

Table 1

Higher education systems and degree structures

Country	The HE system		Degree structure at universities		Doctoral degree structure	
	Unitary	Binary	One-tier	Two-tier	One-tier	Two-tier
Albania	●			●	●	
Bosnia-Herzegovina	●			●	●	
Bulgaria		●		● ¹	●	
Croatia		●		●	●	
Cyprus		●		●	●	
Czech Republic	●			● ¹	●	
Estonia		●		●	●	
Hungary		●	●		● ²	
Latvia		●		●	● ³	
Lithuania		●		●		● ⁴
Macedonia (Former. Yugosl. Republic of)	●			●	●	
Malta		●		●	●	
Poland		●		● ¹	● ²	
Romania	●			●	●	
Slovak Republic	●			●	● ²	
Slovenia		●		●	●	
Switzerland		●	●		● ⁵	
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia	●			●	●	
Montenegro	●			●	●	
Kosovo	●			● ⁶	●	

¹ Higher Education is a mixed system as there are also one-tier programmes.

² The possibility of Habilitation exists.

³ The habilitation existed in the Latvian system but was abolished in 2000.

⁴ The possibility of Habilitation still exists, but there are discussions about abolishing it.

⁵ Habilitation still required in the German-speaking part of the country, with the exception of the ETH Zürich

⁶ Higher education in Kosovo used to be a one-tier system and will have two tiers from 2001 onwards.

Table 2 Higher education qualifications*

Country Type of institution	Higher education qualifications before PhD/doctoral studies according to total number of years of higher education					PhD/doctoral level degrees	
	1-2 years+	3 years +	4 years +	5 years +	6/7 years + ¹	Inter-med. de-grees	PhD/ Doctoral degrees
Albania Universities and academies		Professional degree ²	University diploma (engineer, teacher etc.)	Post-university qualification/ specialisation ³	Master, advanced study degree ⁴		Doctor
Bosnia-Herzegovina University		First degree: VI grade ⁵	First degree: VII grade ⁵	Specialisation studies	Master		Doctor
Bulgaria Universities			Bachelor	Master ⁷			Doctor
Colleges		Specialist					
Croatia Universities			University diploma	Diploma in medicine	Master of science		Doctor of science
Polytechnics		Professional degree ⁸		Postgraduate professional degree ⁹			
Cyprus University			Ptychio	Master			Doctor
Higher education schools	Certificate, Diploma	Higher diploma	Bachelor	Postgraduate diplomas at Master level			
Czech Republic Universities and non-university types of higher education		Bachelor ¹⁰		Master ¹¹			Doctor
Estonia Universities		Bachelor	Bachelor ¹²	Master, Diploma	Degree in basic medical studies.		Doctor

* This table should be read together with the supplementary information on each country in the Country profiles. The aim is to indicate some of the main degree possibilities in each country. It should be noted that the number of years of study does not in itself say much about the level and contents of the qualifications. It should also be noted that the table does not illustrate the various requirements for moving from one qualification stage to another. Thus the conditions for access to doctoral level studies vary from three to five years of previous higher education. Neither has it been possible to illustrate all degree possibilities – especially not at postgraduate level.

¹ In almost all countries the longer degrees of 6 – 7 years duration include degrees in such fields as medicine, veterinarian science, dentistry and others. Usually these degrees do not follow the degree structure for the more general academic degrees, e.g. there is very seldom a first intermediate degree possibility.

² Only in some disciplines like nursing

³ Awarded after 1 year

⁴ Condition for admission to doctoral studies, like the DEA in France

⁵ Awarded after 2 – 3 years, e.g. to lawyers, teachers, engineers, medical technicians

⁶ Awarded after 4 – 6 years, e.g. Bachelor, Medical doctor, etc.

⁷ Either as a one-tier programme of 5 years or consecutive to a Bachelor in one year

⁸ Awarded after 2 – 4 years.

⁹ Requires at least 1 year of studies after the first professional degree

¹⁰ Awarded after 3 – 4 years

¹¹ Either as a one-tier programme of 4 – 6 years or consecutive to a Bachelor, lasting 2 – 3 years

¹² There is a tendency to standardize the duration of Bachelor degrees to 3 years and of Master's to 2 years.

