The education system of

Albania

described and compared with
the Dutch system
This document contains information on the education system of Albania. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Albania 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.

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Education system Albania – flow chart

- **Diplomë Master i Shkencave Cikel i Integruar**
  (higher education)
- **Master i Shkencave/Master i Arteve/Master Professional**
  (higher education)
- **Diplomë Bachelor**
  (higher education)
- **Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore/Diplomë e Maturës Shteterore Profesionale**
  (maturity examination)
- **Vërtetim (certificate)**
  (secondary general education)
- **Vërtetim (certificate)**
  (secondary general and vocational education)
- **Certifikatë të Kualifikimit Profesional**
  (vocational education)
- **Deftesë Lirimi (certificate)**
  (basic education)

**Duration of education**
### Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the foreign qualifications. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the corresponding levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign qualification</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certifikatë të Kualifikimit Profesional (3 years)</td>
<td>HAVO diploma for the general-education part</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vërtetim (certificate) of the 3-year senior secondary school</td>
<td>HAVO diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturës Shteterore Profesionale (professional state matura diploma) (4 years)</td>
<td>VWO diploma for the general-education part</td>
<td>4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore (state matura diploma)</td>
<td>VWO diploma</td>
<td>4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomë Bachelor</td>
<td>HBO or WO bachelor's degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomë e Nivelit të Parë (first level diploma, until 2007/2008)</td>
<td>HBO or WO bachelor's degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Profesional</td>
<td>HBO master's degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master i Shkencave (Master of Science) Master i Arteve (Master of Arts)</td>
<td>HBO or WO master's degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomë e Nivelit të Dytë (second level diploma, until 2007/2008)</td>
<td>HBO or WO master's degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomë i Shkencave Cikel i Integruar (Master of Science, integrated cycle)</td>
<td>HBO or WO master's degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB**
- 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 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

Albania, officially the Republic of Albania (Republika e Shqipërisë), is a country in the Balkans. Albania has been a candidate EU Member State since 2014.

Form of government
Albania has been a parliamentary democracy since the collapse of the Communist regime in 1991. The prime minister is the head of government. The president is elected by parliament.

Education
The government and parliament jointly determine the objectives and structure of the education system. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (Ministre e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë) and local authorities are responsible for daily supervision and governance.

In 2007, the Albanian government adopted the Higher Education Act as an instrument for reform. The Act has been amended several times since then, in an effort to progressively harmonise the country’s education system with the West-European bachelor’s-master’s degree structure.

General features
- Language of instruction: Albanian.
- Compulsory education: age 6 to 16.
- Length of the school year: from early September to late June.
- Academic year: from September/November to June.
Primary and secondary education

Basic education
Basic education spans 9 years (8 years until 2008-2009) and comprises 2 distinct phases:
- **Primary education**: groups 1-5 (with a specific emphasis on language and arithmetic).
- **Lower secondary education**: groups 6-9 (additional subjects and more in-depth education).

Pupils complete their compulsory education phase by taking exams in 3 subjects:
- Albanian language and literature;
- a foreign language;
- mathematics.

Diploma: Дëftesë Lirimi, a certificate stating that the holder has completed basic education.

Secondary education
There are 2 types of secondary schools (shkollë e mesme):
- **Gjimnazi** for general secondary education.
- **Mesëm profesional** for vocational education.

General secondary education
General secondary education (upper years) is an extension of the primary school curriculum.
- Duration: 3 years, groups 10-12 (part-time: 4 years).
- Objective: to prepare for the state matura exam.
- Content: the compulsory matura exam covers 5 subjects: Albanian language and literature, mathematics, 1 foreign language and 2 electives.

Diploma: Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore, the state matura diploma, awarded by the National Examination Agency, provides access to higher education.

NB This diploma was known as Дëftesë Pjekurie before 2005.

Supplementary to the Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore, pupils receive a certificate from their own school stating the matura exam results achieved and their performance over the preceding 3 school years; this Certifikatë Maturës Shtetërore also serves as the document attesting completion of secondary education.

Vërtetim (‘statement’) lists all the subjects attended plus the results achieved, and is issued to pupils who have failed or did not take the state matura exam.

