

## **Country Profile: Lithuania**

### **General Background**

The Republic of Lithuania is the largest and most southerly of the three Baltic states, with a population of 3.4 million. Incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, Lithuania declared independence in 1991 and is now a parliamentary republic. The system of education in Lithuania includes primary, basic (junior secondary) and (senior) secondary education, vocational education and training and higher education. Special education (to pupils with special needs) is provided according to all programmes of compulsory and general education.

Education in Lithuania is compulsory for ten years, made up of four years of primary and six years of junior secondary (Basic) school. The system of general education consists of primary (Grades 1-4), junior secondary (Basic) (Grades 5-10) and senior secondary education (Grades 11-12). The Ministry of Education and Science approves the curriculum at all levels.

### **Academic year**

The academic year is divided into two semesters with the autumn semester usually running from September to January and the spring semester usually lasting from February to June.

### **Medium of instruction**

The language of instruction is Lithuanian at all educational levels. In school education, there are some schools for Russian, Belorussian, and Polish minorities, where the teaching language is Russian, Belorussian or Polish. In higher education, there are study programmes in English or Russian. The list of such study programmes is available at:

[http://www.skvc.lt/files/Qualificatio%20assessment/Study\\_%20in\\_Lithuania\\_2008.pdf](http://www.skvc.lt/files/Qualificatio%20assessment/Study_%20in_Lithuania_2008.pdf)

Prior to independence in 1991 Lithuania followed the Soviet system of education as the Lithuanian SSR. Please see the USSR file for further information.

### **Qualification list**

#### **School**

- Pagrindinės mokyklos baigimo pažymėjimas (PMP) / Pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas (Basic School Leaving Certificate)
- Brandos atestatas (Senior-secondary school leaving certificate) (from a Gymnasium or Secondary School; Vocational School or Technological Lyceum)

#### **Vocational**

- Pažymėjimas (Certificate attesting to completion of basic vocational education (stage 1))
- Diplomas (diploma awarded by a vocational education and training school, attesting to acquisition of a professional vocational qualification (stages 2 to 4))

#### **Post-secondary non-higher education**

- Aukštesniojo mokslo baigimo diplomas / Aukštesniojo mokslo diplomas (Advanced Vocational Education and Training diploma (also referred to as Junior College Diploma) (admission stopped in 2003))

#### **Higher Education – Undergraduate**

- Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (Higher Education Diploma awarded after completion of a non-university level undergraduate study programme)

- Profesinio bakalauro diplomas (Bachelor degree awarded after completion of a non-university level undergraduate study programme)
- Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (Higher Education Diploma awarded after completion of a university-level undergraduate study programme)
- Bakalauro diplomas (Bachelor degree awarded after completion of a university level undergraduate study programme)

#### **Higher Education - Postgraduate**

- Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (Higher Education Diploma awarded after completion of integrated studies when only a professional qualification is awarded)
- Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (Higher Education Diploma awarded after completion of university level [graduate level – Bologna Cycle 2] programme of specialised professional studies)
- Magistro diplomas (Master's degree)
- Daktaro diplomas (Doctorate)
- Meno licenciato diplomas
- Rezidentūros pažymėjimas

#### **Legislative framework**

In Lithuania, education is regulated by laws of the Lithuanian Republic, resolutions of the Lithuanian Government as well as legal acts approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Between 1991 and 2002, a package of documents and publications regulating school activities and curricula was issued, collectively known as the Regulations on General Education in Lithuania. The activities of institutions of science and higher education are regulated by the Law on Science and Studies (12 February 1991). 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.

Relevant laws include:

- The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania (adopted on 25 June 1991). It sets forth the structure of the education system in the country and the foundations of operating and managing all educational institutions (except for higher educational institutions). On 2 June 1998, the [“Seimas”] adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania;
- The Law on Vocational Education and Training (14 October 1997) defines the structure and administration of the vocational education and training system, the activities of vocational schools and institutions of vocational education and training in the Lithuanian Republic. The law was amended in 2008. More to follow.
- The Law on Higher Education (21 March 2000) determines the system of higher education, regulates the activities of the institutions of higher education and establishes the binary system of higher education.

- On 17 June 2003, a revised version of the Law on Education was adopted aimed at defining the goals of education in Lithuania, main principles of the education system, basic structure of its organisation, activities and relationships as well as the major responsibilities of the state in the field of education.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007, a revised version of the Law on Vocational Education and Training was adopted aimed at the introduction of the following important elements into Lithuanian vocational education and training: apprenticeship, National System of Qualifications, accreditation and recognition of the experiential learning, assessment and accreditation of qualifications prescribed for the social stakeholders, co-funding of the vocational education and training and other important aspects.