Applied higher education institutions		Diploma	Diploma				
Hungary Universities	Accredited higher vocational certificate			Master or egyetemi oklevél	Medical degree		Ph.D., DLA ¹³
Colleges	Accredited higher vocational certificate	Bachelor or fõiskolai oklevél					
Latvia Universities and academies		Bakalaurs	Bakalaurs, professional degree level V	Master, professional qualifications	Professional qualifications		Ph.D.
Professional higher education institutions ¹⁴	College degrees: level IV qualific.		Professional degree, level V; applied professional degrees	Professional degrees for holders of a Bachelor			
Lithuania Universities and academies			Bakalauras, professional qualifications	Professional qualifications	Magistras, professional qualifications	1 - 2 years doctor. course	Doctor
Colleges		Professional qualification					
Macedonia (Form. Yugosl. Republic of) Universities/ Faculties	Certificate for level VI(1) ¹⁵		Diploma for level VII(1) (Bachelor) ¹⁶	Diploma for level VII (2) (Specialist)	Diploma for level VII (2) (Master)		Doctor (level VIII)
Malta University	Diploma	Bachelor	Bachelor honours	Master ¹⁷		M.Phil. ¹⁸	Doctor
College		Degrees still being developed					
Poland Universities		Licencjat, Bachelor	Inzynier	Master	Professional qualifications		Doctor
Schools of higher vocational education		Licencjat	Inzynier				
Romania Universities and academies		Diploma de absolvire (Bachelor)	Licenta ¹⁹ , diploma de inginer or diploma de arhitect ²⁰	Master, DEA			Doctor
University colleges ²¹		Diploma de absolvire					
Slovak Republic		Bachelor	Bachelor or Master	Master ²² / engineer	Professional qualifications		Doctor

¹³ DLA: Doctoral degree in arts

¹⁴ Introduction of professional Bachelor/Master degrees starting in 2001

¹⁵ A vocational sub-degree level in the traditional system, presently disappearing

¹⁶ After 4 to 6 years

¹⁷ After Bachelor honours

¹⁸ After Bachelor honours or Master

¹⁹ After 4 to 5 years

²⁰ After 6 years

²¹ Integrated into universities

²² Either as a one-tier programme of 5 years or consecutive to a Bachelor in one year

Universities			/engineer				
Slovenia Universities		Professional diploma	University diploma ²³	Specialisation degree	Master, professional qualifications		Doctor
Professional colleges		Professional Diploma					
Switzerland Universities		²⁴	Lizentiat/ Licence or Diplom/ diplôme ²⁵		Professional qualifications		Doctor
Fachhochschulen		Diplom/ Diplôme FH					
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia Universities			Bachelor ²⁶	Bachelor ²⁷	M. Sc.		Doctor ²⁸
Montenegro University	Professional degree		Bachelor ²⁹	Medical degree	Master		Doctor
Kosovo University		Bachelor ³⁰		Master	Postgraduate degrees		Doctor

²³ Duration 4 – 6 years, depending on the subject; 1 additional year (*absolventsko leto*) is required for degree dissertation

²⁴ By spring 2001 three Swiss universities had started to introduce Bachelor and Master degrees

²⁵ The licence is awarded more in humanities, the diplôme more in engineering and sciences, after 4 – 5 years

²⁶ Social sciences and humanities

²⁷ Engineering and natural sciences: 5 years; biomedical sciences: 6 years

²⁸ Also the Bachelor gives direct access to doctoral studies

²⁹ 4 to 5 years

³⁰ The degree structure at the University of Prishtina is currently being reformed: in 2001 a 3-5-8 model is being introduced

Table 3 Admission to higher education

Country	Admission to higher education¹	Numerus Clausus/ Limitations in admission
Albania	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate and a compulsory entrance examination set up by the institution and the ministry.	There is a general numerus clausus.
Bosnia-Herzegovina	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate – the results of which are weighted, depending on the study programme chosen - and an entrance examination.	No information
Bulgaria	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and the specific requirements (entrance examination) set by the higher education institution.	No information
Croatia	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate and an entrance examination set by the Ministry of Education.	There is an overall numerus clausus for all institutions and all disciplines.
Cyprus	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate and an entrance examination set by the Ministry of Education.	There is an overall numerus clausus in all public higher education institutions.
Czech Republic	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and the specific requirements (entrance examination) set by the higher education institution or faculty.	There is no overall numerus clausus; admission is decentralized.
Estonia	The general access requirement is a secondary school leaving certificate plus the State examination certificate (Riigieksamitunnistus). In addition, there may be entrance examinations set by the faculties, depending on the individual institution/programme.	There is a numerus clausus for the state-financed study places. The institutions can accept additional students on a tuition fee basis.

¹ According to the 1997 Lisbon Convention the terms access and admission are distinct, but linked. They denote different steps in the same process towards participation in higher education. Meeting the access requirements is necessary but not always sufficient for actually gaining admission to a higher education programme (getting a study place). When comparing access and admission requirements one has also to look into the structuring of secondary education which in some countries is based on a high degree of streaming in academic and less academic tracks. These differences are only partially reflected in this table.

