading, writing, mathematics, science and other subjects since its introduction in 1969. President Bush's 2002 national education reform strategy - 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) - signed into law statutory testing in reading, maths and science throughout the USA. Work is underway on the Obama Administration's reauthorisation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which focuses on preparing students for college and the workplace.

Sources/further information

The tables above indicate recent major reforms in specific policy areas. Where available, the date of the legislation or regulation which introduced the reform is given. A blank on the table means that the information received does not indicate that there has been a reform in the relevant policy area. For further information on each of the headings used, see the following sections and their subsections of the full Archive.

Length of compulsory education

Education Structure (ages 3–19) ⇒ 3.1 Compulsory education and 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3–19)

Promote pre-school education

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.1 Compulsory education and 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3–19)

Primary curriculum

Curricula (age 3–19) ⇒ 5.2 Second phase: Primary

Secondary curriculum

Curricula (age 3–19) ⇒ 5.3. Third phase: Lower secondary or 5.4. Fourth phase: Upper secondary

National assessment

Assessment arrangements (information may be available on the introductory page to a chapter).

Examinations

Assessment arrangements ⇒ 6.3. Third phase: Lower secondary or 6.4. Fourth phase: Upper secondary, age

Table 5

Schooling: duration, phases**Table 5.1 Compulsory education**

| | Starting age | Minimum school leaving age | Duration in years |
|------------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| England | 5 | 16 | 11 |
| Ireland | 6 | 16 | 10 |
| Northern Ireland | 4 | 16 | 12 |
| Scotland | 4/5 | 16 | 11 |
| Wales | 5 | 16 | 11 |
| France | 6 | 16 | 10 |
| • Germany | 6 | 15/16+ | 9/10 Full time + 3 Part time |
| Hungary | 6 | 18 | 12 |
| Italy | 6 | 16 | 10 |
| Netherlands | 4/5 | 18 | 13 |
| Spain | 6 | 16 | 10 |
| Sweden | 7 | 16 | 9 |
| • Switzerland | 4/5/6 | 15 | 9 – 11 |
| • Australia | 5/6 | 15/16/17 | 9-11 |
| • Canada | 6/7 | 16/18 | 10-12 |
| Japan | 6 | 15 | 9 |
| Korea | 6 | 15 | 9 |
| New Zealand | 6 | 16 | 10 |
| Singapore | 6/7 | 16/17 | 10 |
| • South Africa | 7 | 15 | 8 |
| • USA | 6 | 16 | 10 |

Notes

- England** Although children must start school the term after they reach the age of five years, many children start school at age four. The Education and Skills Act 2008 introduced a requirement for all young people to participate in (at least part-time) education and training until their 18th birthday. The first cohort to be affected by the changes began secondary education (Year 7, age 11) in September 2008. The minimum age at which young people can leave learning will be raised in two stages – to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015.
- Ireland** Although compulsory education does not begin until age six, more than 50 per cent of four-year-olds and almost all five-year-olds are in publicly-funded provision in the infant classes of primary schools.
- Scotland** A child is of school age between five and 16; depending on when they are born in the school year they may start at age four.
- Wales** Although children must start school the term after they reach the age of five, many children start school at age four.
- **Germany** Students must complete at least nine or 10 years of full-time education, followed by three years of part-time education (dependent on the jurisdiction).
- Hungary** All five-year-olds must also attend kindergarten for up to four hours each school day to prepare for compulsory school. Since 1998, all students commencing compulsory education have had to remain in education until the age of 18. Previously the upper limit was 16. In principle, there are eight years of basic education, plus four years of upper secondary education.
- Italy** Legislation passed in late 2006 made provision for compulsory education to last 10 years from age six to 16.
- Netherlands** Most children (99 per cent) start school at age four although it is not compulsory until the age of five. Children must attend school full-time until age 16 and must continue learning until they have obtained a basic qualification up to age 18.
- Sweden** Although compulsory education begins at age seven, municipalities must allow six-year-olds to commence compulsory education. Entry may also be deferred to age eight. Children who commence compulsory education at age six complete the nine years of compulsory education at age 15; entry at age eight means completion of compulsory education at age 17.
- **Switzerland** Currently, starting and leaving ages and the duration of compulsory education vary from canton to canton, with nine years being the norm. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education has approved an agreement to standardise school starting and leaving ages across Switzerland by 2015/16. In line with this agreement, cantons have begun to introduce compulsory pre-school education from age four. The agreement is currently subject to ratification by each canton.

- **Australia** Although six is the usual compulsory starting age, most children start school at age five. In Tasmania, every child who is at least five years old on 1 January must be enrolled in the Preparatory Year in a school or be provided with home education. The minimum school leaving age is 15 in most States/Territories, 16 in Tasmania. In Queensland, since January 2006, it has been compulsory for young people to remain in school until they finish Year 10 or reach age 16. Unless in full time work, they must then stay in education or training for a further two years or until they have a senior certificate, vocational certificate or have reached the age of 17. Similar arrangements were introduced in Tasmania in January 2008, where, after leaving Year 10, young people must now continue in education or training for two years or until they turn 17. School education is compulsory for all children aged six to 17 years of age in Victoria.
- **Canada** Although, in most Canadian provinces, education is compulsory to around age 16, in two provinces - Ontario and New Brunswick it is compulsory to age 18.
- **New Zealand** Although education does not become compulsory until age six, children almost universally start school at age five.
- **Singapore** Six years' primary education is compulsory. The remaining four years' formal general education is universal, not compulsory. Children start primary school in January of the year in which they become seven.
- **South Africa** Children normally begin school at age five, turning six, for admission into Grade R (reception), or six turning seven, for admission into Grade 1. Education is compulsory from age seven (Grade 1), however, it is intended that all children will attend Grade R.
- **USA** The figures/ages in the table are generalisations. In some states, the kindergarten year (children aged five-six) is compulsory; in others, students may be expected to stay in compulsory education until the age of 18.

Table 5.2 Educational phases (not necessarily involving transfer from one school to another)

| | Pre-school | Primary/basic | Lower secondary | Upper secondary |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| England | 0-5 | 5-11 | 11-16 | 16-18 |
| Ireland | 3-6 | 6-12 | 12-15 | 15-16/17/18 |
| Northern Ireland | 2-4 | 4-11 | 11-16 | 16-18 |
| Scotland | 3-5 | 5-12 | 12-16 | 16-18 |
| Wales | 3-5 | 5-11 | 11-16 | 16-18 |
| France | 2-6 | 6-11 | 11-15 | 15-18 |
| • Germany | 3-6 | 6-10/12 | 10/12-15/16 | 15/16-18/19 |
| Hungary | 3-6 (compulsory at age 5) | 6-10/12/14 | 6-10/12/14 | 10/12/14-18/19/20 |
| Italy | 2½-6 | 6-11 | 11-14 | 14-18/19 |
| Netherlands | 0-5 | 5-12 | 12-15 | 15-18 |
| Spain | 0-6 | 6-12 | 12-16 | 16-18 |
| Sweden | 0-7 | 7-16 | 7-16 | 16-19 |
| • Switzerland | 4/5-6/7 | 6/7-10,11,12 | 10,11,12-15/16 | 17/15/16-18/19 |
| • Australia | 3-5/6 | 5/6-12/13 | 12/13-15/16 | 15/16-18+ |
| • Canada | 4/5-6/7 | 6/7-11,12,13 | 11/12/13-15/16 | 15/16-17/18+ |
| Japan | 3-6 | 6-12 | 12-15 | 15-18 |
| Korea | 3-6 | 6-12 | 12-15 | 15-18 |
| New Zealand | 3-5/6 | 5/6-12/13 | 12/13-16 | 16-18+ |
| Singapore | 3/4-6 | 6/7-12 | 12-16/17 | 16/17-18/19+ |
| • South Africa | 0 to 4/5 | 5/6-12 | 12-15 | 15-18 |
| • USA | 3-5/6 | 5/6-13/14 | 5/6-13/14 | 13/14-17/18 |

Notes

- England** The period of education from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has his/her fifth birthday is known as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Compulsory education begins the term after a child reaches the age of five. However, many children begin school at four+. The compulsory age of leaving education and training will be raised to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015. Those children entering secondary education (Year 7, age 11) in September 2008 were the first cohort to be expected to remain in (at least part-time) education and training until the age of 17.
- Ireland** Although compulsory education does not formally begin until age six, the majority of four- and five-year-old children are in publicly-funded provision in primary school education. At age 15+, students follow either a one-year Transition Year course; three types of two-year Leaving Certificate course; or a three-year course (Transition Year followed by a two-year Leaving Certificate course).
- Wales** The foundation phase covers children aged three to seven years. Compulsory education begins the term after a child reaches the age of five. However, many children begin school at four+.
- France** Compulsory education ends at age 16. Students must therefore spend at least one year in the upper secondary phase.
- **Germany** Primary education ends at age 10 in 14 of the 16 *Länder*, and at age 12 in the remaining two (Berlin and Brandenburg).
 - **Hungary** Attendance in the kindergarten year, age five-six, is compulsory. Traditionally, Hungarian secondary education admitted general school leavers aged 14+. It is now increasingly common for secondary schools to admit students aged 10+ or 12+. This depends on the type of institution and, as a result, students receive either eight, six or four years of upper secondary education.
 - **Italy** Primary and lower secondary education forms the first cycle of education in Italy (six- to 14-year-olds). Compulsory education currently ends at 16; students must spend at least two years in the upper secondary phase. Since September 2009, it has been possible for children to enrol in pre-school from the age of two-and-a-half.
 - **Sweden** Compulsory phase education is provided in the all-through compulsory school (*grundskola*) and usually begins at age seven. Children who start earlier (age six) may finish earlier (age 15) after nine years' compulsory education.
 - **Switzerland** Starting and leaving ages and the duration of compulsory education vary from canton to canton. The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education has, however, approved an agreement to make these the same across Switzerland. This agreement to 'harmonise' education systems is currently in force in 15 of the 26 cantons, making pre-school education compulsory for two years (ages four to six) rather than one (five-six).
 - **South Africa** The Reception Year (Grade R) (age five-six) is not yet compulsory but it is expected that it will be available to all in 2011. Upper secondary provision (15- to 18-year-olds) is not compulsory.
 - **USA** Phases vary dependent on the individual state. The INCA Archive reflects the system of eight-year elementary school, followed by four-year high school. Other jurisdictions have a three-year primary school (includes a kindergarten year), four-year intermediate school, three-year junior high school and three-year senior high; others a five-year elementary school, three-year middle school and four-year high school.

Sources/Further information

For further information – see the following sections and their subsections of the full Archive.

