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## **Respect4 - Education without Barriers Educational Systems and State of Art in GREECE**

**Reference: 2015-1-UK01-KA219-013497**

**Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership (School)**

**United Kingdom – International Research and State of the Art Report  
(IO1)**

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

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## INTRODUCTION

The Greek education system is governed by national laws and legislative acts (decrees, ministerial decisions), while the general responsibility for education lies with the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. The Ministry, supported by collective, consultative and advisory bodies and institutions, takes the key decisions relating to the long-term objectives and functioning of the educational system. Issues, such as the definition of the content of curricula, the creation and distribution of student textbooks, the allocation of teaching time, the education and initial training, of teachers, the placement of teachers and other school staff, teacher salaries and the financing of schools, are centrally specified and their application is compulsory for all schools in the country. However, as part of the overall education reform in progress, the national strategy for a new model of management and governance in education is implemented, based on the principles of decentralization, democratic participation, transparency, social accountability and effectiveness.

## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Greek education system is structured into three successive levels:

- ↳ *P r i m a r y* education (Primary School) which includes *p r e-p r i m a r y* education (Pre-primary or Nursery School)
- ↳ *S e c o n d a r y* education (Lower Secondary School and Upper Secondary School)
- ↳ *H i g h e r* education, which includes the University Sector (Universities, Technical Universities, School of Fine Arts) and the Technological Sector (Technological Educational Institutions and the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education).

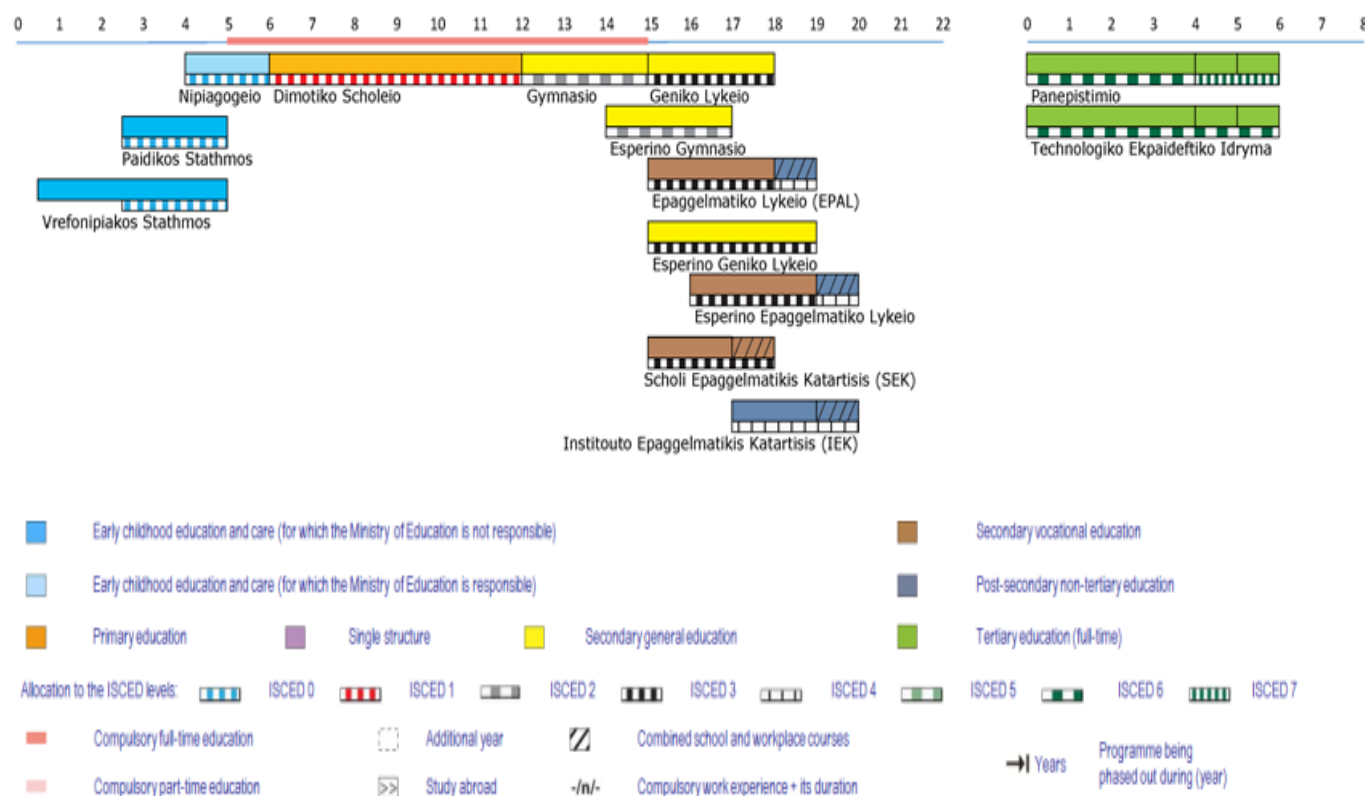
*Compulsory education* in Greece has a ten-year duration and concerns all children between the ages of 5-15 years of age. Pre-primary education (Nursery School) lasts for a year, primary education (Primary School) lasts for six years while lower secondary education (Lower secondary School) lasts for three years. However, students' school life may begin at the age of 2,5 years in Child and Infant Centres which operate under the auspices of the Municipal Authorities or may be private (Pre-school education).

