STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SPAIN

- Structure of Educational System
- Pre-higher Education System
- Higher Education System
- Administrative structure of higher education
- Admissions to Higher Education and Recognition

INSTITUTION TYPES & CREDENTIALS

Types of higher education institutions:
- Universidad (University)
- Facultad (Faculty)
- Universidad Politécnica (Polytechnic University)
- Colegio Universitario (University College)
- Escuela de Especialización (Specialized School)
- Escuela Técnica Superior (Higher Technical School)
- Escuela Técnica (Technical School)
- Escuela Universitaria (University School)
- Instituto Universitario (University Institute)

School leaving and higher education credentials:
- Título de Bachillerato
- Curso de Orientación Universitaria (COU)
- Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad
- Título de Técnico Superior
- Título de Arquitecto Técnico
- Título de Conservador y Restaurador de los Bienes Culturales
- Título de Diplomado
- Título de Ingeniero Técnico
- Título de Maestro
- Título Propio
- Título Superior de Diseño
- Professional Title
- Título de Arquitecto
STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

- **Pre-higher education:**
  - Duration of compulsory education:
  - *Age of entry:* 6
  - *Age of exit:* 16

Structure of school system:

- **Primary**
  - *Type of school providing this education:* Primary School
  - *Length of program in years:* 6
  - *Age level from:* 6 to 12

- **Secondary**
  - *Type of school providing this education:* Compulsory Secondary School (Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria; Institutos de Educación Secundaria, Colegios Privados y Colegios Concertados)
  - *Length of program in years:* 4
  - *Age level from:* 12 to 16
  - *Certificate/diploma awarded:* Graduado en Educación Secundaria

- **Higher Secondary**
  - *Type of school providing this education:* Post Compulsory Secondary (Enseñanza Secundaria Post Obligatoria; Institutos de Educación Secundaria, Colegios Privados y Colegios Concertados)
  - *Length of program in years:* 4
  - *Age level from:* 12 to 16
  - *Certificate/diploma awarded:* Título de Bachillerato or Título de Técnico

- **Pre-university**
Type of school providing this education: Curso de Orientación Universitaria (COU) (-last year available 2001-, Institutos de Educación Secundaria, Colegios Privados y Colegios Concertados)

Length of program in years: 1

Age level from: 17 to 18

Certificate/diploma awarded: Prueba de acceso a la universidad-selectividad (entrance examination)

School education:

Following the 1990 reform, primary education lasts for six years and compulsory secondary education (ESO) for four years (from 12 to 16) divided into two two-year cycles (from 12 to 14 and from 14 to 16).

It leads to the Graduado en Educación Secundaria Certificate. This certificate is required for a) Bachillerato studies (16 to 18) and b) intermediate vocational training (Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio). Bachillerato students who have completed all subjects successfully are awarded the Título de Bachillerato (before the 1990 reform students had to complete the Curso de Orientación Universitaria as well).

To enter university, students must sit for an entrance examination (Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad). In intermediate vocational training (Ciclos Formativos de Grado medio) students who successfully complete their training are awarded the Certificado de Técnico in the relevant field. This certificate enables them to work in areas related to their training, to pursue further training or study for a Bachillerato.

Higher education:

Higher education is mainly provided by both public and private universities. Universities are divided into facultades universitarias, escuelas técnicas superiores, escuelas universitarias, institutos universitarios, and other centres, notably the colegios universitarios.

The Consejo de Universidades (where the Ministry, the Comunidades Autónomas and the Universidades are represented) coordinates the activities of state and private institutions and propose the main lines of educational policy. It also sets up guidelines for the creation of universities, centers and institutes.

It can also propose measures concerning advanced postgraduate studies, the defining of qualifications to be officially recognized throughout the country and standards governing the creation of university departments. The legislation on university autonomy provides for administrative, academic and financial autonomy.
A new law on Universities (*Ley Orgánica de Universidades n° 121/000045*) was voted on 20 December, 2001 and is being implemented.

