Education system

Greece

described and compared with the Dutch system
This document contains information on the education system of Greece. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Greece for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

Disclaimer
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The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree or qualification</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Leaving Certificate of an EPAS (level 3)</td>
<td>MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)*</td>
<td>2/3 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaving Certificate of an EPAL (level 3)</td>
<td>MBO diploma (qualification level 3 or 4)*</td>
<td>3/4 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou with an average mark lower than 10</td>
<td>at least a HAVO diploma*</td>
<td>4 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apolytirio (Genikou) Lykeiou with an average mark of 10 or higher</td>
<td>VWO diploma*</td>
<td>4+ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptychio TEI</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptychio (without final paper)</td>
<td>(at least) a WO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptychio (with final paper)</td>
<td>(1-year) WO master’s degree *</td>
<td>7 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma from a university (with final paper)</td>
<td>WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis</td>
<td>(at least) a WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Netherlands 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: the Dutch education system.

* This evaluation is currently under revision.
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- The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and 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.
Introduction

Greece (Greek: ‘Hellas’) has been a republic since 1974, and became a member of the European Community (now the EU) in 1981.

The education system in Greece is centralized, with all levels falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (Ypourceio Paideias, dia Biou Mathisis kai Thriskeumaton).

There is a limited number of private educational institutions at pre-school, primary and secondary level, which are required to keep to the national education programmes. Private higher education institutions are not permitted to award national certificates.

There is a division within higher education between universities and institutions of higher professional education; in terms of organization, these 2 are at the same level.

The language of education is Modern Greek, yet certain higher education programmes are also provided in English (this is particularly the case at private institutions). Education is compulsory for 9 years (for children aged 5-15).

The academic year runs from September until the end of August, and is made up of 2 semesters.

Primary and secondary education

Primary education in Greece takes place at the Dimotiko Scholeio (for children aged 6-12). Upon completion of these 6 years, pupils are awarded the Apolytirio Dimotikou certificate.

General secondary education

General secondary education is divided into 2 stages. The first stage is the Gymnasio (pupils aged 12-15), and comprises the final 3 years of compulsory education. Upon completion, pupils are awarded the Apolytirio Gymnasiou certificate.

The second stage of secondary education is made up of 2 different types of school: The general Geniko Lykeio (unitary lykeio) and the vocational Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (Vocational Lykeio – EPAL) as well as the Epaggelmatiki Scholi (Vocational School - EPAS). Both the EPAL and the EPAS are institutes for professional technical education.

The Geniko Lykeio (for pupils aged 15-18) was introduced in 1998 to replace the old Eniaio Lykeio.
The first year is an orientation year, in which general knowledge subjects are taught over a total of 32 instructional hours per week. In addition, the pupil is obliged to select 1 elective subject for 2 instructional hours per week. In the second year, subjects are divided into two categories: general knowledge subjects and direction subjects. The second and third year focus strongly on the general knowledge subjects (25/17 hours per week, respectively). The direction subjects can either be compulsory or elective. Compulsory direction subjects are taught for a total of 7 to 8 instructional hours a week in the second grade and 12 hours in the third grade.

In all 3 grades of the Geniko Lykeio, pupils take oral and written school examinations in order to progress to the next grade or to graduate. The examinations in the first and second year are based on questions set by the teachers at school level. The examinations in the third year for certain general knowledge subjects are also based on questions set by teachers at school level. For the rest of the general knowledge subjects and for all the direction subjects, the questions are set by an external nationwide examination committee. The yearly progress grade in each subject is based on the average of the oral grades obtained in the 2 semesters and the grade of the final written exams.

At the end of the third year, pupils who wish to continue on to higher education in Greece, sit nationwide higher education entrance examinations: the Pan-Hellenic exams (Panellinies). The results of this state examination (in combination with the average marks from the previous years' oral/written examinations) determine whether pupils are accepted into higher education in Greece.

Pupils who have completed senior secondary education are awarded the Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou certificate. Pupils who wish to continue on to higher education in Greece upon successful completion of national examinations, are awarded a higher education entrance certificate (Bebaioi Prosbasin Tritobathmia Ekpaidefsi).

In terms of level, the Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou with an average final mark of 10 or higher is comparable to a VWO-diploma.¹

In terms of level, the Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou with an average final mark lower than 10 is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.¹

¹ This evaluation is currently being revised.
Secondary vocational education

The Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (Vocational Lykeio - EPAL) and the Epaggelmatiki Scholi (Vocational School - EPAS) offer a curriculum in which general and vocational education are combined.