*Non-compulsory secondary education* includes two types of upper secondary education schools: General Upper secondary School and Vocational Upper secondary School. Duration of studies in both types is three years.

Generally, formal education is characterized by fixed duration of studies, repetitiveness and the award of a formal, state recognized, title at the end of each stage.

Age of students

Programme duration (years)



## PRE-SCHOOL

### ORGANIZATION OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education in Greece starts at the age of 4, when children are permitted to enroll in the Nursery School. However, attendance is compulsory only for children at the age of 5. Pre-school education is offered by: a) Nursery schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, b) Infant/Child Centres (Vrefonipiakoi Stathmoi) under the auspices of Municipalities and c) respective private pre-school education centres.

In this context an All-day Pre-primary school operates in parallel to the ordinary Pre-primary school with a broadened daily schedule. The aim is to fully prepare the child for Primary School, support working parents and reinforce the role of state care in order to eliminate any educational-social discrimination.

Pre-primary school (Nursery) attendance is free of charge whereas Infant/Child Centres (Vrefonipiakoi Stathmoi) may require board fees on a monthly basis for the families of hosted children, depending on their economic capabilities. The Child and Infant Center Board of Directors establish the circumstances for a family to be exempted from this contribution or pay a lower one.

Pre-primary schools (Nipiagogeia) can have one teacher or two teachers. Single-teacher schools accommodate 7-25 children, while two-teacher schools have 26-50 children. The number of children per pre-primary school teacher is fixed at 25.

### **PURPOSE OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION**

Pre-primary school purpose is to help children develop physically, emotionally, mentally and socially and in particular. Special emphasis is placed on the smooth transition of children from pre-primary school to primary school, constituting a landmark in their development having decisive effects on their personality and overall school progress. This transition does not only concern the child but also all persons and bodies related to it. In particular children learn how to forge interpersonal relations boosting their gradual and harmonious social inclusion, how to develop initiatives freely and effortlessly in an organized environment and to adjust in the two-way relation between an individual and a group and ways to enrich and organize their experiences from the physical and social environment.

### **DAILY TIMETABLE IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The daily timetable in Pre-primary school (Nipiagogeio) lasts for 4 hours a day and runs 5 days a week and includes time for interdisciplinary activities, spontaneous activities in activity corners, break and brunch; the daily schedule begins and ends with a discussion, planning and evaluation of the activities of the day. Similarly, the daily timetable in All-day pre-primary school starts and closes with a discussion, while including more hours of interdisciplinary and spontaneous activities and extra periods of breaks, meals and relaxation. The daily timetable is drawn up by the teachers in collaboration with the Head of the Pre-primary school and can be adjusted in collaboration with the Educational Counselor of Preschool Education.

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## **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ORGANISATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Pre-school Education is followed by Primary Education provided in Primary Schools. Primary Education has a six-year duration and includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Education is free including the provision of books and supplementary educational material to every

pupil. Curricula are developed at central level and are globally applied in all school units across the country, in the respective education level.

Primary Schools are characterized as single teacher, two-teacher or three-teacher and up to twelve-teacher based on the teachers – pupils ratio. Schools with few teachers form classes with up to 15 pupils per class, while schools with six teachers and above have no more than 25 pupils per class. Otherwise, classes are further divided into smaller groups. Apart from the obligatory Primary Schools, there are also All-Day Primary Schools and All-Day Primary Schools implementing a Single Reformed Education Programme.

### **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

Within the framework of Primary Education, there are also alternative educational structures aiming at providing education which meets the needs of people with different educational, social and cultural backgrounds. Such structures are:

- ✧ *Model Experimental Schools*, where educational research, in collaboration with respective *faculties* and academic departments of Higher Education Institutions is promoted.
  - ✧ *Minority Primary Schools* which operate in the geographic division of Thrace, in areas with residents belonging to the Muslim minority.
  - ✧ *Cross-cultural Education Schools* are established in areas with high density of immigrant, repatriate or Roma pupils.
  - ✧ *Primary Schools of Special Education and Training* which are attended by pupils with special educational needs if attendance at mainstream Primary School is not feasible.
  - ✧ *European Education School* which operates for the children of employees of the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) or other services of the European Union.
- 

### **PURPOSE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Primary School aims at the multifaceted intellectual and physical development of children. Specifically, Primary School helps pupils:

- ✧ Broaden and rearrange the relationship between creative activity and things, situations and phenomena under study and build up mechanisms to assimilate knowledge, develop physically, improve their physical and mental health and cultivate their motor skills.
  - ✧ Conquer the content of the most basic concepts and gradually acquire the ability to ascend from sense data to the sphere of abstract thinking and the ability to properly handle oral and written speech.
-