In terms of level, the Vërtetim for the 3 upper years of secondary education is comparable to a HAVO diploma.
Secondary vocational education

Vocational education comprises 3 separate levels and can last 2, 3 or 4 years.

- 1st and 2nd years: the basic years (Arsimi Profesional Bazë).
- 3rd year: 1 year of vocational education (Arsimi Profesional).
- 4th year: 1 year of technically oriented education (Arsimi Teknik).

Content: vocational and general secondary education (the latter is covered sufficiently in the 4-year programmes: comparable to HAVO level). The professional matura exam has the same structure as the general matura exam: Albanian language and literature, mathematics, a foreign language and 2 electives. The electives can be vocational subjects.

- Diploma: Maturës Shteterëre Profesionale (vocational state matura) upon completion of the 4-year programme.
- Diploma: Certifikatë të Kualifikimit Profesional, a vocational qualification certificate issued upon completion of the 2 or 3-year programme. These diplomas don’t give access to higher education in Albania.

In terms of level, the Maturës Shteterëre Profesionale following a 4-year general and vocational programme is comparable to a VWO diploma for the general-education part.

In terms of level, the Certifikatë të Kualifikimit Profesional following a 3-year vocational programme is comparable to a HAVO diploma for the general-education part.
Higher education

Higher education in Albania is unitary in nature: there is no distinction between higher professional education and research-oriented education.

There are 39 higher education institutions in total:

- 14 public institutions;
- 25 private institutions.

These institutions provide education at 1, 2 or 3 levels:

- bachelor’s
- master’s
- PhD

There are 4 types of institutions:

- A university (Universiteti) provides education at 3 levels.
- An academy (Akademi) also provides education at 3 levels, but most academies are smaller than universities and they tend to specialise in specific disciplines (e.g. fine arts) or in vocational domains.
- A university college (Kolegj Universitar), most of which are professionally oriented institutions that only offer education at the first 1 or 2 levels.
- A higher professional college (Kolegj Profesional të Lartë), which offers 1 or 2-year professionally oriented programmes. Some higher professional colleges are part of a university or academy (often as a faculty).

Admission to higher education

Only pupils who hold the state matura diploma (the Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore) or the vocational matura: the Diplomë e Maturës Shtetërore Profesionale can be admitted to higher education. Most institutions also have their own entrance exams.

University and higher professional education

As mentioned, many education institutions in Albania provide both professional programmes and traditional research programmes.

Bachelor’s degree programmes

- Duration: 3 years.
- Content: 70% of the curriculum of similar degree programmes at different institutions is identical; electives and/or specialisation courses make up the remaining 30%. In teacher training, 80% of the curriculum of different programmes is similar. A thesis is not a mandatory component.
- Diploma: Diplomë Bachelor is a bachelor’s degree.
NB Until 2007-2008, students received a Diplomë e Nivelit të Parë (first-level diploma) upon completing a bachelor's degree programme with a duration of 3, 3½ or 4 years.

In terms of level, a Diplomë Bachelor is comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

In terms of level, a Diplomë e Nivelit të Parë (issued before 2008) is comparable to an HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

**Short cycle**
Higher professional colleges (Kolegji Profesional të Lartë) offer a small number of professionally oriented programmes of short duration.

- **Duration:** 1 to 2 years.
- **Content:** professionally oriented courses, e.g. in engineering.
  - Diploma: Certifikatë Profesionale or Diplomë Profesionale.

**Master's degree programmes**
Since 2010, students have been able to obtain the following master's level qualifications.

The most common master's degrees in Albania:

- **Duration:** 2 years (120 ECTS).
- **Content:** courses (80-90 ECTS), research and a thesis (30-40 ECTS).
  - Diploma: Master i Shkencave (Master of Science) and Master i Arteve (Master of Arts).

The medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and architecture programmes have an integrated bachelor's plus master's cycle:

- **Duration:** 5 years, and 6 years for medicine (300-360 ECTS).
- **Content:** courses, research and a thesis.
  - Diploma: Master i Shkencave, Cikel i Integruar (Master of Science, integrated cycle).

Occasionally students opt for a short-duration, professionally oriented master's degree programme:

- **Duration:** 1 year (60-90 ECTS).
- **Content:** an in-depth professionally oriented programme without research or thesis components.
Diploma: Master Profesional (Professional Master). Unlike the other master's degrees, this diploma does not grant access to a PhD programme.

