

Education in the Republic of Albania

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
Rruga e Durrësit 23, Tirana, Albania
Tel: (00355) 42 25987 Fax: (00355) 42 32002

Principles and general objectives of education

The education system in the Republic of Albania is under the jurisdiction Albanian Parliament. The education system and the right to education is based on and defined by the Main Constitutional Provisions, which proclame that education is a national priority.

In the Constitution of the Republic of Albania it is stated that: "Citizens of the Republic of Albania enjoy equal rights to be educated in all levels of education stated by this law, nevertheless their social status, nationality, language, gender, race, political convictions, health and economic level (Article 3, law for preuniversity education system). According to law, 8- year schools education is compulsory . The pupil must be in school up to 16 years old" (Article 8). "In compliance with the law, the members of national minorities have the possibility to teach and learn in their own language, to learn about their history and culture in the framework of school curricula" (Article 10).

The general principles and objectives of education include:

- equal rights to education for all citizens, encompassing primary, general and certain vocational education;
- creating conditions for complete personal development, and offering educational opportunities appropriate to the contemporary requirements of young people's development;
- promotion and modernization of educational content in accordance with contemporary social requirements, including scientific achievements and information technology in instruction;
- conforming vocational education with the guidelines of social development and changes in work and production sectors;
- providing conditions for lifelong education;
- increasing education quality and efficiency.

Current educational priorities and concerns

The development of the Republic of Albania, in particular economic, technological, scientific and other reforms, requires further adjustment of education to social needs and establishment and conception of education policy between now and 2000.

Taking into consideration the constitutional orientation according to which the state shall regulate and provide aims and guidelines for development of the economy, science and technology, as well as

the conditions for realization of rights of the citizens and general interests in the field of education, the development of education is an integral part of the total development of the country.

Further development of the education system is based on its cause-and-effect connection with the complete cultural, economic and political development of the country. In spite of all that, the significance of education in demographic, environmental, economic and cultural development has been taken into consideration. This is particularly important in primary education in order to mitigate the factors of demographic depopulation, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas. The increase in quality and rationalization of education at all levels, the greatest success and efficiency of the education system, greater engagement of assets allocated (appropriated) by the users themselves in the process of education are the requirements imposed by the further education development programme.

Further development and enhancement of the education system have two primary directions: education development in the field of information systems and its introduction into the educational process to a greater extent; and, also, a more intensive learning of foreign languages. The aim of forthcoming reforms in education concerns the achievement of a better and higher quality of education as well as the promotion and spreading of environmental studies. In providing the required conditions for realization of such an aim, the education authorities have envisaged special in-service teacher training and education.

The reforms in educational system occurring in Albania during 1992-98 included certain innovations of curricula, new solutions in the domain of foreign language study, school management, school year, evaluation of teachers' work, etc. were introduced and defined. The aim of these innovations has been to provide the necessary preconditions that would enable the education system to be in the function of global cultural development as well as of the economic reproduction and total progress and development of the entire community. In the context of difficult financial conditions in which education has also been subjected to some inconvenient circumstances, it was necessary to find out, first of all, the best solutions for regular functioning of the system.

Innovations of the curricula for primary and secondary education have been applied from the 1997-98 school year. First of all, this process enabled the rationalization and reduction of curricula by this process in order to provide greater prospects for the teaching process, and rationality of education and its efficiency.

Concerning pre-school education, on 1995 was established the application of the new law of pre-university education, where the children age for entrance in the pre-school establishments (kindergarten) was from 1 to 3 years of age. Almost all 5 year children are in those schools and only 80-90% of childrens 3-4 years old are in pre-schools.

In primary education the basic structure and concept have been kept compulsory lasting eight years for all children 6-14 years old. The process of modernization of curricula and the educational process in primary school started in 1993 and was continued later on. From the 1997-98 school year, certain innovations were applied in schools. These changes have been based upon a critical estimation of scope, content and complexity of curricula concerning subjects, curriculum content correlation and functionality of optional instruction and extramural activities. The changes have included the reduction of school curricula and teaching time (number of lessons), as well as more logical arrangement of the curricula contents. All preuniversitar schools from the school year 1998-1999 have five school days

per week. Some subjects like civic education, history, literature have completely been changed, while some others suffered only part reforms.

The activities for re-examination of optional curriculum and creation of extramural activities in primary school are still in procedure. Also, in order to modernize some forms of work at school, modernization, introduction of information technology into instruction, enhancement of regulations on the required qualification degrees of teachers, etc., some legal acts are in preparation, or already completed.

In order to improve the quality of instruction and responsibility of teachers, a center of accreditation will be set up.

Concerning secondary education, it has been concluded that, after several years of examining the achievement results of the secondary education system in Albania, it is now necessary to make some corrections in curricula and in certain domains of activity. The objectives of these reforms are: to reduce the part of the curriculum content; to introduce certain innovations adapted to the achievements in science, technique and technology, changes in social relations, way of business, laws, etc. A new subject *Computing and Informatics* was introduced in all four grades of general schools and it has been planned to introduce the application of the computer technique in creating vocational subjects in vocational schools. Due to the introduction of this new subject, a better equipping of schools with computers has been foreseen. For the near future it is planned to divide the general schools into two directions after the second year: humanitarian direction and natural sciences direction. In the same way a possibility of opening three- or five-form combined vocational secondary schools has been realized.

Concerning post-secondary and university education, the application of new laws on 1991 led to creating some local universities in Albania's main cities. By adopting the law on post-secondary school in Albania, a segment of non-university postsecondary education has been regulated. The university higher education is realized at universities and other higher institutions.

The domain of education of class teachers (grades 1-4) has suffered the great structural reforms in Albania. Following the world development tendencies referring to the class teacher education and training, the higher education has been introduced as a requirement for this category of teachers. Now those teacher are prepared in the faculties of education located in several Albanian universities.