- ↳ Gradually familiarize with moral, religious, national, humanitarian and other values, organize them into a moral system.
  - ↳ Cultivate their aesthetic criterion, making them capable of appreciating works of art and expressing themselves accordingly, through their own artistic creations.
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### **CURRICULUM - TEACHING**

Teachers must implement the Curricula, taking into consideration the special conditions prevailing in their classes, in order to achieve the educational objectives. In the Curricula, particular emphasis is placed on the interdisciplinary approach to knowledge and it is within this framework that 'Flexible Zone of Interdisciplinary and Creative Activities' is introduced, based on the pupil's experience through activities and projects. Teachers are provided with guidelines on teaching, they are supplied with 'teacher manuals' accompanying each subject while the cooperation between teachers and school advisors provides the former with invaluable pedagogic support.

In the Primary School all subjects are taught by a single teacher with the exception of physical education, music and foreign languages which are taught by teachers specialized in the respective subjects

### **ASSESSMENT - CERTIFICATION**

Assessment is achieved during teaching and represents a continuous and daily process. It is based on a) The daily oral examination and the overall participation of the pupil in the teaching and learning process, as well as in other school activities, b) the outcome of their performance in the assessment criteria, which constitutes an organic element of the curriculum and is included in the teaching material and c) the results of the assessments, which the pupil does at school or at home.

In grades A and B the evaluation of the results of the assessment is descriptive only. In grades C and D, apart from a descriptive remark, the progress report card also includes a grading scale, which is as follows: Excellent (A), Very Good (B) Good (C) Fair (D), whereas in grades E and F an additional grading scale is used, which is both verbal and numerical, as follows: Excellent (9-10), Very Good (7-8), Good (5-6), Fair (1-4). At the end of the school year, pupils in grades A, B, C, D and E are granted a "Progress Degree", if they meet the criteria for promotion. Pupils of grade F are granted a "Studies Degree". The "Progress Degree" is a prerequisite for enrollment to the next grade whereas the Studies Degree (The Primary School Graduation Certificate) is a prerequisite for the admission of the student to Junior High School.



## **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

There is no middle school in Greece.

## **SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Secondary Education in Greece is divided in two cycles: compulsory Secondary Education and non-compulsory Secondary Education. The first is offered at the lower secondary school (Gymnasio), day and evening, and is of three-year duration. Secondary non-compulsory Education is distinguished in a) General Education offered in upper secondary schools (Lykeia), day of three-year attendance and evening of four-year attendance, respectively and b) Vocational Education offered by Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (Lykeia), also of three and four year attendance respectively, or at Vocational Training Schools.

## **COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **ORGANIZATION OF COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Lower Secondary School comprises the last three years of the compulsory education and includes Grades A', B' and C'. Attendance is obligatory if the pupil has not exceeded the 16th year of age. Pupils attend the school nearer their home and "The Primary School Graduation Certificate" is obligatory for their registration. Every grade consists of one or more classes, depending on the number of pupils, which cannot be over 27 per class. Pupils attend a common curriculum for all subjects, without any differentiation. There are neither branches of studies nor any speciality in a sector.

### **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

The basic institutions that provide compulsory secondary education are the following:

**Day Lower Secondary Schools:** They are addressed to the majority of pupils of this educational level and they represent 85% of schools offering General Compulsory Education.

**Evening Lower Secondary Schools:** are addressed to working pupils over the age of 14 years. Attendance is of a 3-year duration and includes the grades A', B', and C', fully corresponding the ones of the Lower Secondary Day School

Lower secondary schools offering training and preparation for a specific vocational orientation, without though lagging behind in general education are *Music* Lower Secondary Schools, *Art* Lower Secondary Schools, *Ecclesiastical* Lower Secondary Schools and the *Athletic* Facilitation

Classes in the Lower Secondary School. In addition, Lower Secondary Schools operate either applying experimental curricula, such as the Model Experimental Lower Secondary Schools, or they are addressed to pupils with specific educational needs, such as *Evening* Lower Secondary Schools, *Cross-cultural* Schools, *Minority* Schools, *Lower Secondary Schools of Special Education and Training*, *Special Vocational* Schools, *Second Chance* Schools and the *European Education* School.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

The organisation of the school year for lower secondary school is determined centrally. The school year begins on 1st September and ends on 31st August of the following year. The teaching year for schools begins on 1st September and ends on 30th June while the teaching of subjects begins on 11th September and ends in May. The exam period follows and is completed by June 15.

The teaching year is divided in three terms:

- ↳ A' term, from September 11th to November 30th.
- ↳ B' term, from December 1st until the last day of February.
- ↳ C' term, from March 1st to the end of courses.

The teaching year encompasses Christmas and Easter holidays of 4 weeks total duration. Summer holidays are from mid June until 10th September, while teachers' holidays are from 1st July until 31st August. The teaching days stand at 150 approximately per year and are structured in 30 weeks of 5 days (from Monday to Friday) per year.