Table 5.1 Compulsory education:

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.1 Compulsory education

Table 5.2 Educational phases:

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3 - 19)

Table 6

School structures, access, internal grouping and progression**Table 6.1 School structures**

This table indicates whether:

- there is a unitary system of schools catering for all students (comp)
- distinct school types for students of different educational aptitudes (select)
- or a mixed system offering both types of schools (mixed).

Even where the structure may be common for all, differentiated courses are usually offered, at least at upper secondary level to suit students' abilities and preferences.

| | Primary | Lower secondary | Upper secondary |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| England | comp | mixed | mixed |
| Ireland | comp | comp | comp |
| Northern Ireland | comp | mixed | mixed |
| Scotland | comp | comp | comp |
| Wales | comp | comp | comp |
| France | comp | comp | select |
| • Germany | comp | select | select |
| Hungary | comp | select | select |
| Italy | comp | comp | select |
| Netherlands | comp | mixed | mixed |
| Spain | comp | comp | mixed |
| Sweden | comp | comp | comp |
| • Switzerland | comp | mixed | select |
| • Australia | comp | comp | comp |
| • Canada | comp | comp | comp |
| Japan | comp | comp | select |
| Korea | comp | comp | mixed |
| New Zealand | comp | comp | comp |
| Singapore | comp | comp | select |
| • South Africa | comp | comp | comp |
| • USA | comp | comp | comp |

Notes

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Northern Ireland | There has, until recently, been a selective system of secondary education, with children taking tests in the final year of primary education to determine selection for the post-primary phase. The last 'transfer tests' were taken in autumn 2008 for entry to post-primary education in September 2009. For 2011 entry, the Government provided a menu of recommended criteria that schools could choose to use and schools had to have regard to these. Schools are recommended not to use academic criteria but are not precluded from doing so. |
| Wales | The overwhelming majority of secondary schools in Wales are comprehensive schools. There are no grammar schools, that is schools which are wholly selective by academic ability or aptitude. |
| Canada | At one time, secondary schools were primarily academic and prepared students for university. Vocational and technical schools were often separate institutions. Although some of these still exist, most secondary schools are now composite and offer both academic and vocational courses. |

Table 6.2 Access

This table indicates whether access to educational phases:

- is automatic (open)
- or subject to performance in school leaving certificates or other evidence of performance (cert).

In the case of higher education, this indicates whether holders of relevant upper secondary school certificates (e.g. *Baccalauréat* in France, *Abitur* in Germany, *VWO* in the Netherlands) have automatic right of access to higher education (open) or whether they have to meet additional selection criteria operated by higher education institutions (select).

| | Primary | Lower secondary | Upper secondary | Higher education |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| England | open | open | cert | select |
| Ireland | open | open | open | select |
| Northern Ireland | open | open/cert | cert | select |
| Scotland | open | open | cert | select |
| Wales | open | open | cert | select |
| France | open | open | open | open |
| • Germany | open | cert | cert | open |
| Hungary | cert | cert | cert | select |
| Italy | open | open | cert, age 14 | open |
| Netherlands | open | cert | cert | open |
| Spain | open | open | cert, age 16 | select |
| Sweden | open | n/a | cert, age 15/16 | select |
| • Switzerland | open | cert | cert | open |
| • Australia | open | open | open | select |
| • Canada | open | open | cert | select |
| Japan | open | open | cert, age 15 | select |
| Korea | open | open | cert, age 15 (open) | select |
| New Zealand | open | open | open | select |
| Singapore | open | cert | cert | select |
| • South Africa | open | open | cert, age 15 | select |
| • USA | open | open | open | select |

Notes

- Ireland** Although admission to higher education is 'open' students need high scores in the Leaving Certificate examinations to access places on the most sought after programmes.
- Northern Ireland** There has, until recently, been a selective system of secondary education, with children taking tests in the final year of primary education to determine selection for the post-primary phase. However, the last transfer tests were taken in autumn 2008 for entry in September 2009. For 2011 entry, the Government provided a menu of recommended criteria that schools could choose to use and schools had to have regard to these. Schools are recommended not to use academic criteria but are not precluded from doing so.
- France** The first year of upper secondary education is the final year of compulsory education, students therefore progress automatically.
- **Germany** In cases where children, aged six, are not thought ready to enter primary education, they may be obliged to spend some time in special preparatory classes.
- Hungary** A certificate confirming a child's attendance in kindergarten education is a pre-requisite for entry to compulsory education.
- Italy** Until the 2004/05 academic year, students took the primary school leaving examination at age 11. This was required for entry to lower secondary education. The examination has been discontinued as primary and lower secondary now form 'sub-divisions' of the first cycle of education in Italy.
- Sweden** Primary and lower secondary compulsory phase education is provided in one 'all-through' school (*grundskola*).
- **Switzerland** As in many countries, there are additional higher education entry requirements in certain subject areas, such as medical science, where there is a shortage of places for students.
- Japan** Students receive an elementary school leaving certificate, but progress automatically from their local elementary school to their local junior high school (at age12).
- Korea** Graduates of middle schools or the equivalent may enter high schools. Admission into high school used to be based on the grades of a selection examination, but there is increasing variance in the admissions process.
- **South Africa** Access to post-compulsory education (age 15+) is dependent on successful completion of lower secondary education and achievement of the General Education and Training (GET) certificate.

Table 6.3 Internal grouping

This table indicates whether classes are generally defined by age or by ability in different subjects (set). In some cases, grouping by ability applies in some subjects only (age/set), or is introduced from a given class onwards (e.g. age/set Year [Yr] 4). In others, students are grouped both by age and the ability based pathway they have taken (age and set). Beyond the compulsory phase, there is considerable variation and students are most commonly grouped according to the courses they take.

| | Primary | Lower secondary |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| England | age/set | age/set |
| Ireland | age | age/set |
| Northern Ireland | age/set | age/set |
| Scotland | age | age/set |
| Wales | age/set | age/set |
| France | age | age |
| • Germany | age | age and set |
| Hungary | age/set | age/set |
| Italy | age | age |
| Netherlands | age | age and set |
| Spain | age | age |
| Sweden | age | age, set at 12+ |
| • Switzerland | age | set |
| • Australia | age | age/set |
| • Canada | age | age/set |
| Japan | age | age |
| Korea | age/set | age/set |
| New Zealand | age | age/set |
| Singapore | age, set at age 10 | age and set |
| • South Africa | age | age |
| • USA | age/set | age/set |

Notes

- Hungary** Classes are generally organised by age regardless of ability but, during lower secondary education, they may be organised by ability in different subjects. Decisions on class grouping are made by the school administration.
- Netherlands** Students in primary education may be grouped by ability in some schools; this procedure is quite rare, however, and students are usually grouped by age.
- **Australia** Teaching groups are generally organised by age. Setting may be practised in some subjects, such as mathematics, from year 7/8 (students age 12/13).
- Japan** Between 2014 and 2019, the Japanese Ministry of Education intends to move away from the policy of teaching in age groups in public elementary and junior high schools (age six to 15) towards teaching groups by ability.
- Korea** Classes are generally organised by age regardless of ability but, since the introduction of the Seventh National Curriculum, some grouping by ability has been introduced.
- New Zealand** Classes are generally grouped by age, but variations do occur with setting by ability for some subjects, such as mathematics and English, or grouping by band.
- **South Africa** Primary level teaching groups are normally organised by age. However, multi-grade classes do exist in areas with low population densities, especially in rural areas. Similar arrangements are also made during secondary education.
- **USA** In elementary schools, children are generally grouped by age with some banding within a class for certain subjects. Grouping by ability may take place in some schools.

Table 6.4 Progression within phases

This table indicates whether students automatically move to the next class (**open**) or whether this is subject to their achieving certain minimum standards (**perf**). In most countries where performance governs progression, the decision is made by all the teachers of the relevant class/year group and includes consultation with parents.

| | Primary | Lower secondary |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| England | open | open |
| Ireland | open | open |
| Northern Ireland | open | open |
| Scotland | open | open |
| Wales | open | open |
| France | perf | perf |
| • Germany | perf | perf |
| Hungary | perf | perf |
| Italy | perf | perf |
| Netherlands | perf | perf |
| Spain | perf | perf |
| Sweden | open | perf |
| • Switzerland | perf | perf |
| • Australia | open | open |
| • Canada | open | open/perf |
| Japan | open | open |
| Korea | open | open |
| New Zealand | open | open |
| Singapore | open | perf |
| • South Africa | perf | perf |
| • USA | open/perf | open/perf |

Notes

- France** Although automatic promotion is becoming the norm.
- Italy** Progression within primary education is generally open although there are some very rare exceptions.
- Singapore** Generally open in primary education, although some students may be asked to repeat the final year of primary education.
- Sweden** Students normally progress to a higher class. However, after consulting a child's parent, the headteacher may decide not to move a student up (or to transfer a child earlier than would be the norm).
- Spain** Although most students generally progress automatically from one school year to the next, children who do not meet the objectives for a given year do not automatically progress to the next year. Instead, they receive additional support to achieve the objectives before being allowed to move on. Generally, however, no child is held back for more than one year.
- **South Africa** Students in South Africa are expected to meet expected levels of performance to progress from one Grade to the next. To reduce the number of students repeating, a new assessment policy, moving the emphasis from year-end exams to continuous performance appraisals has been introduced. This provides struggling students with greater assistance. It is intended that students should not spend more than four years in each phase and should, as a rule, progress with their age group.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables - see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive.

