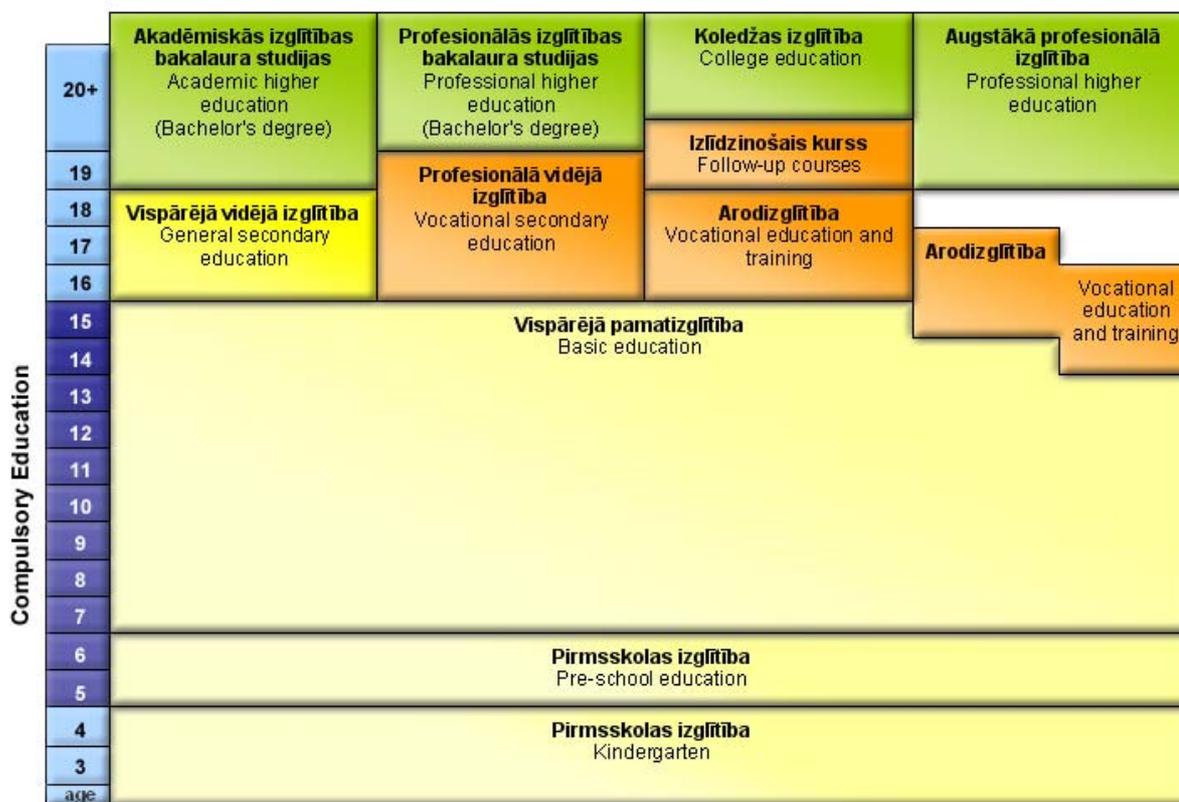


The educational system in Latvia



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Explanation of the Latvian educational system

1. Pre-school	Since 2002, attendance of the pre-school educational programme for 5 and 6 year old children has been compulsory.
2. Primary and lower secondary school	9-year basic education within an integrated system, divided into a 4-year primary sector and a 5-year lower secondary level. Transition to the next highest class takes place automatically. Basic education ends after class 9 with a final examination and certificate. Subsequent to this, attendance of upper secondary education or vocational education and training is possible.
3. Upper secondary education	Basic education is followed by a 3-year upper secondary education sector, affording the opportunity to choose between 4 different teaching programmes. Regardless of the focus of the programme chosen, the following are compulsory subjects: Latvian language/literature, mathematics, history, 1 foreign language, sport, applied information technology, the basics of economics. Compulsory and optional subjects related to the main focus of the programme account for about 25 % of the teaching. Subjects are offered at basic and advanced level, at least one subject having to

	<p>be at advanced level.</p> <p>Upper secondary education ends after class 12 with central final examinations (Latvian language/literature, 1 centrally stipulated examination subject which changes on an annual basis and 3 subjects selected by the pupils themselves). A diploma is awarded in respect of general upper secondary education (upper secondary school leaving certificate). If marks at level 4 or better are achieved in at least 12 subjects, the class 12 leaving certificate confers the entitlement to study at universities and institutes of higher education.</p>
<p>4. Vocational education and training</p>	<p>Vocational education and training takes place completely within vocational schools.</p> <p>There are 3 sorts of VET.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic vocational education and training of 1 to 2 years' duration: imparting of simple occupational qualification for school leavers who have failed to achieve a school leaving certificate from the 9 years of basic education at the general school. This pathway also enables them to catch up by obtaining their school leaving certificate. 2. Vocational education and training in a simple vocational school, of 2 to 3 years' duration: imparting of theoretical and practical knowledge/skills for the pursuit of an occupation. The curricula also contain general educational elements. Completion of training does not confer right of entry to higher education. 3. Vocational education and training in a further vocational school, of 4 years' duration: imparting of higher-level occupational knowledge, contains extensive general educational component, passing the course confers right of entry to the Latvian higher education system. <p>Vocational training can also take place within the form of a practically related course of study. The level of qualification thus obtained is lower than that of Bachelor and does not confer the entitlement to further pursuit of studies.</p>
<p>5. Higher education</p>	<p>Opportunities for study exist at universities, colleges and academies. Prerequisite for entry to studies: successful attendance of general secondary education or completion of higher level VET.</p> <p>2-tier system divided into university and non-university training, academic and practically related courses of study.</p> <p>Colleges offer an academic Bachelor qualification which confers the entitlement to pursue the course of study at a university.</p> <p>Bachelor and Masters degrees and doctorates may be obtained at the universities.</p>