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OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

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Education in Lithuania

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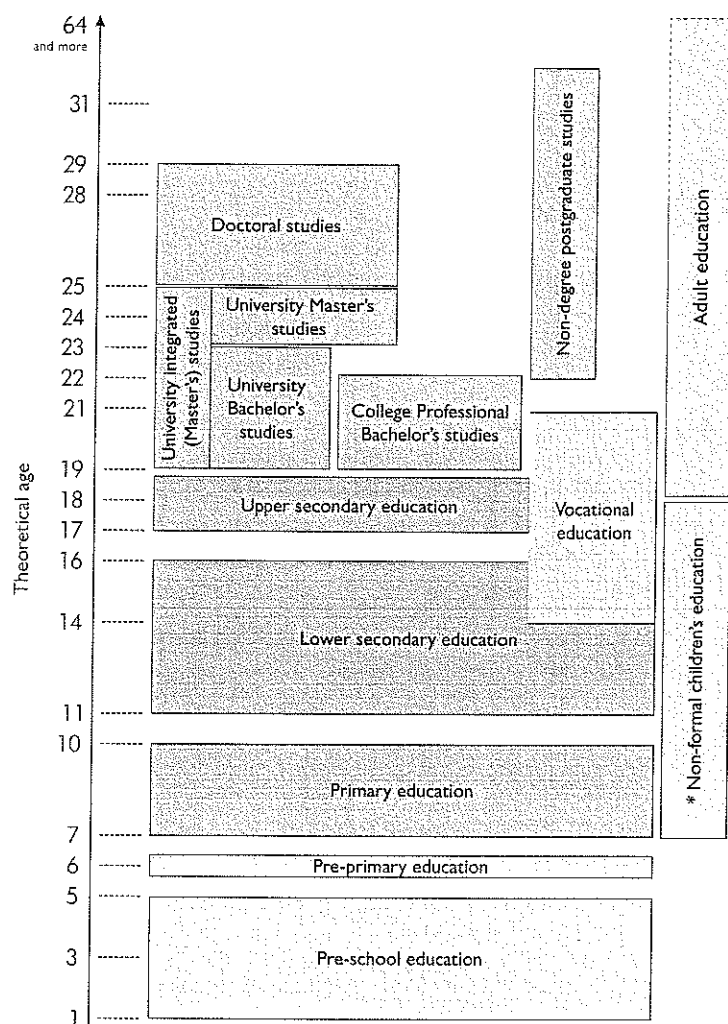
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Ministry of Education and Science
of the Republic of Lithuania, 2004, 2006, 2010

EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA



Structure of the education system



* Education can be conducted under the pre-school and pre-primary education programme, but is not systemic.

EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT



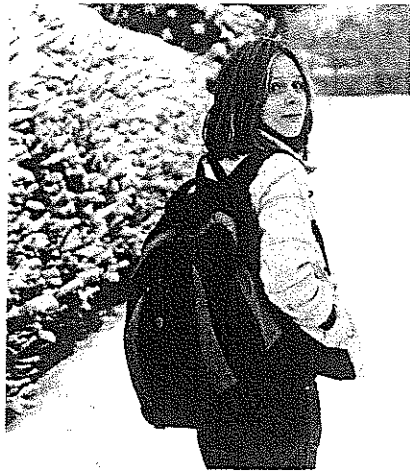
Ministry of Education and Science

Goals and objectives of the Ministry of Education and Science: to implement the national system of formal and non-formal education which secures social attitudes in favour of education and creates conditions for lifelong learning in a changing democratic society; to implement the state policy of science and studies in accordance with the Law on Science and Studies and other legal acts; to coordinate the activity of Lithuanian institutions of science and studies, etc. In order to implement the assigned tasks, the Ministry develops one-year and long-term educational investment programmes, approves requirements for the regulations of state-run and municipal schools; approves the general curriculum content of formal education, and achievement levels; organizes and coordinates the accreditation of the secondary education programme; approves the procedure of consecutive learning under general education programmes

and the procedure for organization and implementation of matura exams; establishes, liquidates, and reorganizes vocational schools and approves general vocational education plans. Science and studies: upon agreement with other ministries concerned, the Ministry submits proposals to the Government regarding establishment, reorganisation, and liquidation of higher education and research institutions; issues licenses to conduct studies; drafts projects on state budget allocations for state institutions of science and studies; approves general and special requirements for first-cycle, integrated, and Master study programmes; establishes a procedure of competition among persons who acquired education in foreign institutions for admission to state-financed studies, etc.