Table 6.1 School structures

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3 - 19)

Table 6.2 Access

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3 - 19) ⇒ 3.2.x.1 Admissions criteria (depending on the phase of education being consulted)

Table 6.3 Internal grouping

Internal school organisation ⇒ Select a phase of education ⇒ 4.x.1 Organisation of teaching groups (depending on the phase of education being consulted)

Table 6.4 Progression within phases

Internal school organisation ⇒ Select a phase of education ⇒ 4.x.2 Student progression through the phase (depending on the phase of education being consulted)

Table 7

Subjects in the compulsory phase curriculum

This table aims to map the subjects studied in the compulsory curriculum mapped against the English National Curriculum.

| | Mother tongue | Maths | Science | Geog | History | MFL - foreign lang | DT -design technology | PE | Art | Music | ICT | Civics | Other |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|---|
| England | 5-16 | 5-16 | 5-16 ⁸ | 5-14 | 5-14 | 11-14 | 5-14 | 5-16 | 5-14 ⁹ | 5-14 | 5-16 | 11-16 ¹⁰ | Religious education, 5-16 Careers education and guidance, 11-16 Sex education 11-16 Work-related learning, 14-16 |
| Ireland | 4/5-15 ¹¹ | 4/5-15 | 4/5-12 ¹² | 4/5-15 | 4/5-15 | 4/5-15 | | 4/5-15 | 4/5-12 ¹³ | 4/5-12 | | 4/5-15 ¹⁴ | Social, Personal and Health Education 4/5-15 Religious education 4/5-15 Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) 12-15 |
| Northern Ireland | 4-14 | 4-14 | 4-14 ¹⁵ | 4-14 | 4-14 | 11-14 | 4-14 ¹⁶ | 4-16 | 4-14 | 4-14 | | 4-16 | Religious education 4-16 Personal Development and Mutual Understanding 4-16 Learning for Life and Work 11-16 Skills and capabilities Language entitlement |
| Scotland | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 ¹⁷ | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 ¹⁸ | 4/5-16 ¹⁹ | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 | 4/5-16 ²⁰ | Health and wellbeing 4/5-16 Religious and moral education 4/5-16 |

⁸ England: At age 14-16, science may be taught as combined science or as individual subjects: physics, chemistry and biology

⁹ England: Art and design

¹⁰ England: Citizenship and personal, social and health education

¹¹ Ireland: Sub-divided into Gaeilge and English

¹² Ireland: As social, environmental and scientific education (SESE) for four/five- to 12-year-olds. Science is an optional subject for 12- to 15-year-olds but is studied by the vast majority of junior cycle pupils (92% in 2009).

¹³ Ireland: Taught as 'Arts education' which comprises visual arts, music and drama for four/five- to 12-year-olds.

¹⁴ Ireland: Part of social, personal and health education for four/five- to 15-year-olds. In addition, the compulsory subject 'Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)' is taught to 12- to 15-year-olds.

¹⁵ Northern Ireland: Taught as the 'World Around Us' for four- to 11-year-olds and 'Environment and Society' for 11 to 14-year-olds.

¹⁶ Northern Ireland: Taught as art, design and music

¹⁷ Scotland: Taught as part of social studies

¹⁸ Scotland: Taught as part of technology

¹⁹ Scotland: Taught as 'Health and Wellbeing'

²⁰ Scotland: Taught as part of religious and moral education

| | Mother tongue | Maths | Science | Geog | History | MFL - foreign lang | DT -design technology | PE | Art | Music | ICT | Civics | Other |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------|--------------------|-------|----------|---|---|
| Wales ²¹ | 7-16 ²² | 7-19 | 7-16 | 7-14 | 7-14 | 7-14 | 7-14 ²³ | 7-16 | 7-14 | 7-14 | 7-14 | 7-16 | Personal and social education (PSE) 7-16 Religious education 7-16 Welsh as a second language 7-16 |
| France | 6-16 | 6-16 | 8-16 ²⁴ | 8-16 ²⁵ | 8-16 ²⁶ | 7-16 | 8-14 ²⁷ | 6-16 | 6-14 ²⁸ | 6-14 | 8-15 | 8-16 ²⁹ | 'Discovering the world', 6-8 Individual support, 15-16 |
| Germany ³⁰ | Varies | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hungary | 6-18 | 6-18 | 6-18 ³¹ | | 10-18 ³² | 9-18 14-18 ³³ | 6-14 ³⁴ | 6-18 | 6-16/18 | 6-16 | 12-15/18 | 10-14 ³⁵ 12-13 ³⁶ 16-17 ³⁷ | Environment, 6-10 Nature, 10-12 Our earth and environment, 12-16 Class session, 10-18 Dance and drama, 10-12 Ethnography, 10-12 Cinema and media, 13-14 Introduction to philosophy, 17-18 Health, 13-14 Careers/work-related education 14-18 |
| Italy ³⁸ | 6-14 | 6-14 | 6-14 | 6-14 | 6-14 | 6-14 ³⁹ | 6-14 ⁴⁰ | 6-14 | 6-14 | 6-14 | 11-14 | 6-14 ⁴¹ | |

²¹ Wales: The foundation phase (children aged three-seven) is based on seven statutory 'areas of learning': personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity; language, literacy and communication skills; mathematical development; welsh language development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. This table therefore starts at age seven for Wales, although education is compulsory from age five.

²² Wales: English or Welsh

²³ Wales: Technology comprising design and technology and information technology

²⁴ France: Experimental science and technology for eight- to 11-year-olds, life and earth science for 11 to 12-year-olds, life and earth science and physics/chemistry for 12- to 16-year-olds

²⁵ France: Geography is part of humanities for eight- to 11-year-olds, history/geography/civics for 11- to 12-year-olds, and history/geography for 12- to 16-year-olds

²⁶ France: History is part of humanities for eight- to 11-year-olds, history/geography/civics for 11- to 12-year-olds, and history/geography for 12- to 16-year-olds

²⁷ France: As part of experimental science and technology for eight- to 11-year-olds, and technology thereafter

²⁸ France: Art and music are combined as 'the arts'

²⁹ France: Civics is part of humanities for eight- to 11-year-olds, history/geography/civics for 11- to 14-year-olds, and civics, legal and social education for 14- to 16-year-olds

³⁰ Germany: Curriculum content varies from *Land* to *Land* in Germany. As a rule, subjects at primary level include German, mathematics, *Sachunterricht* (general studies), art, music, sport and, in most *Länder*, religious instruction. At lower secondary level, the Standing Conference of Ministers lays down a framework schedule for Grades 5-9/10, requiring certain core subjects in every type of school and course of education: German, mathematics, the first foreign language, natural sciences and social sciences.

³¹ Hungary: Environment taught from age six-10, nature from 10-12, physics from 12-17, biology from 12-14 and from 15-18, chemistry from 12-16, and 'Our Earth and Environment' from 12-14

³² Hungary: History and citizenship ages 10-14

³³ Hungary: Second foreign language

³⁴ Hungary: Technology and lifestyle

³⁵ Hungary: Sometime taught as history and citizenship

³⁶ Hungary: Anthropology and social studies, ethics

³⁷ Hungary: Social science and ethics

³⁸ Italy: Subjects taken in the compulsory years of upper secondary education depend on the choice of upper secondary school (*liceo*); this table therefore stops at the end of lower secondary education, age 14.

³⁹ Italy: English is taught from age six, a second modern foreign language is added at age 11.

| | Mother tongue | Maths | Science | Geog | History | MFL - foreign lang | DT -design technology | PE | Art | Music | ICT | Civics | Other |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------|--------|--|
| The Netherlands | 4/5-15 ⁴² | 4/5-15 | | | | 4/5-15 | | 4/5-15 | 4/5-15 ⁴³ | 4/5-15 | | | Social and environmental studies ⁴⁴ Healthy living; social structures ⁴⁵ Man and society, 12-15 ⁴⁶ Man and nature, 12-15 ⁴⁷ |
| Spain | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 ⁴⁸ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 8-16 | 12-16 ⁴⁹ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | | 10-16 | |
| Sweden ⁵⁰ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 ⁵¹ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 ⁵² | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | | | Craft 6-16 Home and Consumer studies 6-16 |
| • Switzerland | Varies ⁵³ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| • Australia | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 ⁵⁴ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 ⁵⁵ | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | 6-16 | Economics, 6-16 Business 6-16 |
| • Canada | Varies ⁵⁶ | | | | | | | | | | | | |

⁴⁰ Italy: Taught as 'technology' and 'art and design'

⁴¹ Italy: In the 2009/10 school year, the teaching of 'Citizenship and Constitution' began on an experimental basis. It is not a separate subject and its contents are developed by each school through pedagogical projects included in the history-social area of study

⁴² The Netherlands: Dutch and Frisian – in Frisian speaking areas

⁴³ The Netherlands: Combined to form 'art education' for five- to 11-year-olds, and 'art and culture' for 11- to 15-year-olds

⁴⁴ The Netherlands: 'social and environmental studies' includes geography, history, science (including biology), citizenship, social and life skills (including road safety)

⁴⁵ The Netherlands: 'healthy living/social structure' includes geography, history, science (including biology), citizenship, social and life skills (including road safety)

⁴⁶ The Netherlands: 'man and society' consists of 12 core objectives covering asking questions and doing research, placing phenomena in time and space, using sources, the organisation of themes and the ideas of citizenship

⁴⁷ The Netherlands: 'man and nature' consists of eight core objectives covering physical, technological and care-related subjects, including living and non-living nature, humans, animals and plants and their relationship to the environment, physical and chemical phenomena, the build and function of the human body, research skills and learning to question, and caring for oneself, others, and the environment

⁴⁸ Spain: Taught as 'knowledge of the natural, social and cultural environment for children aged six to 12. Science may be taught separately for 12- to 16-year-olds.

⁴⁹ Spain: Taught as technology

⁵⁰ Sweden: The time allocation for all subjects during the nine years of compulsory education is set centrally. Schools decide how this time is allocated and when subjects are introduced.

⁵¹ Sweden: 885 hours are allocated to the teaching of geography, history, social studies and religion

⁵² Sweden: Science includes technology

⁵³ Switzerland: There is considerable freedom regarding the content of the primary curriculum, except in mathematics, foreign languages and some aspects of the mother tongue, where there is some national agreement/guidance on standards. The HarmoS agreement, which has come into force in some cantons, harmonises arrangements for introducing the teaching of foreign languages - the first language from Year 5 (age 10) and the second from Year 7 (age 12). In all lower secondary school types, students are usually taught the mother tongue language (German, French, Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic), mathematics, a second national language (French in the German-speaking cantons and the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino, German in the French-speaking cantons), natural science, geography, history, civics, music, art, physical education.

⁵⁴ Australia: Geography, languages and the arts will be covered by the second phase of curriculum development. Expected in 2011.

⁵⁵ Australia: Economics, business, civics and citizenship, health and physical education, information and communication technology and design and technology will be covered by the third phase of curriculum development. Expected in 2012.

