

enter keyword(s)



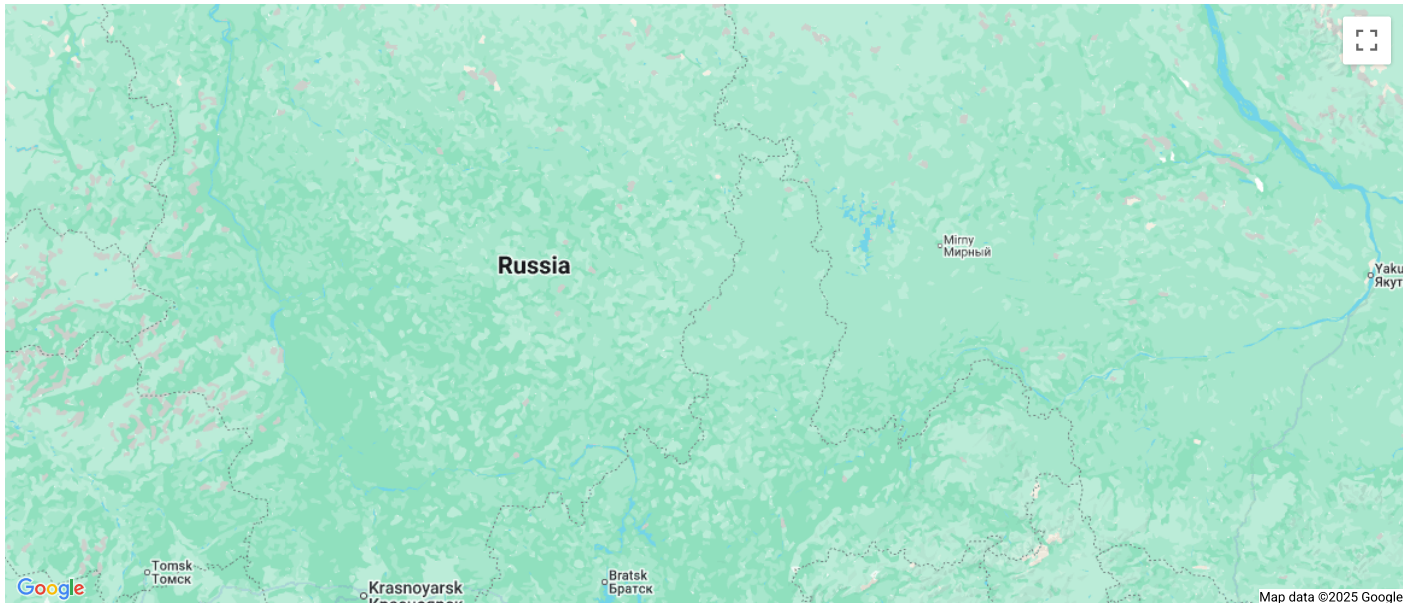
GO

Select Country

SECTION MENU



# Russia



Prior to the 1700's, education was limited to that provided by the Russian Orthodox Church. Beginning in 1701, Peter the Great brought Western education to Russia, including navigation, mathematics, medicine, engineering and science, and he also staffed the schools with Western teachers. Russia's higher education system started in the middle of the eighteenth century with the foundation of universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In the second half of the century, Catherine the Great established widespread elementary education, as well as the first school for girls. She also brought Western ideas and teachers into the education system.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, education in Russia was directed toward industrialization and modernization under state control. In 1861 the serfs were emancipated, and general reforms of that period led to equality in education for women, rural education and vocational/technical schools. The subsequent political reaction at the end of the nineteenth century suspended all reforms and the growth of the education system. Religious schools began to predominate, and by 1897, 70 percent of the male population and 90 percent of the female population were illiterate.

The most significant changes in the Russian education system occurred after the Revolution of 1917. Vladimir Lenin took over the government during WWI, ended Russia's participation in the war and introduced Marxist and progressive education brought from the West. The changes included free and compulsory general and technical education, preschool education, higher education potentially open to all, vocational training for those seventeen and over and mass adult education. Combined secondary and postsecondary occupational schools were created, while religion was banned and atheism promoted within the curriculum. Examinations and grades were abolished, and the student body was granted autonomy. Coeducation became universal.

Subsequently, under Stalin, progressive education was dismantled, examinations and grades were reintroduced, and teachers given authority. Collectivism overtook former Western thought. Central planning, leading to specialized vocational training and evening and correspondence programs, was instituted. Thereafter Khrushchev attempted a number of changes that failed, but secondary vocational-technical schools, along with special schools for gifted students in mathematics, science and foreign languages, were created to augment extant schools in music, the arts and sports. Existing postsecondary occupational schools were promoted and grew in importance.