**Main laws/decrees governing higher education:**

Decree: *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (LRU) Year: 1983  
Concerns: Universities

Decree: *Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo* (LOGSE) Year: 1990  
Concerns: All

Decree: *Ley Orgánica de Universidades n° 121/000045* Year: 2001  
Concerns: Universities

Decree: *Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación*, no. 8 (LODE) Year: 1985

Concerns: Regulations for the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

**Academic year:**

- Classes from: Oct to Jul  
- Languages of instruction: Catalan, Spanish, Basque, Galician  
- Stages of studies:

**A. Non-university level post-secondary studies (technical/vocational type):**

**Non-university level:**

- *Centros de formación profesional especifica de Grado superior* offer to holders of the *Título de Bachillerato* three-year full-time courses leading to *Grado superior* qualifications in areas such as Agriculture, Commerce and Administration.

- Higher education Music, Dance and Drama studies lead to a *Título Superior de* (Música, Danza, Drama) which is equivalent to the *Licenciado* degree. Higher education courses on Preservation and Restoration of historical works of art and Design as well as *Ciclos Formativos de Grado Superior* in Plastic Arts and Design lead to qualifications equivalent to the *Diplomado* degree.
B. University level studies:

University level first stage: Ciclo básico, primer ciclo

- The first cycle of university studies (short term courses), which is taken in Escuelas Técnicas Superiores, Escuelas Universitarias and Facultades lasts for three years and leads to the Diplomado, Ingeniero Técnico or Arquitecto Técnico degrees. These courses lead to long term courses.

University level second stage: Segundo ciclo, ciclo de especialización

- The courses of study leading to Licenciado, Ingeniero and Arquitecto degrees consist of first cycle and second cycle studies (long term studies) but a degree is awarded only when the studies of both cycles have been completed successfully. The Ingeniero and Arquitecto degrees are awarded following an end-of-course project (proyecto fin de carrera). Medical studies last for 6 years but Odontology and Veterinary studies last for five years. These long term courses are taken at Facultades and Escuelas Técnicas Superiores. The former offer courses in Humanities and Science and the latter offer courses in Technology, Engineering and Architecture.

University level third stage: Tercer ciclo, ciclo de especialización para la investigación y docencia

- The third stage is open to holders of Licenciado, Arquitecto or Ingeniero degrees and leads to the Doctor's degree (Título de Doctor) which is awarded after at least four years' further study and research, and after the submission and defence of a thesis. Another postgraduate degree, although it is not officially recognized (Título propio del Centro) is the "Master's" or Maestría degree, awarded after 1 or 2 years of further study.

Teacher education:

- Training of pre-primary and primary/basic school teachers
- Primary-school teachers are trained in Escuelas universitarias de Formación de Profesorado. A three-year course leads to the Título de Maestro.
- Training of secondary school teachers
In order to be able to teach, holders of *Licenciado, Ingeniero* or *Arquitecto* degrees must also hold the *Certificado de Aptitud Pedagógica* (CAP). This requirement does not apply to a) holders of *Licenciado en Pedagogía* or b) holders of *Maestro* degrees who also hold a *Licenciado, Ingeniero* or *Arquitecto* degree.

- Training of higher education teachers

Higher education teachers are trained in *Facultades universitarias* or *Escuelas técnicas superiores*. They must hold *Licenciado, Arquitecto* or *Ingeniero* degrees. After two years of third-cycle study and the submission of a thesis, they are awarded a Doctor degree, which is the prerequisite for teaching in faculties and higher-technical schools. However, in *Escuelas universitarias*, only *catedráticos* (holders of a chair) must meet this requirement. The requirement for *Profesores Titulares* is a *Licenciado, Ingeniero* or *Arquitecto* degree.

**Non-traditional studies:**

**Distance higher education**

The *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia* (UNED) organizes distance learning courses in Law, History and Geography, Philology, Philosophy and Education, Psychology, Economics and Management, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, Political Sciences and Sociology, and Industrial Engineering.

UNED also organizes courses giving direct access to university for adults over 25 who do not hold the required qualifications and distance courses for which no specific qualification is required. In 1992, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports created the Centre for Innovation and Development of Distance Education (CIDEAD).

