

The education system of

# Russia

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Russia. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Russia for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

### Disclaimer

We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.

### Copyright

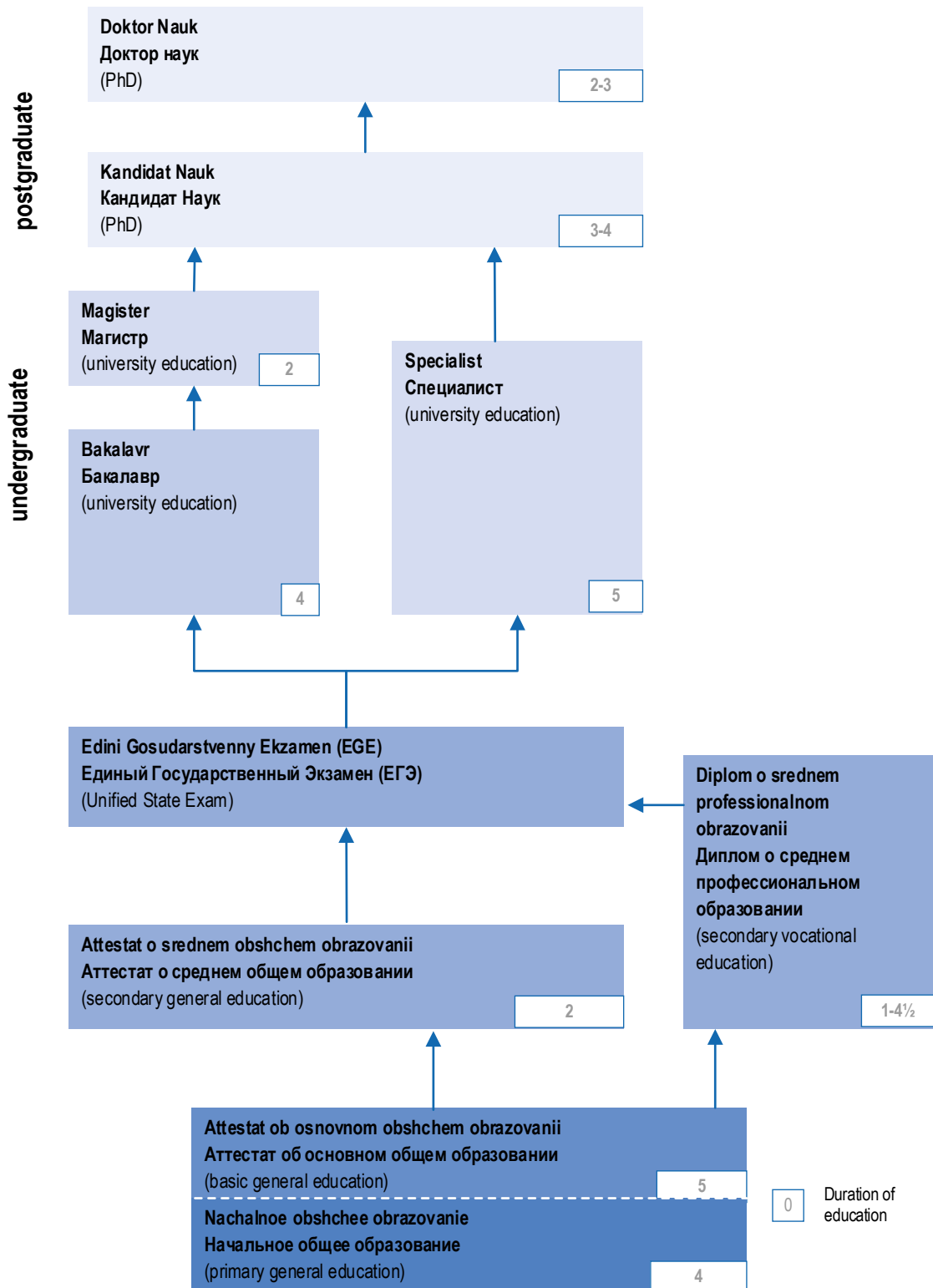


With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit [www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/copyright](http://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/copyright) for more information on the reuse of this publication.