## **Education reforms and their implications**

Education in Lithuania has been subject to significant and ongoing reform since independence in 1991. Since 1991 administrative structures have been reorganised; vocational schools have been restructured and higher education has also been reorganised. In February 1991 the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on Science and Studies which established the guidelines of higher education reform, with the intention of bringing Lithuania's research and higher education system closer to that of Western Europe. In 1992, the Lithuanian Government approved the General Concept of Education in Lithuania which has been the main and the most important document of the education reform ever since.

From 1990 to 1997 the theoretical foundations of the educational reform (concepts of school types and curricula) were developed, and the legal documents of the reform (Law on Education, school regulations, etc.) were prepared. In the later stages, governing bodies (the Ministry of Education and Science, the educational departments of municipalities) were reorganized; the reform of vocational schools and colleges was initiated, and the system of higher education was restructured.

The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania adopted in 1991 set out the main goals of the education system. In 1998–2000, in order to improve retention rates, the compulsory nine-year schooling was replaced by the ten-year schooling, with a year-long pre-primary education introduced in 2000. The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that education is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16 (inclusive). The Law (as revised), which came into force on 29 July 1998, established 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).

The Law on Higher Education, adopted on March 21, 2000, provides for two types of state and private higher education institutions – universities and non-university, higher-education establishments or colleges. The implications in terms of qualifications of this law are set out in Section 9 on higher education below.

## **First level education – Primary education**

### ***Pre-primary***

Pre-school education is not compulsory, however, nurseries and kindergarten are available to children aged up to 3 and from 4 to 6 respectively.

### ***Primary***

The programme of primary education is provided for children who have turned seven in that calendar year. A four-year programme of primary education is provided by kindergartenschools, primary and other schools and covers Grades 1 to 4.

### ***Awards attained at the end of this cycle:***

There is no formal qualification at the end of the primary cycle, however, official certificates of primary education are awarded to pupils who have completed the primary education programme. In the certificate, under the word “completed” a specific programme is indicated: “primary education programme”, “primary education programme for adults” or “primary education stage of the art gymnasium programme”.

### **Second level education – Post-Primary education**

Secondary education is divided into (Basic) junior secondary (Grades 5-10), which is compulsory and senior secondary (Grades 11 and 12) education, which is non-compulsory. Junior secondary education is a constituent part of a comprehensive basic school education and is offered at gymnasiums, secondary, basic, youth, vocational and other schools.

Junior secondary (basic) education covers Grades 5 to 10. Specialisations are introduced in Grade 7. Subjects of study are offered at two levels, Basic (B) and Advanced (A) at this stage. Upon completion of the tenth grade, a certificate is issued which lists completed subjects and their evaluation at A or B level. Before September 1999, junior secondary education covered grades 5 to 9, making compulsory education nine years in length.

Senior secondary education is provided to pupils who have completed basic education. Senior secondary education is non-compulsory and covers Grades 11 and 12. Students can complete secondary education at a general education school, gymnasium, boarding school, special school or vocational school, and the type of education received will depend on the school attended. Education in the final two grades (11-12) of secondary education is differentiated; in grades 11–12, pupils learn according to one of the four profiles they can choose from: humanities, science, technology or arts. From 1 September 2000, profiled teaching was introduced in all Lithuanian schools providing general education. This profilation of education types was recently abolished.

On completion of basic education, pupils may either proceed to grade 11 in the same school or transfer to another general education secondary school or a gymnasium. Alternatively, students may complete their education in a vocational school which provides secondary education and professional qualifications based on the stage 3 vocational school programmes (see Section 8.1 below).

### ***Gymnasium***

Gymnasiums provide in-depth general education and specialise in humanities and arts, fine arts. Students study for six to nine years. Four-year gymnasiums (except for fine arts gymnasiums) admit those pupils seeking general secondary education who have completed at least eight grades. Two-year gymnasiums admit pupils who have completed a ten-year

basic school. Conservatoires may also admit pupils who have completed ten grades and have the required musical training.

### ***Vocational Schools***

Vocational education and training has been the subject of significant reform and restructuring over the past 15 years. Initial vocational education and training is formal and designed for acquisition of an initial qualification. It is provided to learners who have completed basic or secondary education. For learners who have completed basic education, its curriculum can be coupled with the secondary education curriculum. Initial vocational education and training may be also provided to those pupils without basic education who are not younger than 14 years of age.

### ***Awards attained at the end of this cycle:***

#### **Pagrindinės mokyklos baigimo pažymėjimas (PMP) (Basic School Leaving Certificate)**

The Pagrindinės mokyklos baigimo pažymėjimas (PMP) is awarded to learners who have successfully completed basic or junior secondary education. Holders of this award may continue with their secondary education or begin initial vocational education.