During the Gorbachev era, the State Committee of Public Education was established, which implemented an education program consisting of nine years of universal general basic education, followed by two years of various academic and vocational secondary education tracks.

while maintaining many of the unique features of Soviet education.

## Education Today

Education in Russia is administered by the Ministry of Education and Science, [Federal Agency for Education](#). Regional, municipal and local departments may also be involved in educational administration and oversight.

The federal "State Educational Standards" outline the norms for all aspects of education, including curricula and the issuing of official documentation at all levels of education. Please see the [Russian Education Federal Portal](#).

### Structure of Education

Educational reform in the early 1990's created a new organization of education in Russia, including new nomenclature for the types and levels of education.

All education was divided into two types: "general" and "professional".

The sector of "general education" was divided into two levels: "basic general education" and "secondary (complete) general education".

The sector of "professional" education was divided into three levels: "initial", "intermediate" and "higher".

### General Education (*Общее образование/Obshchee Obrazovanie*)

There are two levels of general education:

1. Basic General Education (*Основное образование/Osnovnoe Obrazovanie*): years 1 through 9
2. Secondary (Complete) General Education (*Среднее (Полное) Общее образование/Obshchee (Polnoe) Obshchee Obrazovanie*): years 10 and 11 at general education secondary schools

### Primary Education and Secondary General Education

The length of the sequence of primary-secondary education has changed several times over the last 50 years. The system moved from a 10-year to an 11-year system in 1957, back to a 10-year system in 1964, and to an 11-year system again in 1984, with major adjustments made to that system in 1996.

Currently an 11-year system of general education is in effect, with children starting school at age 7. A new 12-year system was proposed at one time, adding one year to primary education, but the idea was dropped by a decision of the Russian *Duma* in 2008.

The school year starts on September 1 and runs into June. There are two semesters, made up of 34 weeks of instruction followed by exam weeks. Russian is the official language of instruction, but in years 1-9, other languages may be used. Education is compulsory through year 9.

### General education is offered in four types of schools:

1. General education secondary school [*средняя общеобразовательная школа/obshcheobrazovatel'naya shkola*]: Offers years 1 through 11. About 80% of schools are general schools. "Profile" education (intensive instruction in a specific subject area, similar to the gymnasium and lyceum) was introduced in 2003/04 with full implementation by 2006/07.
2. General education secondary school with intensive instruction in specific subjects, such as foreign language, science, sports, dance, music; make up about 15% of schools; may offer all levels of education.
3. Gymnasium [*гимназия/gymnasia*]: Constitute about 2% of schools; often emphasize the humanities and may offer all levels of education.
4. Lyceum [*лицей/litsej*]: 3% of schools; focus on scientific/technical subjects; may offer all levels of education.

### Primary and Secondary Curriculum

Primary general education (years 1-4): Russian, foreign language (starting in year 2), mathematics, environmental studies, practical and fine arts, music, sport. Instruction 5 days per week; 20 hours in year 1, 30 hours in year 4.

Basic general education (years 5-9): Russian, foreign language, mathematics, computer science, history, social science, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, art, music, technology, civics, physical education, subjects set by the school. Instruction 5 days per week, 30 hours per week. Examinations in year 9.

Secondary (complete) general education (years 10 and 11): Russian, foreign language, mathematics (algebra, basic analysis, geometry), Russian and world history, social science, economics, law, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, art, technology, civics,

subjects.

## General Education Documents

After Grade 9:

Certificate of Basic General Education [Аттестат об основном общем], Образовании/Attestat ob osnovnom obshchem obrazovanii]

After Grade 11: Certificate of Secondary (Complete) General Education [Аттестат о среднем], (полном) общем образовании/Attestat o srednem (polnom) obshchem obrazovanii]

## Admission to Higher Education

Secondary (complete) general education gives access to admission to higher education. The Unified State Examination is also required. Unified State Examination (USE) [Единый государственный экзамен (ЕГЭ)] Yedenyj gosudarstvennyj ekzamen (EGE)]

The Unified State Examination is required for admission to bachelor and specialist programs at higher education institutions. Developed in part to expand access to higher education and to quell accusations of corruption in the higher education admissions process, the USE was piloted on a small scale beginning in 2001, with full implementation federation-wide in 2009. Overseen by a special agency, it is given in the final year of both general education schools and vocational schools.