## ■ Background

- **Country:** Russia (Россия, *Rossija*), officially the Russian Federation (Российская Федерация, *Rossijskaja Federatsija*).
- **History:** Russia has been an independent country since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Before that it was the core of the Soviet Union (USSR), as the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR).
- **Responsible for education:** The [Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation](#) (Министерство просвещения Российской Федерации, *Ministerstvo prosvesjtsjenia Rossijskoj Federatsii*) is responsible for primary and secondary education, and vocational education. The [Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation](#) (Министерство науки и высшего образования Российской Федерации, *Ministerstvo nauki i vyssjego obrazovania Rossijskoj Federatsii*) is responsible for science and higher education.
- **Bologna process:** Russia has been a member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) since September 2003. See also the page about Russia on the [EHEA website](#).
- **International treaties:** Russia signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2000. The [website of the Russian ENIC](#) has an overview (in Russian) of all bilateral and multilateral agreements in the field of higher education.
- **Compulsory education:** Ages 7-17/18; 11 years of education is compulsory.
- **Language of instruction:** In principle Russian, although the law also offers opportunities for education in minority languages.
- **School year:** 1 September to the beginning of June.
- **School examinations:** end of May, beginning of June.
- **Academic year:** 1 September to the end of June (2 semesters of 5 months).

Flow chart: education system Russia



## Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the chart below lists the most common qualifications. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level	EQF level	
<i>Attestat ob osnovnom obshchem obrazovanii</i> – Аттестат об основном общем образовании (Certificate of basic general education)	3 years of general secondary education	-	-
<i>Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii</i> – Аттестат о среднем общем образовании (Certificate of secondary education)	at least a <a href="#">HAVO</a> diploma	4	4
<i>Diplom o srednem professionalnom obrazovanii</i> – Диплом о среднем профессиональном образовании (Diploma of secondary vocational education) of the 2nd level	<a href="#">HAVO</a> diploma for the general education component	4	4
<i>Diplom bakalavra</i> – Диплом бакалавра (bachelor diploma)	<a href="#">HBO</a> or <a href="#">WO</a> bachelor's degree	6	6
<i>Diplom specialista</i> – Диплом специалиста (specialist diploma) (5 years)	<a href="#">HBO</a> master's degree or <a href="#">WO</a> bachelor's degree	7/6	7/6
<i>Diplom magistra</i> – Диплом магистра (master diploma)	<a href="#">HBO</a> or <a href="#">WO</a> master's degree	7	7

Note:

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. [EQF](#) = European Qualifications Framework.
- The [EQF/NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [education and diplomas the Netherlands](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and

## Education system Russia

---

training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

### Primary education

Primary education lasts 4 years and is given by group teachers. In addition to state schools, there are also private schools in Russia. These schools, like the public schools, must follow the prescribed state curriculum. Children usually start with class 1 at the age of 7 and end with class 4 at the age of 10.

### Secondary education

In Russia, the division between primary education and secondary education is made differently. The first phase of 4 years of primary education and 5 years of secondary education is called 'basic general education' (*osnovnoe obshchee obrazovanie*). This phase is followed by 2 years of secondary general education, in Russian terms *srednee obschchee obrazovanie*. In the Netherlands, we call this second phase the upper secondary education.

Secondary education in Russia:

- 5 years of lower secondary education (classes 5 to 9, ages 11 to 15-16 years); and
- 2 years of upper secondary education (classes 10 and 11, ages 15-16 to 17-18 years).

Both phases, lower and upper secondary education, pupils finish with an exam and a diploma. In total, pupils have followed 11 years of education when compulsory education ends.