Municipalities execute the national education policy in the municipality, approve strategic education plans for the municipality as well as the general plan for the restructuring of the school network, form the network of pre-schools, pre-primary schools, primary, basic and secondary schools, ensure the environment necessary to provide compulsory education to children, initiate that the formation of the network of vocational education and adult education is in line with the needs of the population, independently form the network of non-formal education providers, etc. Municipalities take care of the education of children with special education needs and the network of schools providing special education.

FINANCING



Education of pupils in pre-school and pre-primary education groups and general education schools is financed through a state budget target grant under the principle of the pupil's voucher. Every year, the state allocates, by taking into account the number of pupils, a special target grant to municipalities. The pupil's voucher is allocated both for public and private schools. When moving to another school, a pupil takes his voucher with him. The pupil's voucher includes money for teachers' salaries, upgrading of teachers' skills, textbooks, special psychological aid, professional guidance, modules of professional artistic education programmes, administration of matura examinations, etc.

Utility expenses of private schools are covered by their stakeholders. Funds for schools of traditional religious communities are allocated by the state under the Agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and the Holy See.

Primary vocational training is financed through the state budget. Vocational education providers receive financing by

applying the methodology of the pupil's voucher, i.e. the calculation of teaching funds per pupil. The same principle is applied when allocating utility funds.

Financing of higher education. Every year, the state allocates funds from the state budget for studies in institutions of higher education. Pupils who graduated from schools with the best grades are admitted to the state-financed seats (their number depending on study fields or study programmes is determined by the Government on a yearly basis) and receive a study voucher which covers tuition in both public and private institutions of higher education. The rest of the students need to pay for their studies. The cost of study is determined by the institutions of higher education. Students can take a state-supported loan to pay for the study costs or living expenses. Students with good academic results may be awarded incentive grants in accordance with the procedure established by the institutions of higher education.

State-financed study seats can also be allocated to residents of the EU and Economic Area countries, foreigners whose permanent place of residence is Lithuania, and expatriates of Lithuanian origin. 50 state-financed seats in universities and 50 seats in colleges can be allocated to these students. Students, who cannot speak Lithuanian and wish to study this language, can take a one-year preparatory course.

The state also allocates funds to state higher education and research institutions for scientific research, experimental (social, cultural) development, artistic activity, administration and utilities, and other needs.

Percentage of GDP allocated for education: 2010 – 7.0 percent.
2009 – 7.27 percent of GDP.

PRE-SCHOOL AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pre-school education under the pre-school education programme is provided to children from one to six years of age. Institutional pre-school education is not compulsory and is provided upon parents' request. This kind of education can be compulsory in individual cases (to children from social risk families, etc.). Pre-school education is provided by public and private nurseries-kindergartens, kindergartens, and kindergartens-schools.

Pre-primary education. Education is provided for one year. Education is provided to 6-year-old (in exceptional cases – five-year-old) children and is intended to better prepare children for school entry. Education is free, universally available, but is not compulsory. Parents have the right to decide whether their six-year-old child should be educated under the pre-primary education programme or not. Pre-primary education groups are established in kindergartens or schools. In remote villages, municipalities can establish such groups in community multi-functional centres or children can be brought by school buses free of charge to the nearest school, where such group has been established. The following flexible pre-primary group models are offered to municipalities: groups working a few days per week, at weekends, or during school holidays, groups of a camping type, etc.

Children attending pre-primary groups learn new skills which will be useful in school: to interact with their peers and adults as well as to orient themselves in a new environment. The following competences are mostly developed through games: social and artistic

skills, health protection, and world comprehension.

If a child is educated at home, his/her parents are informed about pre-primary education novelties and consulted on important child education issues. Upon parents' request, children can be provided with special pedagogical and psychological assistance.

- Pre-primary education groups are attended by approx. 90 percent of pre-primary age children.
- The first groups for 0-1 year-old infants should be established in kindergartens of large cities by 2012. Parents will be able to leave their babies in such groups to the staff's care for an hour or more.
- In 2010-2012, rooms for children in kindergartens are going to be modernized by means of the EU structural funds (approx. 88 million litas).



GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Lithuania has implemented a 12-year general education system.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

According to the Law on Education, children who have reached seven years of age must go to the 1st form. If parents wish so and if the child is sufficiently mature to study under the primary education programme, he/she can start attending school from six years of age. The duration of the primary education programme is four years. Compulsory primary education can be obtained in kindergartens-schools, in primary schools and, which is less common, in basic or secondary schools.

- Parents and children can also choose schools of non-traditional education or individual classes/groups in municipal schools. Montessori, Waldorf, Suzuki pedagogical systems can be chosen in Lithuania.