#### **Brandos atestatas**

The Brandos atestatas is awarded to students who have successfully completed senior secondary education. The year of completing the programme and acquiring the secondary education does not necessarily coincide. The Brandos atestatas is also issued to a person who has completed the adult secondary education programme and has passed the Matura examinations.

Pupils in the last year of secondary education who do not take the Matura examinations or who pass only part of the examinations/credits required for the award of the Brandos atestatas are issued a certificate attesting to learning achievements.

To receive the Brandos atestatas, pupils have to take Matura examinations. Matura examinations can be two types: school-level or national-level. Those wishing to receive the Brandos atestatas must pass examinations in four subjects from the secondary education programme; the compulsory examination in the Lithuanian language and at least three elective examinations in selected subjects. The assessment of national-level exams is norm-referenced from 1 to 100 points. The assessment of school-level examinations is criterion referenced, and the results are rated on a 10-point scale (1–10).

### **Further Education and Training, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

Technical and vocational education and training is provided at secondary level through to tertiary level. A clear distinction should be made between the former advanced vocational education and training and current vocational education and training in Lithuania. According to the revised version of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Education (2003), advanced vocational studies (also referred to as Junior College studies) were provided to persons who had obtained secondary education and were able to study independently. Courses were available at Advanced Vocational Education and Training Schools (also referred to as Junior College) (*Aukštesnioji mokykla*) and other schools with a license to teach students according to such programmes.

After the Law on Higher Education of 2000, the reform of post-secondary education and training began and aimed to gradually discontinue advanced vocational education and to develop non-university higher education. Junior colleges or Advanced Vocational Education and Training Schools, also referred to as Junior Colleges, (*aukstesnioji mokykla*) were reformed and those that were sufficiently qualified to organize a curriculum of higher non-university education were reorganized into non-university higher education institutions – colleges (*Kolegijos*), or were made departments of such colleges. The last students of the advanced vocational schools graduated, acquiring advanced vocational education, in the academic year 2006-2007. There is no admission to advanced vocational study programmes any longer.

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

The Law on Professional Education and Training was further amended in 2007.

**Prior to the 2007 amendment to the Law on Vocational Education**, vocational education and training was classified into:

1. Basic vocational education and training
2. Labour market vocational education and training.

### ***Basic vocational education and training***

The goal of basic professional education and training is to provide students with theoretic knowledge and practical training for professional activity; to offer secondary-school programmes, and to encourage graduates to continue studies at a higher level.

Vocational education and training consists of four levels or stages:

Stage 1: Applicants without lower secondary education are admitted (they have to be at least 14 years old). Education lasts for two years. Students study for their professional qualification, but may also choose to simultaneously study for their lower secondary school diploma (in this case studies last for three years). Graduates receive one of the following:

- a basic vocational qualification certificate or
- a basic vocational qualification certificate and lower secondary school leaving certificate.

Stage 2: Applicants with lower secondary education are admitted. Education lasts for two years. Graduates receive a vocational qualification diploma.

Stage 3: Applicants with lower secondary education are admitted. Education lasts for three years. Graduates receive a vocational qualification diploma and a secondary school leaving certificate (*Brandos Atestatas*).

Stage 4: Applicants with secondary education are admitted. Education lasts for 1-2 years. Graduates receive a vocational qualification diploma.

### ***Labour market vocational education and training***

Labour market vocational education and training is designed to meet the needs of the labour market and to help people who are in danger of losing their jobs or who are unable to find

employment to adapt to the current market needs. This type of programme consists of one or more independent modules. Modules are adapted to individual student's needs by taking into consideration previous education, background, and work experience. These studies should not take longer than one year. At the end of such studies a vocational qualification certificate is issued. It does not award any academic rights. Labour market vocational education and training has been coordinated by the Labour Market Training Authority established by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in 1992. This institution prepares the curricula for labour market vocational training and coordinates the provision of this training executed by the regional labour market training centres (belonging to the system of Labour market vocational training), VET schools and private training providers.

**After the 2007 amendment**, vocational education and training is classified into:

1. Initial professional education
2. Continuous professional education

In general, initial professional education is very similar to basic professional education and training prior to the reform. The amendment of 2007 implies the unification of the National System of Initial Vocational Training with the System of Labour Market Vocational Training.

Continuous professional education refers to formal and non-formal professional education of people who already have a professional qualification and want to either to achieve a higher level of qualification or to get a new qualification by taking additional courses or by getting the required practical training. Further details to follow.

