

8 Information on the national higher education system

Higher education in Norway

All public and private higher education in Norway is subject to Act No. 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to Universities and University Colleges.

Higher education institutions comprise of universities, specialized university institutions, university colleges, and various private higher education institutions with recognised study programmes, www.nokut.no/Accredited-Institutions. Approximately 90% of the students in Norway attend state institutions.

Norway introduced bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees in 2002. Regulations covering these degrees, professional qualifications/titles awarded by the institutions and prescribed length of study, are codified in Royal Decree number 1574 of 16 December 2005 (www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/ldles?ldoc=/for/ff-20100806-1148.html).

Accreditation and evaluation

All institutions of higher education are subject to the authority of the Ministry of Education and Research. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), an independent national agency for the accreditation and evaluation of higher education, is responsible for assessing the quality of programmes and institutions. The agency has accreditation powers for all higher education in Norway.

Admission requirements for higher education

The minimum requirement for admission is the successful completion of Norwegian upper secondary education (13 years of schooling, extended from 12 years from 1997). Upon graduation pupils are presented with the Upper Secondary School Leaving Certificate. Alternatively, admission may be gained by means of other qualifications recognised as being equivalent to the general matriculation standard. Some fields of study have additional entrance requirements.

Degrees and qualifications

The "Høgskolekandidat" degree is obtained after two years of study (120 "studiepoeng"/ECTS). Holders of this degree may continue their studies and obtain a bachelor's degree. This degree is offered at state university colleges and a few other institutions.

The Bachelor's degree is awarded by all state universities, specialized university institutions, university colleges and a good number of other higher education institutions, both private and public. The nominal length of studies required to obtain this degree is three years of study (180 "studiepoeng"/ECTS).

The Master's degree is awarded by state universities, specialized university institutions, several university colleges and some private institutions. The degree is normally obtained after two years of study (120 "studiepoeng"/ECTS), following the completion of a bachelor's degree. An important part of this degree is the independent work/thesis, earning between 30 and 60 "studiepoeng"/ECTS credits.

In the fields of medicine, psychology, veterinary science and theology, professionally oriented degrees/qualifications are awarded after completing six years of studies.

The Doctoral degree, Philosophiae Doctor PhD, is awarded after three years of study (180 "studiepoeng"/ECTS), following the completion of a master's degree or a six-year professionally oriented degree/qualification. Doctoral programmes are offered by all universities and specialized university institutions, by some state university colleges and also by a few private institutions.

There are a few exceptions to this degree structure, listed in the diagram below.

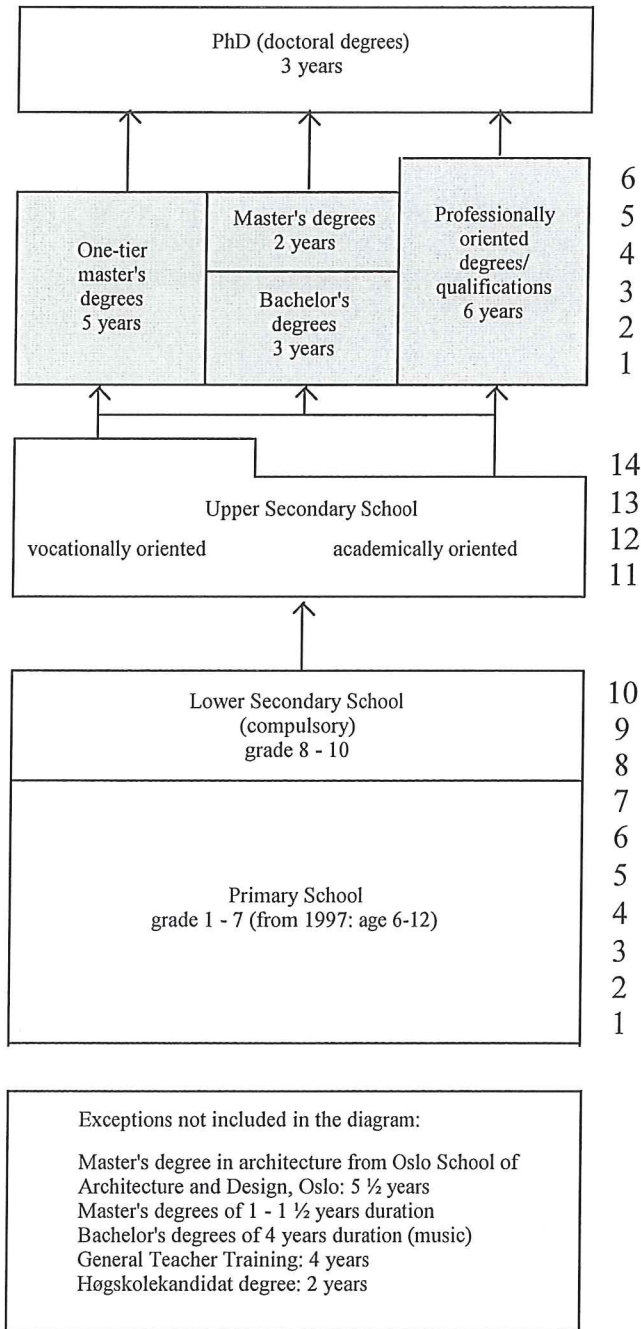
Credit system and grading

The academic year normally runs from mid-August to mid-June and lasts for 10 months. Courses are measured in "studiepoeng", considered equivalent to the European Credit Transfer System standard (ECTS credits). The full-time workload for one academic year is 60 "studiepoeng"/ECTS credits.

Grades for undergraduate and postgraduate examinations are awarded according to a graded scale from A (highest) to F (lowest), with E as the minimum pass grade. A pass/fail mark is given for some examinations.

- A Excellent - An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.
- B Very good - A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking.
- C Good - A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas.
- D Satisfactory - A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
- E Sufficient - A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.
- F Fail - A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

The structure of the Norwegian Educational System and Degrees



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More information: <http://www.nokut.no>