### Curriculum

The state also determines the basic curriculum for secondary education. This curriculum consists of a number of compulsory components in the fields of science subjects, social sciences and humanities. In practice, every high school may determine its own curriculum, as long as it falls within the guidelines of the basic curriculum.

In addition to general schools, there are also schools with a special profile (for example, languages, mathematics or natural sciences) and schools that focus on art or on specific activities such as sports.

Pupils can transfer to vocational secondary education after the lower years (up to and including class 9) or after the upper years (up to and including class 11).

### Lower secondary education

- Duration: 5 years (class 5 up to and including class 9).
- Content: the basic curriculum as determined by the state, with additional subjects (varies per school). Finally, the pupils take the state examination for this phase.

- Diploma: *Attestat ob osnovnom obshchem obrazovanii* - Аттестат об основном общем образовании (Certificate of basic general education). This diploma has a fixed state format that every accredited school uses.

In terms of level, the *Attestat ob osnovnom obshchem obrazovanii* (Аттестат об основном общем образовании) is comparable to 3 years of general secondary education.

### Upper secondary education

- Duration: 2 years (classes 10 and 11).
- Content: a broad, general curriculum with usually 15 to 20 subjects. The level is, just like in the lower years, the same for all pupils. Education is generally focused on knowledge and facts, rather than on academic learning. At the end pupils take the Uniform State Exam (*Edini Gosudarstvenny Ekzamen*, EGE - Единый Государственный Экзамен, ЕГЭ).
- Diploma: *Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii* - Аттестат о среднем общем образовании (Certificate of secondary general education). This diploma has a fixed state format that every accredited school uses.

Until 2013, this diploma was called *Attestat o srednem (polnom) obshtsem obrazovanii* - Аттестат о среднем (полном) общем образовании (Certificate of secondary (complete) general education).

In terms of level, the *Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii* (Аттестат о среднем общем образовании) is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

Note:

- This comparison is based on the duration of 11 years, the lack of difference in level, the knowledge-based learning and the broad range of subject.
- Currently, some secondary schools start introducing profiles and/or in-depth subjects. Nuffic follows these developments.

### **Edini Gosudarstvenny Ekzamen (EGE)**

The Uniform State Exam, the EGE, serves both as a high school final examination and as entrance examination for higher education. The subjects Russian and mathematics are compulsory components. The pupils take part in the examinations in all other subjects on a voluntary basis. They often choose the subjects required for admission to the higher education of their choice.

### **Secondary vocational education**

Secondary vocational education (*Srednee professionalnoe obrazovanie*, *Srednee professionalnoe obrazovanie*) can be taken at 2 levels:



- basic level, the 1st level; and
- advanced level, the 2nd level.

Moreover, pupils can enter at 2 moments: after 9 years of general education (lower years) or after 11 years of general education (upper years). The curriculum of secondary vocational education is always partly general.

### Basic level

Pupils can take the 1st level (basic level) for skilled workers at professional centres or professional schools.

- Duration: 2 to 2½ years after 9 years of general education, or 1 to 1½ years after 11 years of education.
- Content: vocational subjects and a number of subjects in general education.
- Diploma: *Diplom o srednem professionalnom obrazovanii* - Диплом о среднем профессиональном образовании (Diploma of secondary vocational education) with indication of the 1st level.

### Advanced level

Programmes of the 2nd level (advanced level), for higher qualified personnel, are given at a 'technikum' or 'kolledzj' (technicum or college). Sometimes a college is part of a university, but the 2nd level programmes do not belong to higher education.

- Duration: 3 to 4½ years after 9 years of general education, or 2 to 3 years after 11 years of education.
- Content: vocational subjects and a number of subjects in general education.
- Diploma: *Diplom o srednem professionalnom obrazovanii* - Диплом о среднем профессиональном образовании (Diploma of secondary vocational education) of the 2nd/advanced level.

In principle, this type of diploma also gives admission to higher education programmes in the same specialisation. Institutions can grant exemptions up to 1 or 2 years.