In summary, aims for education development include:

- developing democratic values, tolerance and mutual understanding among people, and relationships necessary for life and work in the pluralistic society;
- fostering development of the personality and abilities, in consideration of the individual characteristics of each person;
- acquiring knowledge, the capabilities and affiliations necessary for life and work in contemporary society;
- cherishing desirable social and moral values, beliefs and relationships;
- developing research and critical thinking, creative and aesthetic abilities;
- stimulating physical and mental development;
- creating and maintaining optimal conditions for the fulfilment of individual potential and successful integration in the community;
- instilling a sense of belonging to the community and to the world in general;
- acquiring vocational knowledge and skills necessary for professional work.

- developing an awareness of continuing education and the need for lifelong education.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Passing of laws on education is the jurisdiction of the Government and of the Parliament. After the multi-party elections held in 1992 and the new Main Constitutional Provisions documents which were accepted during 1992-1995, new acts were passed. By these acts, the education sector has been regulated on a new basis and with new characteristics. These acts bring the education system into compliance with Main Constitutional Provisions concerning the rights of citizens, as well as modernization and codification of laws which regulate the domain of education, and the legal regulation of the new education system.

The initial basis for legal regulation of the education system is the citizens' right to education. Schooling is available to everyone under equal conditions, while the assets for achieving this are provided from the budget. The basic texts of laws concerning education are: the Law on Preuniversity system of Education (1995), Normative Provisions on Public Schools, Labor Code on Republic of Albania (1995), Private Education (1995), Law on Higher Education on the Republic of Albania (1994) etc.

In accordance with those laws, a series of *roules* and regulations has been passed and various matters important for the realization of the educational process (assessment of students, appraisals and rewards to be given, enrolment into secondary school, standards concerning the lessons of teachers, in-service teachers training, etc.) were formulated. *Roules* are sub-acts regulating more closely certain segments of education; their passing and application are the competence of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Compulsory education lasts eight years and includes pupils aged from 6 to 14. The compulsory education is completely acquired in the primary school.

Administration and management of the education system

According to the Main Constitutional Provisions, Government and Parliament Authorities determine educational policy. They formulate and pass laws and other regulations and execute other jobs in the field of education envisaged by law. There are also Ministry of Education and Science and provincial or municipal authorities who take care that certain requirements of citizens in the field of education are met.

The State Administration's activities on education at the level of the country are executed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The competences of the Ministry of Education and Science includes: the implementation of laws and other regulations approved from th Parliament and the Government; decisions on legal matters, management and professional supervision. passing of statutes, curricula and other documents; execution of professional work; work improvement, planning, programming; development of education as well as its financing.

The implementation, management and supervision of the Laws on Pre-University Education and Higher Education as well as the regulations which have been passed in the matter, are within the competence of the Ministry of Education and Science. The supervision includes supervision of the legality of school acts and supervision of inspection (direct insight into the future business activities of schools and universities and implementation of laws and other regulations).

Along with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Government executes the tasks of the State Administration. They determine the network of primary and secondary schools, decide on the establishment of post-secondary schools and universities, elaborate the higher education financing standards and handle development requirements in the field of education.

The municipalities, as forms of local government, satisfy within their overall competencies, certain requirements of citizens in the field of education, and realize co-operation with the education establishments on their territories and participate in financing certain school obligations like school rehabilitation, teachers transport etc.

The school managing bodies and their competence are defined by the laws on preuniversity education. These are the school board and the school principal. The school board adopts the report on work, makes decisions on school activities, on investments, announces open competitions to fill the position of school teachers, gives opinions on candidates for teachers and school principal. The school principal manages the school and is appointed by the Education Local Authorities. His authorizations and responsibility refer to the overall scope of school work and realization of curricula. The school principal manages the school, organizes the realization of the annual curriculum, realizes instructional insight in and supervision of the teachers' and professional associates' work, handles the promotion of educational work, undertakes measures against inappropriate behaviour of teachers and associates, convenes the sessions of teachers' councils, directs the work of professional bodies and co-operates with the community and everybody in connection with the school.

The Law on Pre-university Education in Albania envisages that post-secondary schools have managing bodies and professional bodies. Managing bodies include the school principal and the deputy principal, while the professional body is the teachers' council. The school principal manages the school, makes proposals concerning the employment and dismissing of the teaching staff and is responsible for the realization of the curriculum and school work legality. The Teachers' Council includes all teaching staff. It proposes curriculum and monitors its realization, brings special programmes for some types of in-service teacher training as well as programmes for work with gifted students, programmes for development and research, i.e. in order to improve the teaching process.

The Law on Higher Education regulates the activities of universities and faculties, the establishment and work of managing bodies, way of choosing teaching staff, etc. The role of university, its scope of work and basic work conditions and objectives are regulated by laws, while the overall organization and activities are more closely elaborated by their statute.

The university has managing and professional bodies. The university rector manages the university, while the top managing body of the university is the University Senate, consisting of the representatives of associated members' and founders' representatives.

The University Senate consists of the university representatives. The mandate of its members is two years. Its competence includes: passing of the university statute, adopting the curricula and financial plan, studying the reports on work and business activities, giving consent to the statutes of faculties, proposing the students' enrolment plan to the government, making decisions on awarding an honorary doctorate, making decisions on founding the university establishments, promotion of students' standard activities, etc.

In order to examine some specific matters concerning the work domain and groups of related faculties, special professional councils referring to the particular field of studies can be founded while their scope of work and structure are determined by the university statute.

The laws on university separate the professional (scientific/art and educational) function of the university and faculty from the managing functions so that the representatives of the university take part in certain managing activities only - on the priority ground; the matters concerning the domain of science teaching activities are left to the faculty teachers and associates in the work of which they participate.

