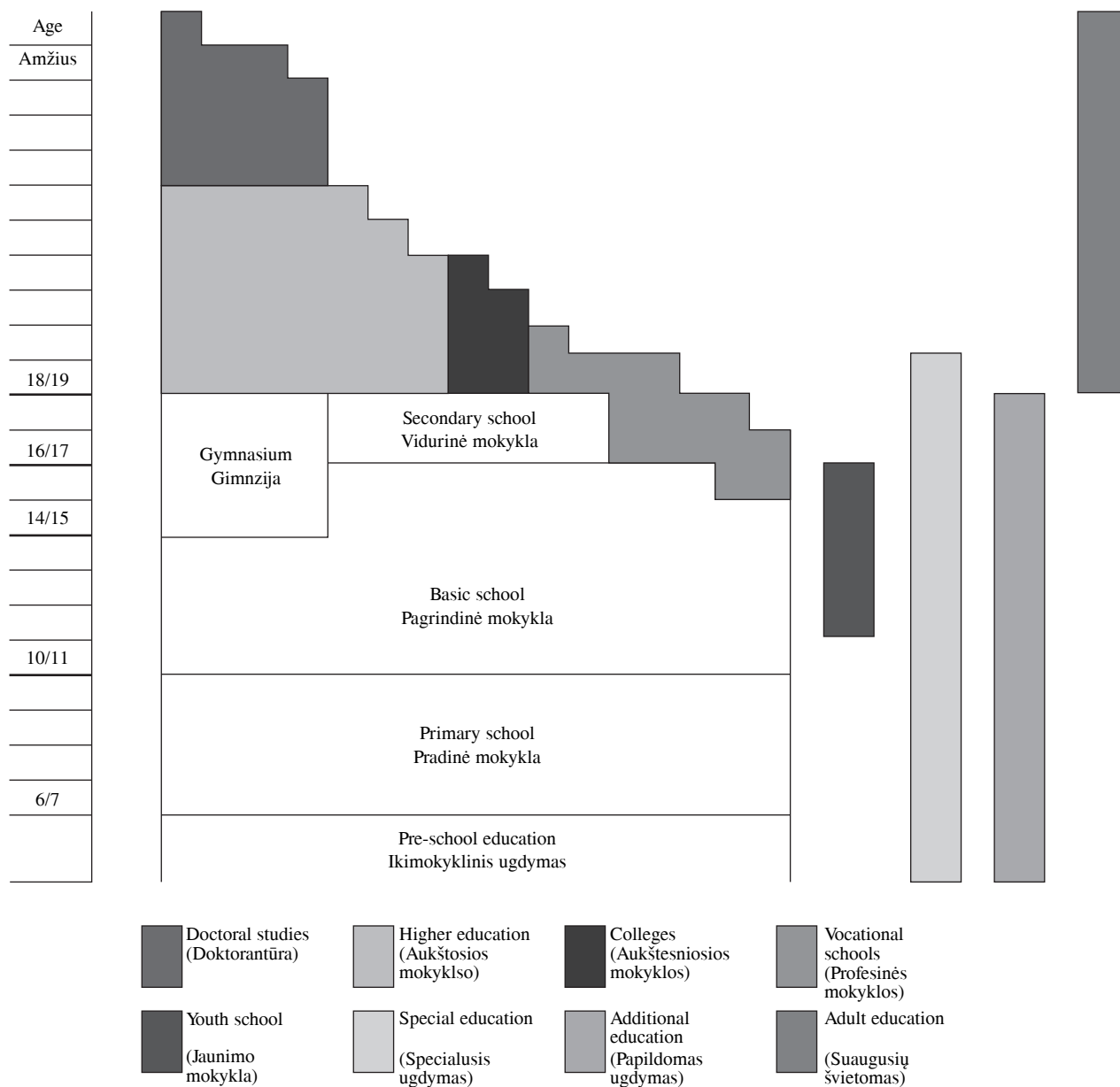


Lithuania

1. Responsibilities and administration	63
1.1. Background	63
1.2. Basic principles of the education system	64
1.3. Distribution of responsibilities	64
1.4. Administration	65
1.5. Inspection and supervision of teaching	66
1.6. Financing	66
1.7. Consultation	67
1.8. Private Schools	67
2. Pre-school education	67
2.1. School organisation	68
2.2. Curriculum and assessment	68
2.3. Teacher training	69
2.4. Statistics	69
3. Compulsory education/Training	69
3.1. Primary education	69
3.2. Lower secondary education	71
4. Post-compulsory secondary school	76
4.1. School organisation	76
4.2. Curriculum	76
4.3. Assessment	78
4.4. Teachers	78
4.5. Statistics	78
5. Initial vocational training	79
5.1. Organisation	79
5.2. Curriculum	80
5.3. Assessment/Guidance	81
5.4. Teachers	81
5.5. Statistics	82
6. Higher education	83
6.1. Admission requirements	83
6.2. Fees/Financial aid for students	83
6.3. Academic year	84
6.4. Courses	84
6.5. Assessment/Qualification	84
6.6. Teachers	85
6.7. Statistics	85

Lithuanian education system (1998/99)



1. Responsibilities and administration

1.1. Background

With an area of 65 300 km², Lithuania is a part of the economic region known as the Baltic Republics, which is situated along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. Autonomous since 1918, the Lithuanian State came under Soviet occupation in 1940. Although its independence was proclaimed on 11 March 1990, it was more than a year before the State achieved international recognition.

In 1998, the population of Lithuania was 3.704 million with a density of 56.7 inhabitants per square kilometre. The largest city is the capital, Vilnius, with a population of 578 400. Lithuania's ethnic composition is relatively homogeneous with more than 81.6 % Lithuanians, 8.2 % Russians and 7% Poles. The remaining 3.3% are Belorussians (1.5%), Ukrainians (1.0%), Jews (0.1%), Tartars (0.1%) and other nationalities (0.6%).

Before the Second World War, Lithuania was predominantly an agricultural country. This situation is slowly changing, with industry assuming a more prominent role. The main industrial sectors include electrical engineering (with one of the largest nuclear power plants in Europe), petroleum, machinery, chemicals, forestry, paper and pulp manufacturing, and food production.

In 1997, about 21.7 % of the working population was engaged in agriculture, 17.3 % in manufacturing industry, and 16.2 % in trade and services. In December 1997, officially registered unemployment was 6.7%. Lithuania is a parliamentary republic governed by a democratically elected parliament, the *Seimas*. The Government is headed by a Prime Minister. Government jurisdiction is divided between central and municipal governments. Municipal government has undergone significant reform with the creation of regional governments for ten counties, under whose jurisdiction have been placed a total of 56 municipalities.

The official language is Lithuanian, but many Lithuanians speak one or more foreign languages, most commonly Russian and one western European language. At the outset, education in Lithuania was closely linked to the spread of Christianity. During the periods of Russian sovereignty (1865-1905 and 1940-1991) the education system was restructured along the lines of the Russian and the Soviet education systems, respectively. In 1988, with the emergence of the Lithuanian Reform Union, *Sąjūdis*, Lithuanian teachers and educators publicly announced their desire to develop an education system different from that of the Soviet Union, with the concept of a *tautinė mokykla* (national school). Thus, 1988 marks the beginning of the most recent period of Lithuanian educational reform.

In the 1997/98 school year, for every 10 000 inhabitants there were 1 935 students in all educational institutions, 1 527 students at schools for general education, 146 students at vocational schools, 81 in vocational colleges, and 181 in higher education (university-level) institutions.

Overall, there are 20 denominations registered in Lithuania. Nine of them are regarded as traditional religious communities, namely the Roman Catholics, the Church of Old Rite, the Orthodox Church, Evangelical Lutherans, Evangelical Reformists, Greek Catholics, Moslems, Judaists, and Karaites.

Roman Catholics constitute the largest denomination, comprising some 90% of the country's religious population. The majority of the former are of Lithuanian and Polish nationality, though they include some Belorussians. Old Rite believers are normally of Russian nationality, and Eastern Orthodox worshippers of Russian, Belorussian or Ukrainian nationality. Whereas the majority of Evangelical Reformists live in northern Lithuania, Evangelical Lutherans generally live in the south-east.

National minorities are able to teach their children their mother tongue and national history, and to foster their culture. In 1997/98, a language of instruction other than Lithuanian was used at 232 schools of general

education in 10 towns and 23 municipal districts. These schools taught 69 777 pupils (12.8% of all pupils). In 1996, 28 textbooks were published in Polish, and 16 in Russian. Schools with national minorities follow the common core curriculum for general education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, and may supplement it with ethno-cultural elements.