## **PURPOSE OF LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The purpose of the School is to promote the all-round development of students in relation to their abilities at that age and the corresponding demands of life. More specifically, in junior high school children learn to broaden their value system, set creative goals, develop social concerns, to cultivate their linguistic expression and body, to form the aesthetic criterion. In any case, the aim is the improvement in the context of cultural, social and economic life.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

In the Lower Secondary School, each of the various subjects is taught by teachers of the respective specialty. For example, Ancient Greek is taught by a philologist, Mathematics by a mathematician etc.

Curricula for the Lower Secondary School are centrally defined and are addressed to all students in the territory attending the same grade and education level. The curricula serve as full guides for the teaching work and include the following:

- ↳ Explicitly stated purposes for each subject, in the context of the general and grade-specific aims of education.
- ↳ Indicative guidelines on the method and the teaching media, per subject.

The subjects taught in lower secondary school are classified in two groups as follows:

Group A' Subjects	Group B' Subjects
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Ancient Greek Language and Literature</i></li><li>2. <i>Modern Greek Language and Literature</i></li><li>3. <i>Mathematics</i></li><li>4. <i>Religion Education</i></li><li>5. <i>History</i></li><li>6. <i>Social Civil Education</i></li><li>7. <i>Physics</i></li><li>8. <i>Chemistry</i></li><li>9. <i>Geography</i></li><li>10. <i>Biology</i></li><li>11. <i>English</i></li><li>12. <i>2nd Foreign Language</i></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Technology-Informatics</i></li><li>2. <i>Music-Arts</i></li><li>3. <i>Physical Education</i></li><li>4. <i>Home Economics</i></li><li>5. <i>Experiential Actions-Synthetic Creative Assignments-Project</i></li></ol>

Courses taught in lower secondary school are compulsory for all students of the same grade, except for the second foreign language, where students are free to choose among French and German for grades A' and B', and French, German, Italian or Spanish for grade C' of Lower Secondary School

#### ASSESSMENT - CERTIFICATION

Assessment in the Lower Secondary School is the result of a continuous process that comprises students' daily oral examination and overall participation in the teaching-learning process, short written tests, hourly compulsory written tests and, finally, written recapitulation exams taking place in June after the end of classes, in all subjects of group A'.

Teachers' pedagogical meetings on student assessment issues as well as meetings with parents come under the school annual and trimestrial school activities planning.

The assessment scale of written and oral pupils' performance in every subject is: 1 to 20. The minimum mark to pass a subject is 10. The same (10) is the pass mark for graduating from each grade.

A pupil is subject to a supplementary written and oral test in September in all subjects where he/she did not manage to get a 10. If a pupil does not fall under any of such cases (i.e promotion or supplementary test), he/she must repeat the class. Sufficient attendance during the teaching year in question, is also a requirement for graduation or promotion to the next grade.

Lower secondary school graduates are awarded the Leaving Certificate (Apolytirio), issued by the school unit the pupil graduated from. Holders of a Lower Secondary School Leaving Certificate are presented with the following possibilities:

- ↳ to enrol in the General or Vocational Upper Secondary School
- ↳ to enrol in Vocational Training School (VTS), which provide initial vocational education
- ↳ to join the labour market without specialization.

## **NON COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **ORGANIZATION OF NON COMPULSORY GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The General non-Compulsory Education is offered in Upper Secondary Schools (Lykeio). Attendance is of a three-year duration and includes the grades A', B', and C'. Students attend the Upper Secondary School in the region of their permanent place of residence and there is no age limit for enrollment. However, the vast majority of students are 15 to 18 years old. Attendance in Upper Secondary Education Schools is non-compulsory. The graduation certificate of Lower Secondary School is the necessary requirement for enrollment. Every grade consists of one or more classes, depending on the number of pupils, while there cannot be more than 27 pupils per class.

### **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

The types of institutions that provide General non-Compulsory Secondary Education and award equivalent degrees are the following:

**Day Upper secondary Schools:** They constitute the main provider of general non-compulsory secondary education as they are addressed to the majority of pupils selecting general education in this educational level.

**Evening Upper secondary Schools:** Evening Upper Secondary Schools are addressed to working pupils, who wish to complete school education. More specifically, adults as well as underage individuals employed in the family business, upon their parents or guardians' declaration, are eligible to enroll in Evening Upper Secondary Schools. Evening Upper secondary School includes 4 years and grades A', B', C' and D'. Grades A and B of the Evening School correspond to grade A' of the Day School, while grades C' and D' correspond to grades B' and C' of the Day School.

Upper secondary schools offering training and preparation for a specific vocational orientation, without though lagging behind in general education, are *Music Schools*, *Art Schools*, *Ecclesiastical Schools* and the *Upper Secondary Athletic Facilitation Classes*. In addition, Upper Secondary Schools operate either applying experimental curricula, such as the *Model Experimental Schools*, or they are addressed to pupils with specific educational needs, such as the *Evening Schools*, the *Cross-cultural Schools*, the *Minority Schools*, *Schools of Special Needs Education* and the *European Education School*.