The Epaggelmatiko Lykeio takes 3 years to complete, while the Epaggelmatiki Scholi takes 2 years. In the event that the chosen programme includes an apprenticeship or on-the-job period, attendance is extended up to 1 year. Admission to both EPAL and EPAS is granted on the basis of the Apolytirio Gymnasiou (lower secondary school leaving certificate).

Enrolment into the first year of the Epaggelmatiki Scholi is based on preference for the courses provided. The specialisations offered by the EPAS depend on the demand of the pupils, the socioeconomic conditions and needs of the area. Graduates of the EPAS are granted an ISCED-level 3 Vocational Title. Graduates of an Epaggelmatiki Scholi (EPAS) have the option to:
1. receive a license to practice a trade or profession (upon completion of exams);
2. enrol in the second grade of the EPAL;
3. register at an Institouto Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (Vocational Training Institute-IEK) in a similar specialisation.

The curriculum of the Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (EPAL) consists of general education subjects and technical-vocational education subjects, the latter including theoretical, workshop, design and combined (theory and workshop) subjects, for a total of 35 hours per week. Graduates of the EPAL are granted a School Leaving Certificate equal to that of the Geniko Lykeio. The final mark on the School Leaving Certificate is the average mark of the subjects of the last grade. The School Leaving Certificate also lists the field, specialisation and marks obtained in the subjects of the last grade. Graduates of the Epaggelmatiko Lykeio (EPAL) have the following options:
1. to seek admission to HEIs (upon completion of national examinations);
2. to receive a license to practice a trade or profession (upon completion of exams);
3. to enrol in an Institouto Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (Vocational Training Institute-IEK)

In terms of level, a School Leaving Certificate of the EPAS is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2 or 3, depending on the specialisation.
Admission to higher education

Students wishing to enter study programmes in Greek higher education require both the Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou (secondary school certificate) and a Bebaioi Prosbasis (certificate of admission). The number of students that are admitted to a certain programme is determined annually for each university by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. As there are usually more applicants than places available in certain fields of study, students with the highest average exam results are selected (calculated using a special formula that also takes the specialisation into consideration). For many students this means that they cannot take their preferred course, or that they cannot take it at the institute of their choice.

Admission to higher education institutions (both in university and technological sectors) takes place through centrally organized, nation-wide exams (Panellinies Exetaseis or Pan-Hellenic exams). The Ministry of Education bears the responsibility for the central organisation of these exams.

For admission to study fields requiring specialised knowledge or skills, special admission exams are necessary in one or more designated subjects (such as architecture, photography, music studies, translation and interpretation, foreign languages and literature) or preparatory tests (health, sports) as regards military schools and the academy of police officers.

Higher education

Greece has 2 sectors of higher education, the university sector and the technological sector, which comprise the following types of institutions:

**University sector**
- Research Universities
- Technical Universities (Polytechnia)
- School of Fine Arts
- Open University

**Technological Sector**
- Technological Education Institutions (Technologika Ekpedeftiaka Idrimata (TEI))
- School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE)

In terms of level, a School Leaving Certificate of the EPAL is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the specialisation.¹
Since 2001, both sectors legally fall under higher education. Although private higher education institutions do exist (such as international universities), the Greek constitution does not permit these private institutions to issue nationally recognised degrees. The Greek open university was founded in 1997 and is located in Patras. Greece has 23 universities and 15 TEIs (including the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education).

**University education**

**First stage**
This type of education includes programmes at both undergraduate and graduate level. The duration of most Greek university programmes is 4 years. Exceptions are technical and agricultural specialisations, architecture, dentistry and veterinary science (all 5 years), and medicine (6 years). Upon completion of a university programme, graduates receive a Ptychio; for technical and agricultural programmes, a Diploma.

A compulsory final paper is not included in the 4-year programmes, which makes it difficult to equate them to a WO master’s programme in the Netherlands. Yet a final paper or research project usually is part of the 5-year technical and agricultural study programmes. In terms of aim, level and content, these programmes can be compared to the WO master’s programmes in similar specialisations in the Netherlands.

For administrative reasons, the Ptychio/Diploma is sometimes issued some years later, or not at all. During the period between completion of the university programme and awarding the degree, a provisional certificate is issued, called the Apodeiktiko or Pistopoietiko.