## Professional Education (профессиональное образование/Professional'noe Obrazovanie)

There are three levels of professional education:

### 1. Initial (or Basic) Professional Education (начальное профессиональное образование/nachalnoe professional'noe obrazovanie)

Three levels with the initial or basic levels of education are available

1. Admission based on Basic General Education (year 9): length of program is 1 to 2.5 years, yields employment qualification with complete secondary education. (Prior to 2007, this type of education yielded only an employment qualification, without complete secondary education.)
2. Admission based on Secondary (Complete) General Education (year 11): length is 1 to 1.5 years, yields employment qualification  
 School type: Professional school [техническое училище/tekhnicheskoe uchilishche]  
 Document: Diploma of Initial Professional Education [диплом о начальном профессиональном образовании/diplom o nachalnom professional'nom obrazovanii]
3. Admission based on Basic General Education (year 9): length of program is 3 to 4 years, yields employment qualification with complete secondary education.  
 School Type: Professional lyceum ([технический лицей / tekhnicheskij litsej] or [профессиональный лицей/professional'nyj litsej])  
 Document: Diploma of Initial Professional Education with Acquisition of Secondary (Complete) Education [диплом о начальном профессиональном образовании с получением среднего (полного) общего образования/diplom o nachalnom professional'nom obrazovaniis polucheniem srednego (polnogo) obshchego obrazovaniya]

### 2. Intermediate (or "Secondary", "Second Level") Professional Education (среднее профессиональное образование/srednee professional'noe obrazovanie)

Admission requires Basic General Education, Initial Professional Education or Secondary (Complete) General Education.

Programs are 2 or 3 years long, depending on the admission level.

School type: Technical school [техникум/tekhnikum], specialized school (училище/uchilishche), or "college" [колледж/kolledzh]

Document: Diploma of Intermediate Professional Education [Диплом о среднем профессиональном образовании/Diplom o Srednem Professional'nom Obrazovanii] with employment qualification

### 3. Higher Professional Education (высшее профессиональное образование/vysshee professional'noe obrazovanie)

This refers to the university and university-level sector of education in Russia offered at institutions that have the designation of "higher education institution" [высшие учебные заведения/vysshie uchebnye zavedeni], commonly known by the acronym "VUZ" (plural "VUZy") in Russian. Admission requires secondary (complete) education.

Programs and credentials awarded:

“specialist diploma” is colloquial, and that the word “specialist” does not appear on the documents.)

Bachelor Diploma [*Диплом бакалавра/diplom bakalavra*]. Admission requires secondary (complete) education. Programs are 4 years long.

Master Diploma [*Диплом магистра/diplom magistra*]. Admission requires a bachelor diploma. Programs are 2 years long.

Each of these diplomas is issued with a *приложение к диплому* (addendum to the diploma) that gives details of the student’s enrollment and lists subjects with grades and the number of hours per subject.

Note that both the Specialist and Bachelor programs have the same admission requirements but differ in the purpose of the education and credential. The Specialist Diploma functions as a professional credential that yields a specific qualification for employment, as was the case in the Soviet era, while the Bachelor and Master reflect a less narrowly-specialized approach to higher education echoing the U.S. model. The vast majority of higher education students are enrolled in Specialist programs.

“Second Higher Education”: Provisions exist for holders of a bachelor to be admitted to a specialist program, and for holders of a specialist diploma to be admitted to a master program. Applicants for “second higher education” are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Russian law requires that each student’s prior education and coursework be evaluated for potential applicability (“transfer”) to the new program, and that the institution must document the evaluation results and the student’s requirements in the new program. The resulting program is shorter.

Candidate of Sciences [*Кандидат наук/kandidat nauk*]. Admission requires the Specialist or Master. This is a research-based degree awarded upon completion of a three-year program, which includes qualification examinations after the first year, and preparation and defense of a thesis. The *Диплом Кандидата наук/Diploma of candidate of sciences* is awarded by the Supreme Certifying Council [*Высший Аттестационный Комитет (ВАК)/Vysshij Attestatsionnyj Komitet (VAK)*]. There is no *приложение* (addendum) for this diploma, although a record of the qualifying examinations might be available. This program is not graded.

Doctor of Sciences [*доктор наук/doktor nauk*] represents completion of an additional dissertation based on original research beyond the level of the Candidate of Sciences. It can be considered similar to a “habilitation” in the European sense, or to research required for a full professorship in the United States.

