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In the Republic of Bulgaria secondary education is **single-staged** (upper secondary/high school education), lasting 4 or 5 years and leading to completion of secondary education. Secondary education is acquired on completing 12th grade. For those students who want to go further with their education it also includes successfully taking state matriculation exams. It is certified with a diploma of completed secondary education, which is final and entitles the holder to continue his education or vocational training. In case students decide not to sit for state matriculation examinations, they are issued a certificate of completed upper secondary education, which, however, does not entitle them to university enrollment.

Education at state and municipality run schools is **free of charge**. Schools are co-educational.

Upper secondary education can be **general** (offered at general and specialized study courses schools) and **vocational**. General upper secondary education is acquired at general schools (with a course of study of 4 years) and specialized schools (with a course of study of 4 or 5 years). Students are admitted to specialized schools after completing 7th or 8th grade and successfully passing entrance exams (in Bulgarian Language and Literature, Mathematics, Humanities, etc.).

Upper secondary education provides the attainment of the general education minimum and, whenever possible, profile-oriented training in accordance with the State Educational Requirements ([Darzhavni obrazovatelni iziskvaniya](#) [1]). Upper secondary vocational education provides the attainment of the general education minimum and the acquisition of qualifications in a given profession in accordance with the State Educational Requirements. Educational courses for vocational technical schools of 2-year duration studies are offered after completing basic education. The acquired vocational qualification gives access to the labour market.

The principal aims of upper secondary education are stated in the [Regulations on the Implementation of the Public Education Act and in the Level of Education](#) [2] and the [General Education Minimum and Curriculum Ordinance](#) [3]. At the level of upper secondary education the emphasis is on **encouraging and developing students' personal interests and abilities, facilitating their future accomplishment, forming specific knowledge and skills, gaining broader general knowledge, adopting civil society values, etc.** The possibilities for choice within the curriculum in the upper secondary stage of education help the overall development of students in the areas where they show greatest interest.

The principal *aims of general upper secondary education* are:

1. to stimulate the physical and spiritual development of students, their successful career orientation, adaptation and fulfilment in society;
2. creating conditions for formation and respect for values like national identity, respect for others, empathy and civic responsibility;
3. creating conditions for developing interest in and positive attitude to lifelong learning,

education and self-improvement.

The main tendency is granting students broader personal choices of their level of education in particular spheres so that it corresponds to their personal aims more fully; improving their chances of social realization through the acquisition of better computer and foreign language competences as well as through increasing the opportunities to get vocational training; supporting the labour market realization of students who would not continue their education, etc.

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[1] <https://www.mon.bg/bg/100105>

[2] https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/media/PPZNP_05_09_14.pdf

[3] https://www.mon.bg/upload/4242/nrdb_6_01_razpr_uchebno_verme.pdf