### PURPOSE OF GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

The aim of the Lyceum is the all-round development of the student's abilities and skills and his/her preparation to take on a responsible role within contemporary society. Main features are, among others, the provision of high level general education, the gradual deepening and specialization in individual subjects, the emphasis on promoting critical thinking, initiative and creativity of students, and the development of skills so as to apply acquired knowledge to solving problems.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Grade A' of Day General Upper Secondary School is an exclusively general education grade with a timetable of subjects totalling 35 hours per week.

Grade B' of the Day General Lyceum includes general education courses of 30 teaching hours per week in total and 2 Groups of Orientation Courses, Humanities and Science Studies, of 5 teaching hours per week in total, where pupils are required to choose one.

Grade C' of Day General Upper Secondary School includes 2 categories of classes: General Education and Direction Subjects. The three directions offered are: Theoretical, Sciences and Technological. General Education subjects are taught 17 hours in grade C' per week. Direction subjects are divided in: a) Compulsory subjects for all pupils, taught for 12 hours and b) Elective subjects, out of which pupils can choose, with a duration of two hours.

General education subjects taught in Day General Upper Secondary School are:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greek Language, with distinct subject fields:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <i>Ancient Greek Language and Literature</i> and</li><li>✓ <i>Modern Greek Language and Literature</i> (Grades A', B', C')</li></ul></li><li>• Physical Sciences (Physics /Chemistry/ Biology) (Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Mathematics (Algebra/ Geometry)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• History (Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Civic Education(Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Religion Education (Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Foreign Language (Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Physical Education (Grades A', B', C')</li><li>• Philosophy (Grade B')</li><li>• Introduction to IT science (Grade B')</li></ul> |
|---|---|

Research Work/Projects become a distinct section of the Study Program in the General Upper Secondary School. These projects are done in groups, which open up new horizons of search, while at the same time a shift is attempted from the intensely competitive and individualistic manner of student work to that of group effort and cooperation. The Projects are obligatory for all students and they are evaluated independently, while their mark is evaluated equally to the marks of the other lessons. The students choose the subject of their Project depending on their particular preferences and inclinations from the disciplines of «Humanitarian and Social Sciences», «Art and Culture», «Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Technology», «Environment and Sustainable Development». All research projects involve the use of technology and the internet, on which they are uploaded after their completion, so that the education community may have access to them.

#### **ASSESSMENT IN GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The assessment of the pupil is synthetic, concerns each course separately, is the exclusive responsibility of the teacher of the relevant course and results from the oral performance of the pupil in each course and the written promotion exams pupils have to sit at the end of each school year. More specifically:

*Grades A' and B'.* Written tests for moving up to the next grade (from A to B or from B to C) are conducted after the end of the courses of term B and are held in all subjects with the exception of research projects and physical education.

The papers of the promotion exams are marked at the 0-100 scale with integers and the final grade of the paper is reduced in the range 0-20 and is written as a decimal, where necessary, to the nearest tenth.

*Grade C'.* In graduation exams regarding grade C of Day Upper Secondary School, the subjects are divided in two categories:

- In subjects tested at school unit level; the tests are drawn up with the cooperation of the teachers instructing the same subject in the same grade, are common for all classes of the same grade and are approved by the school Headmaster.
- In subjects tested at a national level (Pan-Hellenic exams); the tests are drawn up by the Central Examinations Committee set up for that purpose and they are common for all upper secondary school graduates throughout the country. The exams in the subjects in question take place at the same time in all Upper Secondary Schools of the country.

According to the newest legislation, the students attending the last year of the Day General Upper Secondary Schools can acquire a High School Diploma/Certificate without participating in the Pan-Hellenic exams conducted in the year of their graduation and can take the required

written exams in all subjects included in the curriculum of the last year of Upper Secondary School in their schools. The topics of the exams are decided upon by their school's Teachers' Assembly.

## **CERTIFICATION**

Pupils who successfully graduate from the Upper Secondary School are awarded a studies degree which is called Upper Secondary School Graduation Certificate (Apolythrio Lykeiou). Holders of this Certificate are presented with the following possibilities:

- ↳ To pursue their studies in Higher Education if they manage to get the marks required for the Faculty of their preference; this results from the performance at school level and the marks they obtain in the exams at national level (pan-Hellenic exams).
- ↳ To enrol in Vocational Training Institutes to obtain specialization.
- ↳ To take part in competitions for their recruitment in the public or private sector.
- ↳ To join the labour market without specialization.
- ↳ Upper Secondary School Graduation Certificate holders are :

Those who receive an Upper Secondary School Graduation Certificate without having participated in the Pan-Hellenic exams, have the right to access Higher Education only if they take the required written exams of the last year lessons conducted on a Pan-Hellenic level, any other year except the year of their graduation.