In terms of level, the *Diplom o srednem professionalnom obrazovanii* of the 2nd level is comparable to a general secondary education diploma for the general education component.

After completing these programmes (of the 1st and 2nd level), pupils can take the Uniform State Exam (EGE) on a voluntary basis. This is possible because the programmes always consist of a general education component, they are never purely vocational. If they pass the EGE, pupils can move on to higher education.

## ■ Admission to higher education

Since 2009, the Uniform State Exam (EGE) has been mandatory throughout the Russian Federation. Based on the scores for the compulsory and voluntary exams, students can access all higher education institutions in Russia. Some institutions, such as national universities, may impose additional admission requirements themselves.

The results of the EGE have only been available since 2014 for Russian higher education institutions (in a non-public database). Therefore, institutions outside of Russia cannot use these results. The results do not play a role in admission procedures outside Russia, because the data is not public.

If students apply for higher education abroad, they can show the *Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii* (Certificate of secondary general education). Students receive this diploma if they pass the compulsory part of the EGE.

## ■ Higher education

In Russian higher education, no distinction is made between academic education and higher professional education.

### **Types of institutions**

There are state institutions and private institutions in Russia. In general, there are 6 types of higher education institutions:

- National universities: Moscow State University (Lomonosov University) and St. Petersburg State University.
- Federal universities: these 10 institutions are important for the entire Russian Federation.
- National research universities: these 29 universities are strong in research.
- Universities: these institutions offer a wide range of programmes and courses.
- Academies: these institutions focus on a specific subject area, such as art, health or agriculture.
- Institutes: these institutions are aimed at specific professions.

In 2015-2016 Russia counted 530 state institutions and 366 private institutions. It is virtually impossible to give the current number of higher education institutions, because many changes are taking place and institutions are constantly merging with other institutions. The total number of settings is therefore gradually decreasing.

### **Internationalisation**

The [Project 5-100](#) was launched in 2013 to make Russian higher education more international and modern. The selected institutions, 21 in total, receive extra

money to maximise their competitive position worldwide. The universities are committed to internationalisation (of the curriculum, staff, and students) and are engaged in the field of international cooperation.

## ■ University and higher professional education

These degrees are the most common in Russian higher education:

- *Bakalavr* - Бакалавр: bachelor's degree
- *Magistr* - Магистр: master's degree
- *Specialist* - Специалист: specialist degree

### ***Bakalavr* (Бакалавр)**

In Russia, students can take bachelor programmes in almost all subject areas, except medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy and dentistry.

- Duration: 4 years (240 credits).
- Content: a broad orientation at first, with a focus subjects such as social sciences, economics, history, a foreign language and natural sciences. Ending with a final thesis or project report (usually in a 4 month period) and 2 to 4 state exams.
- Admission requirements: the *Attestat o srednem obshchem obrazovanii* (Certificate of secondary general education) and the results of the Uniform State Exam (EGE).
- Diploma: *Diplom bakalavra* – Диплом бакалавра (bachelor diploma). This state diploma is accompanied by an appendix that lists all subjects, hours, grades, practical training and the grades for the final examination and thesis.

In principle, the diploma gives admission to master's programmes.

In terms of level, the *Bakalavr* degree (Бакалавр) is comparable to a WO bachelor's or HBO bachelor's degree, depending on the study programme.

### ***Magistr* (Магистр)**

The *Magistr* programme builds on the level of a completed *Bakalavr* programme.

- Duration: 2 years (120 credits).
- Content: more focused on research in comparison with the *Specialist* programme. Concluding with a state exam and (the defence of) a thesis.
- Admission requirements: a completed *Bakalavr* (Bachelor's) degree, possibly with additional requirements.

- Diploma: *Diplom Magistra* – Диплом магистра (master diploma). The diploma is accompanied by an appendix with all subjects, hours, grades, practical training and the grades for the final examination and thesis.