Structure and organization of the education system

Pre-school education in Albania

Year	No schools	Total enrolment	No teachers
1990	3,426	MF 130,007 F 62,148	MF 5,664 F 5,664
1991	3,174	MF 108,889 F 51,784	MF 5,440 F 5,440
1992	2,784	MF 81,117 F 41,549	MF 5,081 F 5,081
1993	2,656	MF 80,395 F 41,154	MF 4,578 F 4,578
1994	2,668	MF 80,348 F 39,685	MF 4,428 F 4,428
1995	2,669	MF 84,026 F 41,589	MF 4,413 F 4,413
1996			
1997	2,408	MF 80,240 F 41,006	MF 4,116 F 4,116
1998			

Pre-school education is not compulsory and caters for children aged from 3 to 6 years.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Primary education

Year	No schools	Total enrolment	No teachers
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1990	3,271	MF 552,490 F 265,552	MF 28,798 F 15,826	Primary education (8-year school) lasts eight years and caters to pupils from 6 to 14. The children enter the primary school when they reach the age of 6.
1991	3,344	MF 540,133 F 262,080	MF 29,553 F 16,573	
1992	3,322	MF 525,882 F 258,647	MF 30,577 F 17,299	
1993	1,777	MF 535,713 F 260,396	MF 32,098 F 19,367	
1994				
1995	1,797	MF 558,159 F 288,000	MF 31,369	
1996				
1997	1,803	MF 559,457 F 246,000	MF 30,111	
1998				

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998;

Secondary education in Albania

Year	No schools	Total enrolment	No teachers	
1990	513	MF 144,532 F 74,981	MF 9,349 F 2,147	Secondary education lasts three, four or five years and is offered in comprehensive schools, vocational schools, art, sport, foreign language and pedagogical schools. Secondary vocational schools offer students general and vocational (theoretical and practical) education and prepare them for direct work and further education. The secondary school provides vocational qualifications at the level of three-form and five-year education. Secondary art schools educate their students in the field of music, art and ballet
1991	515	MF 116,990 F 62,780	MF 9,189 F 3,245	
1992	515	MF 101,310 F 55,430	MF 9,028 F 3,427	
1993	480	MF 91,293 F 48,449	MF 7,718 F 3,838	
1994	420	MF 86,656 F 44,180	MF 6,288 F 3,221	
1995	416	MF 89,452 F 45,000	MF 6,321	
1996				
1997	400	MF 98,429 F 47,000	MF 5,989	
1998				

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Non-university higher education in Albania is realized in post-secondary schools. The studies last not less than two years and not more than four years. University higher education is acquired at universities which include faculties and departments, at art academies and higher physical training institutes. The faculty is an educational and scientific institution which, within its basic activities includes: basic studies; specialized studies and doctoral studies. All basic studies last from three to six

academic years. Specialized studies last from one to two academic years. The doctoral studies last for three years.

The school year generally begins in September for pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and in October for universities and finishes in June. It is divided into two terms. In Albania the school year at the primary level comprises 33 five-day teaching weeks (165 working days) for pupils attending grades 1-8. At the secondary level, the school year comprises 35 five-day teaching weeks (175 working days) in the first three forms of general school (and in the first four forms of the five-form vocational school and in all forms of the three forms vocational school) and 34 weeks (170 working days) in the fourth form (and in the fifth form of the five-forms vocational school).

The financing of education

Financing of education in Albania is carried out from government revenues or private funds. State educational establishments at all levels, from preschool to university and post-university education, are financed from government revenues, while private schools are financed from private funds.

In 1997, the public expenditures on education amounted to approximately 11% of the national budget. Expenditure on education is far below the real requirements considering the developed education system in the context of economic crisis and declining national product.

Due to aggravated working conditions in recent years, the greatest part of education expenditure is used for current expenditure. From the total assets allocated for education in 1997, greatest part of it was used for salaries and current expenditures of education establishments, and a part of it for investments.

The raise of the budget on local education during 1993-1998 has the tendency to be smaller each year. In absolute figures the raise of the budget on education and in percentage the raise is as following:

No	Year	% of the raise	toward the year
1	1994	48	1993
2	1995	36.4	1994
3	1996	19.5	1995
4	1997	15.1	1996
5	1998	11.3	1997

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

The same figures for salaries on education are:

No	Year	% of the raise	toward the year
1	1994	46.1	1993
2	1995	49.3	1994
3	1996	13.0	1995

4	1997	24.0	1996
5	1998	8.5	1997

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

and for different expenses (travelling, furniture, overheads, transportation, etc.) are oscillations:

No	Year	% of the raise	toward the year
1	1994	39.4	1993
2	1995	-8	1994
3	1996	55.7	1995
4	1997	-23.2	1996
5	1998	22.3	1997

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Besides regular expenditure for post-secondary schools, universities and pupils' and students' dormitories, significant assets have been allocated for student scholarships. During 1997-98 about 1,800 students of secondary education received scholarships, amounting to about 2% of the overall pre-university student population and 4096 university students received scholarships, amounting to about 22 % of the overall student population. Significant assets are also allocated for health security, cultural centres, publishing, sport and similar activities of pupils and students.

Private education has been recently introduced and actually it exists at all institutions of pre-university level. In pre-school, primary and vocational secondary education there are several private schools; they are self-financing establishments. The setting of fees and financing is within the domain of competence of each school. Considering the small number of pupils and students involved in private schooling, the total financial resources are small in comparison to the overall educational financial resources. Non directly, in fact, the state is financing in some ways the private education: the school books are subsidized by the state; the private schools are using state curricula and educational plans of the state schools; their teachers have been prepared in state schools and they don't pay still taxes to the state.

In addition to public revenues, state schools and universities is planned to have in the near future also other income: from sale of their services and products, from money-making projects, scholarships, etc.