In terms of level, the Master i Shkencave, Master i Arteve and Master i Shkencave, Cikel Integruar are comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

In terms of level, a Master Profesional is comparable to an HBO master's degree.

Master's degrees prior to 2008
Master's degree qualifications available to students who started their studies in or before 2008:
- Duration: 1, 1½ or (most commonly) 2 years (60, 90 or 120 ECTS).
- Content: various courses and a thesis.
- Diploma: Diploma e Nivelit të Dytë (second-level diploma).
  NB In addition to these master's degree programmes, which provided access to follow-up studies (PhD and specialisations), there were shorter master's programmes that did not offer access to third-level programmes.
- Duration: 5-6 years (300-360 ECTS).
- Content: integrated bachelor's-master's programmes in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and architecture.
- Diploma: Program i Integruar i Ciclit të Dytë (Integrated second-cycle programme). Except for the name, this programme is identical to the Master i Shkencave, Cikel i Integruar (Master of Science, integrated cycle).

In terms of level, the Diplomë e Nivelit të Dytë/Diplomë Integruar i Ciclit të Dytë is comparable to an HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the type of study programme.

PhD
- Duration: at least 3 years.
- Content: scientific research, and writing and defending a doctoral dissertation.
- Diploma: Doktor i Shkencave (Doctor of Sciences).
Other third-level qualifications:
- Diploma Specializimi for further specialisation over a period of at least 2 years.
- Master Eekzekutiv (Executive Masters) for an in-depth 1 or 2-year programme in medicine, veterinary medicine, engineering, law or another discipline. NB To be admitted to this programme, students need to have completed a master’s degree programme of at least 2 years.

### Assessment systems

Institutions in secondary and higher education most commonly use a 1-10 grading system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In figures</th>
<th>Figures in Albanian</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dhjetë</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nëntë</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tetë</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shtatë</td>
<td>More than satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gjashtë</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pesë</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1</td>
<td>Kater, tre, dy, një</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By adopting the 2007 Higher Education Act, Albania introduced both the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the diploma supplement. One ECTS credit represents 25 hours of work.

For more information, consult the [ECTS User’s Guide](#) published by the European Commission.

### Diploma Supplement

Diploma Supplements, which were first issued by some institutions in 2004-2005, have been compulsory since 2007-2008. Students receive their Diploma Supplement automatically, usually in Albanian and English.

More information about the Diploma Supplement (DS) is available on the [Europass website](#).

### Qualification frameworks

The Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF), introduced in 2010, recognises the same levels as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
• Official information about the AQF is available on this website (in Albanian).
• There is also a brochure, ‘The Albanian Qualifications Framework: an Introduction’, with information about the AQF.

## Accreditation and quality assurance

The body responsible for internal quality assurance and accreditation in Albania is the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (Albanian name: Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë në Arsimin e Lartë (ASCAL)). The old name of this body was Agjencia Publike e Akreditimit të Arsimit të Lartë, APAAL (Public Accreditation Agency for Higher Education, PAAHE).

ASCAL is responsible for the accreditation of education institutions and programmes.
• Accreditations have a term of validity of 6 years.
• Accreditations are based on national standards formulated by the government.

For more information, visit the ASCAL website.

## Bologna Process

Albania signed the Bologna Declaration in 2003. For more information, see the Albanian page on the website of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

## International treaties

Albania signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999 and ratified it in 2002. In addition, the country has entered into bilateral treaties on research and higher education with Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey.

## Checking documents

Upon completing a higher education programme, students receive 2 documents:
• the certificate for the degree concerned;
• the Diploma Supplement stating the exam results and details of the programme.

Albanian students should be able to produce a file that contains:
• a validated copy of their original diploma;
• a certified copy of their original diploma or list of subjects;
• a certified translation of both documents (unless the institution has provided its own English translation).
Credential evaluation
A diploma should be evaluated according to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997). A practical implementation of these standards is the European EAR manual.

Overview of higher education institutions
Visit the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCAL) website for an overview of decisions on the accreditation of institutions and a list of accredited degree programmes:
- accredited institutions;
- accredited degree programmes.

Useful links
- The website of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (text in Albanian only).
- The Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (ASCA) website.