Other educational administrations, amongst which the education Departments for the Communities of Galicia, Navarre and Valencia, have established distance education for adults in their respective regions creating the relevant establishments for distance education. There is also the *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya*.

**Lifelong higher education**

Continuous vocational training, according to the *Nuevo Programa Nacional de Formación Profesional* (NPNFP) 1998-2002, is conceived as a number of training actions aiming at the personal, social and professional promotion of workers.

The NPNFP also establishes the tasks of the *Instituto Nacional de Cualificaciones* (INCUAL) whose main responsibility is to propose the setting up and management of the *Sistema Nacional de Cualificaciones profesionales* (SNCP) which will facilitate the coordination of
vocational training policies proposed by the Administración General del Estado, the Autonomous Communities and Social Agents.

National agreements have been reached in order to promote continuous training. The Fundación Tripartita administers most of the funds on a nation-wide scale.

Ministries, Autonomous Communities, and different institutions in the public and private sectors also organize special courses outside the general education system for the personal and professional improvement of their employees.

**Higher education training in industry**

Postgraduate professional courses are offered in universities and by private bodies and associations and lead to the award of a diploma.

**NATIONAL BODIES**

**Administration & co-ordination:**

**Responsible authorities:**
Division of Universities, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (Dirección general de Universidades, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte)
Head: Julio Iglesias de Ussel, Secretario de Estado de Educación y Universidades
Administrative officer: Ismael Crespo, Director general de Universidades
Serrano 150
28071 Madrid
Spain
Tel: +34(91) 550-5400
WWW: http://www.mec.es

**Role of governing body:** coordinates higher education institutions and proposes to the government the main lines of the educational policy.

**Council of Universities (Consejo de Universidades)**
Head: Pilar del Castillo Vera, President
Administrative officer: Vicente Ortega Castro, Secretary-General
Role of governing body: advises, proposes, plans and regulates activities in the field of higher education.

Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades españolas)
Head: Saturnino de la Plaza Pérez, President
Administrative officer: Félix García Lausín, Secretary-General
C/Príncipe, 1-5a planta
28012 Madrid
Spain
Tel: +34(91) 360-1200
Fax: +34(91) 360-1201
EMail: sgcrue@adm.uned.es
WWW: http://www.crue.org

ADMISSIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to non university higher education studies

- Name of secondary school credential required: Título de Bachillerato
- Admission to university-level studies
- Name of secondary school credential required: Título de Bachillerato
- For entry to: Facultades, Colegios Universitarios, Escuelas Superiores Técnicas
- Alternatives to credentials: Over 25s Aptitude test organized by the UNED University, Bachillerato (or COU) and a specific aptitude test for artistic studies. Título de Técnico
Especialista (or Técnico Superior) for direct access to specific university studies related to previous studies.

- Entrance exams required: Students must sit for the Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad, except for the Escuelas Universitarias (only Bachillerato, COU or Título de Técnico Especialista/Técnico Superior).
- Other admission requirements: Curso de Orientación Universitaria and Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad.

**Foreign students admission**

- Admission requirements: Students must have completed their secondary education studies and have them recognized by the Spanish Ministry of Education. They must also sit for the Prueba de Aptitud de Acceso a la Universidad.
- Entry regulations: Foreign students must have a residence permit and financial guarantees.
- Health requirements: Health visa
- Language requirements: Students from non-Spanish speaking countries must sit for an examination. Universities organize language courses.
- Application procedures:
  - Apply to individual institution for entry to: The institution concerned.
- Application closing dates:
  - For non-university level (technical/vocational type) studies: 1 Jul
  - For university level studies: 1 Jul
  - For advanced/doctoral studies: 1 Jul

**Recognition of studies & qualifications:**

Studies pursued in foreign countries (bodies dealing with recognition of foreign credentials):

NARIC, Subdirección General de Títulos, Convalidaciones y Homologaciones, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte

Head: Nieves Trelles, Asesora Técnica
Deals with credential recognition for entry to:

University and Profession Services provided & students dealt with: Provides information to foreigners wishing to follow studies in Spain who apply for the recognition of their diplomas or partial studies obtained or pursued abroad.