Percentage of the educational expenditure in report with general expenditure in Albania

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
%	9,87	7,55	7,94	9,38	10	8,7

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Public current expenditure on education / distribution by level of education (%)

Level of education	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Pre-school	11	8	6.5	6.3	6

Primary	56	54	63	65.8	65.8
Secondary	20.3	21.6	17	17	17
Higher	11.2	15	11.2	9.6	9.5
Other	1	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.7

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

The educational process

Pre-primary education

Pre-school education is a functional part of the education system of the Republic of Albania and, at the same time, constitutes an integral part of the system of social care for children. Set in this way, the pre-school education also constitutes a part of basic education.

In 1993, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted a draft programme for pre-school education concerning children from 3 to 6 years of age. This draft programme has been defined as an overall conception offering preschool teachers a common orientation for their individual creative work on the basis of real conditions and requirements in the children groups where they live and work. The programme should be realized through integration of different fields of educational activities via games and creation of the activity centres. In main cities of Albania there are pilot pre-schools where are applying new methods, advanced didactic elements of educational models. Those activities are monitorised from local education authorities and the teacher staff of the pilot pre-schools.

The Main Normative Provisions on public schools determine the number of children included in upbringing groups in preschool establishments:

- children from 3 to 5 years old: not less than 25 per group;
- in villages is permitted to have: not less than 15 children per group
- in remote villages is permitted to have: not less than 10 children per group

One pre-school teacher is in charge of approximately 15-25 children. The educational and care curricula in preschool establishments is organized in 240 teaching hours (lessons) per year.

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Primary education (8-year school)

The aim of compulsory education (eight year school) is developing of intellectual, creative, practical and physical skills, developing pupils personality and the acquiring of general education and upbringing, harmonious personal development and preparation for adult life and further general, vocational and civic education. In primary education, the following in particular is acquired:

- readiness for citizenship, work and further education and self-education;
- acquiring of the basic elements of modern general education;

- preparation for the acquired knowledge and skills application and creative use of leisure time;
- development of intellectual and physical abilities, independence and interest in acquiring new knowledge;
- acquaintance with basic principles concerning the development of environment, society and human belief;
- acquiring and developing awareness of the need to protect health, nature and human environment;
- development of humanity, love of the truth, patriotism and other ethical characteristics of an individual;
- encouragement of human and cultural relations among people irrespective of their sex, race, religion, nationality and personal belief,
- cherishing and developing the need for culture and preservation of cultural inheritance;
- acquiring the basic knowledge of appropriate behaviour in all occasions.

In order to prepare the students for adult life and further education on the basis of scientific, technical, cultural and art achievements, the aim of primary education is to enable them to acquire the basic elements of general education and to develop curiosity and interest in new knowledge, as well as to develop in them love for work and for homeland.

The curricula for primary schools are fixed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The curriculum includes compulsory and some optional subjects, their schedule by grades, weekly and annual number of lessons and other types of educational processes. The curriculum defines the contents of each subject, teaching aims and objectives as well as instructions in how to realize them. School Councils, according to the municipality opinion, make decisions on which optional subjects and foreign languages (both compulsory and optional) will be taught in schools.

The primary education in Albania has two levels: at the first level are classes 1 to 4 and at the second level are classes from 5 to 8. Greatest teachers of the first level are class teacher. The second level has subject teachers. Some first level schools prefer subject teachers for classes 4 and 5 as well.

The compulsory subjects are: Mother Tongue, Foreign Language, Music education, Art education, Nature knowledge, History; Geography; Physics, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry; Civic education, Technical Education and Physical Education.

The optional subject is the foreign (second) language. As an optional subject it is taught from the third up to eighth grade in two lessons per week.. The curriculum of primary education in Albania is shown in the table below.

Curriculum of primary education (8-year school) in Albania (1998)

No	Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade							
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
1	Albanian language	-	5	5	5	4	3	3	3
2	Literature	10	5	5	4	3	3	3	3
3	Foreign language	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2

4	History	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	2
5	Nature knowledge	-	-	2	2	3	-	-	-
6	Geography	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2
7	Mathematics	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
8	Physics	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1
9	Chemistry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
10	Biology	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2
11	Civic education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	Art education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	Music education	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
14	Technical education	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
15	Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Total weekly periods	21	21	23	23	27	27	28	28

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

(Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes)

Beside compulsory and optional subject, primary school pupils are exposed to other types of upbringing and learning:

- *Form meeting* with the class teacher
- *Sports* (one week during the school year for sport, recreation and cultural activities);
- *Excursions* (one to three days per school year)
- *Additional work* for gifted pupils
- *Remedial instruction* for pupils with learning problems
- *Preparatory instruction* for pupils taking the makeup examination
- *Social and free activities* with a group of pupils
- *Preparation* of pupils for participation in verified competitions or olympiads
- *Cultural and other activities*

The achievements of students in each subject are separately assessed, publicly and with explanation, in numeral marks ranging from 1-10: Exemplary (10), Very Good (9), Good (8, 7), Satisfactory (6), Sufficient (5) and Insufficient (4 - 1). The marks (1 - 4) are the failing ones. Students' behaviour is expressed by words: Exemplary , Very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory.

At the primary and secondary levels, the monitoring of students' performance and assessment process is carried out almost every day. The assessment is carried out two times during one term and at the end of the school year when the general pedagogical opinion and final grades are given. If the subject syllabus includes several fields, or theory and practice, the performance and progress of students are monitored in each field separately and, in the end of the term and school year a unique, final mark is concluded. The student's general achievement is calculated on the ground of the arithmetical mean of non-failing marks in each subjects. The evaluations given for student's behaviour do not make a part of the student's general achievement.

Besides assessment during regular instruction, students are also assessed at examinations. Examination content depends on the type of examination and the syllabus it includes. The examinations can be: the *makeup exam* in the subject in which the student failed to achieve a sufficient grade during instruction; the *class exam* in subjects in which the student has not received any grade during instruction; the *remedial exam* in the subject in which the student failed to master in his/her previous education; and the final *exam* at the end of schooling. The last one is taken in the presence of the commission appointed by the school principal; this commission includes at least two members who are experts in the subject in which the examination is taken.