1.2. Basic principles of the education system

After the restoration of statehood, new educational legislation became a priority for the *Seimas*. The new 1991 law on education provided for substantial changes in its aims, content, and structure. The aims meant that individuals should acquire knowledge and understanding of the principles of a democratic, pluralistic society, accept humanism and tolerance as basic values, develop independent decision-making skills and acquire professional expertise. They also implied substantial changes in teaching methods, the preparation of new textbooks, and reformed structures for more flexible secondary education. In 1992, the Government published a document entitled *The General Concept of Education in Lithuania*, stating that 'the educational system is based on European cultural values: the absolute value of the individual, neighbourly love, innate equality among men, freedom of conscience, tolerance, the affirmation of democratic social relations'. The main principles of Lithuanian education expressed in this document are humanism, democracy, renewal, and commitment to Lithuanian culture together with the preservation of its identity and historic continuity.

The General Concept of Education in Lithuania sets out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. Following its approval by the Government and *Seimas*, it was the basis for a new law in 1991, and has inspired the implementation of reform since then. In 1992 the document was released to the public.

1.3. Distribution of responsibilities

Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, each of the ten counties has a department of education to which certain ministerial duties are delegated. The main task of these county departments is organising school inspection. Indeed, responsibility for education is, to some extent, shared between central government, the counties and municipalities, as well as the governing bodies of educational institutions.

Enacted by the *Seimas*, legislation may be initiated by its members, the President of the Republic, the Government and, also, any group of 50 000 citizens normally entitled to vote, who may submit legislative proposals to the *Seimas*. In addition, laws may be passed by referendum. The long and complex procedure for consideration and enactment of draft legislation is regulated by statute.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, a referendum may be the instrument for resolving the most important issues regarding the State and life of the nation, as well as enacting basic legislative provisions. A referendum is called by the *Seimas*, and may strengthen the legitimacy of proposed legislation.

Responsibility for implementing legislation lies with the Government and institutions of public administration.

Statutory education reform began with the March 1990 Act of Independence. At present, education is regulated by the Laws on Education, Science and Studies, Vocational Education and Training, and subsequent legislation. The activity of regional and local educational establishments is governed by the Laws on the Governing of the County and on Local Self-government.

Educational institutions directly responsible to **the central authorities** (essentially vocational schools and colleges) are established, reorganised or closed by the Ministry of Education and Science, or other ministries or government bodies.

Schools under **the county authorities** (boarding schools and schools for special education) are similarly maintained by the county governor.

Schools under **local authorities** (pre-schools and schools of general education) are administered by the local government councils, following the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science and the county governor.

Authorities able to set up and maintain institutions as described above are known as their founding bodies or 'founders'. The institutions themselves are legal entities registered in compliance with government regulations. With the exception of higher education institutions which enjoy considerable autonomy, they are responsible to

their founding bodies. They have rights and duties stipulated in the regulations governing their activity or, in the case of higher education institutions, in their statutes.

1.4. Administration

Education is administered by the Government and ends with examinations and the award of government-recognised diplomas or certificates. Education-related laws, government resolutions and orders of the Minister of Education and Science are legal acts that regulate standards for general education, professions and fields of specialisation, and stipulate general requirements for curricula, including their constituent modules and qualification requirements. The documents drawn up pursuant to the legal acts are then classified into a number of national education-related registers, each concerned with different issues, such as the National Register of Education, Science and Study Institutions, the National Register of Study and Training Programmes, the National Register of Licences and the Register of Education Certificates.

Except in the case of higher education, educational institutions work in accordance with teaching plans, the common core curriculum and study programmes directly or indirectly approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Responsibility for curricular implementation lies with the deputy school head, while extra-curricular activities and those of optional subjects are drawn up by teachers and approved by the head of the school. Institutions are the joint responsibility of their heads, or directors, and the founders who appoint and dismiss them. The task of pupil or student assessment lies with teachers themselves who can exercise considerable discretion in their use of teaching methods, textbooks and other materials. Pupils and students who have satisfactorily completed whole courses – or recognised parts of courses – at public or non-state educational institutions receive an official certificate testifying to their attainment, in compliance with Ministry of Education and Science norms.

The **general secondary school system** is administered at two levels, namely the education departments of local government councils, and the county authorities on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science. The departments have to prepare and implement regional education programmes, and create optimal conditions for institutions. The foregoing programmes are usually part of regional development programmes, but may also be specific thematic programmes, as in south-east Lithuania where a programme to promote the Lithuanian language has been launched for the population of predominantly Russian and Polish nationality.

Although founders have general responsibility for the financial resources of their schools, individual institutions may have some scope for self-management in this area. While, therefore, basic salary levels are set by the Government, school heads may award bonuses to staff members in accordance with government norms, provided the money is available.

Vocational education and training institutions comprising vocational schools and colleges are the responsibility of several ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

In the counties, representatives from all county vocational schools and colleges, the county administrative authorities, and the social partners (including trade unions, regional chambers of trade and commerce, and firms), take part in the activities of vocational education and training boards. One of the tasks of the boards is to analyse the demand for different forms of specialist training in their regions. Financial management of vocational institutions is undertaken by their heads under the supervision of the founders.

Institutions of higher education are placed under the authority of the Research and Higher Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science. However, important issues, such as organisation and funding, are the responsibility of the Government's advisory body on research and higher education, the Science Council of Lithuania. And, as already pointed out, the State grants universities considerable autonomy.

University-level institutions register their statutes at the *Seimas*. The Government may regulate activities in higher education institutions through subsidies, the allocation of state-financed student places, and by other means. Institutions prepare and update their study programmes and apply for registration to the Research and Higher Education Department.

The supreme authority of an institution is its *Senate* (Council) which elects the chief administrator, the *Rector*. The Rectors' Conference is a joint meeting of rectors to discuss draft legislation prepared by the Research and Higher Education Department, as well as more general issues, and to take decisions regarding the registration of new higher education institutions.

All teaching staff are elected at the *Faculty Councils* (the main decision-making bodies in the faculties). Requirements for university degrees are approved by the Government on recommendations from the Science Council of Lithuania, while rules for student admission are drawn up by institutions on the basis of government criteria.

1.5. Inspection and supervision of teaching

Inspection and supervision of teaching activity are not carried out by a formally independent legal entity. Instead, they are co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science at different administrative levels – central, county or local – depending on the kind of educational institution concerned. It is worth noting that, although schools responsible to local government are inspected by the local body established for that purpose, they may also be inspected at the level of the county under whose jurisdiction the same local authority falls. Furthermore, the county inspectorates (as well as the central authorities) also have a right to inspect centrally-maintained schools within their geographical administrative area.

Inspection and supervision are carried out in accordance with the *Supervision Plan of the Implementation of the General Policy of Education* drawn up by the Ministry. The main objectives and tasks of the *Plan* are as follows:

- to ensure that the activities of the state inspectorates of the county governor administrations are consistent with those pursued by the Ministry;
- to collect, analyse and circulate information concerning the development of educational reform, with conclusions and proposals for the directors of institutions, county education departments and the Ministry of Education and Science;
- to explain national education policy, and provide information and guidance to institutions in implementing it.

Supervision of implementation occurs as follows:

- On the basis of the **Plan**, the Ministry of Education and Science requires county administrative authorities to supervise the area within their jurisdiction (comprising several municipalities).
- When supervision by county and local administrations has been completed, the former submit their findings to the Ministry by way of feedback.
- These results are analysed by the Ministry, and may provide the basis for new regulations.

1.6. Financing

The main sources of financing for **public educational establishments** are the state and local administration budgets. The *Seimas* earmarks budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Education and Science, county administrative authorities, and the municipalities, in addition to the revenue the latter receive from local taxes. Within the resources available, local administrative authorities establish a budget for education within the municipality concerned.

Pre-schools and schools of general education are financed from this budget on a scale that varies from one municipality to the next. The budget itself is managed by the founder (the local authority) which controls the financial activity of the schools together with departments subordinate to the State Control – the supreme state institution for economic and financial control, responsible to the *Seimas*. However, school salary levels are established by the central Government.

Vocational schools and colleges are financed from the state (government) budget, with the budget of each individual institution administered by its head who is responsible to the central authorities, the latter again sharing control of the financial activity of schools with the appropriate departments of the State Control.

Higher education institutions, though financed from the state budget, enjoy considerable autonomy in relation to their courses and activity, and their resources are managed in accordance with their statutes.