Achievements and progress of the pupils in forms 1-4 is not assessed with marks. Assessment is based on the idiographic principle, i.e. the individual child's progress made with regard to his/her personality is assessed and a criteria-referenced assessment is applied. Pupils are provided with assessment information orally or in the form of a short description of their particular achievements. At the end of the trimester, semester or academic year, a summarized assessment is carried out by

indicating the educational level achieved (satisfactory, basic, higher).

Children who attend schools for national minorities start learning Lithuanian (state language) from the 1st form. All primary school pupils start learning the first foreign language in the 2nd form.

- In 2010, 1,365 general education schools of various types were operating in Lithuania.
- In academic year 2009-2010, schools numbered about 425 thousand pupils.
- The academic year in general education schools starts on the 1st of September.
- The duration of one lesson is 45 minutes (in the 1st form – 35 minutes).
- Holidays: autumn (seven calendar days), Christmas (14 calendar days), Easter (seven calendar days) and summer (from the middle of June till the 31st of August, for primary school pupils – from the beginning of June to the 31st of August).
- In academic year 2009-2010, pupils studied the following foreign languages (as the first, second and third foreign language in total): English – 88.8 percent, German – 10.9 percent, French – 2.6 percent, Russian – 40.9 percent, Polish – 0.025 percent, Italian – 0.061 percent, Spanish – 0.089 percent, and other languages – 0.039 percent.
- For the period of 2007-2013, EU support in the amount of 676.1 million litas allocated for the School Improvement Programme Plus (MTP+) was implemented in Lithuanian general education schools.

LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION



In form 9 (form 1 in gymnasiums), pupils are able to choose subject modules and study optional subjects following their interests and abilities.

Foreign pupils who cannot speak Lithuanian, but wish to study in Lithuanian general education schools, can attend one-year compensatory classes and compensatory mobile groups.

In Lithuania, education is compulsory for children until they reach 16 years of age. Compulsory education is usually provided up to the 10th form. Having completed the 10th form and acquired basic education, pupils can continue their studies under the secondary education or vocational education programme, or under the secondary education programme together with the vocational education programme for the acquisition of the first qualification.

Upon completion of primary education, pupils start studying under the 6-year lower secondary education programme. The lower secondary education programme is implemented by basic, secondary, youth, and vocational schools and gymnasiums.

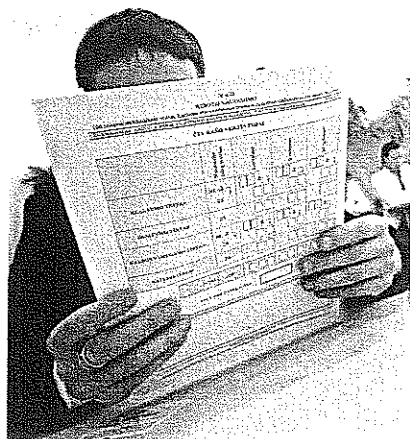
The compulsory lower secondary education programme consists of two parts: part I – a 4-year programme implemented in the 5-8th forms and part II – a 2-year programme implemented in the 9-10th forms (1st and 2nd forms in gymnasiums). Pupils can start learning the second foreign language in the 5th form and in the 6th form the second foreign language is compulsory. Pupils who study under the basic education programme must be engaged in social activities.

- Youth schools are meant for 12-16 year-old adolescents that have not managed to adapt to studying at schools of general education, lack motivation or have no other choice because of the social situation that they face.

The usual grading system at the Secondary School Level is a ten-point scale.

Result	Grade	Short description in Lithuanian	Short description in English
PASS	10	puikiai	excellent
	9	labai gerai	very good
	8	gerai	good
	7	pakankamai gerai	good enough
	6	patenkinamai	satisfactory
	5	pakankamai patenkinamai	satisfactory enough
	4	silpnai	weak
FAIL	3	blogai	poor
	2	labai blogai	very poor
	1	nieką neatsakė, neatliko užduoties	no answer provided, failed to complete the task