According to the law, pupils enter the next grade in case they have non-failing marks in all the compulsory subjects. Pupils from grade 1 to grade 2 can enter the next grade even in case they have failing marks (4 - 1). Due to demographic, social and other factors, primary education suffers a certain drop-out rate particularly in the higher grades. The drop-out rate is particularly high in rural zones. Pupils who turn 16 without completing primary education, can acquire compulsory primary education in schools for adult education, so called evening schools as part - time students.

At the end of primary education, successful pupils are awarded the certificate of completed primary school.

Secondary education

The general and vocational knowledge and abilities for further education and for work, based on the scientific, technological, cultural and artistic achievements, are acquired in secondary schools; the upbringing is acquired; the ethic and aesthetic values are fostered; the physical and spiritual individual abilities are developed; the conscience about humanistic values, personal and social responsibility is developed and the health protection cherished.

In order to prepare the students for work and further education, the aim of secondary education is the acquiring of the necessary general, special and vocational knowledge, skills and habits based on scientific, technical, cultural and artistic achievements as well as the development of intellectual, work, ethic, aesthetic and other personal abilities and characteristics, in particular love for their vocation and love for homeland as well as the ability and readiness to defend its independence.

Secondary education is achieved in comprehensive schools, vocational schools, sport schools and art schools. Comprehensive secondary schools are general schools (*gymnasia*); they provide four-form general education in humanities and sciences which qualify students for further education and successful studying in post-secondary schools and at universities. In the near future it is planned that students who finish two first years to have the possibility to follow one of the two streams the next two other years: humanities or science. In addition, there are four - years comprehensive schools for music and arts, dance, sports, pedagogical, foreign languages as well.

As in the case of primary schools, the curricula for secondary schools are fixed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The curriculum includes compulsory and optional subjects and types of educational work. The optional subjects are foreign languages, informatics and other subjects. It is under the local educational authorities responsibility to decide about optional subjects. A syllabus for the comprehensive school is given below.

Syllabus for comprehensive schools in Albania (1998)

No	Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form			
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1	Literature	3	4	4	4
2	Hustory	2	2	2	3
3	Geography	3	2	2	-
4	Foreign language	2	2	2	2
5	Knowledge on society	2	2	-	-
6	Knowledge on economy	-	-	-	2
7	Introduction on philosophy	-	-	2	-
8	Mathematics	5	4	5	5
9	Physics	3	3	3	4
10	Chemistry	2	3	2	2
11	Biology	2	2	2	2
12	Technology	2	2	-	-
13	Informatics	-	-	2	2
14	Astronomy	-	-	-	1
15	Physical training	2	2	2	2
	Total weekly periods	28	28	28	29

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

(each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.)

The student repeats the grade in secondary school if he/she, at the end of the school year, has at least three failing marks in compulsory subjects and in case he/she does not take the makeup examination or class examination or fails to pass them. At the end of each form, the student who has non-failing grades is awarded a certificate on successfully completed schooling for that grade. At the end of successfully completed secondary education, students are awarded a maturity diploma.

Secondary *vocational schools* offer students general and vocational (theoretical and-practical) education and prepare them for direct work and further education. The secondary school provides vocational qualifications at the level of three-form and five-form vocational education.

The choice of curriculum in vocational secondary schools creates the *vocational profile*. The vocational profile includes general and vocational contents based on the achievements of science and technology and they are necessary for certain jobs or for further education. There are in Albania vocational schools for industry, agriculture, economy, construction, technology and services. The educational profiles represent a variety work fields: forestry and wood processing; agriculture and processing, veterinary, sewing, geology and milling, metallurgy; mechanical engineering and metal processing; electrical engineering; chemistry. textile and leather processing, trade; catering and tourism, economy and administration, rendering of services (beautician, hairdresser), etc.

The *three-form vocational education* lasts three years and includes about 35 different vocational profiles representing almost all work fields. The general education includes 40% of lessons. The

theoretical and vocational education represents 20 to 25 %, while practical training includes 35 to 40 % of the total number of lessons. At the end of three-year education, students take the final exam. The content and modalities of this exam are defined by the syllabus for each individual vocational profile.

The five-form vocational education involves 15 different vocational profiles. The curriculum comprises compulsory academic subjects (50% of lessons); theoretical-vocational subjects (25%); and practical instruction, comprising 25% of the lessons. Beside the compulsory subjects, the schools can also introduce optional subjects which should meet the specific and special interests of students, their choice of vocation and broader knowledge. At the end of five-year vocational education in vocational schools, students take the final examination. The student who has non-failing grades is awarded a certificate on successfully completed schooling for that grade. At the end of successfully completed secondary education, students are awarded a maturity diploma and a certificate for his / her professional and practical skills.

Secondary art, sport, pedagogical and foreign languages schools are four-form secondary schools educating students in the fields of music, art, ballet, sport, teaching etc. These schools are rather different from all other types of secondary schools in a large number of details, including the enrolment conditions. To be enrolled in other secondary schools students must pass entrance examinations, but the students who want to enter those schools undergo tests of special talents and abilities. At the end of education in those four-form school, students take a final examination and are awarded a maturity diploma and a certificate for the professional skills.

In 1997-98, in Albania the gross enrolment rate at the secondary level was 48.7%. The table below gives more figures.

Year	No.pupils finishing primary education	No.students registered in the secondary schools	%	No students finishing secondary schools	No students registered in higher schools	%
1990	57,581	35,096	60	31,634	6,686	21.1
1995	48,488	31,856	65	17,062	8252	48
1997	51,175	31,675	60	16,611		

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

The law on pre-university education envisage not less than 32 pupils per class for primary education (1- 4 form), 35 pupils per class for primary education (5-8 form) and secondary education. In villages primary mixed classes have till 25 pupils per class.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

In Albanian there is a unique system of assessment which is regulated by the relevant educational laws. Students are regularly assessed during their instruction and by means of examinations. Recently test examinations are considered very useful for students assessment.