⁵⁶ Canada: There is no national level curriculum in Canada

| | Mother tongue | Maths | Science | Geog | History | MFL - foreign lang | DT -design technology | PE | Art | Music | ICT | Civics | Other |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----|-----------------------|--|
| Japan | 6-15 | 6-15 | 6-15 ⁵⁷ | | | 10/12-15 ⁵⁸ | | 6-15 | 6-15 | 6-15 | | | Social studies, 8-15 Moral education, 6- Class/homeroom activities, 6- Integrated study, 8- Homemaking/industrial art, 12-15 |
| Korea | 6-15 | 6-15 | 8-15 | | | 8-15 | | 8-15 | 8-15 | 8-15 | | 8-15 ⁵⁹ | Disciplined life, 6-8 Intelligent life, 6-8 Pleasant life, 6-8 Orientation programme, 6-8 Practical arts/home economics, 10-15 Social studies, 8-15 |
| New Zealand | 5/6-16 | 5/6-16 | 5/6-16 | | | 5/6-16 | | 5/6-16 ⁶⁰ | 5/6-16 | | | | Social science, 5/6-16 Technology, 5/6-16 |
| • South Africa | 6-15 ⁶¹ | 6-15 | 9-15 ⁶² | | | | 9-15 ⁶³ | | | 12-15 ⁶⁴ | | | Life skills ⁶⁵ 6-15 Social science 9-15 Life Orientation 12-15 Economic management science 12-15 |
| Singapore | 6-16/17 ⁶⁶ | 6-16/17 | 8-16/17 ⁶⁷ | 12-14 ⁶⁸ | 12-14 | 6-16/17 ⁶⁹ | 12-14 | 6-16/17 | 6-14 ⁷⁰ | 6-16/17 | | 6-16/17 ⁷¹ | Humanities Other options: ⁷² Social studies, 6-14 Health education, 10-12 |
| • USA | Varies ⁷³ | | | | | | | | | | | | |

⁵⁷ Japan: Life environment studies, ages six-eight

⁵⁸ Japan: Recent changes mean that, from the 2011-12 academic year, English is being introduced as a first foreign language for elementary school students in Years 5 and 6, ages 10-12

⁵⁹ Korea: Moral education/ethics

⁶⁰ New Zealand: Health and physical education

⁶¹ South Africa: Children choose a first and second official language

⁶² South Africa: Taught as 'natural science and technology'

⁶³ South Africa: Technology is taught from age 12 to 15

⁶⁴ South Africa: Taught as 'art and culture'

⁶⁵ South Africa: 'Life skills' comprises 'beginning knowledge, creative arts, personal and social well-being'

⁶⁶ Singapore: A choice of Chinese, Malay or Tamil. For six- to 10-year-olds this includes health education and information literacy

⁶⁷ Singapore: At age 14, students choose at least one of: biology or human and social biology; physics; chemistry; science/integrated science

⁶⁸ Singapore: At age 14, students choose at least one of the humanities; literature; geography; history

⁶⁹ Singapore: English is taught as a foreign language from age six; another language is an option at age 14

⁷⁰ Singapore: Art and craft; it is an option from age 14

⁷¹ Singapore: Civic and moral education

⁷² Singapore: Other subjects available at age 14 include a third language (French, Japanese, German or Malay language elective); art and crafts; music; fashion and fabrics; food and nutrition; commerce; principles of accounts; design and technology; and religious knowledge.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables, see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive.

Curricula (age 3-19) ⇒ 5.2 Second phase: Primary ⇒ 5.2.2 Compulsory subjects **AND** 5.2.3 Optional/elective subjects

Curricula (age 3-19) ⇒ 5.3. Third phase: Lower secondary ⇒ 5.3.2 Compulsory subjects **AND** 5.3.3 Optional/elective subjects

⁷³ There is no national curriculum for compulsory phase education. Individual states have the right to establish curriculum guidelines. Education programmes throughout the 50 states generally include English grammar, reading and writing; mathematics; science and the scientific method; United States' history and government; art; music; health and nutrition; practical arts; physical education; geography; and foreign languages. Many schools are also beginning to teach the history, culture, and traditions of other nations and peoples.

Table 8

Curriculum structure and organisation

| | Status of Curriculum | Curriculum specification | Time allocation | Age at which elective subjects are selected | End of lower secondary qualification |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| England | Statutory curriculum framework | Statutory programmes of study and attainment targets for local adaptation | Recommended minimum weekly time allocation by phase of education. Local flexibility in allocation | 14+ | Evaluation of students at the end of compulsory education (age 16) is normally by the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination. |
| Ireland | Statutory curriculum framework (non-statutory pre-school curriculum framework) | National Core Curriculum framework for local adaptation | Recommended minimum weekly time allocation by subject and phase of education | 12 | <i>Junior Certificate</i> |
| Northern Ireland | Statutory curriculum framework | Curriculum expressed through six 'areas of learning', cross-curricular themes and other skills (thinking skills and personal capabilities) | Local time allocation | 14 for choices with the 'learning entitlement'. Schools may offer electives from age 11. | Evaluation of students at the end of compulsory education (age 16) is normally by the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination. |
| Scotland | Non-statutory national guidance | The 'experiences and outcomes' for learning organised across eight curriculum areas | Local time allocation | Age 12 or 14 | Standard Grade |
| Wales | Statutory curriculum framework | National curriculum and religious education | Local time allocation | 14+ | Evaluation of students at the end of compulsory education (age 16) is normally by the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination. |
| France | Statutory curriculum framework | Statutory common core of knowledge and skills expressed as national programmes (of study) | Statutory minimum weekly time allocation by subject and phase/section of education. Local flexibility in allocation for some subjects | 12 | <i>Diplôme national du brevet</i> at age 15 |
| • Germany | No national curriculum. Responsibility lies with the individual federal states (<i>Länder</i>) | Common national educational standards have begun to be developed for specific stages in primary and secondary education. Each <i>Land</i> produces curriculum guidelines on the goals, subject matter and methods involved in learning. | Statutory weekly time allocation by phase of education (and, at secondary level, by the distinction of whether a subject is compulsory or optional). | 12/13 | A 'Leaving Certificate' on completion of Year 9 (<i>Hauptschulabschluss</i>) or Year 10 (<i>mittlerer Schulabschluss</i>) of compulsory education. |

| | Status of Curriculum | Curriculum specification | Time allocation | Age at which elective subjects are selected | End of lower secondary qualification |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Hungary | Statutory curriculum framework | National Core Curriculum framework for local adaptation | Annual statutory time allocation by subject and year level | 6 | Optional national basic examination (age 16) (<i>alapvizsga</i>) (Upper secondary qualification at age 18 – education compulsory to age 18) |
| Italy | Statutory national curriculum defined through national guidelines | National guidelines establish general objectives of education process and specific learning objectives. The guidelines comprise three disciplines divided into subjects. | Local time allocation with specification for English and Catholic religion. | RE is optional throughout compulsory education. No other options are offered. | <i>Licenza media</i> at age 14 |
| Netherlands | Statutory curriculum framework | Statutory attainment targets which schools use to devise their curricular plan | Minimum time allocation by phase of education. Local flexibility in allocation | 12 | Three pathways through upper secondary education lead to school leaving qualifications |
| Spain | Statutory curriculum | Teaching is organised around the minimum core curriculum requirements of the official curriculum (<i>enseñanzas mínimas</i>) over six 'areas of knowledge' | An example school timetable has been established by the national Ministry. It reflects the minimum core curriculum requirements (<i>enseñanzas mínimas</i>). The core curriculum requirements account for 65 per cent of the school curriculum (55 per cent in those Autonomous Communities where the regional language is also taught). The remainder is determined locally. | 12 | <i>Graduado en educación obligatoria</i> |
| Sweden | Statutory curriculum | The curriculum is set out in a syllabus for each subject. | Yes: minimum teaching times for basic education are set out | In the nine years of basic education, 13 per cent of time is set aside for pupil and school options | Final school leaving certificate (<i>grundskolabetyg</i>) |
| • Switzerland | No national curriculum. Responsibility lies with the individual cantons. | Cantonal education authorities draw up the curriculum for lower secondary education. There is ongoing work to 'harmonise' some aspects of compulsory phase education, including some which relate to the curriculum. Organisations such as the CIIP, which brings together the French-speaking cantons are also working on producing regional curricula. | Varies | Varies | A 'Leaving Certificate' on completion of Year 9 (<i>Hauptschulabschluss</i>) or Year 10 (<i>mittlerer Schulabschluss</i>) of compulsory education. |

| | Status of Curriculum | Curriculum specification | Time allocation | Age at which elective subjects are selected | End of lower secondary qualification |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| • Australia | Statutory national curriculum framework (in development) | Learning entitlement expressed in terms of learning areas with general capabilities and cross-curricular perspectives. Content descriptions specify what teachers are expected to teach | Local time allocation | N/A Framework in development | State and territory external examination system at age 18/19 |
| • Canada | No national curriculum. Responsibility lies with the individual provinces and territories. A National Secretariat (CMEC) ensures communication on curricula issues. | Varies | Varies | Varies | Varies – the Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme (PCAP) is a series of cyclical tests of the achievement of 13-year-old students in mathematics, reading, and science involving all provinces and territories. |
| Japan | Statutory curriculum framework | Courses of study provide guidelines for the objectives and standard content of each curriculum subject. Adaptation by local boards of education encouraged | Annual statutory minimum time allocation by subject and year level | 12 | Local end of lower secondary/upper secondary high school entry examinations (age 15) |
| Korea | Statutory curriculum framework | National common core curriculum; local adaptation/additional local content encouraged | Annual statutory minimum time allocation by subject and year level | 6 | Some local upper secondary high school entry examinations at age 15. On completion of upper secondary high school education, successful students receive the diploma of high school education. |
| New Zealand | Statutory curriculum framework | Framework expressed in strands including 'principles', 'values', 'key competencies', 'learning area statements' and 'achievement objectives'. | Local time allocation | Can be offered by schools from school entry, age 5/6 | Level 1 National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is usually taken at this stage |
| Singapore | Statutory national curriculum | Statutory statement of content and subject syllabuses | Statutory weekly time allocation by subject and phase/section of education | 14 + | Singapore (Cambridge) International GCE 'N' and 'O' level |

| | Status of Curriculum | Curriculum specification | Time allocation | Age at which elective subjects are selected | End of lower secondary qualification |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| • South Africa | National curriculum | Curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) that provides details of what students should be taught grade by grade, subject by subject. | Statutory percentage of time set by subject | Age 15 when students choose options for further education and training certificate. | Successful completion/ passing of Grade 9 (age 15) results in the award of a compulsory secondary leaving certificate qualification which registers at grade 1 on the National Qualifications Framework. This is a requirement for further study. (National Senior Certificate at age 18) |
| • USA | No national curriculum. Responsibility lies with the individual states | Varies | Varies | Varies | State and territory external examination system at age 18/19 |

Notes

- **New Zealand** The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is a composite qualification made up of credits gained from a wide range of subjects including traditional school curriculum areas and alternative programmes that are listed on the National Qualifications Framework. The NCEA is available at levels 1, 2 and 3. Level 1 units are generally taken in the first year of upper secondary education.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables - see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive.