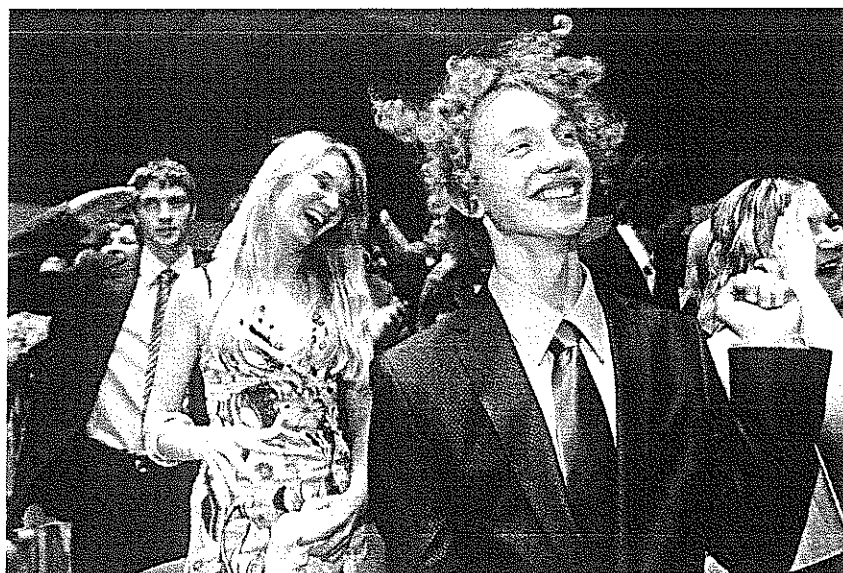
UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION



Upper secondary education is not compulsory and is usually provided for two years (forms 11 and 12 in secondary schools and forms 3 and 4 in gymnasiums). Pupils study according to individual education plans. The

- Pupils can also choose education which mostly corresponds to their values, world outlook, religious beliefs, and philosophical views. Such education is provided in schools of non-traditional education. Schools of non-traditional education may operate according to their own programmes, but the total number of subjects and the total number of hours allocated for each subject in forms 1-12 can differ from the numbers specified in the state general education plans by not more than 25 percent.

programme can include modules of the vocational education programme. Upper secondary education is provided in secondary schools, gymnasiums, and vocational schools.



NON-FORMAL CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



After classes, pupils can choose various leisure activities provided in schools free of charge or attend separate sports, music, fine arts, art, aviation, and choreography schools, and children's clubs. The latter activities are partially paid; professional artists, sportsmen, and teachers work with children.

In schools, pupils can be excused from attending weekly classes in Arts and Physical Training, if they have graduated from art schools or study Fine Arts, Choreography, or Music in art schools or non-formal education establishments specializing in sports. The long-term artistic education programme completed

in children's music, art, and sports schools or any other school can be recognized as a vocational education module.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education is provided in pre-school education establishments and general education schools of all types. If needed, general education programmes can be adapted by taking into account the pupil's special education needs. Free assistance of special pedagogues, speech therapists, psychologists, and other specialists can be provided to pupils in schools as well as to parents and teachers in other institutions. A child's need for special education is determined by a municipal pedagogical psychological service or by a school special-education commission.

MATURA EXAMINATIONS

In spring, upon completion of the secondary education programme, school-leavers take matura examinations. Matura examinations may be of two types, i.e. school-level or national-level. To be awarded a School Leaving Certificate, two matura examinations must be passed: a compulsory exam in Lithuanian and an optional exam. School-leavers who wish

The usual grading system at the Secondary School Level State Exams is on a one hundred-point scale.

Result	Grade	Short description	Short description of one hundred-point scale used in State exams in Lithuania
PASS	50-100	Grades 50-100 correspond to grades 9-10 on the ten-point scale. The School Leaving Certificate with honours is awarded.	The hundred-point scale evaluation system can also be referred to as a normative evaluation system. In short, when this type of evaluation system is used all grades of all students who sit for a National Level Matura Exam are compared to each other and in such a way the final results are brought.
	1-49	There are no equivalents on the ten-point scale.	
FAIL	0		



POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

to enter institutions of higher education and receive state funding (except for the studies of Arts) must pass at least three matura examinations. In total, six matura exams may be taken.

State examinations are conducted centrally – school leavers are registered in the database of the National Examination Centre; examinations are taken in municipal examination centres; pupils are given coded numbers which are attached to their examination papers and the latter are sent to the National Examination Centre where they are assessed by hired experts.

Having completed the secondary education programme and passed matura examinations, school-leavers acquire secondary education.

Secondary and higher education acquired in other countries is assessed by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (*home page www.skvc.lt*).

Having acquired secondary education and decided to pursue their studies, students can choose studies in a vocational school or studies in an institution of higher education – a college or a university.



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The vocational education system covers primary and continuing vocational education and training. The vocational education system lies within the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry is also the stakeholder of the majority of vocational education establishments. The majority of the vocational education establishments are state budgetary institutions and part of the vocational education establishments (13) are public institutions. The main governing body of public vocational education establishments is the general meeting of stakeholders in which each stakeholder has one vote. Municipalities, social partners, and other stakeholders may participate in the governing of the vocational education establishment on equal terms with the main stakeholder (the Ministry of Education and Science).