Hungary	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and – for most programmes - an entrance examination in two subjects, depending on their choice of study programme.	There is a numerus clausus for the state-financed study places. Higher education institutions can accept additional students in exchange for tuition fees.
Latvia	The general access requirement is a recognised secondary school leaving certificate. The higher education institution may specify the necessary elective subjects during secondary education for admission to a programme of study.	There is an overall numerus clausus, set annually by the Ministry of Education.
Lithuania	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate plus an entrance examination set by the higher education institution in a number of disciplines, such as medicine, languages, arts, music, law, etc.	Admission procedures are decentralised, higher education institutions may set a numerus clausus in certain disciplines with regard to state-financed places and accept additional students for fees.
Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate plus an entrance examination (no uniform admission procedure, departments may decide). It is planned to abolish the entrance examination.	There is a numerus clausus for the state-financed study places. Higher education institutions can accept additional students in exchange for tuition fees.
Malta	All students with a recognised secondary school leaving certificate (Matriculation certificate) are eligible for admission. There are no entrance examinations.	The numerus clausus policy has been abolished.
Poland	The general access requirements are a secondary school leaving certificate plus an entrance examination set by the higher education institution.	There is no overall numerus clausus yet but the new higher education act provides for the possibility to introduce a numerus clausus in certain disciplines.
Romania	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and an entrance examination set by the higher education institution in accordance with criteria defined by the Ministry.	Government defines a numerus clausus, but each HEI may accept additional students on a tuition fee basis.
Slovak Republic	Admission is granted either based on the secondary school leaving certificate or on entrance examinations set by the higher education institution or on a combination of both.	No general numerus clausus. Higher education institutions may introduce a local numerus clausus.
Slovenia	Access to academically oriented programmes requires a secondary school leaving certificate (<i>matura</i> , in the future also <i>poklicna matura</i> , a sort of vocational <i>matura</i>) plus an examination in an additional subject. Access to professional programmes requires the <i>matura</i> or the <i>poklicna matura</i> .	No general numerus clausus, but higher education institutions may introduce local limitations with governmental authorisation (e.g. in medicine, law, business).
Switzerland	Access to universities requires a secondary school leaving certificate (<i>Matura, maturité</i>). Access to Fachhochschulen requires a professional <i>matura</i> , normally obtained during an apprenticeship.	A numerus clausus in medicine is applied in the German-speaking part of the country.
Federal		

Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and an entrance examination set by the department.	The government defines a numerus clausus each year for each department.
Montenegro	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and an entrance examination.	A numerus clausus is defined each year by the government.
Kosovo	Students have to meet both the general access requirement (a recognised secondary school leaving certificate) and an entrance examination.	The International Administrator may define a numerus clausus.

Table 4 Credit transfer systems

Country	Credit systems
Albania	No credit system in use yet. The introduction of an ECTS-compatible system is being prepared.
Bosnia-Herzegovina	No national credit system. The introduction of ECTS as a pilot project is currently being considered.
Bulgaria	No national system. So far only two universities use a credit system. The general introduction of credits is being discussed as a medium-term priority.
Croatia	No national credit system. The introduction of ECTS is being prepared.
Cyprus	There is a national credit system that is ECTS-compatible with one national credit equalling two ECTS-credits. E.g. the Ptychio, 4 years, requires 120 credits.
Czech Republic	No national credit system. There is a general trend to introduce ECTS, also due to Socrates/Erasmus, and to use it not only for foreign students but also for Czech students (both for accumulation and transfer).
Estonia	A national credit system is used in all higher education institutions, academic and professional, with 40 credits equalling one academic year. One credit corresponds to 40 hours or one week of study. Conversion into ECTS-credits possible.

