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BE German Community

General Education

In Belgium's German-speaking Community (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens, or DG), education is compulsory from age 5, but most children begin attending kindergarten (Kindergarten) from age 3. It has its own network of school system, including Kindergärten (pre-primary education), Primarschulen (primary schools), Sekundarschulen (secondary schools).

Primary education starts at age 6 and lasts for six years, covering grades 1 to 6. The curriculum includes German language, mathematics, natural and social sciences, music, physical education, and introductory foreign language (usually French). Instruction is conducted in German, with strong emphasis on multilingualism and cross-border cultural awareness. After successfully completing primary education, pupils receive a certificate Abschlusszeugnis der Primarschule that allows them to transition into secondary education.

Secondary education is divided into two cycles: the first stage (years 1–2), which is a common core, and the second stage (years 3–6), which is divided into four streams: general, technical, artistic, and vocational. General education prepares students for higher education, while technical and artistic programs combine academic and practical subjects. The vocational stream is focused on direct entry to the job market, though it can also lead to further education. At the end of upper secondary, students receive a Diplom der Oberstufe der Sekundarstufe, which grants access to higher education or vocational specialization.

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education offers practical and career-oriented pathways, beginning in the second cycle of secondary school. It includes both full-time and part-time systems, the latter combining school-based instruction with on-the-job training (duales System). Vocational programs are available in fields such as carpentry, mechanics, nursing, and retail. Students acquire both general education and vocational qualifications, and may receive a Berufsausbildungszeugnis or vocational diploma. Those who complete additional general education subjects can also earn a diploma qualifying them for higher education. Close cooperation with local businesses ensures strong alignment with regional labor market needs.

Higher Education

The German-speaking Community does not operate a full university system. Its only higher education institution, the Autonome Hochschule in der DG (Autonomous University of Applied Sciences), offers professional bachelor's degrees in fields such as education, nursing, and social work. Students seeking academic bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees typically study at universities in Flanders, Wallonia, Germany, or other countries. The community facilitates this through support services and scholarships. Higher education is structured according to the Bologna Process, ensuring compatibility and mobility within the European Higher Education Area.

Higher Education Qualifications

- **Bachelor**

First cycle

Level 6

Level 6

The bachelor programmes offered in the German-speaking Community prepare students for the exercise of a specific profession, most of which are regulated professions: pre-primary or primary school teacher, nurse, social worker, and accountant. They focus on professional practice.

Rights Granted

No master programmes are offered in the German-speaking Community. Academic rights granted depend on the regulations of the higher education institutions outside of the German-speaking Community. In the Flemish and French Community, graduates are most often admitted to master programmes (level 7) if a bridging programme (45-90 ECTS) is completed.

Recognition Status

Accreditation is not mandatory according to the legal framework. The higher education institution evaluates the quality of its training, research and continuing education activities at least every five years in accordance with European requirements, if possible in co-operation with other Belgian or foreign higher education institutions, universities or third-party institutions. It examines the extent to which the university structure, methods and results of the education, research and training activities are in line with the objectives of the education project, consults with the employers of graduates and makes proposals for the future development of the university.

Other Information

website of AHS Ostbelgien: <https://www.ahs-ostbelgien.be/>

<https://enic-naric.net/page-Belgium-German-Speaking-Community>

Useful Links

- [Ministry of the German-speaking Community, Department VET and Organisation of Education](#)
- [Belgium German Speaking Community profile on ENIC/NARIC portal](#)

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