Other information sources on recognition of foreign studies:

Universities' governing bodies have full authority to recognize both the courses taken in foreign institutions which have not led to a standard qualification and the courses which have led to standard qualifications but whose recognition has been refused by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport.

Special provisions for recognition:

For access to university level studies:

Foreign higher education qualifications awarded by authorized higher education institutions (where the courses leading to the awards have been taken), once they have been recognized, have the same academic and professional equivalence as the corresponding Spanish official higher education qualifications.

Foreign higher education qualifications can be recognized as equivalent to the Spanish Diplomado, Arquitecto, Técnico or Ingeniero Técnico degrees, as the case may be, provided they are equivalent to existing Spanish qualifications awarded by Spanish universities at the time the application for recognition is submitted.

The recognition of foreign qualifications can only be applied to qualifications included in the catalogue of official university qualifications. The Universities Council plays a major role in the recognition process. The contents and duration of courses leading to the respective qualifications submitted for recognition and their equivalence to the educational content of Spanish and EU qualifications are evaluated by sub-committees of experts on different areas of knowledge.
For access to advanced studies and research: (see above)
For the exercise of a profession: (see above)

**Multilateral agreements concerning recognition of foreign studies**

- Name of agreement: Convention On the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Europe
- Year of signature: 1979

**References to further information on foreign student admissions and recognition of studies**

- Title: *Cursos para extranjeros en España*
  - Publisher: Secretaría de Estado de Universidades e Investigación

- Title: *Estudios en España: II. Nivel universitario*
  - Author: Spain. Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia. Secretaría General Técnica
  - Publisher: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia

- Title: *Guía básica sobre régimen académica y acceso para alumnos con estudios en el extranjero*
  - Publisher: Universidad Complutense de Madrid - Vice-Rectorado de Alumnos

- Title: *Homologación y Convalidación de Títulos y Estudios Extranjeros*
  - Publisher: Secretaría General Técnica. Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte

- Title: *Las Enseñanzas universitarias en España y en la Comunidad Económica Europea*
  - Author: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia

**STUDENT LIFE**

- Health/social provisions
- Social security for home students: Yes
- Social security for foreign students: Yes
- Special student travel fares:
- By road: Yes
- By rail: Yes
- By air: Yes
- Available to foreign students: Yes
- Student expenses and financial aid
- Student costs:
  - Home students tuition fees: Maximum: 3600 (Euro)

Bodies providing information on student financial aid:
Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport
Alcalá 34
28014 Madrid
Spain
Tel: +48(1) 532-1300

**Deals with: Grants**
Category of students: students with Spanish citizenship or with legal residence in Spain.
Publications on student services and financial aid:
- **Title:** Convocatoría general de Becas para Realizar Estudios en España
  - Publisher: Agencia española de Cooperación internacional (AECI), Madrid

- **Title:** Study abroad 2000-2001
  - Publisher: UNESCO/IBE
  - Year of publication: 1999

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & EXCHANGES**

Principal national bodies responsible for dealing with international cooperation and exchanges in higher education:
Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport
Serrano 150
28071 Madrid
Spain
Tel: +34(1) 550-5400
WWW: http://www.mec.es
GRADING SYSTEM

Usual grading system in secondary school

Full Description:
- 0-10: 10 sobresaliente (matrícula de honor);
- 8.5-9 sobresaliente; 7-8.4 notable;
- 6-6.9 bien;
- 5-6 suficiente;
- below 5 Insuficiente.
- Highest on scale: 10
- Lowest on scale: 0

Main grading system used by higher education institutions

Full Description:
- 10: matrícula de honor;
- 9-9.9: sobresaliente; 7-8.9: notable;
- 5-6.9: aprobado;
- below 5: suspenso
- Highest on scale: 10 matrícula de honor
- Pass/fail level: 5 aprobado
- Lowest on scale: 4-1 suspenso
- Other main grading systems
- For theses: apto; no apto; cum laude;

NOTES ON HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Data for academic year: 2001-2002
Source: NARIC, Subdirección General de Títulos, Convalidaciones y Homologaciones, Madrid, 2001