Table 8 Curriculum Structure and Organisation

Curriculum (3-19) ⇒ Select a phase of education ⇒ 5.x.1 Control

Table 9

National assessment and public examination arrangements

Table 9.1 National standardised assessment system

All systems feature ongoing teacher assessment, which sometimes determines student progression between classes. This is NOT shown in the table below. Figures indicate the ages at which standardised national assessment takes place. An additional column, indicating whether standardised assessment is full cohort assessment or by sample was added in November 2010. In the federal states, a 'yes' is only included where there is standardised national testing, for example, the Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme (PCAP). See the notes for details of federal/state assessments.

Bold figures indicate that assessments are compulsory or essential for admission to the next phase.

| | National standardised assessment system | Cohort or sample | At school entry | During compulsory primary education | During compulsory secondary education |
|------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| England | yes | cohort | 5 | 7,8,9,10, 11 | 14 |
| Ireland | yes | cohort | no | 7, 10 | |
| Northern Ireland | yes | cohort | no | 4-11 | 11-14 |
| Scotland | yes | sample | varies | 8/9, 11/12 | 13/14 |
| Wales | yes | cohort | 4/5 | 7, 11 | 14 |
| France | yes | sample | no | 7/8, 10/11 | 14/15 |
| Germany | yes | sample | 6 | no | 14/15 |
| Hungary | yes | cohort | 6 | 9/10 | 12/14/16 |
| Italy | yes | sample | no | 7/8, 10/11 | 11/12, 13/14 |
| Netherlands | yes | cohort | no | 12 for most | 14/15 |
| Spain | yes | sample/cohort | no | 10 | 14 |
| Sweden | yes | cohort | no | 9 | 12, 14, 16 |
| Switzerland | no | n/a | no | no | no |
| Australia | yes | cohort | no | 8/9 10/11 | 12/13 14/15 |
| Canada | yes | varies | no | varies | varies |
| Japan | yes | sample | no | 12 | 15 |
| Korea | yes | sample | no | 12 | 15, 16 |
| New Zealand | yes | sample | 5/6 | 8/9 | 12/13 |
| Singapore | yes | cohort | no | 10, 12 | |
| South Africa | yes | cohort | no | 8/9, 11/12, | 14-15 |
| USA | yes | varies | varies | varies | varies |

Notes

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| England | Children must attend school from the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday; most receive some form of early years education prior to this date in the pre-compulsory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (birth to five years old). At the end of the EYFS, the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' – practitioners' observations of children's achievements across six areas of learning – sums up each child's development and learning achievements. Statutory assessment at ages seven and 11 involves teacher assessment and/or externally set national tests. At age 14, there is only teacher assessment. |
| Ireland | Standardised tests were introduced in primary education during the 2007 calendar year. Schools are free to decide when children should take the tests – either at the end of Year 1 or at the start of Year 2 (aged seven), and at the end of Year 4 or the beginning of Year 5 (aged 10). |
| Northern Ireland | Statutory assessment arrangements for children at the end of key stages 1-3 have recently been replaced by annual teacher assessment. InCAS (Interactive Computerised Assessment System) are used during key stages 1 and 2 (ages four to 11) for diagnostic assessment. |
| Scotland | The Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA) is the national sampling programme of assessment to monitor standards in English, mathematics, science and certain other subjects. |
| Wales | There is statutory teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 (children aged seven), Key Stage 2 (age 11) and at the end of Key Stage 3, age 14. |
| France | <p>A nursery school "record of achievement" is kept and passed on to a child's first compulsory level school. Progressive assessment of the knowledge and skills of the <i>socle commun</i> (the common core of knowledge) takes place via national standardised assessment, organised in three stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first assesses acquisition of reading and writing, as well as initial mathematical elements. The test is taken by children in the second year of elementary school, aged seven to eight.• The second stage is an appraisal of the acquisitions of students in the final year of elementary school, ages 10-11 in the seven major skill areas.• The third stage concerns students in the final year of <i>collège</i> (lower secondary school, aged 14-15). It assesses the seven skill areas of the <i>socle commun</i>. |
| Germany | There is a national, standardised marking system across all <i>Länder</i> and for all levels of schooling, and an agreement on recognition/standardisation of the <i>Abitur</i> (upper secondary leaving certificate/higher education access certificate). Common standards for assessment in primary and lower secondary education in a range of subjects have begun to be introduced. National tests to assess performance against the standards take place. The first national standardised language tests for Year 9 (students aged 14/15) took place in 2009. Further assessments took place in 2011 (primary level) and are planned for 2012 (secondary level). Children are evaluated, usually by the school doctor, to judge their maturity/readiness for school. In some cases, alternative provision is recommended. |
| Hungary | Centralised tests, the National Assessment of Basic Competencies (NABC), comprising tests in mathematics and reading/literacy are taken by students in Grades 4, 6, 8 and 10 (aged 10, 12, 14, and 16 respectively). |
| Italy | Until the 2004/05 academic year, students took the primary school leaving examination at age 11 which was required to gain access to lower secondary school. This has now been discontinued as primary and secondary education form 'sub-divisions' of the first cycle of education in Italy. INVALSI, the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System, has developed new standardised tests to assess students' skills and knowledge at specific points in the education system. The tests, in Italian, mathematics and science, which began to be formally introduced in the 2007/08 school year, are administered to a sample of schools and to students in Years 2 and 5 of primary education (aged seven/eight and 10/11 respectively); in Years 1 and 3 of lower secondary education (ages 11/12 and 13/14); and in Years 2 and 5 of post-compulsory upper secondary education (aged 15/16 and 18/19). |
| Netherlands | Tests are supplied by the National Institute of Educational Measurement (CITO) to evaluate whether students have achieved the attainment targets of the compulsory core curriculum for lower secondary education. These tests may be taken after two years of the course (age 14) or at the end of the three-year period of lower secondary education, age 15. CITO also produces the national tests taken at the end of primary education (age 12). Although not compulsory, these are used by the majority of primary schools. |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Spain | The first new national diagnostic tests in Spain were taken by a sample of students in Year 4 (aged 10) and covered the four basic skills (literacy, numeracy, knowledge of the physical world, and social and civic competence). It is planned to introduce a similar diagnostic test for students in the second year of upper secondary education (aged 13/14). Prior to these tests, there were national sample surveys of student attainment at age 12 and 16. In addition, all of the Autonomous Communities carry out their own annual diagnostic evaluation which assesses the basic skills achieved by students at ages 10 and 14. These tests are taken by the full cohort. |
| Sweden | National tests for children in Year 3 (aged 9/10) were introduced in Spring 2009. |
| • Switzerland | Although there is no system of standardised national assessment in Switzerland, new national standards in a range of subjects are under development. |
| • Australia | In Victoria, school entry assessment is compulsory. In May 2008, the first national tests in literacy and numeracy were taken by students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (ages eight/nine, 10/11, 12/13, and 14/15) as part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The national curriculum, being introduced from 2011, will have aligned assessment and reporting arrangements. |
| • Canada | There is periodic national assessment via the Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme (PCAP) which is coordinated by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). In addition, several provinces implement provincial testing/assessment programmes for specific subjects (literacy and numeracy, in particular), and specific age groups, during primary and secondary education. |
| Japan | New national standardised tests in Japanese and mathematics were introduced for all 12- and 15-year-olds in April 2007. Following elections in August 2009, the Government scaled back the tests, selecting a sample of around 30 per cent of students to take part. However, many schools voluntarily take part boosting the participation rate to just over 70 per cent. |
| Korea | National assessment of educational achievement via scholastic achievement tests (SATs) for small samples of students in some year groups. |
| New Zealand | Until 2010, a sample of students at ages eight/nine and 12/13 were assessed via the National Educational Monitoring Project (NEMP). In 2012, NEMP will be replaced by the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement which will again assess a sample of students at these ages. In addition, national standards, which set out descriptions of what students should know and be able to do in reading, writing and mathematics at different points in their schooling from Years 1 to 8 (aged five to 13) were introduced in 2010. |
| Singapore | Children take school-based examinations in English, the mother tongue, mathematics and science at the end of Primary 4 (age 10). On the basis of their performance in these exams, they may go on to study these subjects at 'Standard' or 'Foundation' level (or 'Higher Level' in the case of the mother tongue). At age 12, the end of primary education, the school decides at which level to enter the child in each subject in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). |
| • South Africa | There is currently no formal policy on assessment during pre-school education. This is proposed, however, in a draft curriculum for children from birth to age four/five. Systematic evaluation was previously conducted on a nationally representative sample of learners and learning sites. Annual National Assessments - standardised national assessments for languages and mathematics for students in the intermediate phase (Grades 4 – 6) (aged nine-12) and in literacy and numeracy for the foundation phase (Grades 1 – 3) (aged six-nine) were introduced in 2011. |
| • USA | The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as 'the Nation's Report Card', is a regularly administered, congressionally mandated assessment programme, which assesses representative national samples of students attending public and private elementary (primary) schools, junior high (lower secondary) schools and high schools (upper secondary schools). The Obama Administration's blueprint for the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) continues to require some form of state assessment. Such testing at the individual state level involves the whole cohort. |

Table 9.2 National examination or certification framework to mark the end of an educational phase

All systems feature ongoing teacher assessment, which frequently determines student progression between classes. This is NOT shown in the table below. Figures indicate the ages at which national certification/public examinations take place.