Higher education in Albania

Higher education in Albania includes universities and higher schools. Higher education is at the university level, i.e. the university education, which enables the acquiring both post-secondary and the higher education through post-university schools functioning inside universities.

Post-secondary schools offer programmes lasting not less than two years and not more than five years. The universities organize and perform scientific, educational work, research and training work, as well as other activities in compliance with the law and their statutes. One university may have some faculties and each faculty may have some branches. The basic studies last from three to six academic years. Specialized studies last from one to two academic years, and magisterial studies - till five academic years. The doctoral studies last three years. The universities perform independently, or in co-operation with another organization, apply and develop researches which are in the function of scientific and educational activity development.

The Albanian higher education is regulated by several categories of legislative acts, like the Higher Education law, which regulates the organisation of the higher education institutions, the level of the university education and types of degree courses, the financing of higher education, in terms of university autonomy, the students rights and the scope of university research activities. There are specific laws under preparation on accreditation of higher education and recognition of diplomas. Some governmental decisions regulate a series of aspects, like student quotes for first year, for students financial support, home scholarships. Orders of the Ministry of Education and Science are regarding the use of its legal competence. Universities and high schools have internal regulations. The major institutional normative document is the University Statute.

The first institute of higher education that functioned on the territory of Albania was the University of Tirana (1957). There are eight universities in Albania: University of Tirana, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Agricultural University of Tirana, University of Shkodra, University of Elbasan, University of Korça, University of Vlora and University of Gjirokastra. There are the Higher Academy of Arts and the Higher Institute of Physical Training as well. All are financed by the government. In the future it will be approved the law for the private higher education. There are also two military higher institutions.

Some universities in Albania include post-university schools. Universities provide both basic and post-graduate studies. Basic studies for acquiring post-university education last two years, while degree programmes last four to five years. All post-graduate studies are organized to enable the acquiring of qualification degree of a specialist, a doctor degree. The specialized studies last from one to two years. The degree of doctor of science can be acquired in basic scientific disciplines at the faculties or universities which provide post-graduate studies.

Universities are autonomous establishments. This autonomy concerns the performance of their activities, realization of scientific, art and educational work and a partial management. Universities and faculties have managing and professional bodies. The managing bodies at universities are the Rector of the University and the University Senate, while professional bodies are science-teaching councils, then professional councils by scientific fields and disciplines and larger groups of related faculties. A university has several faculties. The faculty represents the functional basic unit of the higher institution and is organised by departments and by chairs. The faculty includes the teaching and research personnel, the students and the auxiliary and administrative personnel. The faculties are

individualised by their study programmes and field of specialisation. The managing bodies at the faculty are the Dean and the Faculty Council; at higher institutes these are the School principal and the Council. The professional body is the science-teaching, i.e. art-teaching council. The Dean manages the faculty, but there is also one (or several) Vice-Dean(s) (there is, usually, a Vice Dean for instruction, scientific-research work and finance). Each two years, the Faculty Council elects, among the professors, the Dean and Vice-Dean(s). Half of the Faculty Council's members are appointed by the founder while the other half is elected by the science-teaching/art-teaching council of the faculty. The Faculty Council is elected each two years. This body formulates the faculty by-law, work programme, accepts financial plan, makes decisions on establishment or repeal of departments, accepts the report on the faculty business activities, etc. The department is a sub-unit. It carries out teaching, research, design etc. A department may include several chairs with a narrow specialisation in a specific academic field.

The Science-Teaching /Art-Teaching Council of the faculty is its professional body consisting of faculty teachers and associates. It is competent for the most important matters concerning the faculty activities: making the curriculum for overall studies (basic and doctoral) by departments, groups or streams, with the consent of the university; creating the scientific-researching programmes; giving consent to the topics for doctoral dissertations; giving the opinion on the number of students which are to be enrolled in the studies; defining the faculty statute draft; defining the measures for enhancing gifted students, etc. The Dean, according to his function, is the President of this Senate.

The laws on university separate the professional (scientific/art and educational) function of the university and faculty from the managing functions so that the representatives of the university and faculty founders take part in certain managing activities only - on the priority ground; the matters concerning the domain of scienc-teaching/art-teaching activities are left to the faculty teachers and associates and to the professional bodies in the work of which they participate.

For all universities the decision on the number of students enrolled in the first year of studies, as well as on standards concerning financing of the faculties'/universities' activities, is made by the Government.

Evaluation of the performance of educational activities in higher education is within the competence of university managing councils (Senates) and science-teaching/art-teaching councils in individual higher education establishments.

Higher education in Albania

Year	No schools	Total enrolment	No lecturers
1980	8	15,000	1,103
1985	8	22,000	1,468
1990	8	27,000	1,806
1991	8	28,000	1,805
1992	10	31,000	1,680
1993	10	30,000	1,715
1994	10	28,000	1,504
1995	10	29,000	1,517
1996	10	34,000	1,576
1997	11	36,000	1,609

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Students enrolled in higher education institutions (1990-97)

No	School	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
1	Polytechnic University	-	4435	4050	3008	2426	2121	1842	1884
2	University of Tirana	12745	8812	9140	8602	8021	7730	8002	8429
3	Agricultural University	4231	4076	3538	2482	1620	1244	809	816
4	University of Korça	643	545	615	685	734	883	915	1079
5	University of Shkodra	1522	1692	1701	1677	1651	1719	1636	1746
6	University of Gjirokastra	724	812	975	983	911	851	916	974
7	University of Elbasan	1124	1305	1647	1649	1418	1347	1406	1722
8	University of Vlora	-	-	-	-	163	330	580	778
9	High Inst.of Phys. Train.	341	328	404	388	292	316	271	255
10	High Academy of Arts	729	700	765	716	556	472	422	430
11	High Nursery School	-	-	-	-	-	-	295	437
	Total	22059	22705	22835	20190	17792	17013	17094	18550

