



Education in Iceland

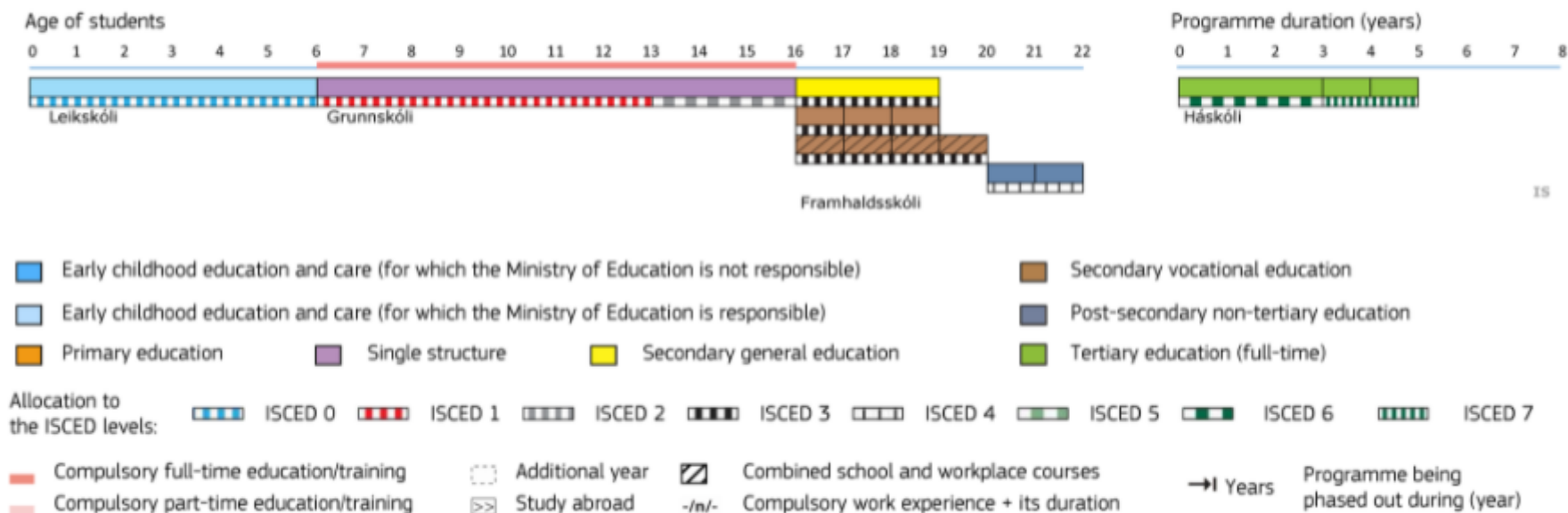
- Preschool 1- 6 years of age
- Elementary school 6-16
- Secondary school 16-19
- University 19 onwards





Education in Iceland

Iceland – 2020/21





Pre-primary school (Leikskóli)

Pre-primary education is defined by law as the first level of the educational system, providing education and care for children who have not reached six years of age, at which point compulsory education begins. The [Pre-primary Schools Act No 90/2008](#).



Pre-primary school (Leikskóli)

- All children have a right to ECEC
 - Usually between 18-36 months old
- ECEC is guided by a national core curriculum
- Place guarantee to ECEC
 - In 2019, 95% for children aged between 2 and 3 attended ECEC settings
 - Participation in ECEC is voluntary
- Affordability
 - In Iceland, municipalities have a statutory duty to provide and finance both centre-based and home-based ECEC services and families pay a co-contribution.



Compulsory education (grunnskóli)

Compulsory education is organised in a single structure system, i.e. primary and lower secondary education form part of the same school level, and generally take place in the same school.

Legislation on compulsory education stipulates that education shall be mandatory for children and adolescents between the ages of six and sixteen.

The Compulsory School Act No 91/2008.



Compulsory education (grunnskóli)

- Geographical Accessibility
 - It is the duty of the local municipalities to ensure that all children from the age of six to sixteen can attend school.
 - Children living in rural areas are bussed to and from school every day, free of charge



Compulsory education (grunnskóli)

- Admission Requirements and Choice of School
 - The Compulsory School Act of 2008 stipulates that all children and adolescents between the ages of six and sixteen are required to attend school
 - It is the duty of the local municipalities to ensure that all children from the age of six to sixteen attend school
 - Under the law, compulsory education begins in the calendar year that the child turns six and ends at the close of the spring term the year in which the child reaches the age of 16



Compulsory education (grunnskóli)

- Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils
 - Compulsory education is organised in a single structure system, i.e. the primary and lower secondary education form part of the same school level and usually take place in the same school
 - Schools are organised into classes by age from grade one to ten
 - There is no selection or streaming by ability and children automatically go up from one grade to the next according to age



Compulsory education (grunnskóli)

- Classrooms are generally allocated to individual classes, i.e. each class has its own classroom and teachers move from room to room
- More and more schools are however built with more possibilities for flexibility to have pupils in open spaces or divided into mixed size groups, with increased possibilities for individualized teaching and learning



Compulsary education

- Almost all children graduate at the same age from elementary school
- Following the same or similar curriculum until the age of 15-16
 - Elementary school is *compulsory*
 - The elementary schools are mostly run by the community
 - All are funded by the community



Secondary school

- All students **have the right** to enter secondary school
 - The state is ***obliged*** to provide a place for students in secondary school until they are 18 years old
 - The secondary schools are mostly run by the state, and all are funded by the state
- Students can apply where they want but most schools choose students based on grade average in key subjects



Structure of secondary education in Iceland (simplified version)

- Grammar schools that prepare students for university (matriculation)
- Community colleges (Fjölbrautaskólar) with emphasis on matriculation
- Community colleges (Fjölbrautaskólar) with emphasis on both matriculation and vocational studies
- Vocational schools



Curriculum in secondary schools

- All academic schools make their own curriculum
 - No two schools in Iceland have the same curriculum
- The schools have to have certain amount of Math, Icelandic language, English, Danish and a third language
- Under the national curriculum guide, the matriculation examination, which concludes the upper secondary school level, must include courses with various levels of strength to ensure deeper knowledge and skills
- The Directorate of Education is expected to perform an audit on each secondary school every five years
 - All audits are published online



The national curriculum guide is based on six fundamental pillars:

- Literacy in the widest sense
- Education towards sustainability
- Health and welfare
- Democracy and human rights
- Equality
- Creativity

Key competence is to link the fundamental pillars to the objectives of student competence and all choice of material and content of study, teaching and play should reflect these fundamental pillars.



Vocational schools

- Many upper secondary schools in Iceland are combined schools, i.e. they offer both general and vocational education. Institutions offering both general and vocational education sometimes have teaching facilities in separate buildings.
- In vocational education at the upper secondary level, study shall be both theoretical and practical and shall form as cohesive a whole as possible to enable pupils to better understand the connection between its theoretical and practical aspects
- For the certified trades there are journeyman's examinations. They are the responsibility of the trade in question.
- Those who have completed the journeyman's examination can become master craftsmen after a certain period of work experience and advanced studies.