Hungary	In 1998 the introduction of a credit system was made compulsory for all higher education institutions by September 2002, supervised by the National Credit Council. It will be ECTS-compatible, with one semester equalling 30 credits, and one credit corresponding to 30 hours of work. The institutions will have some autonomy in defining the operational details.
Latvia	There is a national credit system, similar to that of Scandinavian countries: 40 credit points equal one academic year and one credit corresponds to 40 hours or one week of study. The system is compatible with ECTS, but different.
Lithuania	The new higher education law of March 2000 establishes a relation of the national system to ECTS: 1 credit equals 1 week of study, 40 credits equal 1 year.
Macedonia (Form. Yugoslav Republic of)	No national credit system. The new higher education law of 2000 makes the introduction of ECTS compulsory.
Malta	National credit system with 30 credits per year, ECTS-compatible.
Poland	No national credit system. Some institutions have started, however, to introduce credit systems for specific disciplines and some are working with ECTS
Romania	A national decentralised credit transfer system has been introduced since 1998/99 on a voluntary basis. It is ECTS-compatible, with one semester equalling 30 credits.
Slovak Republic	No national credit system. Individual institutions experiment with ECTS. According to the concept for the future development of Slovak higher education, an ECTS-based system is to be developed for all institutions.
Slovenia	No national system. Both universities are introducing a credit system and use ECTS for student exchange within Socrates/Erasmus. In one university ECTS is compulsory for all newly introduced programmes. The basis, however, is not student workload, but contact hours.
Switzerland	All universities and Fachhochschulen are introducing ECTS for transfer purposes. Credit accumulation is being introduced simultaneously.
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia	No system yet. The introduction of ECTS is planned. For the time being one of the newly established post-graduate institutions is experimenting with ECTS.
Montenegro	No system yet. The introduction of ECTS is planned as part of the university reform.

Kosovo	No system yet.
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Table 5 Organisation of the Academic Year

Country	Start of the academic year	Organisation of the academic year/lecturing periods
Albania	First week of October	The academic year is divided into two semesters of 38 to 42 weeks. There are three examination periods (in winter, summer and autumn)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	October	The academic year is divided into two semesters, from October to July. There are three exam periods (January-February, June-July, September-October).
Bulgaria	October	The academic year is organised in two semesters, from October to June. After each semester there follows an examination period, defined by the higher education institution.
Croatia	1 October	The academic year is divided into two semesters. There are three examination periods, in winter, summer and autumn.
Cyprus	September	The academic year is organised in two semesters of 15 weeks duration each: from September to January and from January to May. Examinations are organised at the end of each semester.
Czech Republic	Between 15 September and 15 October, decided by the individual higher education institution.	The academic year is divided into two semesters of 14 weeks duration each. Examinations are organised at the end of each semester.
Estonia	September	The academic year is divided into two semesters. Each lasts 20 weeks, including an examination period at the end.

Hungary	Beginning of September, but this may vary significantly	The academic year is divided into two semesters. Each lasts 14 to 15 weeks, followed by an examination period of six weeks.
Latvia	Normally the first week of September, but there may be differences between the higher education institutions	The academic year is organised in two semesters. After each semester there follows an examination period of two to three weeks, in January/February and in June/July.
Lithuania	1 September	The academic year is divided into two semesters of 20 weeks (September – January, February – June), including a 4-week examination period at the end of each semester.
Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of)	1 October	The academic year is semester-based. The two semesters run from 1 October to 15 January and from 15 February to 31 May. The new higher education law of 2000 allows each institution to set their examination periods.
Malta	1 October	The academic year is divided into two semesters, from 1 October to 31 January, and from 1 February to 15 July. Exams are organised during the last week of January, and between the last week of May and 15 July.
Poland	1 September	The academic year is organised in two semesters of 15 weeks duration each, followed by an examination period.
Romania	1 October for most institutions, but they are free to choose the exact date in September and October	The academic year is organised in two semesters of 15 weeks duration each, followed by an examination period.
Slovak Republic	1 September	The academic year is organised in two semesters: From 1 September to 31 January and from 1 February to 30 June. Examinations are organised at the end of each semester.
Slovenia	1 October	The academic year is organised in two semesters of 15 weeks duration each. There are three examination periods, in January/February, June/July and September.
Switzerland	Second half of October	The academic year is divided into two semesters of 15 weeks duration each. They run from the second half of October to the beginning of March and from mid-April to mid-July. Examination periods are organised independently in spring, summer and autumn.
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia	1 September	The academic year is organised in two semesters: from September to January and from February to June. Examinations are organised in September, October, January, April and June.
Montenegro	1 October	The academic year is organised in two semesters of

Kosovo	1 October	15 weeks duration each: from 1 October to 15 January and from 15 February to 31 May. There are three examination periods, in January/February, June/July and September. The academic year is semester-based with fixed examination periods.
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Table 6 Tuition fees and student support systems for study abroad