Pupils and students at **schools of general education**, or **vocational schools and colleges**, do not pay for tuition. However, under a January 1996 government resolution, higher education institutions may establish places for students who pay tuition fees, alongside the limited quota of state-funded places. Such fees constitute extra income for these institutions, in addition to their public budgetary allocation. Thus, in 1997, over and above 56 800 state-maintained students, a further 10 300 students paid fees. Indeed, a further government resolution of July 1998 enabled fees to be paid by as many as half of those enrolling in each study programme. In 1998, the state-funded quota was fixed at 17 205 students out of a total 73 210 applicants, 5 712 of whom were, however, willing to pay for their tuition.

In schools for general education, certain items, such as textbooks and teaching materials are provided for pupils by the State, but others they have to buy themselves, including exercise books, dictionaries and atlases. Students at vocational schools and colleges can obtain textbooks from their school libraries, although they normally work with materials prepared by the teachers themselves.

Students in higher education institutions are responsible for securing their own teaching materials.

Orphans or pupils from families receiving social assistance benefit from free school meals.

1.7. Consultation

Although there are no consultative centres as such, three-day seminars called 'Ministerial Days in the Counties' are organised. The seminars are essentially visits by officials from the Ministry of Education and Science to county and local authorities, to discuss and provide them with information on matters such as the implementation of laws relating to education, the development and implementation of programmes, optimisation of the educational network, and the assessment of heads of institutions and teachers.

1.8. Private schools

Non-state educational institutions may be established, reorganised and closed by private persons or recognised legal entities, with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, there are only 56 such institutions, compared to 2 912 public ones.

Non-state educational institutions are maintained by their founders. They may offer education whose standard is formally approved by the State, along with their certificates, curricula and teaching activity.

Alternatively, they may offer a variety of courses in areas such as cookery, handicraft and foreign languages, whose content and standards are not subject to formal state approval, although the centres themselves operate in accordance with ministerial regulations.

Graduates of non-state institutions are awarded a certificate recognised by the Ministry provided their education is of the state-approved standard.

To finance curricula to this standard, institutions receive (state or municipal) budgetary funds in the same way as public institutions under central and municipal government, and on a similar scale in line with the estimated expenditure per pupil in the public sector.

Tuition fees at non-state educational institutions are paid subject to agreement between those who pay (usually parents) and the school.

2. Pre-school education

Pre-school education forms the foundation for subsequent education and future personal activity. It is part of general education placed under the Minister of Education and Science which determines its curriculum and aims.

Pre-school education answers three central needs of children, namely security, activity and self-expression. Its task is to boost their self-reliance, initiative and creativity, and look after their health. Above all, it is meant to help families take care of and educate their children skilfully. Attendance at day nurseries and kindergartens is not compulsory. But it is recommended that, from the age of four or five, children attend the kindergarten to start to mix with adults and other children outside the family, and prepare for subsequent schooling. Pre-school institutions are becoming more varied with, at present, state and non-state schools, kindergartens run by religious communities, Montessori establishments and full- and part-time kindergartens. Day nurseries are for children aged up to three, kindergartens for those aged up to six or seven, and primary-school-type kindergartens for children who may be as old as ten.

Although pre-schools may offer different methods, programmes or extra-curricular activities, they do not generally determine the kind of subsequent education children receive (except in the case of those sent to special schools).

All kindergartens are administered in the same basic way. However, administration of a primary-school-type kindergarten depends on the location of its premises. On kindergarten premises, it is managed by its own head, although a deputy head for primary education may be appointed. On the premises of a school for general education, it is managed by the administration of that school.

2.1. School organisation

Children in pre-school institutions are grouped according to age, or in mixed age-groups. The maximum number of children together when they are aged between one-and-a-half and three, is 10. When the age-range is 3-7, the limit is 15. The minimum number of children in the institution is determined by its founder.

Although the school year begins on 1 September, provision in pre-school institutions is very loosely structured with no formally defined school days, terms or even lessons. Conditions encourage the communicative, artistic and cognitive potential of children, in both play and work. During these activities, educational, developmental and training considerations are all naturally taken into account. Schools are open throughout the year except on national holidays and at weekends.

An August 1995 Government Resolution set the terms now regulating payment for children who attend state pre-school institutions. Parents normally have to make a 60% contribution to the cost of their children's sustenance (though there are exemptions, or a 50% reduction to take account of limited means in cases where, for example, only one parent is bringing up a child, the father is doing military service, or there are three or more children in the family).

The State will also provide support in the form of compensatory payments when children of pre-school age are brought up at home. Additional support for children in pre-school institutions may be funded from municipal budgets, as well as from the resources of institutions themselves, enterprises or other organisations. These resources are distributed to the schools.

2.2. Curriculum and assessment

The basic aim of pre-school education is to assist in the development of a child's personality and impart the fundamental skills needed for life in society.

For this purpose, it follows two state programmes, *The Guidelines of Pre-school Education – a Curriculum for Teachers and Parents* (1993) and the 1993 kindergarten programme *Vėrinėlis (The String)*. While both pursue the same goals, their methods differ. *The Guidelines of Pre-school Education* uses integrated education, whereas *The String* is based on a creative method inspired by the principles of holistic education. Instead of a curriculum divided into separate subjects, various activities conducive to a child's development are integrated, including language, general awareness, art, music, games, crafts and acting¹.

Certain pre-school groups are based on the principles of M.Montessori and R.Steiner. Institutions may also provide additional artistic, linguistic and musical education, at the request of parents.

Only special education pre-schools or specialised institutions at pre-school level (for example, in art) prepare for specific kinds of primary education that are different from the mainstream. In other cases, children may be admitted to any kind of primary school irrespective of their pre-school institution.

Although pre-school children are not subject to regular assessment, primary schools admit children aged 6 or 7 who conform to *The School Maturity Criteria* established by an expert commission and approved by the Minister of Education and Science in 1996. According to the criteria, child maturity includes socio-emotional maturity (exemplified by self-awareness, self-esteem and elementary self-control, ability to mix and co-operate and a sense of responsibility), intellectual maturity (including general awareness and sensitivity, good memory skills, signs of logical reasoning, imagination and creativity), and a natural disposition towards schooling (including willingness to attend school and an interest in reading, writing and elementary mathematics).

¹ The preface to the programme states that 'The String' is to be understood as a kind of relic, or keepsake handed down from generation to generation. Just as pearls are assembled into a necklace on a single thread, so children 'string' their experience, word by word, thought by thought into their own pattern of creative development for the benefit of posterity.

On the basis of observation rather than formal tests, kindergarten advisers or parents (if a child has not attended pre-school) normally decide whether children should attend primary school. However, psychological testing may be used in exceptional cases. Parents may also decide which primary school their children should attend and at what age. If they want them to be taught in a language other than Lithuanian, they have to choose an appropriate school for that purpose. In regions with a sizeable linguistic minority, this is not usually a problem, although the real needs of the area concerned are taken into consideration.

Pre-school education has been supported by two international projects, namely *The Democratisation of the Pre-school Education System* launched by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania and Egmont Peterson (Denmark) in 1992, and *Step by Step*, another Open Society Fund project started in 1994. The first involves 32 pre-school establishments and primary-school-type kindergartens, and the second 22 institutions. Provision in all of them follows *The Guidelines of Pre-school Education*, with emphasis on the principles of a humanistic education, and use of a distinctive methodology. Both projects have brought about favourable changes in teacher training institutions and resulted in the publication of books on teaching methods.

2.3. Teacher training

Pre-school teachers may be trained at either university-level higher education institutions or teacher training colleges (whose provision corresponds to level 5 of the International Standard Classification for Education). In fact, whereas the former train for any level of education, colleges prepare teachers for pre-school, primary or lower secondary work only. College courses may last three years or four (if an additional specialisation is involved), whereas those in higher education institutions entail courses for a Bachelor's degree lasting four years or five years (if more than one subject of specialisation is studied), with a further one-and-a-half to two years for a Master's qualification.

In the case of pre-school training, teachers are trained for all aspects of their future activity but without reference to specialised subjects. College courses for pre-school teachers last just three years. Some pre-school institutions employ specialists to teach music, dance and foreign languages, and also make their facilities available for teaching practice.

2.4. Statistics

At the end of 1997, there were 724 pre-school establishments (491 in urban areas, and 233 in rural areas) attended by 96 443 children (86 369 in urban areas and 10 074 in rural ones). These schools employed 12 190 teaching staff (10 900 in urban areas and 1 290 in rural areas), including school heads, music teachers, special teachers, psychologists and other staff, in addition to the 9 676 group and senior teachers in regular daily contact with children. On the basis of this latter figure, the national pupil/teacher ratio was 10, while the average number of children in a group was 18.7.