Bold figures indicate that examinations/certification are compulsory or essential for admission to the next phase.

| | Primary | Lower secondary | Upper secondary |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| England | no | 16 | 17/18 |
| Ireland | no | 15 | 17/18 |
| Northern Ireland | no | 16 | 17/18 |
| Scotland | no | 16 | 17/18 |
| Wales | no | 16 | 17/18 |
| France | no | 15 | 16+/18 |
| • Germany | no | 15/16 | 18/19 |
| Hungary | no | no | 18+ |
| Italy | no | 14 | 18/19 |
| Netherlands | 12 | 14/15 | 16, 17, 18 |
| Spain | no | 16 | 18 |
| Sweden | n/a | 16 | 18/19 |
| • Switzerland | no | no | 18+ |
| • Australia | no | no | 18+ |
| • Canada | no | no | 18/19 |
| Japan | no | 14+/15 | 18 |
| Korea | no | 15 | 18 |
| New Zealand | no | 16 | 17/18 |
| Singapore | 12 | 16/17 | 18+ |
| • South Africa | no | 15 | 18 |
| • USA | no | varies | 18 |

Notes

- England** At the upper secondary level, students in schools generally study for General Certificate of Education Advanced-level examinations (GCE A-levels). These are single-subject examinations, which may be studied in any combination, within the limitation of a school's timetable and the range of subjects it offers. Since September 2000, GCE A-levels have been structured as follows:
- AS – During the first year of post-compulsory education in the sixth form (Year 12, age 16 to 17), students typically take four or five subjects leading to the GCE Advanced Subsidiary qualification (AS) (GCE AS qualification).
 - A2 – Taken in the second year of sixth form (Year 13, students aged 17 to 18), this is the second half of the full A-level qualification. Students typically pursue three of their four or five AS qualification subjects to A2.
- Northern Ireland** At the upper secondary level, students in schools generally study for General Certificate of Education Advanced-level examinations (GCE A-levels). These are single-subject examinations, which may be studied in any combination, within the limitation of a school's timetable and the range of subjects it offers. Since September 2000, GCE A-levels have been structured as follows:
- AS – During the first year of post-compulsory education in the sixth form (Year 12, age 16 to 17), students typically take four or five subjects leading to the GCE Advanced Subsidiary qualification (AS) (GCE AS qualification).
 - A2 – Taken in the second year of sixth form (Year 13, students aged 17 to 18), this is the second half of the full A-level qualification. Students typically pursue three of their four or five AS qualification subjects to A2.
- Wales** In Wales, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification was introduced in 2007. It combines personal development skills with existing qualifications like A levels, NVQs and GCSEs to make one wider award.
- France** All students take the lower secondary leaving examination (*diplome national du brevet*) at age 15. Various vocational qualifications are available at age 16+; the *Baccalauréat* at age 18.
- **Germany** In each federal state (*Land*), there are secondary school leaving examinations of various types at age 15/16. There is national agreement on the content of the *Abitur* examination (the upper secondary leaving examination which is required for university entry).
- Italy** Until the 2004/05 academic year, students took the primary school leaving examination at age 11 which was required to gain access to lower secondary school. This has now been discontinued as primary and secondary education form 'sub-divisions' of the first cycle of education in Italy.
- Sweden** Primary and lower secondary compulsory phase education is provided in one 'all-through' school (*grundskola*).
- **Switzerland** In some cantons, there is an examination during the final year of primary education (age 10, 11 or 12 depending on the canton) which may, in combination with other factors, influence lower secondary entry. Again, in some cantons, at the end of lower secondary education (age 15/16), students can take a written and oral examination in their main subjects to obtain a leaving certificate.
- Korea** Entrance tests, combined with continuous assessment results and lottery allocation, govern access to high school, age 15+. The College Scholastic Achievement Test, taken at age 18 (on completion of high school), governs entry to higher education.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables, see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive:

Table 9.1 National standardised assessment system

Assessment arrangements ⇒ Select a phase of education.

Thematic probes ⇒ August 2007: Compulsory assessment systems in the INCA countries

Table 9.2 National examination or certification framework to mark the end of an educational phase

Assessment arrangements ⇒ Select a phase of education.

Table 10

Control and supply of school textbooks

This table outlines:

- who produces textbooks (state or commercial bodies)
- whether the State (or devolved authority) prescribes content etc. of textbooks
- whether the State (or devolved authority) draws up a list of authorised textbooks
- who selects textbooks for use in class
- whether textbooks are provided free by the State (or devolved authority), or whether parents are required to buy them.

| | Textbook production | State provides list of approved textbooks | Choice of books for use in class | Textbook provision |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| England | Commercial | No | Teachers – free choice | School provides/lends |
| Ireland | Commercial. Ministry provides guidelines and may produce/commission materials for distribution. | No | Teachers – free choice | Parents usually buy or rent from schools. Some state subsidies available. |
| N. Ireland | Commercial | No | Teachers – free choice | School provides |
| Scotland | Commercial | No | Teachers – with consultation of school board | School provides |
| Wales | Commercial | No | Teachers – free choice | School provides (on loan) |
| France | Commercial – state approved. Local/regional associations and documentation centres may produce teaching materials to supplement those published for national use. | State prescribes content and format, approves all textbooks for use in schools, and provides list of approved texts. | Teachers – from list of approved textbooks | Compulsory education - school provides. Post-compulsory, parents usually buy. |
| Germany | Commercial – Länder approved | Each federal state (Land) prescribes cost, content, format and quality and provides list of approved textbooks. RE textbooks are approved with the agreement of the church authorities. | Teachers – from approved textbooks list. Sometimes subject to Schools' Inspectorate approval or consultation with representatives of parents and children. | School provides (on loan) |
| Hungary | Commercial (state approval). The State underwrites bank loans to publishing companies. | State generally prescribes content, approves and provides recommended list. Teachers are free to select other material, in addition. | Teachers – generally from recommended list, but can select additional material. | Parents buy (subsidised prices) (assistance for needy). Textbooks for minority language education must be provided by the State. |
| Italy | Commercial | State issues guidance on cost and frequency of updates, but does not prescribe or approve. | Council of teachers – free choice | Provided free at primary level. Parents usually buy thereafter; increasing financial assistance available to low income families. |
| Netherlands | Commercial | No (Ministry prescribes educational attainment targets but does not prescribe or produce specific teaching materials.) | Teachers – free choice | School provides at primary level (on loan). At secondary level, parents often buy books. Many schools may have book funds and provide loan books. |

continued

| | Textbook production | State provides list of approved textbooks | Choice of books for use in class | Textbook provision |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Spain | Commercial under state supervision. Centre for Educational Research and Documentation (CIDE) assists in development/ dissemination of curriculum materials and teacher guides. | No general prescription, but the Autonomous Community (via the regional/local education authority) usually provides a recommended list. | Schools/teachers – usually from recommended list. | Parents usually buy. Increasing financial aid available for low income families. |
| Sweden | Commercial | No | Teachers - free choice | School provides. |
| • Switzerland | Cantons (compulsory phase) | Cantons usually prescribe content and provide recommended lists for compulsory phase. | Teachers – usually from recommended list; free choice for upper secondary. | School provides. Upper secondary (post-compulsory) parents buy. |
| • Australia | Mostly commercial. Boards of Studies may publish support materials. | No | Teachers – free choice | Parents generally buy (or pay a levy to schools for book hire). |
| • Canada | Commercial (by approval). Provinces produce and pilot books. | Province or territory usually provides recommended list of approved titles. | District or school usually from recommended list. | School usually provides free of charge |
| Japan | Commercial with state approval, or state-produced. | State-approved, commercially produced. (Some state-approved and state-produced textbooks with prescribed content.) | Local boards of education or headteachers determine which books will be used from prescribed list. | In compulsory education, all students receive new books, free, each year. Post-compulsory, parents/students buy. |
| Korea | State, or commercial with state authorisation or approval. | Ministry compiles some and authorises or approves other textbooks. | Single textbook replaced by range of government-copyrighted and approved textbooks for individual subjects, enabling teachers to choose. | Provided free at primary level (6-12) (and students may keep, as in Japan). Thereafter, parents buy but costs are kept low. |
| New Zealand | State and commercial. (Learning Media, a crown-owned company, publishes a range of resources free to schools. Use is not mandatory.) | No | Teachers - free choice | School provides (loaned, parents contribute for damage or loss). Parents buy supplementary materials, particularly at post-compulsory upper secondary level. |
| Singapore | State and commercial with state approval | State prescribes content and produces an annual approved Textbook List (ATL) for primary and secondary education. | Teachers - from ATL | Parents buy, free for needy |
| • South Africa | Commercial | Textbooks must be aligned to the national curriculum. | Procurement and delivery of textbooks is a provincial responsibility. In upper secondary, schools chose from a national catalogue. | School provides |
| • USA | Commercial (dominated by about ten main corporations). | About half of the States recommend textbooks after some process of review against State curriculum guidelines. | Teacher (or school committee) choice; in about half of the States from approved list. (In California, for example, schools may only opt out of the state-recommended textbook system with an official waiver.) | In most States, schools provide books to students free of charge. Some States charge all but the most needy. Others may request a contribution from students in high school (age 14+) in particular. |

Notes

- England** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses. In addition, the programmes of study for English at Key Stages 1-4 contain criteria and categories from which to select the range of reading.
- Wales** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses. In addition, the programmes of study for English at Key Stages 1-4 contain criteria and categories from which to select the range of reading.
- Northern Ireland** There are, however, set texts for certain examination syllabuses.
- Sweden** Occasionally some post-compulsory schools (students aged 16+) may request a parental contribution for certain items.
- Korea** The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is converting all paper textbooks to new digital versions which schools will be able to download from a central repository. It is expected that all schools will be using the digital editions by 2015.
- **South Africa** All learners in Grades 1 to 6 (six to 12 years of age) are supplied with workbooks containing teaching materials to ensure that all teachers have access to materials which support the new curriculum.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on of the content of these tables - see the following sections and subsections of the full Archive:

Curricula (age 3-19) ⇒ Select a phase of education ⇒ 5.x.6 Curriculum materials

Table 11

Steps to becoming a teacher

NB. This table is no longer being updated.

Table 11.1 Steps to becoming a primary school teacher

- The **consecutive** model: a programme of professional education training is undertaken once an undergraduate degree has been obtained.
- The **concurrent** model: teacher training is combined with a degree which results in the award of a Bachelor of Education degree or similar.
- The **combined** model: a joint degree in education and a specific subject.
- **Length of training** for the consecutive route includes the time taken to obtain a first degree. On-the-job training tends to last one to two years.

| | Length of training | Type of training available | | | On-the-job training | Probationary period | Registration necessary |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Concurrent | Combined | Consecutive | | | |
| England | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | • | 1 year | • |
| Ireland | 3/4 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| N. Ireland | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| Scotland | 4 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| Wales | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | • | 1 year | • |
| France | 5 years | | | • | | 1 year | • |
| Germany | 5 years | • | | | | 2.5 years | • |
| Hungary | 4 years | • | • | | | | |
| Italy | 4 years | • | | | | 1 year | • |
| Netherlands | 4 years | • | | | | Discretionary | |
| Spain | 3/4 years | • | | | | 3 months to 1 year | • |
| Sweden | 3 to 5.5 years | • | | | | 1 year | |
| Switzerland | 3 years | • | | | | | |
| Australia | Between 4 and 5 years | • | • | • | | Three months to 1 year | • |
| Canada | 4/5 years | • | • | • | | In some provinces | • |
| Japan | 4 years | • | | | | 1 year | • |
| Korea | 4 years | • | | | | | |
| New Zealand | Between 3 and 4 years | • | | • | | 2 years | • |
| Singapore | 2 to 4 years | • | | • | | 1 year | |
| South Africa | 4 years | • | | • | | | • |
| USA | 4/5 years | • | • | • | • | 1 to 3 years | • |

Notes

- England** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- Ireland** Generally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- N. Ireland** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- Wales** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- **Germany** Training consists of two phases: 3 to 4 years of university studies followed by 1.5 to 2 years of preparatory 'on-the-job' training.
- **Spain** New arrangements for teacher training were announced following the Organic Law of Education (LOE). This will increase the length of training from 3 to 4 years.
- Singapore** A two-year qualification only entitles the holder to teach in a primary school. Although there is no formal registration process, teachers are appointed by the state or its local arm and thus are informally registered. They must also serve a three-year teaching bond.
- **South Africa** Although the concurrent and consecutive training models exist, the concurrent is preferred. Teachers must register with the South African Council for Educators (SACE).
- **USA** The concurrent programme usually lasts for 4 years. The probationary period may last between 1 to 3 years depending on the State.