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## **VOCATIONAL SCHOOL**

### **ORGANIZATION OF VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Vocational non-compulsory Secondary Education is offered mainly at day or evening Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (VUSS). VUSS offers two cycles of study:

- a. a secondary cycle of studies and
- b. a post-secondary (optional) cycle of studies, the «Apprenticeship Class»

Enrolment in the VUSS A' Grade is without examinations for holders of Lower Secondary School Leaving Certificate or equivalent. Enrollment in the following two Grades (B' and C') is subject to successfully passing end of year exams. Students of VUSS A' Grade who pass the end of year examinations may enrol in Grade B' of the General Upper Secondary School.

## **TYPES OF SCHOOLS**

Vocational Upper Secondary Education is provided into two types of schools:



*Day Vocational Upper Secondary Schools:* they constitute the main provider of vocational non-compulsory education as they are addressed to the majority of pupils opting for vocational education in this education level. Day Vocational Upper Secondary Schools represent more than half of the total number of school units providing vocational education in Greece. Attendance is of 3-year duration and includes A, B and C grades while a post-secondary cycle of studies, the «Apprenticeship Class» is offered. The «Apprenticeship Class» is provided for Vocational Upper Secondary Schools (VUSS), and enrollment is optional for holders of a school leaving certificate and for holders of a degree of a second cycle of studies at VUSS.

*Evening Vocational Upper Secondary Schools:* These are established by joint decision of the Ministers of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and Finance. Attendance lasts for four years, including a total of 2,730 teaching hours which are distributed in four school years. These schools are attended either by employed or unemployed individuals holding an OAED (Manpower Employment Organisation) unemployment card. Students who cannot attend the Day Vocational Upper Secondary School may enroll in the Evening Vocational Upper Secondary School. Following graduation from the secondary cycle of studies provided by the Evening VUSS, a post-secondary cycle of studies is foreseen, namely the «Apprenticeship Class», as is the case of Day Vocational Upper Secondary Schools. Minimum age requirement to enrol in these «Apprenticeship Class» is set to 16 years of age.

The degree awarded by the Evening Vocational Upper Secondary School is equivalent to the one issued by Day Vocational Upper Secondary School. Graduates of Evening Vocational Upper Secondary Schools have access to Higher Education, by participating in the nation-wide Pan-Hellenic examinations.

#### **PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

The purpose of Vocational Education does not differ from those of general education. They include, however, some special parameters, like:

- Providing integrated vocational competences and skills that facilitate students' access to the labour market.
- Strengthening the ability to keep abreast with developments in the employment sector as well as the ability to receive and assimilate new technological and vocational knowledge, skills and competences in Lifelong Learning.
- Enabling career advancement due to studies completed at a higher educational level.
- Developing actions for quality assurance in technical-vocational education.

#### **CURRICULA IN VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS (VUSS)**

The curricula in question are prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training - ECVET.



In order to formulate curricula for each sector and specialization, the related occupational profiles, if there are any, as certified by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance specialty are taken into consideration. Timetables and curricula are reassessed, evaluated and, if deemed necessary, renewed every 6 years at least.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

In Grade A' of Day Vocational Upper Secondary School, a timetable of subjects totalling 35 hours per week is applied with 10 General Education subjects being common for all pupils plus a curriculum of 4 to 6 specialty subjects.

The curriculum that applies to Grade B' of the Day VUSS comprises of 35 hours per week in total. More specifically, it includes 6 General Education courses common for all the pupils, as well as 4-6 specialization courses. Specialty courses include approximately 50% theoretical training and 50% lab training.

In Grade C' of Day Upper Secondary School the lessons are divided into subjects of General Education, Electives and into Specialties that amount to an overall total of 35 hours per week. The general education courses are divided into: a) mandatory courses for all pupils of a total duration of 10 hours and b) elective courses of a total duration of 2 hours. Mandatory courses fall into two groups. Pupils must take over the courses of the mandatory group and only one of the elective courses.

### **CERTIFICATION**

Pupils successfully graduating from the Vocational Upper Secondary School are awarded a studies degree which is called Vocational Upper Secondary School Graduation Certificate, as well as a Professional Specialization Degree with level 3 professional rights. Graduates of the "Apprenticeship Class" are awarded a Professional Specialization Degree with level 4 professional rights.

A Vocational Upper Secondary School Graduation Certificate offers the holders the following possibilities:

- ✎ To follow Higher Education after taking the national exams (pan-Hellenic exams) on an equal number of subjects as the General Upper Secondary School.
- ✎ To enroll in Vocational Training Institutes, in a speciality corresponding the one they had selected at school.
- ✎ To enroll at the Apprenticeship Class, which implements the dual education system.

## **VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL (VTS)**

### **ORGANIZATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS**

Schools of Vocational Education were established recently and they provide initial training to holders of Junior High School Certificates of Graduation or any other equivalent qualification. In SEK, where attendance lasts for three years, the grades in operation are grade A' and grade B', as well as the Apprenticeship Class. Attendance in Public Vocational Training Schools is free. Those eligible to be admitted to grade A' of SEK, without exams, are the holders of a graduation certificate from the junior-high school or another equivalent degree. Those promoted from grade A' are admitted and enrolled to grade B', whereas those promoted from grade B' are admitted to the Apprenticeship grade.

