Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

The curriculum is comprised of compulsory, core curriculum optional and free elective study courses.

Compulsory education provides the attainment of the general education minimum, which is compulsory for all schools and is the basis of general education.

Core curriculum optional education provides additional instruction within the subjects from the cultural and educational areas corresponding to the interest and individual abilities of students. The share of core curriculum optional education at upper secondary level is between 45 to 80% of hours. Academic time for core curriculum optional education at upper secondary is used for general, specialized or vocational training.

In sports and arts schools core curriculum optional education is devoted to profile education in the respective sports and arts.

Free elective education provides instruction in areas and activities offered by the school and chosen by students, which may be outside the cultural and educational areas. Its duration is up to four hours per week for all classes in accordance with the curriculum and is not compulsory for students.

Compulsory teaching hours include compulsory and core curriculum optional education – at upper secondary level they can be not more than 32 per week. Core curriculum optional and free elective hours are allotted to subjects according to every school opportunities and students’ choices.

General education at Bulgarian schools is accomplished by studying subjects, grouped in the following cultural and educational fields:

- Bulgarian language and literature;
- Foreign languages;
- Mathematics, computer science and information technology;
- Social sciences and civic education;
- Natural sciences and ecology;
- Arts;
- Home economy and technology;
- Physical education and sports.
- All syllabi feature explicitly stated interdisciplinary links with other fields of study by theme and topic.
Teaching hours in core curriculum optional education at vocational schools and vocational upper secondary schools are used for compulsory vocational training and compulsory-elective general education and vocational training.

Students in vocational upper secondary education may study according to the following framework programmes:

**Framework programmes „B”** for vocational training for acquisition of II degree of vocational qualification: II degree – with professional competences for practicing of professions, which require performing of complex activities, accomplished under variable conditions. Begins: VII grade or basic education completed. Ends: X or XI grade completed, rights for sitting for matriculation acquired for completion of secondary education, or secondary education completed.

**Framework programmes „C”** for vocational education for acquisition of II or III degree of vocational qualification: III degree – with professional competences for practicing of professions, which require performing of complex activities, accomplished under variable conditions, as well as taking responsibility for the other people’s work. Input level: VII grade or basic education completed. Output level: secondary education completed or acquired right for sitting for matriculation. It is determined by the state educational requirements for acquisition of a qualification by professions.

**Teaching Methods and Materials**

Upper secondary students possess a higher level of intellectual development and knowledge and skill formation, which facilitates the application of more various methods of education.

The most wide spread methods of education at the upper secondary level of education in Bulgarian schools are:

- Presentation of the study material by the teacher – narrative, explanation, lecture, combined with the use of visual aids and technical means;
- Discourse methods of education – talk, discussion, debate, which stimulate students’ reasoning;
- Individual work on study literature;
- Direct study of the real world – observation, school experiment, research of documents;
- Indirect study – demonstration, modelling;
- Practical activities – exercise, situational, laboratory and practical work topics development;
- Situational and role play methods.

Bringing teaching methods up-to-date at upper secondary level is done in two ways:

- Giving ‘ready-made knowledge’ is replaced with more active methods, provoking independence, creativity and developing students’ skills to make independent decisions;
- Greater use of ICT in education.

Also teachers are an inseparable part of the selection process of all textbooks among which 3 per subject are approved by the Minister of Education, Youth and Science. Once the textbooks are approved schools and teachers choose the corresponding textbook as well as supplementary materials.