Country	Tuition fees for regular study programmes	National student support systems for studies abroad
Albania	A tuition fee system was introduced in the past years. The government determines the fee level (identical for all disciplines) but higher education institutions may keep up to 90 percent of the fees.	No national support system, but some grants are offered by foreign institutions within bilateral agreements.
Bosnia-Herzegovina	No tuition fees yet, although the higher education law allows the introduction of fees. Foreign students pay fees, depending on the study programme.	No support system.
Bulgaria	A tuition fee system was introduced in 1999. The fee level depends on the kind of degree and is set by the government. Foreign students also pay fees.	No national support system, but some grants are offered by foreign institutions within bilateral agreements.
Croatia	A number of places are state-financed, for the rest the higher education institutions charge tuition fees. Foreign students generally pay fees. The introduction of a general tuition fee system is under discussion.	The government provides grants for Master and doctoral programmes abroad. In addition, foreign governments offer grants within bilateral agreements.
Cyprus	At the University of Cyprus the state pays the fee (CP 2000 p.a.) for Cypriot students. Foreign students pay CP 4000 p.a. At other institutions, Cypriots pay CP 1000-3500 CP., foreigners often more.	National support plus scholarships for study abroad provided by the Ministry of Finance
Czech Republic	At state and public institutions regular studies at all levels are free within the standard duration plus one year. Students exceeding this duration by more than one year pay fees. Foreign students pay for courses taught in foreign languages. 24 private institutions (non-university type) charge fees.	No specific national system, but grants for study abroad may be provided by the department, the higher education institution or the Ministry (within the framework of international cooperation agreements)
Estonia	A number of places are state-financed, for the rest the higher education institutions charge tuition fees. Foreign students generally pay fees.	Educational assistance (loans) is provided for studies abroad.
Hungary	General tuition fees, introduced in 1996, were abolished again in 1998. A number of places are state-financed, for the rest tuition fees are set by higher education institutions (Euro 400 - 2400 per semester). Foreign students	There are a very limited number of grants for study abroad; they are normally allocated in bilateral agreements between Hungary and foreign governments.

	generally pay fees.	
Latvia	A number of places are state-financed, for the rest tuition fees are charged. A system of study loans is being introduced.	A limited number of grants for study abroad are available if it is academically justified. Study loans are available for studies abroad if these studies require paying a tuition fee.
Lithuania	A number of places for “good students” are state-financed; an additional 25 percent are admitted in exchange for tuition fees charged by the higher education institutions (Euro 375 - 6000 per year). Foreign students generally pay fees.	The Lithuanian government abroad finances a few programmes for study.
Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of)	A number of places are state-financed. For the other students the higher education institutions charge fees. Foreign students generally pay fees. The introduction of a general fee system for all students is planned.	No national support system, but some grants are offered by foreign institutions within bilateral agreements.
Malta	All full-time programmes are free of charge for Maltese students. Tuition fees, set by the Ministry, are to be paid for part-time courses and by foreign students.	All Maltese undergraduate students are entitled to a maintenance grant, also for study abroad as part of their programme
Poland	Regular studies are free of charge but tuition fees are charged for evening classes, extramural studies and the repetition of exams. These fees, set by the Ministry, are not related to the student’s nationality	There is no national support system yet, but a system for all types of study is being prepared
Romania	In state institutions, a number of places are state-financed, for the rest tuition fees are charged (Euro 1500 per year). Private institutions charge similar fees. Foreign students pay around Euro 400 per month, also in state institutions.	There is a national scholarship office for study abroad, and grants are also given by foreign countries and higher education institutions (cooperation agreements)
Slovak Republic	No tuition fees for full-time Slovak students (only administrative fees for certain services and part-time programmes, life-long learning etc.). Tuition fees may be charged to foreign students.	No national support system, study abroad is either self-financed or through grants available through bilateral agreements
Slovenia	No fees for undergraduate programmes in state institutions and in private institutions with a concession. All part-time and postgraduate students, and also full-time students in private institutions pay fees, set by the institution in accordance with	No national support system, but some grants are available through bilateral agreements.

	ministerial regulations. Foreign students pay around Euro 1500 – 2000 p.a. for undergraduate, Euro 2250 – 3000 for graduate programmes.	
Switzerland	Yes, fixed by the institutions: SFR 500 – 800 per semester at universities and SFR 500 at <i>Fachhochschulen</i> . (At the Swiss Italian University SFR 2000 per semester.)	No specific system, but students with a cantonal grant may use it for study abroad if their programme is not offered in Switzerland
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Serbia	At the state universities there are 3 categories of students: fully funded and with a tuition waiver, subsidised (with reduced tuition) and paying full tuition. The decision is performance-based. In private universities all students pay full fees. All foreign students pay fees. The government sets fees at state universities.	No support system.
Montenegro	A number of places are state-financed. For the other students tuition the higher education institutions charge fees. The university, in accordance with the Ministry of Education, defines the fee level. A new system is being developed.	A grant for study abroad can be obtained for programmes not offered in the country.
Kosovo	All students pay a tuition fee of Euro 13 per semester. Foreign students pay a slightly higher fee. The decision on fees lies, under the Interim Statute that is currently in effect, with the International Administrator.	There is for the time being no support system.