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

Students and teaching staff in higher education institutions (1997-98)

	MF / F	Universities	High Academy of Arts	High Institute of Phys. Train.	High Nursery School
Students	MF	18,500	430	255	437
	F	11,270	194	52	374
Full time professors	MF	1,609	101	48	12
	F	535	25	9	10
Part-time professors	MF	932	91	4	51
	F	347	24	2	38
Assistant professors	MF	351	6	3	-
	F	202	4	2	-
Doctors and professors	MF	600	10	29	2
	F	155	1	6	-

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

After 1991 a major reform was initiated by the higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education and Science. The main objectives of the higher education reform are: further decentralisation as regards administration of budgetary funds and elaboration of diversified and multidisciplinary study

programmes, market orientation of the curricula and service, preparation for European integration, introduction of information technology and quality management systems, accreditation and transferability mainly through introduction of credit transfer systems, promotion of scientific research in universities etc.

The academic year begins on October and ends on June. The year is divided into two semesters. Each semester having a duration of fifteen weeks. Students have a summer holiday, a Christmas and New Year holiday and national holidays. Examinations take place at the end of each semester. They may be oral or written examinations or both of them. Classes are held from Monday to Friday.

Special education

In the Republic of Albania, special education constitutes an integral part of the education system and is regulated by the Law on Pre-university Education. In the 1997-98 school year there were 6 special schools, about 40 specialized classes, with 654 pupils. According to the law, special education and care are realized in special education establishments, preschool establishments, special classes in regular primary schools, special primary schools specialized for care and preparation of students for work.

Special education is organized according to type of disability:

- Children with sensory impairment - blind / pearsighted
- Children with mental deficiency - slight, moderate, serious or heavy)
- Children with sensory impairment - deaf / hard-of- hearing

The type and degree of developmental impairment is established by a doctors' commission opinion and proposal. The special schools for children with sensory impairment - deaf/hard-of- hearing and children with mental deficiency made the normal programme of the first four years of the primary education in nine years. The school for children blind/pearsighted is a eight year school, its programme is based on the primary schools. A curriculum is prepared and adopted for each type and degree of impairment. The curriculum is realized on the basis of special methods and by using various and specific teaching materials and aids (technical, audio-visual, electrical-acoustic, etc.). The educational process is followed by methods of correction and rehabilitation, exercises, audio training, speech therapies, corrective gymnastics, psychomotor exercises, phonetic rhythms, etc.

The instruction in special schools is performed by teachers specialized for work with handicapped children, teachers, psychologists, special education teachers, physical therapists. The subject instruction is performed by teachers who have acquired adequate higher education.

Private education

In Albania, private education was re-established after 1996 and covers all forms of the pre-university education. The Law on Pre-University Education in Albania allows the opening of private

schools in all the levels of the pre-university education. The decision on establishing is made from the Ministry of Education and Science if the educational process is given in Albanian. If more than the half of the subjects is in a foreign language, or if there are lessons on religion, the decision is made from the Council of the Ministers. There is a period up to three months between the documentations presentation and the giving of the licence. Secondary schools can also be established by private providing that all legal preconditions concerning space, equipment, teaching staff, etc. have been fulfilled. According to the law, every private education institute should comply with national standards. They have organisational and functional autonomy (employment of teachers, establishment of fees etc.). The education plans and curricula of these institutions are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

In Albania, for 1997-98, there were:

6 private pre - schools (5 in cities and one in a village) with 408 children and 25 teachers

9 primary schools with 1575 pupils (20 foreign pupils), 89 Albanian teachers, 11 foreign teachers

3 primary religious schools with 288 pupils and 41 teachers;

6 secondary schools with 626 Albanian students, 18 foreign students and 29 Albanian teachers, 27 foreign teachers;

5 secondary religious schools with 523 students and 71 Albanian teachers and 2 foreign teachers

The state and private secondary schools have the almost the same curricula. In addition, private schools have some optional subjects.

The decision on the number of students to be enrolled in the private pre-schools or primary and secondary schools is taken independently by the founders and managing bodies of these establishments.

Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure

The financial and economic difficulties which occurred in the Republic of Albania from 1991 had direct and severe influence upon the education system, causing its impoverishment and non-renewal of its financial and technical base. Due to this, during the period 1991-98 were faced with the serious problem of attrition of the educational infrastructure and continual aggravation of the economic status of education. In the period 1992-97 in particular, the number of education establishments decreased, the number of employees in education was reduced, many teachers left this field of work, and problems arose in investment maintenance and provision of necessary assets for staff salaries.

The growing student number and lack of assets to renew and provide new equipment has caused a great amortization and wearing-out of the existing means of instruction. This problem has been particularly evident and serious in the teaching of subjects requiring performance in a study room and laboratory. Due to the lack of equipment, this cannot be realized, or is realized only after great effort, in a large number of schools.

All primary schools suffer from a lack of computers, overhead projectors, television sets, slide projectors, cassette decks and modern study rooms and teaching materials for the instruction of physics,

chemistry, biology, technical and physical education. Secondary schools face the same situation though it differs from school to school.

In the period 1992-98 a very significant co-operation was achieved with UNESCO, PHARE, UNICEF, Soros Foundation, World Bank, Italian Government and other foreign donors concerning school rehabilitation, the provision of teaching materials and equipment for primary and secondary schools and universities in Albania.

According to legal provisions, the preparation and publishing of school textbooks is the competence of special institutions: publishing houses for textbooks and teaching materials. Those publishing and distributor houses are still under the Ministry of Education and Science responsibility, but for the near future a process of privatisation is preview with the help of the World Bank. The plan of required textbooks for primary and secondary schools is determined by the Ministries of Education, while the professional opinion on them is given by the relevant experts.