**Awards at the end of this cycle:**

### **Aukštesniojo Mokslo Baigimo Diplomas**

Aukštesniojo Mokslo Baigimo Diplomas (Advanced Vocational Education and Training Diploma (also referred to as Junior College Diploma) were issued by post-secondary non-higher education institutions Advanced Vocational Education and Training Schools (also referred to as Junior Colleges) (*aukštesnioji mokykla*),. *Aukštesniojo mokslo baigimo diplomas* or *aukštesniojo mokslo diplomas* certify completion of post-secondary, but not higher education. Studies leading towards this type of diploma lasted for three to four years. For several years after the 2000 reform, reorganised higher non-university education institutions (colleges) still awarded *aukštesniojo mokslo baigimo diplomas* or *aukštesniojo mokslo diplomas* for students, who entered junior college study programs before the reform.

Holders of *aukštesniojo mokslo diplomas* can be admitted to undergraduate university or non-university level higher education studies or begin a professional career. According to the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, a holder of a *aukštesniojo mokslo diploma* can complete a non-university level higher education study program in a shorter time period than the nominal duration of such a program (but in not less than three years of full-time study) because study courses completed in a junior college can be transferred. Such transference is possible if the requirements (aims, content, competence of teachers, etc.) for study courses in a junior college correspond to the requirements for study courses of the non-university level higher education study program.

### **Formal Adult Vocational Education and Training**

Formal adult vocational education and training programmes are registered with the Register of Studies and Training Programmes and is largely labour-market oriented. Labour-market vocational education and training is delivered on the basis of two-level vocational training curricula:

- Level 1 short course vocational training programmes lead to an initial qualification in a simple occupation or a permission to carry out certain functions or perform certain types of work; the duration of such programmes is 4–9 weeks;
- Level 2 vocational education and training programmes make up the larger part of labour market training programmes. The duration of training for persons with completed general education is at least 3 months.

Curriculum content in labour-market vocational education and training is defined by the qualification requirements for a particular occupation established in agreement with a relevant competent institution. Curricula may be supplemented by additional modules to meet employers' specific requirements with regard to the trainees' qualifications.

A full secondary education is the standard requirement for admission to advanced vocational and higher education institutions.

Graduates from advanced vocational studies were not awarded an academic qualification; they only acquired a professional qualification. A final examination or a diploma project is an obligatory part to be completed by all students who seek a qualification certificate (diploma) testifying to a successful completion of a study programme. Upon completion of the labour-market vocational training programmes included in the Register of Studies and Training Programmes learners are awarded a nationally-recognised certificate attesting to a qualification obtained or ability to perform a certain type of work.

## **Higher education and training**

Higher education programmes are provided by universities (as well as academies) and higher-education colleges (*Kolegijos*). Colleges offer non-university study programmes, while students at universities and academies pursue university studies. Higher education institutions can be public (state-run) and private. Private higher education is strongly state-regulated. The granting of professional degrees by private institutions is decided by the state. Institutions of university-level higher education are under the authority of the Research and Higher Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science, and the newly established sector of non-university, higher-education colleges (*Kolegijos*) (following the new 2000 Law on Higher Education) are regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science. Studies are organised over two semesters lasting approximately 20 weeks each.

In Lithuania, university-level higher education is provided by 22 higher-education institutions (14 universities, six academies, and two seminaries, seven non-state and 15 state). The academic status of an institution is largely determined by the relationship between the general education and professional training it offers and the scale of research conducted and is determined by the state.

## ***Admissions to Higher Education and Training***

The Brandos Atestatas (school leaving or Matura certificate) qualification or comparable qualification is required to gain access to higher education. Comparable qualifications include some qualifications obtained in vocational schools until 1994. It should be noted that those students who studied at vocational education and training schools and acquired vocational



qualification and secondary education (stage 3) were not awarded a separate document attesting to completion of secondary education (a *Brandos atestatas*) until 1994; they were only awarded a vocational qualification diploma. The only way to differentiate between stage 2 (those who acquired only a vocational qualification) and stage 3 (those who acquired a vocational qualification and secondary education) is by looking at the diploma supplement to see if that person studied subjects of general education. From 1994 onwards, graduates from vocational education and training schools who acquired a vocational qualification and secondary education receive both: a vocational qualification diploma and secondary school leaving diploma (*Brandos atestatas*).

## **Non-university level higher education and training**

The College (*Kolegija*) is a higher-education institution in which activities are directed toward applied research and/or professional art. Colleges train specialists-practitioners and can grant professional qualifications only on the basis of the authorisation issued by the Ministry of Education and Science. The study scope in colleges, as in universities, is measured by credits (see section 12.1 below). One national study credit is equal to 40 conditional hours or one conditional week of student's work. Non-university study comprises not less than 120 and not more than 160 credits. In establishing the duration of consecutive studies, the number of credits to be earned in one year is taken into account. One year daytime study scope is 40 credits and one year evening or correspondence study scope is 30 credits.