Table 11.2: Steps to becoming a lower secondary school teacher

NB. This table is no longer being updated.

- The consecutive model: a programme of professional education training is undertaken once an undergraduate degree has been obtained.
- The concurrent model: teacher training is combined with a degree which results in the award of a Bachelor of Education degree or similar.
- The combined model: a joint degree in education and a specific subject .
- Length of training for the consecutive route includes the time taken to obtain a first degree. On-the-job training tends to last one to two years.

| | Length of training | Type of training available | | | | Probationary period | Registration necessary |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Concurrent | Combined | Consecutive | On-the-job training | | |
| England | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | • | 1 year | • |
| Ireland | 4 /5 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| N. Ireland | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| Scotland | 4/5 years | • | • | • | | 1 year | • |
| Wales | Between 3 and 5 years | • | | • | • | 1 year | • |
| France | Between 5 and 6 years | | | • | | | • |
| Germany | 6+ years | • | | | | 2.5 years | • |
| Hungary | 4/5 years | • | • | | | | |
| Italy | 5 years | | | • | | 1 year | • |
| Netherlands | 4 years | • | • | • | | Discretionary | |
| Spain | Between 5 and 7 years | | • | • | | 1 year | • |
| Sweden | Between 4.5 and 5.5 years | • | | | | 1 year | |
| Switzerland | 4 years | • | | | | | |
| Australia | 4 5 years | • | • | • | | Three months to 1 year | • |
| Canada | 4/5 years | • | • | • | | In some provinces | • |
| Japan | 4 years | • | | | | 1 year | • |
| Korea | 4 years | • | | • | | | |
| New Zealand | Between 4 and 6 years | • | • | • | | 2 years | • |
| Singapore | 4/5 years | • | | • | | 1 year | • |
| South Africa | 4 years | • | | • | | | • |
| USA | 4/5 years | • | • | • | • | 1 to 3 years | • |

Notes

- England** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- Ireland** Generally, the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- N. Ireland** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- Wales** Traditionally the concurrent route has been chosen by those intending to be primary school teachers and the consecutive by those intending to teach in secondary schools.
- France** Six years of training generally leads to an Agrégation, with which teachers work in lycée. Only a handful of 'professeurs agrégés' teach in lower secondary schools.
- **Germany** Training consists of two phases: 3 to 4 years of university studies followed by 1.5 to 2 years of preparatory 'on-the-job' training.
- **Spain** Following the introduction of the LOE (legislation passed in 2006), some changes may be made to the organisation of teacher training for this phase.
- **South Africa** Although the concurrent and consecutive training models exist, the concurrent is preferred. Teachers must register with the South African Council for Educators (SACE).
- **USA** The probationary period may last between 1 to 3 years depending on the State.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables, see the following sections and subsections of the full archive:

Table 11.1 Steps to becoming a primary school teacher

Initial Teacher Training ⇒ 7.2 Second phase, compulsory primary education ⇒ 7.2.2 Types of training courses and institutions

Table 11.2 Steps to becoming a lower secondary school teacher

Initial Teacher Training ⇒ 7.3 Third phase, compulsory lower secondary education) ⇒ 7.3.2 Types of training courses and institutions
or 7.4 Fourth phase, post-compulsory upper secondary education (in schools) ⇒ 7.4.2 Types of training courses and institutions.

Table 12

Special educational needs teacher training

NB. This table is no longer being updated.

| | Specialist initial teacher training | Post qualification specialisation | Special needs education part of initial teacher training |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| England | | • | • |
| Ireland | | • | • |
| Northern Ireland | | • | • |
| Scotland | | • | • |
| Wales | | • | • |
| France | | • | |
| • Germany | • | • | |
| Hungary | • | | • |
| Italy | | • | • |
| Netherlands | | • | • |
| Spain | • | | • |
| Sweden | | • | • |
| • Switzerland | | • | • |
| • Australia | • | • | • |
| • Canada | • | • | • |
| Japan | • | • | |
| Korea | • | • | |
| New Zealand | | • | |
| Singapore | • | • | |
| • South Africa | | • | |
| • USA | • | • | • |

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of these tables see the following sections of the full archive.

Select the country ⇒ Initial teacher training ⇒ Special

Table 13

Recruitment incentives to encourage individuals to train as teachers

NB. This table is no longer being updated.

Recruitment incentives include the payment of course tuition fees by the Government.

Where no recruitment incentives are highlighted we have not found evidence that any exist.

| | Primary education | | Compulsory secondary education | |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | All subjects | Shortage subjects | All subjects | Shortage subjects |
| England | • | | • | • |
| Ireland | | | | |
| Northern Ireland | | | | |
| Scotland | | | | |
| Wales | • | | • | • |
| France | | | | |
| Germany | | | | |
| Hungary | | | | |
| Italy | | | | |
| Netherlands | • | | • | • |
| Spain | • | | • | • |
| Sweden | | | | • |
| Switzerland | | | | |
| Australia | • | | • | • |
| Canada | • | | • | |
| Japan | | | | |
| Korea | | | | |
| New Zealand | • | | | • |
| Singapore | • | | • | • |
| South Africa | | | | |
| USA | • | • | | • |

Notes

- **South Africa** Proposals exist to establish a national bursary scheme for those entering initial teacher training.

Source/Further information

For more detailed information on the content of the above table – see the following section of the full archive.

Select the country ⇒ Initial teacher training ⇒ Choose a phase of education ⇒ 7.x.7. and its subsections.

Table 14

Organising bodies responsible for initial teacher training

NB. This table is no longer being updated.

- **National Ministry:** The Ministry of Education in each country which determines and funds broad policies dealing with the 'national interest'.
- **Federal Ministry:** State Ministry of Education, responsible for education in the specific state/province.
- **Statutory body:** Body independent from government which was established by legislation.
- **Non-departmental public body:** Body set up, sometimes under statute, to carry out specific functions on behalf of government. However, although non-departmental public bodies are government funded, they are not government departments or part of government departments.
- **Local authority:** Regional education headquarters; the local arm of the Ministry of Education.

| | Standards for teaching qualification | Responsibilities of organising bodies | |
|------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| | | Teacher training curriculum guidance/standards | Registration agency |
| England | National Ministry | Non-departmental public body | Statutory body |
| Ireland | National Ministry/Statutory body | Statutory body/individual universities | Statutory body |
| Northern Ireland | National Ministry | National Ministry | Statutory body |
| Scotland | National Ministry | National Ministry | Statutory body |
| Wales | Non-departmental public body | Non-departmental public body | Statutory body |
| France | National Ministry | National Ministry | Local authority |
| Germany | Federal Ministry | Federal Ministry | Federal Ministry |
| Hungary | National Ministry | National Ministry/individual universities | n/a |
| Italy | National Ministry | National Ministry | Local authority |
| Netherlands | National Ministry | National Ministry/individual universities | n/a |
| Spain | National Ministry | National Ministry | Local authority |
| Sweden | National Ministry | National Ministry/individual universities | n/a |
| Switzerland | National Ministry | National Ministry | National Ministry |
| Australia | National Ministry or statutory body and federal ministry | Federal Ministry or statutory body | Statutory body |
| Canada | Federal Ministry or statutory body | Federal Ministry or statutory body | Federal Ministry or statutory body |
| Japan | National Ministry | National Ministry | Local authority |
| Korea | National Ministry | Teacher training institutions | Local authority |
| New Zealand | Statutory body | Statutory body | Statutory body |
| Singapore | National Ministry | National Ministry | National Ministry |
| South Africa | National Ministry | National Ministry | Statutory body |
| USA | Federal Ministry | Federal Ministry | Federal Ministry |

Notes

- England** The coalition elected in May 2010 plans to close the General Teaching Council for England which is the regulatory body for the teaching profession.
- Ireland** The Ministry is responsible for the standards for obtaining a teaching qualification for primary education, while a Statutory Body (The Registration Council for Secondary Teachers) is responsible for the standards for secondary education. Individual universities are responsible for the content of the teacher training curriculum for primary education, while a Statutory Body (The Registration Council for Secondary Teachers) has overall responsibility for the secondary teacher training curriculum. In 2006, a Teaching Council was established in Ireland. Its role includes promoting teaching as profession, the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers and the regulation of standards in the profession.
- **Australia** While the States and Territories retain control of their own education systems, a national education and training framework is emerging through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), including the 2003 National Framework for Professional Standards for Teaching.
- USA** Although, most responsibility lies with the federal ministries in the individual states, to qualify for certain funding strands, states must meet certain national requirements.

Sources/Further information

For more detailed information on the context of the above table – see the following sections of the full archive.

Initial Teacher Training ⇒ Choose a phase of education ⇒ 7.x.1 Control and regulation

Table 15

Organisation of school year and school day

Table 15.1 Organisation of the school year

This table aims to show, at a glance, the organisation of the school year, which includes when the school year starts, the number of terms and the length of the main holiday. It is not an exact representation – for example the break in March/April in England and the other home countries is not generally a month long but may take place at any between mid-March and April depending on the timing of Easter. This situation may be present in other countries. There may be mid-term breaks of up to a week which are not included in this table.