## Documentation of Incomplete Higher Education:

Academic Certificate [*Академическая Справка/akademicheskaya spravka*]

This document is similar in concept to the U.S. “transcript”. It is given to students who officially withdraw from their institution without completing a full higher education program. This is the official document that confirms the student’s enrollment dates, program of study, whether the student was enrolled full- or part-time, the legislated full-time length of the program, and the subjects completed with the grades and number of hours per subject, as well as any term papers or practical training placements completed.

The Academic Certificate is created based on entries in an internal student record called the credit booklet [*зачетная книжка/zachetnaya khnizhka*]. The credit booklet is actually a small pre printed booklet each student receives upon enrollment at the institution in which the student’s initial enrollment information is recorded by hand. Each semester the subjects are entered, as well as the instructor’s signatures confirming grades on examinations or ungraded passes in subjects that do not have final examinations. This booklet is an internal document for the use of the institution only, and U.S. educators are advised not to accept it as an official academic record. The Academic Certificate is the official record.

Diploma of Incomplete Higher Education [*Диплом о неполном высшем образовании/diplom o nepolnom vischem obrazovanii*].

This “diploma” is not a document of completion of a full academic program. It represents partial completion of a bachelor or specialist program. The document is similar in format and content to the “academic certificate”. To obtain this document, the student must have completed at least two years of the program and must make a special request for it when officially leaving the institution. (If the student does not request this document, an official Academic Certificate is issued upon official withdrawal.) For employment purposes within Russia, this “diploma” is considered more advantageous than an “academic certificate”. However, for academic purposes, this “diploma” is not a completion credential.

## Higher Education Institutions

In Russia, the types of higher education institutions include the university [*университет/universitet*], academy [*академия/akademiya*], institute [*институт/institute*], and conservatory [*консерватория/konservatoriya*]. Universities offer a wide range of disciplines, while an institute can be either an independent entity or part of a university or academy. An academy generally offers programs in one specific field of study, while conservatories offer programs in music and the fine and performing arts.

## Higher Education Accreditation

Higher education quality control is overseen by the National Accreditation Agency [*Национальное Аккредитационное Агентство/Natsionalnoe Akkreditatsionnoe Agentstvo*]. Accreditation as a quality assurance process is available to both state (public) and private institutions. For private institutions, the first step toward accreditation is a review for approval to operate as an education provider, resulting in a “license”. Licensed private institutions and public institutions that wish to be accredited participate in both peer assessment and self evaluation based on criteria that ensure that the activities of the institution conform to the State Educational Standard. Accreditation gives an institution the right to use the state seal on its credentials, to use the state format for diplomas, and to receive benefits as provided by the legislation of the Russian Federation. The period of accreditation certification is five years, with a continuous

## How Higher Education Documents are Issued in Russia

### ORIGINAL DIPLOMA AND ADDENDUM:

The *Диплом* (diploma) and *приложение к диплому* (addendum to the diploma) are issued together, in Russian, and given to graduates at a ceremony that takes place after final state examinations and diploma thesis defense are complete. Only one original diploma and addendum will be issued. No other originals will be issued; all copies issued later are “duplicates”.

### ORIGINAL ACADEMIC CERTIFICATE:

The *Академическая Справка/akademicheskaya spravka* (academic certificate) is issued for students who have not completed the full program of study. It is prepared by the Dean of the Faculty's office after a student officially withdraws from the institution. It is based on records kept by the Dean's office and in the student's credit booklet. Only one original is issued and the student must pick it up in person. Certified copies and documents issued later are “duplicates”.

### OFFICIAL COPIES:

Students can have copies of the original documents certified or attested by the department of their higher education institution, or by an official notary office in Russia. Notaries in Russia are legal functionaries who certify the authenticity of a copy of an official document. Copies certified in Russia can be accepted as official copies.

### DOCUMENTS IN US “TRANSCRIPT” FORMAT:

There is no official Russian higher education documentation that is issued in a format similar to a US transcript, in a semester-by-semester format with grades, “credits”, and a “GPA”. If a US institution requires a document in this format, Russian students must prepare it themselves, and have it attested by their departments. Such a document is not official and should be not accepted without the appropriate official documentation as described above.

### DOCUMENTS MAILED TO US INSTITUTIONS:

Students can ask their institutions to seal certified documents in an envelope sealed with the institution's stamp. The student must then mail this envelope to the US institution. Russian institutions generally do not have the means or infrastructure to send documents abroad unless the student pre-pays for this type of service (i.e. courier).

---

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE FLETCHER



DR. YURI AKIMOV