Non-university study programmes are comprised of modules. According to their content, modules are broken down into theoretical subjects in higher education and professional studies (not less than 30 credits), subjects devoted to obtaining a professional qualification (not less than 40 credits), and professional specialization subjects (not less than 10 credits). Not less than 20 credits are assigned to periods of professional practice and not less than six credits to a graduation project. Subject to co-ordination with universities, college study programmes may include modules corresponding to basic university studies.

### ***Awards attainable at the end of this cycle (non-university higher education):***

#### **Profesinio bakalauro diplomas (Profesinis bakalauras)**

The Profesinis Bakalauras was introduced in January 2007 in professional non-university level higher education and will facilitate, though not provide direct, access to the second cycle for graduates of the non-university sector. The holders of this qualification can be admitted to a Master degree study programme only after completion of additional courses, which should not exceed 80 national credits. During these courses, a person must acquire the knowledge and skills which were not obtained during non-university studies and which are necessary for successful studies at Master's degree level. If 80 credits are not sufficient to cover the differences, the student must enter a university-level undergraduate study programme. When a graduate of a non-university higher education study programme enters a university level undergraduate study programme, s/he usually has to study a shorter period of time than the nominal length of the aforementioned undergraduate studies. Only colleges that have successfully completed an accreditation procedure will be entitled to award this degree.

#### **Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (non-university)**

The Aukštojo mokslo diploma (Higher Education Diploma) certifies completion of non-university level higher education. All colleges previously awarded this higher education diploma, which attests to acquisition of a professional qualification. It does not give direct

access to the university level 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle studies (Master studies). Graduates awarded this qualification can enter university-level master studies only after they take additional courses. Non-university higher education studies can be transferred as an appropriate part of university first cycle or integrated studies on a course-by-course evaluation basis. It is important to note that a number of different types of Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas exist, each attesting to qualifications gained in the higher education and training system. Additional information on the range of Aukštojo mokslo diplomas can be found below:

### **Additional Information on Aukštojo mokslo diplomas**

#### **Before the 1991 reform:**

1. The Aukštojo Mokslo Diploma was granted after completion of a study program, belonging to the old soviet system of higher education (issued up until approximately 1995). The nominal duration of such programs was five years of full-time studies. Currently, such qualifications are equated in Lithuania to the *Magistras* awarded after completion of either university 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (Master's studies) or integrated studies (combining studies of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle). Holders of such qualifications have the right to enter university 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (doctoral) studies.

#### **After the 1991 reform:**

2. Following the Law on Higher Education of 2000, the Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas is awarded after completion of a non-university higher education program offered by colleges (*kolegija*). It does not give direct access to the university level 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle studies (Master studies). Graduates awarded this qualification can enter university-level Master studies only after they take additional courses. Non-university higher education studies can be transferred as an appropriate part of university first cycle or integrated studies on a course-by-course evaluation basis.
3. The Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas may also be granted after completion of undergraduate university-level studies when only a professional qualification (*profesine kvalifikacija*) is awarded. (According to the national legislation, after completion of the undergraduate university-level studies, the following qualifications can be awarded: a Bachelor degree; a Bachelor degree and a professional qualification; a professional qualification). In practice, holders of this type of aukštojo mokslo diplomas are admitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (university level Master studies).
4. This type of Aukštojo mokslo diplomas is awarded after five-six year consecutive studies combining the first cycle and second cycle level programmes (for example, in medicine) when a professional qualification is awarded. Not less than 180 national credits are required for completion of integrated studies when a professional qualification is awarded. Studies during the first four years (130 – 170 credits) are attributed to the first stage of undergraduate studies, and studies during the remaining one-two years (40-80 credits) are attributed to the second cycle studies. Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project. Holders of this award are admitted to the university 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle studies.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate among these types of diplomas because the wording of the title of the three diplomas is the same. The differentiation is important because the different types of *aukštojo mokslo diplomas* award different academic rights.

The first type of *aukštojo mokslo diplomas* is easy to recognise just by looking at the date. They were awarded until approximately 1995-1997. However, during the transitional period of the Lithuanian educational reform, which started in 1990, some institutions were still awarding type 1 *aukštojo mokslo diplomas*, while others had already started awarding type 3 *aukštojo mokslo diplomas*. In cases of *aukštojo mokslo diplomas* awarded between 1993 and 1997, it is necessary to contact the institution to clarify if the holder of such a diploma graduated from the old study program or from the new undergraduate university-level study program.

Type 2, 3 and 4 *aukštojo mokslo diplomas* can be distinguished by looking at the name of the institution and checking if it is a university level or a non-university level (college) institution. However, as a further complication some universities offer non-university level study programs and vice versa. In such cases it may be necessary to search for that particular study program at [www.aikos.smm.lt](http://www.aikos.smm.lt).

## **University-Level Higher Education and Training**

University study comprises three levels, leading to Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees. An undergraduate study programme at university level in Lithuania comprises 140 - 180 national credits and lasts between four and five years. Two thirds of the subjects have to be studied at the same higher-education institution.

### ***First cycle university-level studies***

The first cycle at university level leads to a Bachelor diploma, when a Bachelor (Bakalauras) degree and/or a professional qualification (profesinė kvalifikacija) is awarded or to an Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas when only a professional qualifications is awarded.

### ***Second cycle university-level studies***

Master degree programmes last for one-and-a-half to two years (60-80 national credits). To be admitted, students should hold a qualification obtained after completion of a university first cycle study programme or a comparable qualification. Studies lead to a Master (Magistras) degree and /or a professional qualification (profesinė kvalifikacija).

Special professional studies last for one to two years (40 to 80 national credits). To be admitted, students should hold a university first cycle or a comparable qualification. These studies prepare for activities requiring special practical abilities. The general requirements for special professional programmes are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. These studies lead to an Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas, which awards a professional qualification (profesinė kvalifikacija). Generally, a qualification obtained after this type of programme does not give the right to enter third cycle university (postgraduate) studies.

There are also Integrated (vientisosios) studies that combine university first and second cycles. Studies lead to a Master diploma when a Master (Magistras) degree is awarded or an Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas when a professional qualification (profesinė kvalifikacija) is awarded. When studies lead to the award of a professional qualification, they last for at least four and a half but not more than six years (180 to 240 national credits). When studies lead to the award of a Master's degree, they last for at least five, but not more than six years (200 to 240 national credits). The only exceptions in integrated studies are made in the fields of

medicine, odontology and veterinary medicine where studies may last no more than seven years (a maximum of 280 national credits). On completion of integrated studies, a Masters degree is awarded. Generally, a qualification obtained after completion of integrated studies gives the right to enter university third cycle.

### ***Third cycle university-level studies***

Residency (Rezidentūra) studies last from two to six years (80 to 240 national credits). They are designed exclusively for the training of specialists in the fields of medicine, odontology and veterinary medicine. To be admitted, students should hold an integrated study qualification, namely Doctor (Gydytojas); Medical Doctor (Medicinos gydytojas); Doctor Odontologist (Gydytojas odontologas/stomatologas); Veterinary Surgeon (Veterinarijos gydytojas) or a comparable qualification. On completion of studies, a Residency certificate (Rezidentūros pažymėjimas) in a special field is awarded.

Postgraduate art studies last for a maximum of two years (up to 80 national credits). They are designed to train higher education institution art teachers and specialized artists. To be admitted, students should hold a Master's degree awarded on completion of university second cycle studies or a comparable qualification in the area of arts. After the successful completion of the studies, the postgraduate Licentiate diploma in Art Studies (Meno licenciato diplomas) is awarded.

Doctoral studies last for three to four years. Studies consist of doctoral courses (at least 20 national credits), specific research activities and the preparation of a doctoral dissertation.

### ***Teacher Education***

A teaching qualification can be acquired after completion of non-university or university studies (when a professional qualification is awarded). Until 2009, the only requirements set are with regard to the level of education to be required by teachers. From 2009, only those who graduate from a study programme leading directly to a teaching qualification can be employed as teachers. Those with other qualifications will have to obtain a teaching qualification by completing a qualification course of 40 national credits in the field of psychology and teaching within one year.

### ***Awards attainable at the end of this cycle (university-level higher education)***

All first cycle university graduates have access to the second cycle. Not all second cycle qualifications give access to the third cycle; specialised professional studies do not give access to the third cycle.

### **First-cycle awards:**

#### **Aukštojo Mokslo Diplomas**

The Aukštojo Mokslo Diploma may be granted after completion of undergraduate university-level studies when only a professional qualification (profesine kvalifikacija) is awarded. (According to the national legislation, after completion of the undergraduate university-level studies, the following qualifications can be awarded: a Bachelor degree; a Bachelor degree and a professional qualification; a professional qualification). In practice, holders of this type of Aukštojo mokslo diplomas are admitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle (university level Master studies). Please note that Aukštojo mokslo diplomas may be awarded after completion of other types

of programmes. Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project or passing of final examinations. For a description, see the section on Aukštojo mokslo diplomas above.

### **Bakalauro diplomas (Bachelor diploma)**

Bachelor degrees normally involve four or five years of study. Programmes encompass three major strands, each comprising at least 30% of all credits taken; comprehensive humanitarian and social studies, the fundamentals of the chosen study area and specialised subject modules. Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project or passing of final examinations. The passing of state examinations is required if the profession in question is state regulated. Upon completion of basic studies lasting three and half to four years a Bachelor degree and sometimes a professional qualification, such as teacher, engineer, artist, etc is awarded.

Additionally, five-six year consecutive studies combining the Bachelor and Masters level programmes (for example, in medicine) may be pursued. The duration of integrated studies are no more than six study years (240 credits) and no less than five study years (200 credits). Studies during the first four years (160 credits) are attributed to the first stage of undergraduate studies, and studies during the remaining one-two years (40-80 credits) are attributed to the Masters stage of sequential studies. After successful completion of such studies the professional qualification and (or) Masters degree is awarded.

### **Second cycle awards**

#### **Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (awarded after completion of specialised professional studies)**

Upon completion of an undergraduate study programme, graduates may pursue specialised professional studies (lasting one-two years and comprising 40-80 credits). Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project. After completion of these studies, a professional qualification is obtained without the right to enter university 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle studies.

#### **Aukštojo mokslo diplomas (awarded after completion of integrated studies when a professional qualification is awarded)**

This type of Aukštojo mokslo diplomas is awarded after five-six year consecutive studies combining the first cycle and second cycle level programmes (for example, in medicine) when a professional qualification is awarded. Not less than 180 national credits are required for completion of integrated studies when a professional qualification is awarded. Studies during the first four years (130 – 170 credits) are attributed to the first stage of undergraduate studies, and studies during the remaining one-two years (40-80 credits) are attributed to the second cycle studies. Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project.

#### **Magistro diplomas (Masters diploma) awarded after completion of integrated studies**

Degree awarded after five-six year consecutive studies combining the first cycle and the second cycle level programmes (for example, in medicine) when a Master degree is awarded. Not less than 200 and not more than 280 national credits are required for completion of

integrated studies when a Master degree is awarded. Studies during the first four years (130 – 170 credits) are attributed to the first stage of undergraduate studies, and studies during the remaining one-two years (40-80 credits) are attributed to the second cycle studies.

### **Magistro diplomas awarded after completion of graduate (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle) studies**

Diploma awarding a Master degree after completion of 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle studies. (lasting one and half – two years and comprising 60 – 80 credits). Courses consist of more in-depth theory and special subject modules. Completion of the programme includes the preparation of a thesis or a diploma project. A professional title may also be granted, with regulated professions requiring a pass in a state examination.

### **Third cycle awards**

#### **Daktaro diplomas (Doctorate)**

Doctoral studies can be started if the candidate has already obtained a Magistras (Masters) degree or equivalent higher education qualification. Programmes take no more than four years, of which one and a half to two years are spent on doctoral courses. The doctoral courses comprise up to five subjects and final examinations, each subject comprising at least 45 hours. Upon completion, a doctoral thesis must be publicly defended. Doctoral studies may be jointly organised by higher education and research institutions. Not less than 20 credit points have to be earned by a doctoral student during the stage of doctoral courses. Some universities allocate credit points to the whole doctoral programme integrating study and research. In addition, doctoral students have to deliver lectures and conduct seminars to acquire lecturing skills.

#### **Meno licenciato diplomas**

Meno aspirantūra studies are designed for the preparation of lecturers in higher-education institutions in the field of Arts and for the specialisation of artists or defense and preparation of some art project. After the successful completion of studies the qualification of *meno licenciatas* can be obtained.

**Rezidentūros pažymėjimas** (Residency) studies are committed for the practical training of medical doctors after completion of medical studies.

#### **Pažymėjimas (Certificate of habilitated doctor)**

This is the highest academic degree in Lithuania, awarded by institutes of science and research. This degree is awarded to holders of a Doctorate who have published significant work in relevant Lithuanian or international journals, as well as a monograph or a habilitation thesis.

### **Bologna reforms**

#### **Three-Cycle System**

In 1999, Lithuania signed the Bologna Joint Declaration. Following the introduction of the Law on Education in 2000, the Bologna Declaration was ratified, the result of which was the formal introduction of a two-cycle Bachelor and Masters degree structure, followed by a doctoral cycle. This is in place for most degree programmes with the exception of law, and medicine and related fields, which involve a long, single-cycle integrated study period. In reality, the three-cycle system had been operating since 1993.

A national framework of qualifications is currently being developed and is expected to be completed in 2008. A pilot project financed by the European Structural Funds was launched in 2005. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the Ministry of Education and Science are authorities in charge of fulfilling this task. The Development Plan for 2006-2010 aims for the implementation of a qualifications framework for higher education compatible with the national qualifications framework for Life Long Learning.

### ***Quality Assurance***

In 1998, the Ministry of Education and Science declared quality assurance a central priority of the education reform and the development of the national education monitoring, appraisal and examination system has been designated as the key priority in implementing the reform. For more on quality assurance see Section 11.1 below.