3. Compulsory education/Training

Article 19 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that education is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16 (inclusive). Article 4 of the Law (as revised), which came into force on 29 July 1998, stipulates that basic (lower secondary) school should last six years (replacing the former five-year basic school). Thus, compulsory education now involves four years of primary education followed by six years of basic (lower secondary) education (ten years in all). Compulsory education is provided not only in publicly-maintained schools of general education, but in private schools that get state support if they adopt the state curriculum. However, enrolment in the latter is still limited.

3.1. Primary education

Schooling in Lithuania has inherited a Soviet, and even partly tsarist Russian, structure. As a result, primary schools are often not separated from basic or secondary schools, and even some gymnasiums operate both primary and basic school classes.

Primary schools constitute the first level of schooling from first to fourth forms, and initially admit children aged between six and seven. Primary education is part of the statutory period of education, and is free.

The general aim of schools is to prepare for the development of an educated, independent and active personality. It seeks to do so by the following means:

- creating conditions conducive to the growth of each child's individuality;
- imparting the basics of culture (intellectual, aesthetic, ethical);
- imparting knowledge and fostering the ability to analyse and interpret it;
- developing all ways of acquiring it that are relevant to a person's life, and his or her relations with society at large.

The primary level may be classified as follows:

- Primary-school-type kindergartens incorporating forms 1 to 4, each sometimes comprising several classes in the same year;
- sets of primary-level forms 1 to 4 in general secondary schools and basic schools;
- primary schools;
- small-set primary schools (set up in rural areas).

All primary schools follow a common state-approved core curriculum and plan for teaching. However, primary education at fine arts gymnasiums and special schools is normally followed by the same kind of training in the school concerned. Schools are not classified according to their size.

3.1.1. School organisation

Primary schools are coeducational and, in villages, have small sets of up to 25 children grouped into classes which each combine different ages and school years. Elsewhere, schools can be attended by 50 to 500 children depending on the size of their premises. The maximum number of pupils in a single class is 24.

Primary schools operate on the basis of either one set of pupils each day or, where there are many pupils, two sets (shifts). Classes are based on the age of pupils. The primary school year comprising three terms is a minimum 170 days of school attendance. Pupils in forms 1-4 attend school five days a week throughout the year which finishes no earlier than 31 May.

In the first year, the number of lessons a week is 22, in the second to fourth years, 23. The daily teaching workload is four or five lessons. Lessons may also be given outside the formal curriculum.

Pupils receive free textbooks, but have to buy their exercise books. Teachers are provided with teaching manuals. A variety of contrasting textbooks on music have already been published, and alternative sources similarly prepared for ethics and mathematics are being made available in 1999 and 2000. Prior to each school year, the Ministry of Education and Science presents schools with sets of recommended textbooks from which teachers are free to select those they prefer.

3.1.2. Curriculum

Provision of primary education follows the 1992 *General Curriculum Framework for Primary School* approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. The curriculum of compulsory subjects includes moral education (parents may choose whether their children receive religious instruction relevant to a given denomination, or lessons in ethics), the Lithuanian language, perception and understanding of the world, mathematics, fine arts and crafts, music, physical training and one foreign language (English, German or French).

Educational provision is based on the selection by each school of one of four teaching plans proposed by the Ministry. The *Curriculum Framework* does not prescribe the weekly number of lessons (periods) per subject, but this is listed in the plans. In the first year of primary education, lessons last 35 minutes. In the second to fourth forms, they may last 35, 40 or 45 minutes, depending on the teaching plan chosen.

In addition to the foregoing compulsory subjects, certain others are optional. Both categories are allocated a given number of lessons by the Ministry, whose precise schedule is at the discretion of the school where, in several subjects, teachers themselves have some say in establishing the schedule. Furthermore, in three subjects, namely fine arts, music and a foreign language, the plans allow for so-called intensive provision from the

second form onwards. Instruction in the first two (fine arts and music) has to be given at this stage, irrespective of whether the teaching is intensive or not. However, at the same stage, the foreign language has to be taught intensively, or not at all. Intensive instruction of this kind in any of the three subjects can only be provided in accordance with a programme (*individualioji programa*) either recommended by the Ministry or, in most cases, approved by it following the submission of a proposal from the school concerned.

Pupils following the general curriculum are normally taught to the same level. Pupils who are integrated into mainstream education, but have special educational needs, are offered specifically adapted programmes, subject to professional recommendations from educational psychologists. Adapted programmes are drawn up by the class teacher, approved by the school group on methodology, and confirmed by the school head. Programmes for special schools are approved and confirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Teachers are free to choose their teaching methods. Indeed, the former teacher-centred approach is being superseded by a new, pupil-centred ethos with an emphasis on humanistic cooperative pedagogy, active teaching and group work.

3.1.3. Assessment

Although primary school pupils do not take any examinations, their progress is assessed on a continuous basis, and reported to their parents. If marks are used, a 10-point system is employed, with a final mark at the end of every term and school year. A total of one to three marks is felt to be unsatisfactory, and the pupils concerned are considered not to have passed, or to be 'non-certified'. However, primary school councils may decide that marks should not be used for pupil assessment.

Responsibility for assessment lies with the teacher, so pupils move on to a higher class following a decision by the teachers' council of their school. Only pupils with a satisfactory end-of-year assessment in their subjects can continue into the next class. If the performance of pupils in some subjects is unsatisfactory, or if they are 'non-certified', they may ask for additional assignments whose duration is determined by the teachers' council. But pupils whose attainment in certain subjects is sub-standard may sometimes move on to the following class at their parents' request. By contrast, exceptional pupils with perhaps 9-point or 10-point end-of-term scores in all subjects may be allowed to skip one class after their knowledge of subjects taught in that class has been tested.

Pupils with learning difficulties at special schools, or in mainstream schools for general education, may be denied entry to the next class only if this is recommended by their parents or a special school commission.

Progress from primary to secondary school normally occurs as a matter of course on the basis of the 4th-form end of-year assessment.

In the primary school leaving certificate, the teachers' council states whether the pupil holding the qualification will enter lower secondary school. Where marks are not referred to in the certificate, attainment may be recorded using percentages, written summaries, symbols or other comparable indicators.

3.1.4. Teachers

As already mentioned under 2.3 (above), primary teachers are trained to teach all necessary subjects at university-level institutions or teacher training colleges.

3.1.5. Statistics

In the 1997/98 school year, there were 149 primary-school-type kindergartens, and 834 primary schools. Their 226 744 pupils accounted for 98.7% of pupils in the seven-to-ten-year-old age-group. They were taught by 13 417 teachers, giving a 16.9 pupil/teacher ratio.

3.2. Lower secondary education

On completion of primary education (forms 1 to 4), pupils move on to **basic school** (*pagrindinė mokykla*) for their lower secondary education corresponding to forms 5 to 9 (soon to be 10 as discussed at the beginning of section 3). Basic schools thus normally cover the 10-16 age-group. They may be autonomous, operate in conjunction with a primary school, or be part of a secondary school catering for both upper and lower levels.

When pupils complete this level of education, they are awarded a basic school-leaving certificate. School-leaving examinations are governed by Ministry of Education and Science criteria, and may be noted in the certificate. However, after four years, when aged 14 or 15, pupils may choose to enter a gymnasium (see Section 4). Pupils aged 14 who want to get a vocational qualification and find employment may also leave the *pagrindinė mokykla* and go to **vocational schools** to complete their basic school course.

On completion of basic school, pupils may enter upper secondary education, a vocational school or some colleges (such as conservatoires), or go to work (provided they are aged 16).

Pupils unsuited to mainstream general education (generally because they lack motivation) may, at the age of 12, after just one year of basic school, go to **youth schools**. These separate institutions offer pupils an opportunity to acquire lower secondary education over a 10-year period or more, but also, if appropriate, to re-enter the mainstream.

Pupils from families officially in need of social welfare support can finish their compulsory education in **boarding schools**.

Pupils with special needs are educated and trained in various **schools of special education** depending on their impairment and specific requirements. Their provision approved by the Ministry of Education and Science includes general teaching programmes, as well as special courses that may be adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils receive certificates when they complete special education, or at the end of its separate stages (modules). After completion of their schooling, pupils with special needs may also enter vocational schools.

The aim of all types of general education is to cater for the needs of pupils of different ages, abilities and aptitudes, while creating favourable conditions for the education of young people whose motivation also differs.

As a rule, compulsory education ends with completion of basic schooling at the age of 16.

3.2.1. Organisation of the school

In all public-sector schools of general education, education is free. Private schools charge their own fees.

