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This chapter provides a concise overview of secondary education in the Republic of Croatia, its objectives, principles and types of secondary schools as well as their duration. An overview of the legal and regulatory framework governing secondary education is also given.

After completing compulsory primary education, students can continue their education in secondary schools. Secondary education enables the acquisition of knowledge and skills required for work and further education, however, it is not compulsory.

Secondary education is provided by secondary schools and student dormitories and other public institutions under the conditions laid down in the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (OG No. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90 / 11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 94/13, 136/14 - RUSRH, 152/14, 7/17, 68/18 and 98/19). Another public institution may be an organisational unit of the ministry competent for the judiciary and an organisational unit of the ministry competent for internal affairs, which provides education for the profession of *police officer*.

Secondary education in the Republic of Croatia enables everyone, under the same conditions and according to his or her abilities, upon completion of primary education, to acquire the knowledge and ability to work and continue education.

The objectives of education in schools include, among others, ensuring that students acquire basic (general) and vocational competences in a changing socio-cultural context to meet the requirements of a market economy, modern information and communication technologies and scientific knowledge and achievements. Furthermore, the aims focus on the students, enticing and enhancing their intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social, moral and spiritual development in accordance with their abilities and preferences. Responsible participation in the democratic development of society is promoted as well as the importance of empowering students for lifelong learning.

The principles of education at secondary level emphasise the equality of educational opportunities for all students according to their abilities. Emphasis is placed on the high-quality education and training of all direct educators – teachers, professional associates, headmasters and other workers, on the autonomy of planning and organisation and on the freedom of pedagogical and methodological work, on decentralisation and on the partnership of all educational actors at the local, regional and national levels.

Types of secondary schools

Secondary schools, depending on the type of education programme, can be:

- grammar schools,
- vocational schools,

- art schools.

Grammar schools are four-year general education schools that students graduate from by completing the state graduation exam. In grammar school programmes, students acquire general competences (knowledge and skills), which is a good basis for continuing their education at higher education institutions. There are five types of grammar school programmes, which differ according to the increase in a number of teaching hours per subject characteristic for the specific programme, and those are:

- general education grammar school programme;
- language grammar school programme;
- classical grammar school programme;
- natural sciences and mathematics grammar school programme;
- natural sciences grammar school programme.

Education in **vocational schools** lasts from one to five years, and the duration depends on the type of education programme for a particular profession, i.e. the vocational curriculum for obtaining a qualification. After graduating from a vocational school, it is possible to enter the labour market or, subject to certain conditions, continue education at secondary or higher education institutions. Vocational education provides the competences (knowledge and skills) required at the labour market with the aim of recognising qualifications that also provide opportunities for advancement in further education.

A student who has attained a lower secondary education qualification, as well as a student who has completed an education programme which lasts three years, is entitled, in accordance with the needs of the labour market, to obtain a higher level of qualification by continuing education or passing the exam. A student who attains a higher level of qualification may continue his/her education as a full-time student within two years from the day he/she graduates from the vocational school.

Vocational skills are acquired through practical training and exercises. Practical training and exercises are carried out in school workshops and laboratories, which are as a rule equipped with modern didactic, and increasingly professional equipment, where educated vocational teachers work. In addition, part of the practical training is also provided by employers in real work settings. This kind of acquisition of competences enables students to be well prepared to engage in work processes.

Secondary **art education** is provided according to the art curriculum and it lasts four years. Through secondary art education, students acquire competences (knowledge and skills) to work and continue their education. Art schools are music, dance, visual arts and other schools that provide art programmes. Students who complete the art education curriculum at the secondary school level for a minimum of four years may also take the state graduation exam.

National minorities members have the right to education in their own language and script they use in accordance with the *Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities* (OG 155/2002, 47/2010, 80/2010, 93/2011). Education in schools in the languages and scripts of national minorities is provided in the communities in which minority members live, based on three models of organising and implementing instruction, namely:

- model A (the entire instruction is taught in the language and script of the national minority with compulsory learning of the Croatian language) - Italian national minority and Serbian national minority
- model B (instruction is bilingual)
- model C (instruction is implemented in the Croatian language and the culture and language of

the national minority are cultivated).

Legal and regulatory framework

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (OG 56/90, 135/97, 8/98, 113/00, 124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85/10)
2. Primary and Secondary School Education Act (OG 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 94/13, 136/14 - RUSRH, 152/14, 7/17, 68/18 and 98/19).
3. Vocational Education and Training Act (OG 30/09, 24/10, 22/13, 25/18)
4. Art Education Act (OG 130/11)
5. Act on Education in the Languages and Scripts of National Minorities (OG 51/00, 56/00)
6. The Crafts Act (OG 143/13)
7. Act on Textbooks and Other Educational Material for Primary and Secondary Schools (OG 116/18)
8. The National Pedagogical Standards for Secondary Education System (OG 63/08, 90/10.)
9. National Curriculum for Vocational Education (NN). 62/18)
10. Ordinance on the Manner of Organising and Conducting the Teaching in Vocational Schools (OG 140/09), Ordinance on Drafting and Fulfilment of Requirements of Final Examination (OG 118/09)
11. Ordinance on Conditions and Methods of Continuing Education for Higher Level of Qualification (OG 8/16)
12. Ordinance on Taking the State Graduation Exam (OG No. 1/13 and 41/19)
13. Ordinance on the Remuneration of Teachers, Professional Associates and Headmasters in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories (OG 53/19)
14. Ordinance Amending the Ordinance on Teaching Assistants and Professional Communication Intermediaries (OG 59/19)
15. Ordinance on Promotion of Teachers, Professional Associates and Headmasters in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories (OG 68/19)
16. Ordinance on the Method, Procedures and Elements of the Evaluation of the Primary and Secondary School Students (OG 112/10 and 82/19)
17. Decision on Adoption of Guidelines for the Development of a Network of School Institutions and Education Programmes (<https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocImages//dokumenti/Obrazovanje/NacionalniKurikulum/Odluke//Odluka%20o%20dono%C5%A1enju%20Smjernica%20za%20izradu%20Mre%C5%BEe%20%C5%A1kolskih%20ustanova%20i%20programa%20odgoja%20i%20obrazovanja.pdf> ^[1])
18. Curricula for grammar schools (<https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/srednjoskolski-odgoj-i-obrazovanje/nastavni-planovi-gimnazije/1093> ^[2])
19. Curricula for professions and vocational curricula for the acquisition of vocational qualifications (<https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/srednjoskolski-odgoj-i-obrazovanje/nastavni-planovi-kurikulumi-strukovne-skole/1094> ^[3]; <https://www.asoo.hr/default.aspx?id=1345> ^[4])
20. Curricula and programmes for art schools (<https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/umjetnicko-obrazovanje/132> ^[5])
21. Ordinance on the Teaching of Part of the Subjects and Contents Determined by the Curriculum in One of the World Languages in Secondary Schools (https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2016_12_116_2567.html ^[6])

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[4] <https://www.asoo.hr/default.aspx?id=1345>

[5] <https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/umjetnicko-obrazovanje/132>

[6] https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2016_12_116_2567.html