### ***Recognition and Mobility***

The Diploma Supplement has been fully implemented. It has been available upon request since 2005 and mandatory since the 2006 academic year. All students of the first and the second cycle graduating in 2007 should receive a Diploma Supplement. It follows the recommended UNESCO and Council of Europe template. It is delivered automatically free of charge in the English and Lithuanian languages to all graduates at all higher education institutions. Doctoral students do not receive a Diploma Supplement.

## **Quality Assurance**

### ***School***

Inspection and supervision of teaching activity is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science at different administrative levels – central, county or local in accordance with the Supervision Plan of the Implementation of the General Policy of Education drawn up by the Ministry. Since 2000, the Ministry of Education and Science has been issuing annual reports entitled “Lithuanian Education” (Lietuvos švietimas) on the state of the education system. These publications, based on descriptions of key indicators and respective research and statistical data, present an annual outline and analysis of education within the context of reform.

### ***Higher Education***

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE) is an independent public expert agency established by the Ministry of Education and Science in 1995. The Centre implements the external quality assurance policy in research and higher education in Lithuania.

The main function of the Centre is to assist higher-education institutions to assure quality and to constantly improve it. The Centre fulfils this function through:

- Assessment of the quality of research and higher education;
- Assessment of the qualifications concerning higher education; and
- Provision of information on higher education systems and qualifications recognition.

The Centre is the national ENIC-NARIC.

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA* have been translated into the Lithuanian language and introduced to higher education institutions. Some universities have already been evaluated by organisations, such as European Universities Association. The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is making preparations for its evaluation in 2007–2008, in preparation for full membership of ENQA. The Centre has been

a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN).

## National credit system

Lithuania operates its own national credit system in higher education in both the university and non-university sector. One national credit is equal to 1.5 ECTS credit. The *Law on Higher Education* states that the average amount of one academic year in full-time studies corresponds to 40 credits. The national credit system is applied to the Bachelor and the Master cycles and non-university sector study programmes. Doctoral programmes also have to allocate credits according to the *Decree of the Government on Doctoral Studies* of June 2002. The use of the national credit system is an essential element for a study programme accreditation and registration.

The national credit in Lithuania is based on a student's workload (contact hours, independent study, exercises, research and/or other assignments) and refers to 40 notional student's work hours per week. 1 Lithuanian credit is equal to one study week. One academic year is equal to 40 national credits or 1600 hours of a student's work.

Institutions use ECTS as a transfer system for exchange purposes on a voluntary basis. A multiplying factor 1.5 is used to calculate correlation between the national and ECTS credit. For accumulation purposes, national credits are used. However, alongside the national credits ECTS credits are indicated on the Diploma Supplement.

## The grading system

A grading system of 1-10 is used in all levels of the education system:

Pass/fail	Literal Evaluation	10-point evaluation	Percentage of maximum amount of knowledge demanded	Approximate equivalent of 5-point grading system
Pass	Excellent	10	92-100%	5
	Very good	9	82-91%	5 (-)
	Good	8	74-81%	4
	Highly Satisfactory	7	66-73%	4 (-)
	Satisfactory	6	58-65%	3
	Sufficient	5	50-57%	3 (-)
Fail*	Insufficient	4	40-49%	



Fail*	Highly Insufficient	3	30-39%	2
	Poor	2	20-29%	1
	Very Poor	1	0-19%	

4 is a fail mark in higher education. In secondary education, however, 4 is the lowest passing mark and 3 is the first failing mark.

### ***Other main grading systems***

The assessment in Matura national-level examinations is norm-referenced within a range of 100 (highest) to 1 (lowest) (all grades are passing). It is designed to determine individual student performance in comparison to others. Students who earn 50 to 100 points graduate with distinction.

Institutions may also use the pass/fail system. Examinations and work defence evaluations, as a rule, are graded. For the courses that do not end with an examination, the pass system is used to test if students have earned the credits allocated to it. Students succeed when they prove they have assimilated not less than 50% of the required knowledge.

### **List of Recognised Vocational and Higher Education Institutions**

The following is a link to recognised vocational and higher education institutions:

<http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/webdriver.exe?kalba=en&Mlval=/Institucijos.html>

### **Further information**

#### **Special provisions for recognition:**

The Lisbon Recognition Convention and the latter Supplementary Documents and the main principles and instruments for recognition are fully in force.

For the exercise of a profession: Competent bodies (ministries, agencies, associations) deal with professional recognition. For the lists of professions and competent authorities please visit: <http://www.profesijos.lt/>; <http://www.skvc.lt/>

Link to sample transcripts:

<http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/webdriver.exe?kalba=en&Mlval=/Pazymejimai.html>

Link to national bodies:

<N:\COUNTRY EDUCATION PROFILES\Lithuania>List of Administrative bodies.doc>