Although most general education schools are coeducational, certain special institutions in this category are single-sex schools.

While schools may cater for as many as 2 500 pupils, the establishment of a school is authorised when there are no more than three. Small schools are common in eastern Lithuania where the population consists of several nationalities, as well as in rural areas, whereas large ones operate in the big cities. The vast majority of all institutions aim to cater for one daily set, or shift, of pupils, but 9.5% have a daily two-shift intake. This applies to as many as 60% of schools in Vilnius, and 28% in the second largest city, Kaunas.

Where this occurs, pupils in forms 5 and 9 (the first and last years of basic school) are taught during the first shift, and those in forms 6 to 8 during the second, which normally ends no later than 7 p.m. Every effort is made to ensure that regular schooling is offered during the day, whereas extra-curricular activity generally occurs in the evening.

Rather than depending on the availability of school premises, the hours of the school day are arranged by each institution with due regard for a general regulation established by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The school councils decide whether teaching will be spread over a five-day or six-day week, or both. The three-term school year for forms 6 to 9 lasts 195 school days. While schools may choose to organise their work over two halves of the year, the semester system is not commonly adopted until upper secondary level.

Textbooks and teaching materials are approved by ministerial expert commissions. Authors are urged to write integrated books comprising textbooks, exercises and a teacher's manual. Where more than one form of teaching support is available, teachers may choose between them. Use is also made of support in forms such as computer software, works of fiction and the mass media.

3.2.2. Curriculum

Pending transition to the six-year basic school, use is being made of the teaching plans for the five-year system. The plans set out both the compulsory (core) subjects and optional subjects, as well as the number of lessons per subject a week. At basic school level (forms 5 to 9), the total number of lessons is 27 to 31. The 16 compulsory subjects are moral education (religion or ethics), the Lithuanian language, two foreign languages, mathematics, nature and man, biology, physics, chemistry, history, civics, geography, art, music, crafts and physical training. These subjects are studied by all pupils, but may be allocated a variable number of lessons, depending on the level chosen by each.

In basic schools, instruction is normally offered at either level B (*basic*) or level S (that of intensified provision). In basic school teaching plans, compulsory subjects are allocated 90% of the total number of lessons fixed by the Ministry of Education and Science, an arrangement which involves a minimum number of compulsory lessons at level B. The distribution of the remaining hours of teaching to compulsory and optional subjects is decided by schools on the basis of pupil requirements.

The maximum number of 27-31 centrally imposed compulsory lessons may thus be allocated to S-level lessons at the initiative of the school. Normally, schools adopting S-level teaching develop their own individual syllabus (*individualioji programa*) approved by the Ministry (cf. 3.1.2 above). From form 5, they may offer S-level foreign languages, fine arts, music, and physical training.

The weekly distribution of lessons for compulsory subjects at basic school level is shown below:

Form	5	6	7	8	9
Subject					
1. CURRICULUM SUBJECTS					
Moral education (religion or ethics)	1	1	1	1	1
A. LANGUAGES					
Lithuanian language	5-6	5-6	5-6	4-5	5
Foreign language (1 st)	3-4	3	3	3	3
Foreign language (2 nd)	–	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
B. NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS					
Mathematics	4-5	4-5	4-5	4	4
Nature and man	2	2	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	2	1-2	2
Physics	–	–	1	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	2	2
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
C. SOCIAL SCIENCES					
History	2	2	1,5-2	2	2
Basics of civic society	–	–	0,5-0	1-2	–
Geography	–	2	2	1-2	2
D. FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHYSICAL TRAINING					
Fine arts	1	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1	1
Crafts	2	2	2	2	1-2
Physical training	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3
Civil safety, traffic safety	–	–	–	–	–
Elective subjects	–	–	–	–	–
Overall: for a 5-day school week	23	27	28	28	30
Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion*	4	2	2	3	1
Maximum number of compulsory lessons	27	29	30	31	31

As in primary schools, teachers are free to choose their **teaching methods**. Among the more common methods are discussions, team work, modelling, 'brain storming', project design, experimentation, interviewing, analysis and research, and out-of-school assignments. Integrated instruction, and methods geared to the needs of individual pupils are all actively promoted.

3.2.3. Assessment

Assessment distinguishes three levels:

- an individual level concerned with the progress of a particular pupil as viewed personally by the teacher;
- a group level reflecting the teacher's perception of the class as a whole;
- the official national level with its natural concern for transmitting and upholding sound standards throughout the school.

In all end-of-term and end-of-year assessments in basic schools, the attainment of pupils is measured by means of a 10-point system even though teachers may use other systems with the approval of the school. Teachers may also choose whether assessment should be based on written or oral tests, ongoing credits or projects, and how often they should be assigned.

Although, up to the age of 16, pupils whose performance is unsatisfactory (1-3 points) may move on to a higher class with the agreement of their parents, they cannot take basic school-leaving examinations until they have improved this performance with a higher score. If, at 16, the results are still unsatisfactory, they are offered education in another type of institution.

Examinations on completion of basic school are approved by the Ministry, and are compulsory for all pupils with 4-10 points in their end-of-year assessments. They are devised by expert groups, usually on the basis of tests, with reference to school teaching programmes. The results are assessed by specialist commissions of teachers from the same school in the subjects concerned.

On completion of basic school, pupils are awarded a leaving certificate showing their assessment based on the 10-point system in the subjects examined. The certificate entitles them to enter a vocational school and some colleges.

3.2.4. Teacher training

Lower and upper secondary teachers receive training as subject specialists. Graduates of university-level teacher training institutions are awarded the Diploma of Higher Education (the Bachelor's Diploma) entitling them to teach at all levels of secondary school, including gymnasiums. Their studies may involve a course for a Bachelor's degree lasting four to five years (five if an additional specialisation is acquired), as well as a study programme for a Master's degree lasting a further one-and-a-half to two years. Some university-level higher education institutions, Vilnius University among them, offer one-year teacher training programmes to holders of the Bachelor's diploma, upon completion of which the Certificate of Teaching Qualification is awarded.

Those who graduate from teacher training colleges are awarded the Diploma of College Education, entitling them to teach their subject(s) in basic school. Courses last four years if they specialise in more than one subject. Otherwise they last for three.

Teachers are state employees recruited by the school head. They are tenured and may work either full-time or part-time.

At present in Lithuania, there are 30 teacher education centres, and seven institutions of in-service teacher training at various institutes and universities.

According to two Ministry Resolutions of 1995 and 1998 respectively, all teachers are entitled to a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 15 paid days of in-service training over a five-year period, with official assessment 'at the expense of an educational institution'.

In-service training may be either compulsory (necessary for the implementation of the state educational programme, or teacher assessment in the case of poor teaching performance), or voluntary. Training at the wish of teachers is encouraged by institutions and supported by the State, provided its content corresponds to the interests of the educational system.

Furthermore, training may be continuous or occasional. Ideally, occasional training lasts one to three working days comprising a single session, while its maximum length is ten. Teachers who undergo training

for which they have to account, receive certificates from in-service training institutions. Continuous training, on the other hand, is organised in the form of several such sessions. Teachers choose either the whole of a proposed training programme or the parts of relevance to them. Training is considered preferable when pupils are on holiday.

There is a significant shortage of teachers, not so much in terms of particular levels of secondary education, as in certain subjects in places where there are no teacher training institutions.

The Ministry of Education and Science is attempting to remedy this by organising retraining for non-specialists in institutions of higher education, vocational colleges and the Lithuanian In-Service Teacher Training Institute. Priority for admission to such courses goes to teachers who are unemployed or likely to become so. As a result, they get a chance to qualify. They are given an opportunity to qualify as teachers of subjects for which there is considerable demand, including foreign languages, Lithuanian, house-craft and technical skills, informatics and fine arts. Older teachers whose former training does not match the requirements of today's schools are also retrained.

3.2.5. Statistics

In 1996/97, basic and secondary institutions, including here, youth, special, and adult schools, enrolled 551 181 pupils and employed 47 419 teachers, giving a pupil/teacher ratio of 11.62.

In 1997/98 there were 594 basic schools existing as autonomous educational institutions.

Number of young people in secondary education, and their percentage within the population of the same age-group, 1997

Educational level	Age-group	Number of pupils registered	Percentage of pupils registered within the population of the same age-group
Basic (lower secondary)	11-15	263 653	93.4
Upper secondary	16-18	130 709	82.8

Number of schools and pupils at the beginning of the 1997/98 school year

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Basic	594	61 817
Secondary	707	429 178
Gymnasium	42	13 990
Youth	22	2 100

In 1997/98, 3916 pupils were offered provision in schools of special education.

4. Post-compulsory secondary school

Students leaving compulsory school can continue their studies in one of the following institutions: *secondary schools, gymnasia, vocational schools, some boarding and special education schools*.

With the transition from the five-year to six-year basic school, upper secondary education is currently offered in the last three years of schooling (forms 10-12). At public educational institutions, it is free of charge.

To enter an upper secondary school, pupils must have a certificate testifying to the completion of lower secondary education. However, in Lithuania, no schools offer exclusively upper secondary education. Instead, they normally cover at least lower and upper secondary levels, and sometimes primary level too. Consequently, school premises for general education usually accommodate large numbers of pupils, especially in the cities. Overall, there are 704 such secondary schools, with 90.5% of them operating one daily shift of pupils, and the remainder, two. The former cater for 92.3% of all pupils, while those with a double shift account for 7.7%. The average number of pupils in a secondary school for general education is 610.

The main aim of upper secondary education is to enable pupils to enter any type of college or university-level higher education. Gymnasiums cover the last four years of secondary education. Pupils are admitted according to school criteria, particularly as regards performance, maturity and motivation. Normally, gymnasiums provide a more advanced level of education to academically inclined pupils than other secondary schools. They offer them the opportunity to choose between various branches of study, including humanities, science, and fine arts. Gymnasium school leavers are encouraged to enter university-level higher education institutions.

The goal of vocational schools is to offer vocational qualifications in addition to general upper secondary education.

4.1. School organisation

The school council decides on the weekly organisation of lessons, including (once again) their scheduling over a five-day week, a six-day week, or both. Pupils in the last year of secondary school, however, work five days a week. The beginning of the school year is 1 September, while the year in the last (12th) form ends on 26 May. It is organised over three terms (or in some gymnasiums, two semesters), and lasts 195 days.

As at primary schools, regular schooling usually takes place in the daytime, whereas extra-curricular activity may be outside school hours or in the evening. For optional or extra-curricular subjects, pupils from different classes of the same year may be brought together.

Textbooks are selected from a ministerially approved list, and schools get money to buy both books and teaching material.

4.2. Curriculum

With the ongoing transition to the six-year basic school, teaching plans for three-year secondary school are currently being implemented. Plans establish compulsory (core) subjects and optional ones, together with the number of lessons in each week. At upper secondary level the total number of 45-minute lessons is 32.

There are 16 compulsory subjects, as follows: moral education (religion or ethics), Lithuanian (the language), two foreign languages, mathematics, computer science, physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, history, geography, political sciences, fine arts, music and physical training.

As with basic school, compulsory subjects may be allocated a variable number of lessons, depending on the school emphasis, or the level chosen by the pupil.

At upper secondary level, instruction may be offered at **B** (basic, or general), **A** (advanced) or **S** (intensified) curricular levels. The teaching plans centrally established by the Ministry allocate around 65 % of the

compulsory number of lessons, involving a **minimum** number, over the different subjects. To follow level B, a minimum of 28 lessons are prescribed. The distribution of the remaining time over both compulsory and optional subjects is carried out by the school, in the light of its pupils' needs.

Level A involves a **median** number of lessons comprising those distributed by the Ministry and those allocated at the school's discretion. It is defined in terms of detailed teaching programmes for each subject on the basis of the general curriculum framework, known as *Bendrosios programos*. Level S consists of a **maximum** 32 lessons, again made up of those allocated by the Ministry and those scheduled by the school. Normally, schools following level S develop their own ministerially approved individual syllabus, the *individualioji programa*.

Pupils may choose five subjects at level A, or not more than two subjects at level S. They may also decide whether they take school-leaving examinations at level B or A, and choose their optional subjects from several which may include a third foreign language, philosophy, psychology, basics of law, computer programming and office work, and applied economics. In fact, the overall list of optional subjects will depend on the school's own desired emphasis, as well as parental requests and the general practicability of the proposals.

Optional subjects are included in those distributed at the discretion of the school, with the overall arrangements shown in the following diagram.

Form		10	11	12
Subject				
1. CURRICULUM SUBJECTS				
Morals education (religion or ethics)		1	1	1
A. LANGUAGES				
Lithuanian language		4-6	4-6	4-6
Foreign language (1st)		2-4	2-4	2-4
Foreign language (2nd)		2-3	2-3	2-3
Elective subjects		–	–	–
A: Overall: for a 5-day school week		8	8	8
B. NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS				
Mathematics		3-5	3-5	3-5
Informatics		1-2	0-2	–
Physics		2-4	2-4	3-5
Astronomy		–	–	–
Chemistry		2-3	1-3	1-2
Biology		1-2	1-3	1-2
Elective subjects		–	–	–
B: Overall: for a 5-day school week		9	7	8
C. SOCIAL SCIENCES				
History		2-3	1-2	1-3
Geography		2	–	–
Political sciences		–	1-2	0-2
C: Overall: for a 5-day school week		4	2	1
D. FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHYSICAL TRAINING				
Fine arts		1-2	1-2	1-2
Music		1-2	1-2	1-2
Physical training		2-3	2-3	2-3
Civil safety		–	–	–
Elective subjects		–	–	–
D: Overall: for a 5-day school week		4	4	4
Overall: for a 5-day school week		26	22	22
Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion*		6	10	10
Maximum number of compulsory lessons	for a 5-day school week	32	32	32

Once again, teachers are free to choose their **methods** which include discussion, projects, interviewing and the other kinds of approach to which reference has already been made at the end of section 3.2.2.

4.3. Assessment

At upper secondary level, pupil assessment is once again essentially based on a 10-point system, as described for basic education in section 3.2.3. On completion of the full 12 years of secondary school, a school-leaving (maturity) certificate is awarded, stipulating the examinations passed, their level and points assessment, as well as giving similar information on all subjects for the end of the 12th school year or the year the course in a subject has been completed.

School-leaving certificates entitle their holders to enter any Lithuanian higher education institution, vocational school or college. Yet precisely which kind of institution they attend will be determined by their marks in the maturity certificate, as well as their all-round knowledge and ability. And higher education institutions establish their own criteria to help them decide which young people they are going to admit. Gymnasium leavers are encouraged to enter university-level institutions if possible. At present, higher education institutions enrol some 50% of all school-leavers, vocational colleges, 27%, and vocational schools, 10%.

Those unable to enrol in higher education institutions, vocational schools or colleges may be trained to practise a trade in adult education centres.

Currently, an EU PHARE Higher Education Reform in Lithuania (HERIL) is under way. One of its sub-programmes – **National Assessment** – has been designed to improve the system of admission to higher education, partly with a view to reconciling the secondary school-leaving examinations and entrance examinations to higher education through the creation of a system of external school-leaving examinations. The immediate goal of the **National Assessment** sub-programme is thus a reform of secondary school-leaving examinations in four subjects, namely Lithuanian language, mathematics, biology and history. The scheme was piloted in one of the counties in the spring of 1998.

4.4. Teachers

Upper secondary school teachers have to hold the (Bachelor's) Diploma of Higher Education, entitling them to teach at all levels of secondary school (including gymnasiums). The period of study involved has already been noted at the start of section 2.3. Information on in-service training is given in section 3.2.4.

4.5. Statistics

In 1997/98, 130 709 pupils taught at upper secondary level accounted for 82.8% of the 16-18-year-old age-group. The pupil/teacher ratio was 10.8, and the average number of pupils in a class, 22.3 (13.3 in rural areas, and 19.1 in urban ones). And in 1997, 8.4% of secondary school leavers continued their education in vocational schools, 31.4% in colleges, and 44.7% in higher education.

Number of schools for general education, and their pupils, 1997/98

Type of school	Number	Number of pupils
Youth	22	2 078
Basic	594	61 817
Secondary	707	429 178
Gymnasium	42	13 990
Special education	56	7 565
Adult	24	11 835

In 1997/98, these institutions employed 47 000 teachers.

5. Initial vocational training

Framework

Like most other educational activity, initial vocational education comes under the Ministry of Education and Science which inherited the network of vocational technical schools in the former Soviet Union. With the transition to a market economy and discontinuation of the compulsory transfer of pupils of poor learning performance to these schools, there was an urgent need **to reform the system** so that training responded better to the wishes of young people and the needs of the labour market.

Although reform started in 1990, it has really gathered pace since 1994. While initiatives under the PHARE programme have been especially significant in this respect, several **vocational institutions** have also been founded, including the Lithuanian Council of Vocational Training, the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the National Standards Group, the County Vocational Education and Training Boards, the Centre for Vocational Education and Research at Vytautas Magnus University, and the National Resource Centre.

The October 1997 **Law on Vocational Education and Training** sets out a full reform of the system, defining its key institutions, responsibilities and processes. The main institutions are the Ministry of Education and Science (responsible for national policy), and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (concerned with labour market vocational training policy), as well as other ministries, institutions of local administration, the Lithuanian Vocational Education and Training Council and the social partners.

The Lithuanian Council of Vocational Education and Training has the role of an **advisory body**. In line with government policy for involving the social partners, the Council is formed from equal numbers of participants from state authorities and organisations representing the interests of both employers and employees.

The state shares **the right to found vocational schools and colleges** with private interests.

Cooperation with the social partners is conducted in the following main areas:

- initiation of training in new trades and skills;
- the development of new curricula;
- trainee placements for practical training;
- the establishment of national standards for vocational education and training;
- setting of, and participation in, the final examinations needed to qualify;
- participation in the expert commissions of the Ministry of Education and Science;
- renovation and modernisation of school facilities for practical training.

General principles for funding and quality control are established on a centralised basis. In the area of initial vocational training, responsibility for these matters lies with the Ministry of Education and Science, but training within the labour market system comes under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. However, as the latter is not considered a part of initial vocational education and training, information on it is not included here.

Funding of institutions depends on their student enrolment, as well as the viability and flexibility of their training programmes. State orders for training are made in cooperation with the administrative and employers' organisations of the regions concerned.

Vocational education and training is currently provided in several types of institution, as follows:

- vocational schools,
- vocational colleges;

Each type of institution offers different kinds and levels of provision.

5.1. Organisation

Vocational schools

Four options of vocational school training have been introduced since 1990/91.

The **first** is aimed at young people who have not finished basic school. By undergoing this option, they may do so, and also acquire very simple qualifications. Courses usually last two years.

Those wishing to embark on the **second option** have to finish basic school. While pupils who attend this option obtain professional qualifications, essential economic training, and general cultural instruction, they are not awarded a secondary school certificate. Studies last for three years.

The **third option** is aimed at those who have finished basic school. As a result of this option, they can acquire both professional qualifications and a secondary school certificate. Here, courses last for four years.

Finally, the **fourth option** is aimed at those who have finished their upper secondary schooling but are not academically inclined, and prefer to be trained as workers. Depending on the complexity of the prospective occupation, the duration of studies will be between one and two years.

Initial vocational training institutions enrol pupils aged at least 14. The order and conditions of admission are determined by the founder of the institution. Tuition at vocational schools is free, and pupils making good progress receive grants.

Vocational Colleges provide students of any age who have completed upper secondary school, or third- and fourth-option vocational schools, with opportunities for free specialised training. Converted from former technical schools, these colleges provide higher vocational (non-university) training, equivalent to level 5 of the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED). Those admitted do not have to take entrance examinations, as the results of school-leaving examinations are taken into account, although study aptitude tests are sometimes held. Again, students displaying noteworthy progress are eligible for grants. Foreign students pay a flat-rate tuition fee, from which those undergoing training in accordance with state cooperation agreements, and Lithuanians living abroad are exempt.

Full-time training courses last three to four school years. The duration of extramural (part-time/distance) studies (adult training) is usually one year longer.

5.2. Curriculum

The curricular content of training in state-recognised vocational sectors consists of a core part, for which the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible, and an optional part administered directly by the individual schools.

Only the main guidelines for restructuring curricular content have been laid down. They reject narrow specialisation, emphasising that all students should have a basic knowledge of economics, and that curricula should correspond to labour market needs.

The curricula are basically designed by the schools themselves, in accordance with general ministerial requirements. New teaching programmes are revised by panels of experts, including employer representatives, and approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Vocational schools have to review their curricula every five years and, in practice, this happens more frequently still.

In designing curricula, the need for practical training to account for around 70% of the total time allotted to subjects is emphasised. Work safety and environmental issues are being integrated into the overall package of subjects. The number of teaching hours in general education subjects, in the above-mentioned third option of the curriculum, should correspond to the number in the secondary school general curriculum. Courses in foreign languages and information technologies are optional in the first, second and fourth options, and compulsory in the third option. In the first option, 59 hours a year are assigned to these courses, in the second option 120 hours, and in the fourth, 80.

At the majority of vocational schools, practical training includes training in the school workshops, and comprehensive training and practical activity in firms.

Lithuania has also introduced a **dual system** under which all vocational training and practice is on an in-company basis. About 1% of students in the system benefit from this approach.

In vocational colleges, the school year lasts 42 weeks (including examinations). Generally, it falls into two terms (autumn and spring) of similar length. The Register of Study and Training Programmes lists

approximately 140 study programmes at college level, classified into 14 groups. As with vocational schools, college study programmes are designed by colleges themselves, subject to revision by Ministry of Education and Science experts and the approval of the Minister. As also in the case of vocational schools, colleges place considerable emphasis on practical training which accounts for no less than 30% of all study time. Theoretical subjects are normally of an applied nature.

In vocational schools, the textbooks used for general education are the same as those in secondary schools. The books used in vocational training itself are either approved by Lithuanian experts, or translations of recommended foreign textbooks. However, the main support has consisted of training packages prepared by the instructors themselves, on the basis of advice from EU experts under the PHARE Programme. All such material is stored in the National Resource Centre, in order to relay experience gained in the field.

5.3. Assessment/Guidance

The knowledge and professional skills of vocational school students are, once again, assessed within the 10-point system. Teaching of theoretical subjects concludes with an evaluation of what students have learnt, using a credit system or an examination, in accordance with the teaching plans. Achievements in the course of practical training are recorded as 'accomplished' or 'unaccomplished' in the student notebook. A professional qualification is awarded to students who have followed the whole of the theoretical and practical course of training, and passed the final examination consisting of a comprehensive theoretical part and a demonstration of practical skills.

To conduct exams, an impartial qualification commission of employers, which is approved by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, is set up. Practical assignments are undertaken only after the theoretical part of the examination has been passed.

The state-approved **qualifications** are the certificate of qualification, and the diploma of a qualified worker. Trainees who have completed the first option of initial vocational training and passed the examinations involved, are awarded the certificate. Those who have completed training in the second, third and fourth options, and passed the examinations for a qualified worker, are awarded the diploma.

A service for **vocational guidance** and psychological consultation has been started in six major cities, and the Ministry of Education and Science has initiated the establishment of the Vocational Guidance Centre. Regional centres have also been set up in all 10 counties. Vocational guidance includes consultations and information on all questions concerning the choice of an occupation, and use is made of computer databases and specialised publications. Individual and group psychological consultation is also possible.

As regards **vocational colleges**, each term concludes with a set of no more than four examinations, with a 10-point system for assessment. Courses as a whole are completed with a final examination, or a diploma project. Students who pass are awarded a **State Diploma of College Graduation** indicating the college, the study programme and the qualification acquired for a specific occupation that its holder can enter.

5.4. Teachers

In fact, there are no trainers as such, with qualifications especially geared to vocational schools. Instead, the activity is performed by teachers of general education and vocational subjects respectively, as well as instructors, known as foremen, who help students acquire practical skills in firms.

Staff in all three groups should ideally be adequately qualified to work with trainees in terms of the appropriate discipline, teaching methods and psychology. Yet this is not always the case. Teachers in general education are often graduates from the teacher training colleges or universities, whereas those who teach vocational subjects invariably have only a qualification in engineering.

College teachers are graduates from university-level higher education institutions. Teachers who, at the most, have just an engineering qualification have to acquire an additional qualification over the first year of their teaching career. Efforts are made for vocational subjects to be taught by persons with research, practical or creative experience.

The issue of appropriate qualifications for teachers of vocational schools and colleges is now being addressed through in-service training. Since 1994, four kinds of qualification have been introduced. In vocational schools, these are vocational teacher (*profesijos mokytojas*), senior vocational teacher (*vyresnysis profesijos mokytojas*), vocational teacher-methodologist (*profesijos mokytojas-metodininkas*) and vocational teacher-expert (*profesijos mokytojas-ekspertas*). In vocational colleges, the categories are assistant teacher (*dėstytojas asistentas*), teacher (*dėstytojas*), senior teacher (*vyresnysis dėstytojas*) and expert teacher (*dėstytojas ekspertas*). Teacher methodologists and experts at vocational schools are assessed by commissions at the Lithuanian Teacher In-Service Training Institute, while those concentrating on a lower kind of qualification are evaluated by a commission at the school. In colleges, entrants to the lower categories of assistant teacher and teacher are similarly approved by commissions at the colleges themselves, while senior and expert teachers are assessed, on recommendation of the college concerned, by the General Commission for Assessment of College Teachers at the Ministry of Education and Science. The general regulations for assessment are drawn up by the Ministry, and the responsibility for supervision lies with the county education departments.

5.5. Statistics

Number of students who have completed the various options in vocational education and training, 1996/97

	Number of pupils	%
Option	6 598	12.8
1st	18 574	36.0
2nd	22 100	42.8
3rd	4 379	8.5
4th	51 651	100

Kinds of subjects taught at vocational schools

Length of training	Vocational training subjects	General education subjects	General cultural education	Extra-curricular education
1 st option: 3 years	62%	18.4%	15%	5%
2 nd option: 3 years	70.4%		22.7%	6.9%
3 rd option: 4 years	46%	36.6%	8.1%	9.3%
4 th option: 1 year	80.7%		15%	4.2%
4 th option: 1.5 years	84.2%		11.6%	4.2%
4 th option: 2 years	85.4%		10.4%	4.2%

Numbers of vocational school teachers, 1996/97

Total number: of which female teachers %	4 760 2 916 61.3
Full-time teachers	3 713
Part-time teachers	1 047

Educational level of vocational school teachers, 1996/97

Educational level	
Higher, total number	3 113
% of the total number of teachers	65.4
of which have approved teacher qualification	1 587
% of the total number	51.0
College	1 372
% of the total number	28.8
Secondary	275
% of the total number	5.8
Teaching staff total	4 760

6. Higher education

In 1998, the higher education system consisted of 15 higher education institutions comprising nine universities, five academies and one institute which provides higher education at three academic levels (basic, specialised and doctoral) discussed further in Section 7.5. below.

As yet, there are no private higher education institutions in Lithuania.

6.1. Admission requirements

A secondary school-leaving certificate or its equivalent (which includes the International Baccalaureate) is required for admission to higher education institutions.

The conditions governing admission for Lithuanian applicants are the results of the school-leaving examinations recorded in the school-leaving certificate, and the results of entrance examinations, if required. Regulations for such examinations are set by the individual institutions themselves.

Further information about a recent attempt to improve the system of admission to higher education is given at the end of Section 4.3.

Foreign applicants are admitted, either by signing an agreement with the institution concerned, or as exchange students within the framework of international programmes and bilateral agreements. Students from abroad are required to enrol in a one- or two-year introductory Lithuanian language programme, so as to attend courses given in the language in the second or third year of studies at the latest.

Admission is administered by the individual institutions. The deadline for application varies from one institution to the next. Generally, complete applications should be submitted from the beginning of June until 31 August at the latest.

6.2. Fees/Financial aid for students

Foreign students are charged tuition fees varying between USD 1 300 and USD 3 000 a year. The amount which, again, is set by the individual institutions includes the cost of using libraries, laboratories, medical services and, sometimes, accommodation. State scholarships are granted to Lithuanian students on the basis of attainment and social considerations. Study loans are also available for full-time students. A provision regarding the free movement of students and equal treatment, in accordance with the case law of the European Court of Justice, is stipulated in the new draft law on research and higher education currently under preparation.

According to a 1996 government resolution, a system of state scholarships is currently being established to support Lithuanian citizens pursuing study or research abroad, as well as foreigners studying or doing research in Lithuania. Scholarships for exchange students are granted for one to ten months, under the terms of bilateral agreements with the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Spain and other countries.

As already mentioned in Section 1.6, the Government has required that a certain number of state-maintained student places should be available at higher education institutions. Students who secure one do not have to pay tuition fees and usually get grants. Alongside these places, higher education institutions are entitled to establish a certain number of additional places for students who do pay fees.

6.3. Academic year

The academic year is divided into two semesters, autumn (usually from September to January), and spring (February to June).

6.4. Courses

Students in higher education can follow either full-time, part-time (or evening) and extramural (or distance) courses. Major fields of study offered are education, humanities, theology, fine and applied arts, law, social sciences, economics and business administration, natural sciences, engineering, architecture, medical sciences, agriculture and forestry.

Teaching methods are varied, but lectures and seminars are the approach most often employed. Experimental and research work, projects, and written papers are also sometimes adopted, in addition to practical activity for students.

6.5. Assessment/Qualification

Three levels of higher education may be distinguished. The first, or basic, level consists of a four- to five-year Bachelor's degree, or a professional qualification equivalent to the degree depending on the kind of curriculum followed. A few universities award both the degree and a professional teaching qualification, following successful completion of the basic degree course and then a further year of professional studies. Students are formally recognised as having higher education upon satisfactory completion of four-year basic studies.

This basic level may be followed by the second level comprising a one-and-a-half to two-year Master's degree (see section 2.3.), or specialised professional qualification – which, here again, may be equivalent to the degree, depending on the curriculum selected – for occupations such as economist, sociologist, or engineer.

Furthermore, so-called single-stage programmes may include both basic and specialised professional studies. For example, a professional qualification in medicine is awarded upon completion of a single-stage programme lasting six years. Other fields covered by these programmes include veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy law (in Vilnius University) and agriculture. In the case of students who undertake single-stage programmes, their higher education is only recognised on satisfactory completion of the entire programme

A two- or three-week examination period is usually arranged at the end of each semester. During this period, students prepare for and take the examinations prescribed for that session. Forms of examination (oral, written, or other) are decided by the teacher, and students also have to write a course paper during the school year.

Final examinations for Bachelor's and Master's degrees are taken in accordance with government requirements. Student performance in them is assessed by a special commission set up by decision of the Dean (head of administration) of the faculty concerned.

The third level of higher education is that of doctoral studies. Doctorates are usually awarded after candidates have already obtained a Master's degree or a specialised professional qualification equivalent to it. A doctorate takes no more than four years, of which up to one-and-a-half or two years are spent attending doctoral courses.

On their completion, a thesis has to be prepared and satisfactorily defended. Doctoral studies may be organised jointly by higher education and research institutions.

6.6. Teachers

All teaching staff are elected at the Faculty Councils of higher education institutions.

The lowest teaching position is that of *asistentas* (assistant). Applicants are required to hold a Master's degree with, preferably, some experience of research.

The position of *vyresnysis asistentas* (senior assistant) does not require a scientific degree. It can be occupied for only two terms if the staff member concerned has not defended a doctoral thesis. Research activity has to be undertaken, and senior assistants are not able to teach Master's students.

A *docentas* (docent or associated professor) should hold a scientific degree or be awarded the academic title of *docentas* for significant commitment to teaching. Docents normally publish articles on the basis of original research, and teach Master's students.

A *profesorius* (professor) is the highest teaching position. Professors are normally holders of the highest possible academic degree. A significant publications record is required, along with a prominent contribution to departmental faculty research. Professors are also usually involved in training young scientists.

All teaching positions can be occupied for up to five years renewable subject to satisfactory professional performance. During that time, it is expected that staff achieve a certain minimum output of scientific and teaching publications.

Teachers may, if they wish, take a year's leave once in every five-year period to update their professional knowledge.

Study visits abroad are widespread, as a result of participation in international teacher and student exchange programmes.

According to the plan approved by the Rector of specialised higher education institutions (such as the Law Academy), teachers may also update their expertise in appropriate – and normally university-level – institutions, depending on the subject or sector concerned.

6.7. Statistics

Students in higher education institutions, by type of course, 1997/98

Types of course	Numbers of students (all levels)
Full-time	53 556
Part-time (evening)	2 926
Part-time (extramural/distance)	10 586

Students in higher education institutions, by level of study, 1997/98

	All levels of study	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral
Students	67 068	52 584	13 008	1 476
of which male	28 351	22 304	5 288	759
female	38 717	30 280	7 720	717
Percentage				
of male students	42.3	42.4	40.7	51.4
of female students	57.7	57.6	59.3	48.6

Educational background of entrants to higher education institutions, 1997/98

Students matriculated	17 935
of which were graduates of	
Secondary schools	15 709
Vocational colleges	1 603
Vocational schools	376
Schools of higher education	247

In 1997/98, 9214 teachers at the 15 university-level institutions offered higher education to 67 068 students (giving a student/teacher ratio of 7.27).

In the same year, 6 586 of the teachers constituted the main body of academic staff, while 2 574 worked as 'non-primary' staff; 54 foreign teachers were also employed. Out of all teachers, 2 768 held a doctorate, and 472 a habilitated doctor's degree, while 2 333 were docents, and 518 full professors.

1994 and 1997 suggests increasing participation in continuing education and training courses, rising from 15% to 25 %.