Vocational schools provide both training for qualification and basic or secondary education. The duration of the programmes can be either two or three years depending on whether it is intended to provide basic or secondary education or whether it is adapted to persons with special needs. The duration of studies for students who have already acquired secondary education is 1 to 1.5 years. Requirements for vocational education programmes are set out by the General Requirements and Standards for Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education and Science. Vocational education programmes are developed by vocational education providers in cooperation with employers.

The education programme consists of two parts. The first part is applicable to all schools in the country and defines the fields of professional activities, compe-

tences, teaching goals, and assessment provisions. The second part is optional and covers teaching methods, subject programmes, teaching aids, etc. The programme must include the subjects or modules of Entrepreneurship, Civil Protection, Ecology, Information Technologies, and Foreign Language for Specific Purposes.

60-70 percent of the total time allocated to vocational subjects should be devoted to practical training. Usually, practical training is conducted at the school or in a company. Training can also be performed under exchange programmes.

The final assessment of qualifications is separated from teaching; pupils' training is assessed by social partners.

Having completed the vocational education programme and passed examinations, pupils obtain vocational qualification. Pupils who have acquired secondary education can continue their studies in colleges or universities. Successful graduates as well as graduates who have work experience according to their qualification receive additional points when entering institutions of higher education.

- There are 78 vocational schools in Lithuania (2010) (three of them are private).
- In the academic year 2009-2010, vocational schools numbered 47.9 thousand students, which is the largest number of students over the past decade.
- 1.9 thousand (4 percent) students pursue basic education in vocational schools and 30.9 thousand (65 percent) students pursue secondary education. More than one-third (15.1 thousand) of vocational school pupils study profession only.

STUDIES

- Every year, School Leaving Certificates are awarded to approx. 15 percent of all graduates in the country. In 2009, 5 percent of vocational school graduates entered colleges or universities.
- The proportion of vocational school pupils was 67 percent for males and 33 percent for females. Every fifth vocational school pupil (10.4 thousand or 22 percent) is a minor (i.e. is under 18 years of age).
- Vocational schools train over 12 thousand specialists every year.
- In 2003, the ReferNet Lithuania network was launched and since then it has united over 20 various organizations. The goal of the cooperation of the organizations is to promote the development of vocational education and human resources by using knowledge-based solutions.
- Over one thousand vocational school pupils and teachers participate in Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects every year.

The state **policy of science and studies** of Lithuania is formed by the Seimas and implemented by the Government, the Ministry of Education and Science and other ministries, the Research Council of Lithuania, the State Studies Foundation, and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, etc.

Studies are conducted according to degree and non-degree study programmes. There are two types of **study programmes**: university and college. Studies are organised in three cycles: the first cycle – Professional Bachelor's or University Bachelor's studies, the second cycle – Master's studies, and the third cycle – Doctoral studies. Studies can be of different intensity: **full-time and part-time**.

Higher education studies in Colleges are oriented towards training for professional activities. The duration of full-time studies is usually three years and the duration of part-time studies is four years. Practical training covers at least one third of the study programme. Graduates are awarded a Professional Bachelor's degree.



Students who have gained practical work experience and completed additional studies (their duration is determined by the higher education institution) can pursue their studies under a university Master's programme.

College studies are conducted by colleges (public and private).

University studies are rather oriented towards universal academic education, theoretical training, and the highest level of professional excellence. University degree study programmes can be **integrated**, when studies of the first and second cycles are combined (e.g. law, medical studies, etc.). The most common duration of full-time Bachelor's studies is four years. The duration of part-time Bachelor's studies is mostly five years.

The Bachelor's study programme includes a theoretical part and a research part. Upon completion of the studies, graduates are awarded a Bachelor's degree.

Students can pursue their studies for a Master's degree; the duration of Master's studies is 1.5 to two years. Upon completion of the Master's studies, students who wish to be engaged in academic activities can pursue doctoral studies (they last four years).

University studies are conducted by **universities, academies, and seminaries**.

Third-cycle studies (doctoral studies in Science and Art) can be conducted by **universities or universities together with research institutions**. The scope (duration) of doctoral studies is determined by the Government.

Non-degree studies (Residency, teacher training) can be conducted by universities and/or colleges.

Higher education schools can provide **joint study programmes**, upon the completion of which a **joint qualification degree** is awarded as well as programmes, upon the completion of which a **double qualification degree** is awarded. A joint qualification degree is awarded in the case where the study programme is conducted by at least two institutions of higher education, usually in different countries. A double qualification degree is awarded when the study programme meets both the requirements of the major study field and minimum requirements of another study field. General requirements of these programmes are laid down by the Ministry of Education and Science.