In terms of level, a Ptychio without a final paper is comparable to (at least) a WO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, a Ptychio with a final paper is comparable to a (1-year) WO master’s degree.¹

In terms of level, a university Diploma with a final paper is comparable to a WO master's degree.
Second stage
Most students continue on with a postgraduate course after completing the first stage. There are more than 200 programmes that award the Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis (postgraduate diploma or specialisation). They usually take 2 years to complete, and involve a compulsory final paper. The entrance requirement is a Ptychio (from a university or a TEI) or a university Diploma. Students are selected by entrance examination or other selection process.

In terms of level, a Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis is comparable to (at least) a WO master's degree.

A PhD usually takes 3 to 6 years. After defence of the doctoral thesis, the degree of Didaktor is awarded. In principle the entrance requirement is the Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsis, yet in specialisations for which no such programme exists (and in some technical specialisations) students can also be admitted to a PhD with a Ptychio or Diploma.

Higher professional education
The education offered at TEIs is divided into 7 sectors: graphic and fine arts, economics and administration, health care, agriculture, engineering/technology, food technology and music. Each TEI institution gives courses in at least 2 of these sectors.

The entrance requirement is the Apolytirio Genikou Lykeiou and the Bebaiosi Prosbasis or the School Leaving Certificate of the Vocational Lykeio (EPAL). EPAL graduates must have been successful in the relevant admission exams elements which vary in accordance with the particular orientation taken up in the context of studies at EPAL.

Higher professional education lasts 4 years, 1 semester of which consists of an internship. Graduates of these programmes are awarded the Ptychio TEI.

In terms of level, a Ptychio TEI is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

TEIs do not offer any postgraduate courses. Yet TEI faculties can set up a Metaptychiako Diploma Eidikefsi programme jointly with a university, after which the degree is awarded by the university.
Assessment systems

Secondary education
The Gymnasio and the Lykeio both use an assessment scale of 0-20, with a minimum pass mark of 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.1 – 20</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.1 – 18</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1 – 16</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 – 13</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 – 9.4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5.1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher education
Universities and TEIs use the following assessment system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 – 8.5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 – 7</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 – 5</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 – 0</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has been implemented in higher education and has contributed to inter-institutional cooperation and student mobility. The majority of the first-cycle programmes in higher education comprise 8 semesters (4 years – 240 ECTS) and they are fully compatible with the European Qualifications Framework. The vast majority of postgraduate programmes last 4 semesters (2 years – 120 ECTS) and lead to MA or MSc degrees.

More information on ECTS is available in the ECTS User’s Guide issued by the European Commission.

More information about the value of foreign grades can be found on our website (Dutch only).

Bologna process

Higher education institutions in Greece have not yet collectively started implementation of the bachelor’s-master’s degree structure. Greece essentially
already has a two-stage system, undergraduate and postgraduate since 1982. Many students pursue their initial studies at postgraduate level. Information on the current situation regarding the Bologna process can be found on the official website of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

As of 2001, the Greek government has been involved in the establishment of joint degree programmes (mainly at master's level) between Greek and other European universities, in particular those in France and Germany.

### Qualification frameworks

Greece is in the process of establishing a national qualifications framework, the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF). The referencing of the HQF to the European Qualifications framework (EQF) is expected to be completed by December 2015.

More information on the development and the proposed levels of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework can be found in the referencing report of Eoppep.

### Quality assurance and accreditation

The Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HQAA), an independent agency for quality assurance, was established in 2005 with the purpose of evaluating institutions and programmes. The agency gives advice on how institutions and programmes can improve quality in specified areas (e.g. internal quality procedures/ processes, teaching staff, links with the labour market, research and lifelong learning activities). The HQAA is not a member of the European Association of Quality Assurance Agencies or the European Quality Assurance Register.

The 24 universities and 16 technological educational institutions (TEIs) are self-governed. These public higher education institutions operate under the supervision of the State and are entitled to financial assistance from it. They are considered accredited by the Greek state. A list of these accredited higher education institutions can be found on the Greek ENIC-NARIC website.

### International treaties

Greece has not yet signed the Lisbon Convention. However, the European Treaty of 1953 concerning admission to higher education does apply.
Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is issued automatically for the majority of study programmes, in the language of instruction and/or in English.

More information on the Diploma Supplement is available on the website of the European Commission.

List of higher education institutions

Website of the Hellenic Research Network, with an overview of Greek higher education institutions.

Website of DOATAP, with an overview of state-accredited higher education institutions.

Useful links

Website of DOATAP (formerly DIKATSA), the Greek ENIC-NARIC for university education.

Website of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs.