

Education and Career guidance in Lithuania

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Education and Culture

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Education in Lithuania

Education is an essential element in the implementation of the Lithuanian lifelong learning strategy. According to Eurostat data, the rate of lifelong learning in Lithuania has grown from 4.5% in 2003 to 6.5%. The average of lifelong learning in the whole EU reaches 9.9%.



There is a thorough legal framework regulating education in Lithuania: Law of Education, Law of Higher Education, Law of Vocational Education and Training, Law of Special Education, Law of Non-Formal Adult Education, etc.



The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the formulation and implementation of state education, science and study policy. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for organising labour market vocational training.



The total number of persons who acquired an educational background and vocational education in 2004 may be split as follows: 41% of all graduates acquired a general background, 35% a secondary background, and 24% a university background. In 2004, graduates of higher education made up 21.8% of all the employed population*.



Every resident of Lithuania is granted the right to learn and acquire an educational background and qualification. For children under 16 years of age, primary and basic education is compulsory.



In 2003, 72.8% of basic education graduates continued learning at a secondary education level, another 27.2% reached vocational qualification at vocational education and training institutions. Also 68.8% of graduates of secondary education entered higher education, the latter for a qualified worker's diploma.



Educational institutions in Lithuania may be split into state, municipality and private. Studies at state and municipality general education and vocational training institutions are free of charge. Higher education studies are free of charge for the best-performing students. Fees for studies at private education institutions are subject to the regulations of the institution.

* According to data of Statistics Lithuania.



The Lithuanian education system and levels

See Table 1 (Page 15)

Level 0 (ISCED 0)

Pre-school education

The task of pre-school education is to help children satisfy their natural, cultural, social, ethnic and cognitive needs. Pre-school education is provided in the family and based on the request of the child's parents (or foster parents) at nurseries, nursery-kindergartens and kindergartens. These institutions can be attended by children aged of 1–5 or 6 years.

Pre-primary preparatory education

Pre-primary preparatory education is a 1-year programme, intended to help the child prepare for learning at a primary education institution. The provision of pre-primary education to a child commences in the calendar year when the child turns 6 years of age. Pre-primary education may begin earlier if the child has achieved the maturity required for this kind of education, but not earlier than 5 years of age. This level of education may be provided upon the request of the child's parents (or foster parents). This level of education is organised by kindergartens, primary and other schools.

Level 1 (ISCED 1)

General primary education

Children aged 6/7 – 10/11 years attend general primary education, which is provided by pre-school kindergartens and primary schools. Primary education is also accessible to children with special needs. The purpose of primary education is to provide the child with the basics of moral, cultural and social maturity, to acquire elementary literacy skills and to assist in getting prepared for further schooling in accordance with the curriculum of general primary education. The curriculum duration is 4 years (1–4 grades). Upon its completion, the primary education is acquired.

Level 2 (ISCED 2)

General lower-secondary (basic) education

Having attained a primary education, schoolchildren continue learning according to lower-secondary (basic) education curricula. The purpose of this is to develop the fundamentals of moral, social-cultural and civic maturity, to help the person to acquire general literacy skills and the basics of technological literacy, to nurture national awareness and to develop aspirations and self-determination in the further pursuit of education. Lower-secondary education lasts for 6 years (5–10 grades).

Lower-secondary education is provided by general basic schools, youth schools, special children's education and care residence, hospital and sanatorium schools. General lower-secondary education services are also accessible to children with special needs. Those schoolchildren who fail to adapt at general education schools or lack motivation

to study at general or vocational education institutions can attend youth schools. These institutions provide lower-secondary education services and primary job skills, eg pre-vocational training.

Stage I of vocational training

For young people over 14 years of age who have not completed lower-secondary education but seek to acquire a vocational qualification 2-year training studies are provided. Upon completion of this training, graduates get a vocational qualification certificate.

Those learners who have already completed 5 years of lower-secondary education (nine grades) and prefer to acquire a vocational qualification as well as lower-secondary education, can choose separate 3-year programmes. Upon the successful completion of studies, graduates are awarded vocational qualification certificates and basic school-leaving certificates.

Level 3 (ISCED 3)

Upper-secondary education

The curriculum of upper-secondary education is intended for learners who have acquired a general basic background and wish to go for upper-secondary education. Upper-secondary education lasts for 2 years (11–12 grades).

The content of the upper secondary education curricula consists of two parts: general disciplines, compulsory all learners and other selected disciplines, depending on their chosen secondary education profile. Schoolchildren are free to choose one of the four available profiles: humanities, science, technology (at vocational schools and technological gymnasia) and fine arts (at art gymnasia, the National Art School and conservatoires).

A general upper-secondary education may be acquired at secondary schools, gymnasiums, vocational schools and other institutions. Adults may acquire a general education at general training schools for adults (training centres) and at adult departments of general education schools (adult classes). There are also special schools intended for disabled children. The same type of special school is also attached to care institutions for disturbed children.

Upon the completion of upper-secondary education and the passing of maturity examinations, graduates attain an upper-secondary background and are awarded a maturity certificate and acquire the right to try higher education or study according to the programmes of stage IV of vocational training.

Stage II of vocational training

The second stage of vocational training is intended for young people from the age of 16 who already have a general basic background and seek to acquire a vocational qualification. The duration of the training course is 2 years. Upon completion, graduates acquire a qualified worker's diploma. Stage II of basic vocational training is also available to persons with special needs.

Stage III of vocational training

Stage III of vocational training, providing a secondary education and a professional qualification, is intended for young people from the age of 16 who have already acquired a general basic education. The duration of the training course is 3 years. Upon the successful completion of studies, graduates acquire a secondary education background and a qualified worker's diploma.

Level 4 (ISCED 4)

Stage IV of vocational training

The fourth stage of vocational training is intended for young people with an upper-secondary educational background who seek to acquire a vocational qualification. The duration of the training course is 1–2 years. Upon the successful completion of the course, graduates acquire a qualified worker's diploma.

The basic vocational training according to level IV curricula may also be provided to persons from the age of 18 with special needs. The training programme also lasts 1-2 years.

Level 5 (ISCED 5)

Post-secondary education curricula

The task for post-secondary studies was to help the person acquire an advanced background and a professional qualification and to get prepared to enter the labour market and participate in the social life of the country. Post-secondary education studies were offered to those individuals who had acquired secondary education. Admission to post-secondary studies ended in 2003 as the establishment of college studies started in 2000.

Level 6 (ISCED 5)

Higher education studies

University and non-university higher education is provided in Lithuania. University studies provide a higher education level and qualification as well as a study degree, based on a theoretical background and scientific research. Non-university studies are aimed at applied research and practical aspects based on vocational qualification.

In Lithuania, there are public and private higher education institutions. There are also two types of higher education institutions – universities and colleges. The higher schools may be entered by persons who have graduated from secondary schools or gymnasias and have been awarded a certificate of maturity.

Colleges offer predominantly non-university study curricula and vocational studies orientated towards practical activity. Upon completion, a higher educational background and a professional qualification are attained.

Universities offer predominantly university studies, perform scientific research, organise master's or post-graduate studies (Doctor's degree) and/or develop a high level of professional creative art activities and offer post-graduate art programmes.

Bachelor studies – are the first stage in coherent university and non-university studies, which are designed to give the benefit of theoretical fundamentals of vocation and to form vocational skills for self-sufficient work practice. Undergraduate studies can be entered by persons already having a secondary education. The duration of these studies can be 3–5 years. Upon successful completion of undergraduate studies, a Bachelor's degree or a vocational qualification is acquired.

Master studies encompass the second stage of university studies for advancing a person's professional and scientific qualifications and preparing for independent work in the area of science or art requiring knowledge and skills that are more sophisticated. Master's studies can be tried for by those already having completed bachelor or integrated studies. The Master's programme lasts from 1.5 to 2 years. Upon its completion, post graduates acquire a Master's degree.

Integrated studies are studies for acquiring an advanced professional qualification and they combine in a consecutive manner the university studies of stage I and II. They last 4.5–5 years and provide a Master's degree and/or vocational qualification.

Specialised professional studies are offered to those who wish to get better prepared for work requiring special practical skills. Studies may be joined by students with the basic university background. These studies are intended for acquiring a certain specialised professional qualification and last 1–2 years.

Level 7 (ISCED 6)

Doctoral programmes

A doctoral programme covers the third (highest) stage of university studies devoted to preparing scientific staff. Upon the completion of a Master's programme, the duration of the doctoral program does not exceed 4 years.

Post graduates study according to the individual doctoral programme curriculum, and upon completion, they prepare and officially defend a Doctor's (PhD) thesis to acquire a Doctor's (PhD) degree.

Post graduate art studies

A post graduate art programme covers the third stage of university studies and is devoted to the preparation of individuals to teach at art schools and specialise in creative art activity. The duration of post graduate art studies does not exceed 2 years. The studies are completed upon defending a thesis – a developed art design project.

Post graduate residency studies

Residency studies are the third stage of university studies helping those who have acquired professional qualifications in the areas of study defined by the Government, to prepare for taking on independent practical activity.

Non-formal education

If requested, the organised education system may offer different forms of non-formal education provided by art, sports, languages, technical and other schools, courses or other extra-curricular classes.

Non-formal children's education is provided by music, art, sports schools, education centres focused on the development of children's skills, the Lithuanian Youth Technical Creativity Palace, creative work centres, clubs, Saturday and Sunday schools for national minorities, etc. The purpose of non-formal children's education is to meet schoolchildren's cognitive, educational and self-expression needs and help them to grow into active members of society.

Non-formal adult education is provided by adult training centres, popular higher schools, teachers' in-service training institutions, different courses, etc.

Labour market vocational training

The purpose of labour market training is to help people within a comparatively short period (up to 6 months) to acquire a marketable professional qualification. For persons wishing to be retrained or improve their qualifications, different training institutions may offer a number of training programmes.

The programmes offered cover all areas of economic activity. The basic groups of the training programmes are as follows: handicrafts, wholesale and retail sales, accounting and tax, management and administration, work organisation, computer literacy, mechanics and machine shop works, electricity and power, motor vehicles, food, textiles, garment and footwear production, leather and wood processing, construction and civil engineering,

hospitals, restaurants and public catering, travelling, tourism, entertainment, home services, hairdresser's and beauty parlours, transport services.

Training services are intended for persons having at least the basic (10 grades) or the secondary (12 grades) background. The minimum age limit for admission is 18 years (in certain cases the limit may be reduced to 16 years).

Labour market training in Lithuania is supervised by the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. This organisation is also in charge of developing vocational training programmes and providing actual training services at its established labour market training centers able to offer over 400 training programmes. Each year, the 15 labour market centres provide training services to about 20,000-25,000 persons. The majority of trainees are directed by the labour exchange or employers; however, a number of people come on their own initiative, too. A marketable profession may be acquired in the following ways:

- Upon registration with the labour exchange, the labour exchange specialists may direct the person to undertake training according to the programme of vocational training financed from the funds of the labour exchange;
- The person may be directed to seek training under the labour market vocational training programme by his employer, who will also pay for such training;
- The labour market training centres or other training institution providing labour market vocational training services may be approached individually, in which case the costs of training shall be assumed by the person himself.



Career guidance in Lithuania

Career guidance covers information, counselling and guidance services helping persons in different age categories to choose their own pursuits in the area of education, training and employment and to undertake an active role in the development of their own professional career. Career guidance in Lithuania accommodates the same trends prevailing in Europe: vocational guidance is being recognised as a basic element of the lifelong learning strategy and a fundamental part of employment policy.

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The formation and development of the career guidance system in Lithuania is under the responsibility of two executive authority institutions of the Republic of Lithuania – the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In 2003, these institutions approved a strategy of vocational guidance aimed at facilitating the development of the career guidance system and services. This strategy represents the main document based on which the Lithuanian career guidance system is formed and developed.

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To ensure the accessibility of career information and counselling services, a special focus is put on career guidance information systems. Therefore, Lithuania, like other EU Member states, has joined a single European information system, comprised of EURES (Search for Jobs in Europe) and PLOTEUS (Training Opportunities in Europe). The Ministry of Education and Science has initiated the creation of open vocational information, through the counselling and guidance system AIKOS, which makes available data on education, statistics and labour registers to a wide range of customers and offers relevant information to career guidance services providers. Moreover, the providers of career guidance services have set up their own career guidance information systems.



Career guidance service providers

Career Information Points

Career Information Points provide vocational information services: information on issues of career choices, training and employment opportunities in the country and abroad and on the situation within the labour market and vocations.

Career Information Points are set up at general education and training schools, youth centres, education centres, non-formal development institutions, etc. At present, the network of Career Information Points is being expanded.

Persons applying to Career Information Points may obtain information stored on web-based vocational guidance databases and scrutinise information available on computer files, videotapes and in various publications. CIPs also make available services provided by vocational advisors.

The services are intended for learners at general education schools, their parents and teachers.

Pedagogical-psychological services

Pedagogical-psychological services perform psychological and pedagogical assessments of the child, advice parents and teachers on issues related to learning, behaviour, emotions and communication problems of learners with special needs or psychological difficulties, and provide recommendations on their further development. Psychologists of some pedagogical-psychological services also provide learners with the services of vocational information and counselling.

The pedagogical-psychological services report directly to municipality administrations; among the service staff there are special and social pedagogues, speech therapists and psychologists.

The services are provided to learners, their parents and teachers.

Career planning centre under the Lithuanian Youth Technical Creativity Palace

www.rmtkr.lt

The purpose of the career planning centre under the Lithuanian Youth Technical Creativity Palace is to establish the background and organise vocational information and career planning activities within education institutions.

The career planning centre is in charge of coordinating the activities of career information points and providing them with any required information and methodological material. The centre also provides services to vocational information specialists – it develops and implements qualification improvement programmes for them, holds seminars and training courses.

The centre also collects and provides information on various professions, training establishments, training and qualification improvement opportunities for vocational informa-

tion specialists, counsels learners, their parents and teachers on issues of vocational choice and training specialisation, arranges workshops on career planning and vocational information. For junior grade learners the centre helps to identify what faculties and vocations they should develop by way of taking up extra-curricular activities.

The services are available to learners in general education schools and their parents, pedagogues, vocational advisors, social pedagogues, school psychologists, and to any other persons interested in vocational information and career planning.

University career centres

University career centres are generally represented by university subdivisions functioning independently and dealing with existing and future students' career planning, vocational choices and employment. Such subdivisions are established at the main universities of the country.

Career centres of different universities provide counselling to future students of universities on issues of vocational choices, provide information to students and graduates as well as Lithuanian and foreign companies on professional career, career planning, and human resources management, practical training and the employment of young specialists, watch graduates' career development and counsel on the job search strategy and tactics. Some career centres are oriented more towards the development of students' career planning skills, the provision of information on possible job search methods and the arrangement of practical career planning and job search classes; whereas other centres, in addition to the above-mentioned activities, also perform the role of students' employment mediators, ie they cooperate with employers, collect and provide information on job vacancies and, together with collaborating enterprises, organise careers fairs and tender selections for future employees.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority

www.ldrmt.lt

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is the largest organisation engaged in the active development of labour market vocational training, information and counselling. The Authority has seven territorial labour market training and counselling services in the largest cities of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Alytus and Utena) and representative offices in Ignalina, Naujoji Akmenė and Tauragė. Their activities cover the entire country.

Priority customer groups for labour market training and counselling services are the unemployed and senior-grade learners at general education schools. They also expand their work with groups of persons with special labour market needs – existing and former convicts, the disabled, soldiers, the long-term unemployed and immigrants. They employ highly qualified and experienced counsellors with a background in psychology.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority develops labour market integration, career planning, social adaptation and professional and personal growth programmes, adapts, standardises and implements diagnostic methodologies, continuously improves counsellors' qualifications, and prepares and implements programmes intended for persons with special labour market needs. Each year it provides group and individual services to over 70,000 persons who fail to adapt in the labour market, or for various reasons have lost their competitiveness and self-confidence after a long period of unemployment and therefore drift and suffer from apathy. They are encouraged to self-actualise, to recover from the psychological and social disjuncture, to evaluate their own faculties and vocations, to choose a profession and to plan a career.

Counselling services may be also provided online at www.darborinka.lt making available online counselling on all issues of concern with respect to vocational choices, self-determination, training, study specialisation, career planning and job search. It is also possible to run tests on the website, obtain and scrutinise their results and, should more comprehensive counselling be required, apply directly to the counsellors of the territorial labour market training and counselling services.

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange

www.ldb.lt

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is an institution under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and operating on a territorial principle. The 46 territorial Lithuanian labour exchanges provide services of vocational information and employment counselling and mediation to job seekers and refer them to the territorial labour market training and counselling services for psychological counselling.

The Labour Exchange is expanding its network of open information centres. In order to provide territorial labour exchange vocational guidance services, there are 5 job centres (in Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Jonava, Radviliškis and Vilnius), 6 youth employment centres (in Alytus, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Šiauliai and Vilnius), 50 information and counselling centres and a vocational information centre (in Vilnius).

Private institutions

Career guidance services may also be provided by private entities. At present, there are approximately 30 private counselling organisations, providing services in personnel selection are job search. Some of them also provide career guidance.



Euroguidance Centre

www.euroguidance.lt

The Euroguidance Centre is one of the members of the Network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance, which is financed by the European Commission. This particular network unites 65 closely cooperating centres in 31 European countries.

The centre works with career advisors and counsellors, career guidance specialists and institutions engaged in the area of career guidance.

The basic activities in which the centre specialises cover the drafting and publication of information on training and study opportunities in Europe and methodological information for career guidance employees, organising training seminars for vocational information and counselling specialists, as well as the administration and publication of information on various electronic career guidance means available. The Euroguidance Centre is also involved in other activities aimed at the development of the vocational guidance system in Lithuania.

Starting from 2001, the Euroguidance Centre has published an annual publication under the title “Guide of Professions” which is intended for learners at schools, their parents and teachers, as well as career guidance specialists. This is a comprehensive publication providing information on the professions available and the ways to acquire them. The publication provides descriptions of professions, specifies personal requirements for each particular profession and outlines the professional perspectives. “Guide of Professions” also presents the latest information on the admission requirements of educational institutions per particular vocation based on admission data to vocational training and higher non-university schools for each year. Readers of the publication may also find information on university studies available, studies abroad and career planning. “Guide of Professions” is beneficial not only to those who intend to take up vocational training or studies, but also to those who wish to specialise in the education provided by general schools. An electronic version of the publication with expanded profession search possibilities is also available.

The Euroguidance Centre has its own website at www.euroguidance.lt where visitors may find information relevant both to young people and to specialists of vocational information and guidance. The website also provides the latest electronic version of the “Guide of Professions”.



Virtual career information tools, recommended by the Euroguidance Centre

Ploteus

On the initiative of the European Commission, the World Wide Web portal *Ploteus* (<http://europa.eu.int/ploteus>) has been established to provide information on opportunities for people from Europe to take up studies in other member states of the European Union. Visitors may also find information on different countries of Europe, their education systems and study opportunities. The portal gives links to the websites of numerous European training institutions. A Lithuanian version of the portal is also available.

The Guide to the World of Occupations

A portal under the title “The Guide to the World of Professions“ (www.occupationsguide.cz/en/portal) will provide about 700 illustrated descriptions of occupations and guide on how to choose the best profession responding most adequately to a person’s vocation or faculties. The guide is intended for those who want to choose a particular occupation or find a job. The information is available in Lithuanian.

On the Move

On the Move (www.onthemove-eu.hi.is) is an interactive and interesting web-based program intended for young people considering their mobility opportunities in other European states. It is not a database but rather a dynamic careers guidance tool, which can be used as a source of information for those contemplating their study or employment opportunities abroad.

On the Move is a joint product of partners involved in the areas of youth information, guidance and counselling from all over Europe and, therefore, it is presented in different languages. The Lithuanian version of the program is also available.

Estia

Estia (www.estia.educ.goteborg.se) is a web portal encompassing 25 European states and providing links to national education and labour market websites. The portal is designed for the purpose of encouraging customers to use the information available on studies, jobs and the labour market and enhancing the intercultural awareness of careers guidance specialists and experts. The information is available in English.

Fit for Europe

Fit for Europe (<http://europe-online.universum.de>) is a web-based database providing important information on learning, study and careers opportunities in Europe. Visitors may also find information on education systems, remote training, recognition of qualifications, employment opportunities and living conditions, as well as other general information on European states. The portal also contains a language test. The information is available in English, French, German and other languages.

Table 1.

The Education system in Lithuania