- In Lithuania, study programmes are provided by 23 colleges (10 of which are private) and 23 universities (eight of which are private).
- In 2009, 36,374 students were admitted to institutions of higher education: 23,538 students were admitted to universities and 12,836 – to colleges. 20,891 first-year students received full state financing (twice as many as the previous years). More than a half of first-year students studied free



of charge. Another 15,483 admitted students pay tuition fee for their studies: 11,949 students were admitted to universities and 3,534 – to colleges.

- The study year is divided into semesters and holiday periods. The beginning and end of the semesters in the study year and holiday periods are determined by the Senate of the institution of higher education (Academic Council). In summer, students must have at least one month of uninterrupted holidays.
- The language of instruction in public schools of higher education is Lithuanian. Teaching can be conducted in other languages when: 1) the contents of the study programmes is connected to another language; 2) lectures are given or other academic

activities are conducted by foreign teachers; 3) studies are conducted under joint study programmes or study programmes, upon completion of which a double qualification degree is awarded, and part of these programmes is taught in other countries, private schools of higher education where the teaching language is other than Lithuanian, etc.; 4) studies are conducted under the study programmes designed for foreign students or are part of academic exchange programmes.

- 2.4 billion litas of EU structural funds are planned to be allocated for the development of Lithuanian higher education and research in the period from 2007 to 2013.



Since 1993, except for several institutions of higher education in Lithuania, students have been evaluated on a ten-point grading scale

Result	Five-point grading system		Ten-point grading system				
	Grade	Short description in Lithuanian	Grade	Approximate equivalent in ECTS*	Approximate percentage of the knowledge required	Short description in Lithuanian	Performance description
PASS	5	labai gerai	10	A	≥ 92	puikiai	Excellent performance, outstanding knowledge and skills (excellent)
			9	B	84-91	labai gerai	Strong performance, good knowledge and skills (very good)
	4	gerai	8	B or C	75-83	gerai	Above the average performance, knowledge and skills (good)
			7	C or D	67-74	vidutiniškai	Average performance, knowledge and skills with unessential shortcomings (highly satisfactory)
	3	patenkinamai	6	D	58-66	patenkinamai	Below average performance, knowledge and skills with substantial shortcomings (satisfactory)
			5	E	50-57	silpnai	Knowledge and skills meet minimum criteria (sufficient)
FAIL	2	nepatenkinamai	4	F/FX	40-49	nepatenkinamai	Knowledge and skills do not meet minimum criteria/ below
			3		30-39		
	1	blogai	2		20-29		
			1		0-19		

*ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS' SKILLS

There are over 40 thousand teachers in Lithuania (in academic year 2009-2010 the total number of teachers, including vocational school teachers, was 43,710).

During an academic year, teachers have to allocate five days for the improvement of their skills. Every municipality has a teacher education centre, in which teachers can upgrade their qualifications. These services are also provided by various private institutions.

There is a system implemented for the teacher performance appraisal. The

Regulations of the Teacher Performance Appraisal specify four teacher qualification categories: teacher, senior teacher, teacher-supervisor, and teacher-expert.

Since 2010, students who enter pedagogical studies have to take a motivation test. The motivation test enables the institutions to select the most motivated students. Future pedagogues with the best achievement results receive an incentive – an additional target grant of 400 litas (approx. 115 euros).

ADULT EDUCATION

Once students have reached 18 years of age, they are offered a variety of interesting opportunities for further education. It is possible to continue one's education in general education schools and centres for adults, by taking various courses or just using the Internet, reading books, or developing one's interests in special literature.

Adults can obtain primary, basic or secondary education in adult schools, education centres, and general education schools with forms established for adults. General education of adults is organised by approx. 60 institutions in all municipalities of the country, which number about 12 thousand adults. These schools also provide non-formal adult education services.

The scope and subjects of study programmes for adults are adapted according to the needs of adults.

Adults who study under general education and non-formal education programmes can choose a flexible learning form that is most suitable for them – modular learning, independent learning, extramural studies, or distance learning. These forms allow adults to choose the most suitable time and study programme for their studies as well as plan their learning process on their own.



The modular learning method creates opportunities to study single subjects and complete the selected education programme within acceptable time frames as well as study for the purposes of self-education. Extramural students arrive to the adult school only for consultations and their credit tests. Part of consultations under the correspondence and individual programmes (and all consultations for disabled people) can be provided by means of distance learning, i.e. by communicating with teachers with the help of information technologies – Internet sites, e-mail, or Internet Telephony Programs.

Adults study not only in order to obtain formal education, but also for self-expression, improvement of their skills, or communication with other people. In non-formal adult education courses and seminars most adults would like to study foreign languages, Basics of Law and Business, Psychology, Computer Literacy as well as Arts, Literature, and Philosophy. Improvement of competences in civic education, traffic safety regulations, and career management is also topical. Non-formal adult education is organized by approx. 700 public and private institutions. Adult learning also takes place in the workplace and is organized by the employers, who take into account their business demands.

According to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as of 2006, during one year 987 thousand 25-64 year-old residents of the country (55% or every other) studied in various education institutions, participated in courses organized by various learning providers, or studied on their own. This figure is almost twice as big compared to the results of the statistical analysis of the lifelong learning of residents conducted in 2003.

REFERENCE LEVELS OF EUROPEAN AVERAGE PERFORMANCE

(Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02)

1. At least 95% of children between four years of age and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

Situation in Europe (ES-27):
90,1% (2008)

Situation in Lithuania:
65% (2008)



2. The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%.

Situation in Europe (ES-27):
14.4% (2009)

Situation in Lithuania:
8,7% (2009)

3. The share of low-achieving 15-year olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %.

Situation in Europe (ES-27):
24.1% (2006, reading)

Situation in Lithuania:
25.7% (2006, reading)

4. The share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary education attainment should be at least 40%.

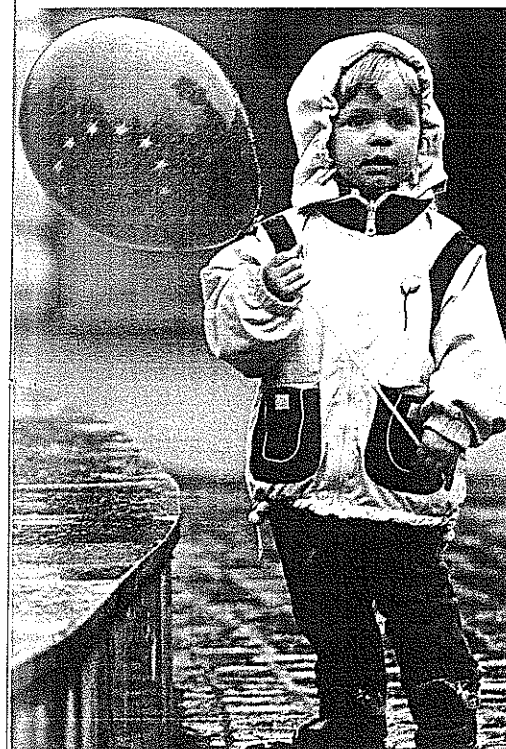
Situation in Europe (ES-27):
32.3% (2009)

Situation in Lithuania:
40,6% (2009)

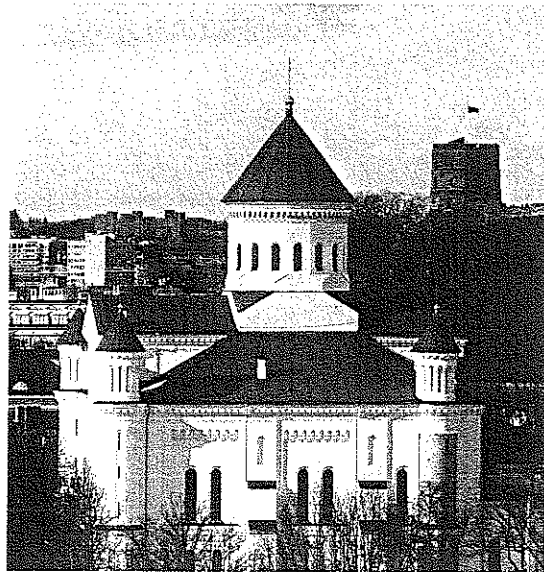
5. An average of at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning.

Situation in Europe (ES-27):
9.3% (2009)

Situation in Lithuania:
4.5% (2009).



LITHUANIA IN BRIEF



Lithuania is situated on the southeastern coast of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania borders with Latvia, Belarus, Poland, and Russia (Kaliningrad region). The length of the Baltic Sea coast is 90.66 km.

The Lithuania-Belarus border and the border between Lithuania and the Russian Federation are also borders of the European Union.

System of government: parliamentary republic. The head of state is the President elected directly for a five-year term. The President appoints the Prime Minister (upon the approval of the Seimas) and Ministers (upon the Prime Minister's motion) and is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces. The President also appoints judges.