In accordance with the plans concerning obligatory textbooks in primary education, 95% of the titles were published for 1998-99. This met the demands of the entire primary school population for school textbooks. In addition, publishing houses for textbooks and teaching materials also prepare large additional textbooks (teachers' handbooks, collections, auxiliary textbooks for pupils, etc.). In secondary education, publishing houses also print obligatory textbooks and cover about 70% of the total envisaged need for obligatory textbooks.

There are publishing houses for textbooks for higher education. It has also been envisaged to oblige professors to prepare textbooks and literature for the subjects they teach. As a result, a large number of universities independently publish and print textbooks written or prepared by their professors.

There is no organized importation of textbooks to meet educational requirements, although foreign literature is used in higher education as well as in certain types of foreign language teaching. The university libraries have a lot of those books. In some universities there are a lot of cultural centres set-up from foreign universities or embassies in order to help higher education in Albania.

Adult and non-formal education

Non-formal education is realized within separate courses (for typists, cosmetologists, dressmakers, etc.) and schools for learning foreign languages. They are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, if they last more than 6 months. Otherwise, they are under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Labour. Courses for pre-qualification and additional qualification of workers with different vocational profiles are also organized.

Persons older than 16 years can obtain their elementary education in special schools for adults, i.e. in classes for adult education, part-time schools, or, so called, evening schools. The teaching process for adults is realized according to the curriculum for adults which is approved by the Minister

of Education and Science. The instruction includes classes from the fifth to the eighth grades. There are both comprehensive and vocational secondary schools and they last three years.

The financial assets are provided from the State budget. Each municipality keeps files on illiterate persons and persons without complete elementary education. Special actions in order to offer complete elementary education to those who have exceeded the age for attending primary schools or have not completed all grades are being organized.

Teaching staff

Pre-school teachers must finish four-form pedagogical secondary schools or faculties of education in order to acquire relevant qualifications for work with children in preschool establishments. Recently some Albanian universities have faculties of education, where preschool teacher are prepared during a period of three years.

The primary school teachers working with pupils from First to Fourth grade must acquire the same education as preschool teachers. The subject teachers in higher grades (Five to Eight) of primary schools must have the diploma of higher education from a relevant university. All teachers must take the professional teacher's examination.

According to laws on secondary school, the theoretical instruction and practical instruction in secondary school can only be performed by teachers having higher education. The teachers working in medical schools have a relevant specialization in the subjects they are teaching. The practical instruction in secondary vocational schools can only be given by teachers with higher education, or even with secondary school qualification in the event they have completed a relevant specialization after secondary school.

The curricula for teacher training encompasses three basic groups of disciplines: 1) the disciplines in the field of academic education, 2) pedagogical and psychological disciplines (pedagogy, psychology and methods of vocational subjects), 3) teaching practise.

Within the general pedagogy, the contents of general pedagogy, didactics and methodology of pedagogical research are studied. Psychology includes the contents of developmental and pedagogical psychology. This knowledge forms the necessary basis for each teacher to understand and study the method in a more qualitative way.

All Albanian universities provide pre-service education for future teachers. There are, from department to department, differences concerning the number of teaching hours provided for pedagogical-psychological and methodological disciplines, as well as the subjects including these sciences. Most of the syllabi for pre-service education of future teachers includes pedagogy, psychology and didactics. Most study groups include the study of method (with demonstration classes and practical lessons) but with different numbers of teaching hours. The studies last three years.

Concerning teachers' workload, at the pre school level the teacher has 36 hours per week, in the primary level (1-4 forms) the teacher has the same amount of hours as the pupils have, for forms 5-8 the teacher of literature has 20 hours per week, teacher of maths, physics, chemistry and biology 22

hours per week and other teachers 24 hours per week in direct educational work with pupils. At the secondary level, the teacher of the Albanian language and literature has the norm of 20 teaching hours (or 650-680 hour per year), other teachers vocational schools teacher has 22 hours per week (or 700-750 hours per year). Practice teacher has 33 hours per week.

Percentage of teachers at each level of experience, 1990-97

Level of the teacher	No. of teachers			% of qualified teachers		
	1990	1995	1997	1990	1995	1997
Pre-school	5,664	4,413	4,116			76
Primary (1-4 forms)	12,418	13,000	13,077			90
Primary (5-8 forms)	16,380	17,900	37,034			79
Secondary	9,708	6,321	5,989			92

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 1998

The laws concerning education determine the necessity of a permanent in-service training of educational staff in education establishments. The legal acts have envisaged the establishing of the permanent in-service training which is more closely and precisely detailed by separate regulations on permanent in-service training of primary and particularly secondary school teachers.

The content of in-service training programme includes all these fields: children and developmental psychology; methodology with didactics; teaching methods, pedagogical psychology; methods of pedagogical work; informatics; application of new teaching technology and scientific field important for certain subjects; social psychology and other fields.

Universities, professional societies and scientific, professional organizations and different NGOs offer programmes of in-service training by scientific-teaching fields and organize their direct realization.

In-service training within the school can be realized as individual or collective. The individual type is accomplished by mastering the approved programme, monitoring professional and scientific literature, application of professional and scientific achievements, performing experimental lessons and professional lectures, by issuing professional papers, as well as by acquiring a higher degree of qualifications. The collective in-service training is realized within the professional teachers' work groups and teachers' councils in one or for several schools in the area of a municipality or region, or within professional societies. The school principal and inspectors of local education authorities and the Ministry of Education and Science monitor the realization of the in-service training.

Educational research and information

Research in the field of education is carried out by scientific, professional and educational institutions, individual teachers, scientists, and researchers. Within the universities and faculties of

education as part of their scientific research activities, especially in the fields of didactics and psychology, education represent a significant part of research.

The establishments dealing with the research work in the Republic of Albania are the Pedagogical Research Institute, teacher training faculties and other universities providing pre-service teacher education. The topic and content of research projects include broad educational problems, from the theoretical to practical ones, from the preschool to the higher education level. The results are disseminated through publications or articles in various Albanian and foreign scientific reviews.

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STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN ALBANIA