Holders of Lower Secondary School Graduation Certificate or other equivalent qualification are entitled to attend Day Vocational Training Schools, provided they have not reached the age of 20 years. Working pupils older than 20 years are enrolled to the Evening VTSs.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The curriculum that applies to grades A' and B' of SEK include a curriculum of 30 hours per week in total. More specifically, a curriculum of 4 hours per week is applied, which includes 2 General Education courses, Greek Language and Mathematics, and is common for all the pupils, as well as a curriculum of 26 hours per week, which consists of specialization courses. Specialization courses comprise approximately 50% theoretical training and 50% lab training. Teaching the various subjects-courses, as they are described in the detailed curricula of the SEKs, is undertaken by teachers having a respective specialization.

In the "Apprenticeship Grade" there is a lab course called "Remedial Laboratory Training for Apprenticeships" and a "Training program in the workplace - Apprenticeship in the workplace", of a total duration of 28 hours per week, divided into 5 days for an entire school year is being applied.

### **VTS ORIENTATION GROUPS AND SPECIALIZATIONS**

The Orientation Groups offered in VTSs are as follows:

- A. Agriculture, Food Technology and Nutrition Orientation Group
- B. Technological Applications Orientation Group
- C. Applied Arts Orientation Group
- D. Tourism Management and Business Hosting Occupations Guidance Group
- E. Sub Sectors and Occupations

## **ASSESSMENT - CERTIFICATION**

The written examination for promotion in grades A' and B' of the Vocational Training School are carried out at a school level and include all the general education and specialization courses taught, with common questions for all departments of the same school as determined by the teacher or teachers. The papers are corrected by the relevant teacher(s).

Pupils promoted from grade B' of SEK are awarded a Level 2 Vocational Training Certificate that automatically grants them the right to participate in the Apprenticeship Grade. After successful completion of the Apprenticeship Grade, pupils are awarded a level 3 Vocational Training Certificate.

VTS graduates are not entitled to have access to Higher education.

## **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Within the framework of non-formal education, which can lead to the acquisition of certificates recognized at national level, service providers are:

- a. the Vocational Upper Secondary School which, besides the secondary studies cycle, offers the Apprenticeship Class. The "Apprenticeship Class" is optional (education at work place); enrolment is addressed to the holders of school leaving certificate and of the degree from Vocational Upper Secondary school secondary cycle of studies;
- b. the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), the main provider of Post-Secondary, non-Higher Education. They operate in the context of non-formal education, i.e of education offered in an organized educational context outside the formal educational system and being able to result in the acquisition of certificates recognized at national level. The Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) can be public or private. Attendance in Public Vocational Training Institutes is offered free of charge. Vocational Training Institutes aim at providing services of initial and continuing vocational training to formal non-compulsory Secondary education graduates, of General and Vocational Upper Secondary school and to Vocational Training Schools' graduates. They operate in the country's largest cities, providing skills and organizing courses in accordance with national and regional needs of the national economy as well as the recommendations of the relevant education authorities
- c. Colleges belong to post-secondary non-higher education. The Colleges are service providers of non-formal upper secondary education and training, offering exclusively studies on the basis of validation and franchising agreement with higher educational institutions abroad, recognized by the competent authorities in the countries they are registered; the studies result in a bachelor degree of at least three-year duration and attendance or in a postgraduate title of study. The degrees, titles and any kind of

certificate granted by colleges may be recognized in terms of professional equivalence to higher education titles awarded in the framework of the Greek formal education system.

- d. The Lifelong Learning Centres, which provide continuing vocational training, adult general education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling.

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## HIGHER EDUCATION

### HIGHER EDUCATION SECTORS

Higher education in Greece constitutes the last level of the formal educational system and is divided into the University Sector and the Technological Sector.

*The University Sector:* Higher Education University Sector aims at establishing, producing and developing science and technology, achieving our country's future scientists' high level, comprehensive, theoretical and applied training while promoting and developing scientific research. It also gives emphasis to high quality education according to the demands of science, technology and arts taking into account the international scientific practice and the corresponding professional fields. This sector includes:

- Universities,
- National Technical Universities,
- the Higher School of Fine Arts and
- the Hellenic Open University.

*Technological Sector:* Higher Education Technological Sector aims at developing the scientific and technological research and at providing programmes of more applied character. Special emphasis is given to high quality education as well as to the applied character of science, technology and arts in the corresponding professional fields. In this framework they promote the development of the appropriate theoretical background together with the development of high standard practice. To this sector belong:

- Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) and
- the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE).

### ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION

All General or Vocational Upper Secondary School graduates (the latter under certain conditions) have the right to proceed to both sectors of Higher Education. Candidates have to sit for the nation-wide examinations (Pan-Hellenic Examinations) which are organized centrally and are common to all candidates. After the final score in these exams is made known to candidates,

they submit an “Application - Computerized Bulletin”, in which they declare and prioritize their preferences for Higher Education Departments they wish to attend. Candidates may apply for as many Departments as they wish provided that these Departments belong to one or maximum two scientific fields. Entering a specific Department is subject to the combination of: a) the marks they have received; b) the order in which they have indicated their preferences and c) the number of places available in each Department.