The table presents the length of the school year, in days or weeks as expressed in the policy documents of the country concerned. Level of responsibility refers to the body responsible for organising the school year within the statutory number of day/weeks for the school year.

| | Jan | Feb | March | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | School year | Level of responsibility |
|------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-------------------------|
| England | | | | | | | 6 weeks | | | | | | 190 days | Local/school |
| Ireland | | | | | | | 10 or 12 weeks | | | | | | 179 or 183 days | School |
| Northern Ireland | | | | | | | 8 weeks | | | | | | 200 days | Local/school |
| Scotland | | | | | | | 6 weeks | | | | | | 190 days (min) | Local |
| Wales | | | | | | | 6 weeks | | | | | | 190 days | Local/school |
| France | | | | | | | 7-8 weeks | | | | | | 180 days | National |
| • Germany | | | | | | | 6 weeks | | | | | | 188-208 days | Federal |
| Hungary | | | | | | | 10 - 11 weeks | | | | | | 185 days | State |
| Italy | | | | | | | 12 -13 weeks | | | | | | 200 days | State |
| Netherlands | | | | | | | 6 – 7 weeks | | | | | | 200 days | State |
| Spain | | | | | | | 11 weeks | | | | | | 175-180 days | Federal |
| Sweden | | | | | | | 10 weeks | | | | | | 40 weeks | Local |
| • Switzerland | | | | | | | 5-9 weeks | | | | | | 38 weeks | Federal |
| • Australia | | | | | | | | | | | | | 200 days | State |
| • Canada | | | | | | | 5-6 weeks | | | | | | 180-200 days | School |
| Japan | | | | | | | | | | | | | 35 weeks | Local |
| Korea | | | | | | | 70 days | | | | | | 220 days | State |
| New Zealand | | | | | | | | | | | | | 190-197 days | State |
| Singapore | | | | | | | | | | | | | 40 weeks | State |
| South Africa | | | | | | | | | | | | | 195-200 days | Province |
| • USA | | | | | | | | | | | | | 180 days | School |

| Key | Term 1 | Term 2 | Term 3 | Term 4 | Main holiday | Other holiday |
|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------|
|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|---------------|

Notes

- England** In England, schools must be open for at least 380 half day sessions each school year. The dates of school terms are not fixed nationally; they are set, depending on the legal category of the school, by the local authority (LA) or school governing body. Although school holidays generally cover the same core periods, exact dates may vary between schools and authorities.
- There is currently some movement towards the adoption of a standard school year, which would be consistent year on year. A number of LAs have begun to introduce this model.
- Ireland** 183 days in primary education, six- to 12-year-olds; 179 days in secondary education 12-to-15-year-olds.
- Wales** In Wales, schools must be open for at least 380 half day sessions each school year. The dates of school terms are not fixed nationally; they are set, depending on the legal category of the school, by the local authority (LA) or school governing body. Although school holidays generally cover the same core periods, exact dates may vary between schools and authorities.
- France** The school calendar is fixed by the Minister for National Education, who also determines the dates of school holidays in each of the three zones in metropolitan France. There are three distinct zones (A, B and C) to ensure staggered holidays.
- **Germany** Teaching may be organised on the basis of a five- or six-day week. Following the five-day week model, teaching usually takes place on 188 days a year on average; it is 208 days for the six-day week model. The six-week summer holiday is staggered between June and September across the federal states (*Länder*) and varies from year to year.
- Hungary** There are three, one-week holidays during the autumn, winter and spring, and a long summer break.
- Italy** The Ministry of Public Education sets guidelines for terms and holiday periods, the dates of public holidays and final examinations. Since 1999, headteachers have had some flexibility in implementing these.
- Netherlands** Dates for the summer holidays are decided by the Ministry; the main holiday period is staggered over the three regions (northern, central and southern) into which the country is divided for this purpose (compulsory dates for all schools); all other holidays are recommended by the Ministry. The Minister recommends a period of one week's holiday after every seven to eight weeks of school.
- Spain** 175 days at secondary level (12+), 180 days for six-to 12-year-olds in primary education.
- Sweden** The teaching year comprises 40 weeks which should not be less than 178 working days and not more than 190.
- **Australia** In Tasmania, exceptionally, there are 3 terms.
 - **Canada** The school year averages 180 to 200 teaching days over the period from September to late June.
- Japan** The statutory minimum length of the elementary school year (minimum number of teaching weeks per year) is 35 weeks. For children in Year 1, however, it is 34 weeks.
- New Zealand** 197 days in primary phase education (five- to-12-year olds); 190 days for 12/13- to 16-year-olds (expressed as half day sessions). The Ministry of Education sets term dates but schools have limited flexibility in implementing them.
- **USA** This is a common standard but it varies by state. Local school boards must comply with State school year requirements.

Table 15.2 Organisation of the school week and day

This table looks in more detail at how the teaching week is organised. Teaching time is per week unless otherwise stated; some systems specify teaching time per year.

Level of responsibility refers to the body responsible for organising the school day within the statutory teaching time per week.

| | Teaching time per week | School day | School week | | | | | | | Teaching periods | Level of responsibility |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|-------------|---|---|----|---|----|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | | M | T | W | Th | F | Sa | S | | |
| England | Min 21 hours, age 5-7 Min 23.5 hours, age 7-11 Min 24 hours, age 11-14 Min 25 hours, age 14-16 | 9am-3.30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | Varies | School |
| Ireland | Min 915 hours/year, age 6-12 Average 40 period week, at age 12-15 | 9am-3/3.30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | 30 minutes 35-45 minutes | School |
| Northern Ireland | Min 3 hours/day to age 8 Min 4.5 hours/day, age 8+ | 9am-3.30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | Varies | School |
| Scotland | Average 25 hours/week at primary Average 27.5 hours/week at secondary | 9am-3.30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | Varies | School |
| Wales | Min 21 hours, age 5-7 Min 23.5 hours, age 7-11 Min 25 hours, age 11-16 | 9am-3:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | Varies | School |
| France | 26 hours/week, age 6 to 11 26 to 30 hrs/week, age 11 to 15 30 to 40 hrs/week, age 15 to 18 | 8/9am – 4/5pm | • | • | • | • | • | • | | 55 minutes/1 hour | Local |
| Germany | 19 to 29 periods/ week primary 28 to 30 periods/week, age 10 to 12 30 to 32 periods/week, age 12 to 16 | 7:30am-1:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | • | | 45 minutes | School |
| Hungary | Max 20 hrs/week, age 6 to 9 Max 22.5 hrs/week, age 9 to 12 Max 25 hrs/week, age 12 to 14 Max 27.5 hrs/week, age 14 to 16 Max 30 hrs/week, age 16 + | 8am-2pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | 45 minutes | State |
| Italy | Min 27 hrs/week primary education Min 29 hrs/week lower secondary Min 29 hrs/week upper secondary | Varies | • | • | • | • | • | • | | 1 hour | School |
| Netherlands | Min 3520 hrs/year, ages 4-8 Min 3760 hrs/year, ages 8-12 | 9am-3:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | 50-60 minutes | School |
| Spain | Average 25 hrs/week at primary level Average 30 hrs/week at secondary | 9am-4:30/5pm | • | • | • | • | • | | | 55 minutes 60 minutes | School |
| Sweden | Max 6 hrs/day up to age 9 Max 8 hrs/day aged 9+ | Varies | • | • | • | • | • | | | Varies | School |
| Switzerland | Varies | Varies | • | • | • | • | • | • | | Varies | School |

Continued

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|--------|
| • Australia | Average 25 hrs/week at primary level Average 27.5 hrs/week at second level | 9am -3pm | • | • | • | • | • | Varies | School |
| • Canada | 950 hrs/year (Alberta) | 9am-3:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | School |
| Japan | Min 17 to 20 hours/week | | • | • | • | • | • | | Local |
| Korea | 830 to 1156 hours/year | 8am-4:00pm | • | • | • | • | • | 40-45 minutes | State |
| New Zealand | Average 25 hrs/week | 9am-3/3:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | | School |
| Singapore | | 7:30am-1pm 1pm-6:30pm | • | • | • | • | • | 30-40 minutes | State |
| • South Africa | 22.5 hrs/week, age 5-8 25 hrs/week, age 8-9 26.5hrs/week, age 9-12 26 hrs/week, age 12-13 27.5 hrs/week, age 13-15 27.5 hrs/week, age 15-18 | Varies | • | • | • | • | • | Varies | School |
| • USA | Varies | Varies | • | • | • | • | • | Varies | School |

Notes

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| Ireland | Children in junior infants and senior infants classes in primary school (aged four-six) normally have a shorter school day, ending between 1.30 and 2.30 p.m. Teaching periods last for 30 minutes at primary level and 35-45 minutes at secondary. |
| France | Schools are usually open six days a week (Monday-Saturday), but no classes are held on Wednesdays or on Saturday afternoons. Some schools have moved to a four-day week, with teaching on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The missing hours are usually made up by shortening the school holidays. Since the beginning of the 2008/09 school year, the primary school week has been reduced by two hours (from 26 to 24 hours) and there is no more teaching on Saturdays. |
| Germany | <p>A teaching period generally lasts 45 minutes.</p> <p>The half-day school (mornings only, five or six days a week) is the traditional form of teaching in Germany. Until recently, all-day schools (<i>Ganztagschulen</i>) were the exception and most Länder did not plan any extensive expansion of this school form. However, in a bid to raise standards nationwide, government funding has been provided to set up more all-day schools.</p> |
| Hungary | The daily timetable must be based on the statutory average lesson time of 45 minutes. However schools may organise longer or shorter lessons. The school day generally runs between 8am and 2 pm but there may also be non-compulsory afternoon sessions. There are some all-day schools in which lessons finish around 4pm. |
| Italy | The school day varies dependent on whether the school has a five- or six-day week; schools with a six-day week are open from 8:30am to 1:30pm; those operating a five-day week have timetables running from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Teaching periods are an hour long for students at the lower secondary level, age 11-14. Individual schools may organise optional teaching activities and other optional activities which may raise the school week to 40 hours. |
| Spain | At primary level (six- to 12-year-olds), the sessions are usually three hours in the morning, two hours in the afternoon, with a two-hour break for lunch. In secondary education, days generally end earlier as there is a single session running throughout the morning and early afternoon, with two short breaks. |
| Switzerland | In some cantons, children have all day Saturday free, whilst in others they have lessons on Saturday mornings, but one afternoon in the week free, or lessons on Saturday mornings and one full day in the week free. |
| Japan | The school week has been reduced from six to five days. |
| Korea | The school week coincides with the six-day week in the business and government sectors; five full days Monday - Friday and Saturday morning. However, if the latter sectors adopt a five-working-day policy, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) may then consider reducing school days from six to five per week. |
| Singapore | Most schools run double sessions, with different groups of students attending school either from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or from 1:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday. There are plans for all schools to become single session schools by 2016. |

Sources/Further information

For further information about the contents of these tables, see the following sections and their subsections of the full Archive:

Table 15.1 Organisation of the school year

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3 - 19) ⇒ 3.2.x.2 Length of school year (in days) and day (in hours)

Table 15.2 Organisation of the school week and day

Education Structure (ages 3-19) ⇒ 3.2 Educational phases (ages 3 - 19) ⇒ 3.2.x.2 Length of school year (in days) and day (in hours)