In principle, the diploma gives admission to a *Kandidat Nauk* programme.

In terms of level, the *Magistr degree* (Магистр) is comparable to a WO or HBO master's degree, depending on the study programme.

### **Specialist (Специалист)**

Alongside the bachelor's and master's programmes, there are also *Specialist* programmes. *Specialist* programmes are often more practice-oriented than bachelor's and master's programmes. Before the introduction of the bachelor-master structure, this was the most common diploma in higher education.

*Specialist* programmes are common in technical fields, but also in teacher training programmes, in legal and economic studies and in medical professions (veterinary medicine, medicine, pharmacy and dentistry).

- Duration: in the vast majority of cases, 5 years (300 credits). There are a few exceptions: for example, medicine lasts 6 years (360 credits). With some technical studies at leading universities, a longer duration may occur, while certain teacher training programmes may take a shorter time (4 years).
- Content: just as in bachelor's programmes a broad in scope during the first years, including general introductions in a wide range of subjects. Often internships and projects are part of the study programme, and always a thesis (for example about a project).
- Admission requirements: the *Attestat o srednem obshtsjem obrazovanii* (Certificate of secondary general education) and the results of the Uniform State Exam.
- Diploma: *Diplom specialista* – Диплом специалиста (specialist diploma). The diploma must be accompanied by an appendix with all courses, hours, grades, practical training and the grades for the final examination and thesis or project.

In principle, the diploma gives admission to a *Kandidat Nauk* programme.

According to Russian law, these programmes provide the same academic rights as master's programmes, even though the (nominal) duration is 1 year less than a master's degree.

In terms of level, the *Specialist* (Специалист) degree following a 5-year programme is comparable to a WO bachelor's or HBO master's degree, depending on the study programme.

### **Medicine**

The study of medicine, completed with a *Specialist* diploma, takes 6 years. To be allowed to practice the profession of doctor independently, graduates need to follow a professional programme after obtaining a *Specialist* diploma:

- the *Internatura*, a clinical internship of 1 year; or
- the *Ordinatura*, a 2-year preparation aimed at starting a doctorate programme.

### **Doctorates**

Russia has 2 types of doctorates:

- de *Kandidat Nauk* - КАНДИДАТ НАУК, meaning literally 'Candidate of Sciences'; and
- de *Doktor Nauk* - ДОКТОР НАУК, meaning 'Doctor of Sciences'.

### ***Kandidat Nauk* (КАНДИДАТ НАУК)**

A *Specialist* or *Magistr* degree is required for admission to the *Kandidat Nauk* programme. The programme, the *Aspirantura*, consists of lectures, seminars and research, and lasts 3 years. Students complete the programme with the public defence of their dissertation. They must write a mandatory comprehensive summary of the dissertation, the *Avtoreferat*. If the dissertation council considers the dissertation to be satisfactory, the *Kandidat Nauk* diploma is awarded.

### ***Doktor Nauk* (ДОКТОР НАУК)**

*Doktor Nauk* is the highest academic title in Russia. Admission is extremely selective. An institution's Academic Council determines whether or not to award the title. The research project must be advanced work in which a fundamental scientific problem is solved.

The programme consists exclusively of research. With outstanding research and an excellent dissertation, a *Doktor Nauk* diploma can be awarded immediately after a *Kandidat Nauk*. There is no equivalent qualification in the Netherlands.

## Assessment systems

An assessment scale of 5-2 is used in Russian education:

In numbers	In words	Meaning
5	<i>otlichno</i> - отлично	outstanding
4	<i>khorosho</i> - хорошо	good
3	<i>udovletvoritelno</i> - удовлетворительно	pass
2	<i>neudovletvoritelno</i> - неудовлетворительно (also: <i>plokho</i> - плохо)	fail

A 2 is seldom given, so there is not much variation in grades in practice. You can come across the term *zatshteno* - зачтено on higher education diplomas. This means that the exam has been passed.