### **DURATION OF STUDIES**

Studies leading to a degree in Greek Universities last at least four years for most scientific sectors while they last five years at Technical Universities, other applied sciences (Agronomy, Forestry, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, and Pharmaceuticals) and certain Art Departments (music studies and fine arts) and six years for Medical School. Studies leading to Diploma in Technological Educational Institutes last four (4) years.

### **CYCLES OF STUDY**

Studies are divided into three cycles,.

The *first cycle* of studies comprises the attendance of a study programme, includes courses corresponding to a minimum of 180 ECTS credits and leads to the award of a diploma / certificate.

The *second cycle* of studies comprises the attendance of a postgraduate programme. This programme includes courses corresponding to a minimum of 60 ECTS credits and leads the award of a Postgraduate Degree (*Metaptychiako Diploma Spoudon*), in accordance with the provisions of the organizational charter of the institution.

The *third cycle* of studies comprises the attendance of a doctorate study programme. It includes courses corresponding to at least 30 ECTS credits, as well as the thesis preparation. It is concluded within minimum three years duration, leads to the award of a doctoral diploma, according to the provisions of the organizational charter of the institution.

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### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

Initial training for Primary and Secondary Education teachers falls under the Higher Education University or Technological sector, while all teachers in primary education – including pre-primary and primary school education- as well as teachers in secondary education, hold at least a first cycle degree.

### **PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHING STAFF**

At municipal infant/child and child centres, which provide early childhood education and care, educators are graduates of Pedagogical Departments for Pre-Primary Education operating at Universities, or graduates of Nursery Departments operating at Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs).

### **SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHING STAFF**

Prospective teachers for the secondary education, compulsory and non-compulsory, receive their initial training in University Departments throughout the country, providing courses relevant to the subjects included in the curricula of secondary education. The majority of these Departments are included in the so-called “*Teachers’ Departments*”, meaning university departments whose graduates may be appointed in secondary education as permanent or substitute teachers. Their appointment does not require any additional degree or pedagogical proficiency certificate since, simultaneously with their studies at the corresponding university department, students receive pedagogical training, just as with prospective primary teachers. In most Education Departments and “*Teachers’ Departments*”, beyond the theoretical training, enough time is devoted to actual practice through teaching in real class or through participation in relevant laboratory exercises.

### **TERMS OF RECRUITMENT**

Teachers’ vacant positions as well as operational needs in primary and secondary education are covered by prospective teachers achieving a passing score in the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP) examination. Academic qualifications, actual teaching experiences and social criteria are also taken into account.

## HELLENIC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The development of the National Qualifications Framework ensures the existence of a single and unique tool through which all qualifications awarded in Greece can be described and measured. The National Qualifications Framework was formed by the National Qualification Certification Agency and Vocational Guidance (E.O.P.P.E.P.) and fully corresponds to the European Qualifications Framework. According to the mapping report, the Greek educational system is classified in the following eight (8) levels:

HQF & EQF LEVELS	VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	GENERAL EDUCATION	HIGHER EDUCATION
1		PRIMARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	
2		LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	
3	VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL		
4	VOCATIONAL SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (post lower secondary level)	GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	
	VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL “DEGREE”		
	VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE		
5	VOCATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL “DEGREE” / CERTIFICATE + APPRENTICESHIP CLASS		
	VOCATIONAL TRAINING DIPLOMA (Initial Vocational Training) (post secondary level)		
	POST SECONDARY AND NOT HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMA OR “DEGREE”		
6			BACHELOR DEGREE
7			MASTER’S DEGREE
8			DOCTORATE

It should be noted that the word “Degree” whenever used within quotation marks, signifies that it is a direct translation from the terminology in Greek as it appears in the Greek legislation. In Greek, the word ‘ptychio’ is used for titles of study from different education levels (higher, secondary etc.). It is by no means to be confused with its usage in the English language, where the word degree refers to higher education title of study.

## USEFUL LINKS

<http://bit.ly/1WtvMVP> (full description of the Greek educational system prepared by the European Network for Education *Eurydice*)

<http://bit.ly/1k7D6FH> (The *Dynot* (Dynamic Online tool for Guidance) site, a European Commission funded Leonardo da Vinci pilot project initiated and coordinated by the ibw – Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy. The site presents the Educational systems of various European countries but is not updated and gives an older form of the Greek educational system)

<http://bit.ly/1WwtzyK> (a brief *outdated* presentation of the Greek educational system, from the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs site)

<http://bit.ly/1NOHEdw> (a site on various educational issues with a non-updated reference to Greek educational system)

<http://bit.ly/1koYo0W> (a brief presentation of the Greek educational system from Wikipedia)

<http://bit.ly/1XVvSX0> (a pdf document concerning the Greek Qualifications Framework prepared by the Greek National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance ([www.eoppep.gr](http://www.eoppep.gr)). Although written in 2014, it describes quite accurately the Greek Educational System and Qualifications Framework)