Legislative power lies with the unicameral Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas). Members of the Seimas are elected for a four-year term. Executive power is exercised by the Government.

Administrative division: nine cities, 60 municipalities.

Area: 65.3 thousand square kilometers.

Climate: transitional between maritime and continental. Lithuania lies in the cool moderate climate zone. The average temperature in July is approx. 17°C and the average winter temperature is approx. -5°C; the seasonal temperature range is approx. 20°C.

Capital: Vilnius (since 1323).

Official language: Lithuanian; it belongs to the group of Indo-European languages.

Population: 3,310,687 (according to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as of 2010).

Religion: 79 percent – Roman Catholic, 4.07 percent – Orthodox, 0.56 percent – Evangelical Lutherans, 0.2 percent – Reformed Church, 0.08 percent – Muslim sunni, 0.04 percent – Judaism, 14.86 percent – non-believers.

Currency: litas (Lt). 1 EUR=3.45 Lt.

Time zone: UTC + 2

Internet country code: .lt

Telephone country code: + 370

NOTABLE DATES OF LITHUANIAN HISTORY

- 1009** Lithuania's name was first mentioned in written sources (Quedlinburg's Annals).
- 6 July 1253** Grand Duke Mindaugas was crowned as King of Lithuania. Lithuanian State Day.
- 1387** Christening of Lithuania.
- 1397** The first school was opened in Vilnius.
- 1410** The battle of Tannenberg (Žalgiris). The joint army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland defeated the army of the Teutonic Order.
- 1529** The First Lithuanian Statute (codified law) came into power. It covered the political structure, judicial system, the right of private ownership, and the criminal law of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, as well as other legal issues (in 1566 and 1588 the second and third Lithuanian Statutes were issued).
- 1547** The first Lithuanian book – Martynas Mažvydas' "Katekizmas" was published in Lithuania Minor.
- 1569** The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth came into being.
- 1579** Vilnius University was established.
- 1773** The Educational Commission of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was established. A reform of the entire educational system of the state – from the provincial school to the university – was introduced. It was the first educational reform of such scale implemented in Europe.
- 1791** The Constitution – Europe's first and the world's second written constitution – was adopted.
- 1795** Following the third division of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, Russia seized control of Lithuania.
- 1864** Lithuanian press was banned. Book smugglers were bringing banned Lithuanian prayer-books, primers and fiction from Lithuania Minor to Lithuania. Lithuanian villages saw the emergence of underground schools where children were taught to read and write in their native tongue.
- 1883-1886, 1889-1905** The first Lithuanian newspapers "Au ra" and "Varpas" were secretly brought from Lithuania Minor to Lithuania and circulated in the country.
- 1904** The ban of the Lithuanian press was abolished.
- 16 February 1918** Lithuania declared its independence. The Day of the Declaration of Lithuania's Independence.
- 1922** The first permanent constitution of the independent Lithuania was adopted (the second constitution was adopted in 1928 and the third constitution was adopted in 1938 which established the President's institution).
- 1922** The Lithuanian University was established in Kaunas. 1930 The university was renamed to Vytautas Magnus University based on the artes liberales idea (the university was reestablished after occupation in 1989).
- 15 June 1940** Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union.
- In 1941 June** Mass deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia began.
- 22 June 1941** The German army entered Lithuania. German occupation began.
- 1944** Lithuania was occupied by the Red Army.
- 1944-1953** Repressions, mass deportations of Lithuanians to Siberian gulags (around 300,000 people were victimized), nationalization of farms and industry, active guerrilla resistance.
- Ever since **1945** Lithuanians that fled to the West (usually to the USA) have formed political, cultural and public organizations working in support of Lithuania and Lithuanian identity.
- 14 May 1972** 19 year-old student Romas Kalanta, committed self-immolation in the City Gardens of Kaunas in protest of the Soviet occupation. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in different parts of the city. The Soviet regime arrested around 400 people.
- 23 August 1988** A public rally in protest of the Soviet occupation took place in Vilnius and was attended by over 200 000 people.
- 23 August 1989** The Baltic Road. Over 2 million Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians joined hands in a human chain.
- 11 March 1990** Restoration of independent Lithuania was declared. Day of the Restitution of Independence of Lithuania.
- 11 February 1991** Iceland became the first country to recognize independent Lithuania.
- 2004** Lithuania joined the European Union and NATO.
- 2009** In celebration of the millennium of Lithuania's name, a Lithuanian crew sailed around the world on the yacht „Ambersail“ to commemorate this date in most parts of the world where Lithuanian communities were established. The Millennium Odyssey yacht covered 43,427 nautical miles.