## Accreditation and quality assurance

In Russia accreditation is under the authority of the [Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science](#).

The [National Accreditation Board](#) carries out the accreditations. Higher education institutions may operate only with the approval of the government. The institutions and programmes must comply with state education standards.

Russia recognises the following 2 phases:

1. Licensing: obtaining a state licence to provide education. This phase usually lasts 3-5 years and precedes state accreditation.
2. State accreditation: the institution may provide education programmes recognised by the government and grant diplomas and degrees approved by the state. The accreditation is valid for 6 years.

More information on quality assurance and accreditation can be found on the [website of the Russian ENIC](#).

## Checking documents

Minimum requirements: any file originating from Russia must consist of a copy of the Russian original diploma and a diploma supplement (or the list of grades for old diplomas) together with translations. This applies to both secondary education and higher education diplomas.

### **Authenticity**

Russian diplomas from accredited higher education institutions do have a similar format. The appearance and layout have changed over the years, but the [website of the Russian ENIC](#) contains an overview of which formats were used in which years, with clear images as examples. The only exceptions are the diplomas of the 2 national universities (the State University of Moscow/Lomonosov University and the State University of St Petersburg), these institutions may use their own format.

The diploma is always signed by the rector and the chairman of the state examination committee.

### **Cum laude**

If the diploma holder has graduated cum laude, this will be stated under the title *Diplom as s otlichiem – с отличием* (in print).

### **Diploma supplement**

The European model of the Diploma Supplement has not been introduced in Russia, but the Russian diploma supplements do contain information about the structure of the programme and the work load by hours. Some institutions grant the European Diploma Supplement on request. However, this supplement does not replace the Russian Diploma Supplement.

### **Credential evaluation**

Nuffic evaluates qualifications according to the principles of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#) (1997). A practical implementation of these standards can be found in the European [EAR manual](#).

## ■ **Overview of higher education institutes**

- [Website of the Russian ENIC](#), including an overview of recognised Russian higher education institutions (in English).
- The [Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science, Obrazovaniye](#), maintains a [database](#) of accreditations, but it can only be consulted in Russian.

## ■ **Useful links**

- The [Russische ENIC](#) provides information about the Russian education system, educational institutions and the Russian higher education law. The website also shows examples of diplomas from secondary and higher education.
- The [Glavexpertcenter](#) (Main State Center for Education Evaluation) deals with international recognition and also provides general information about the education system (e.g. examples of diplomas). The codes of Russian

programmes can also be viewed (all fields of study have a fixed code) as well as the duration of courses.

- The [Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation](#) manages the [Study in Russia](#) website, with information for foreign students who want to study in Russia.
- The [Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation](#) with information on primary, secondary and vocational education.

## ■ Glossary

- **Bologna process:** The process that started after 29 European Ministers of Education signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999, with which they agreed, among other things, to create a European Area for Higher Education (EHEA): “An open space that allows students, graduates, and higher education staff to benefit from unhampered mobility and equitable access to high quality higher education”. This includes setting up a system based on 2 cycles, undergraduate and graduate, also known as the bachelor-master structure. In 2003 a [third cycle](#) was added for doctoral programmes. The EHEA currently has [48 members](#).
- **Duration:** The official length of the full-time programme (not part-time) without study delay.
- **EGE:** *Ediniy Gosudarstvenniy Ekzamen*, ЕГЭ – Единый Государственный Экзамен, the Uniform State Exam. EGE is the final examination of secondary education and also the entrance examination for higher education.
- **Graduate programme:** A higher education programme after completion of a bachelor's degree. See also the description in the Nuffic Glossary: [graduate](#).
- **Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC):** The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, was drafted in 1997 by the Council of Europe and Unesco to facilitate and promote fair recognition among Parties of the Convention. Read more on the [website of the Council of Europe](#).
- **Undergraduate programme:** A programme for a bachelor's degree. See also the description in the Nuffic Glossary: [undergraduate](#).