

The education system of

# Moldova

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Moldova. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Moldova 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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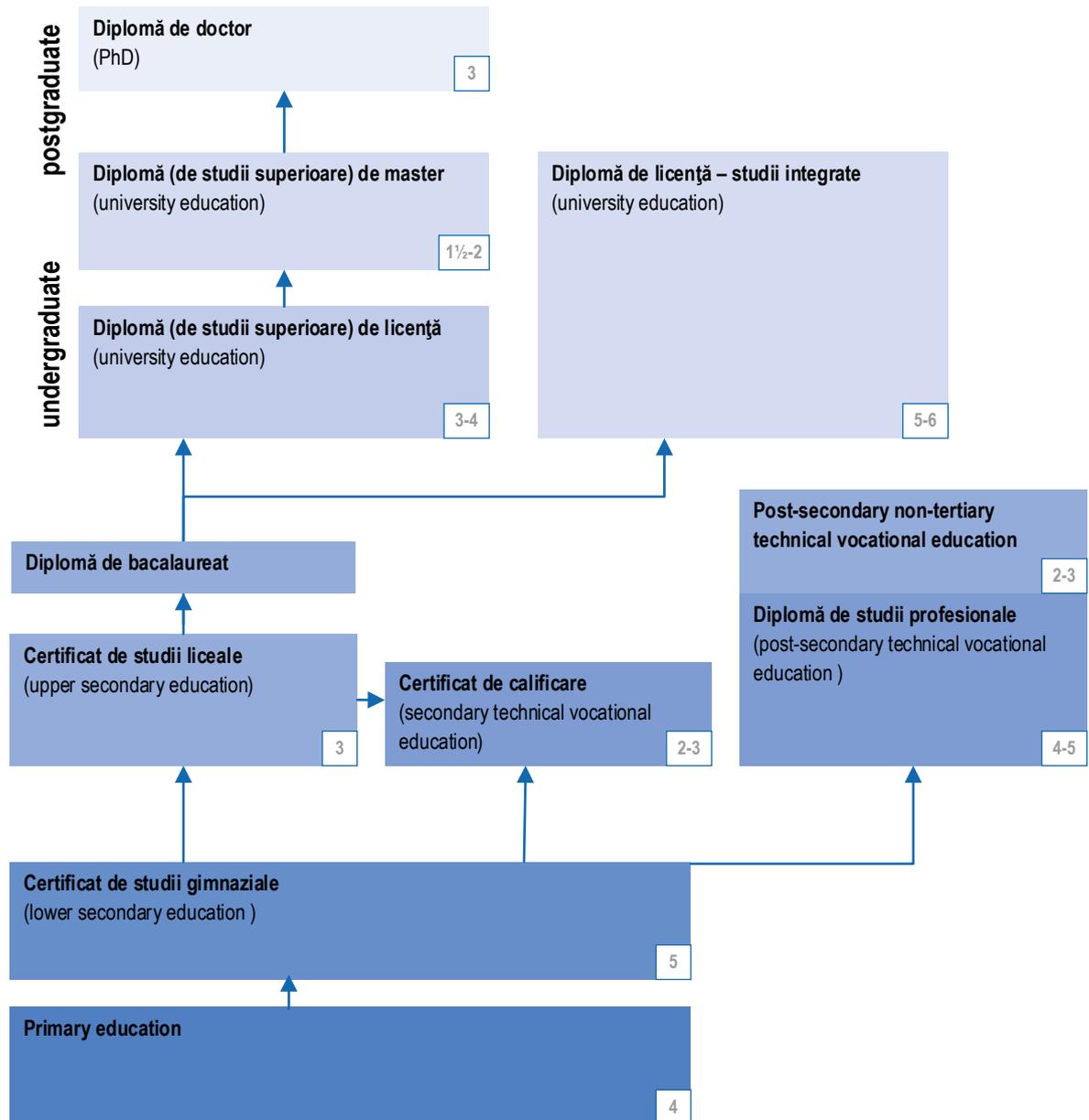


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## ■ Background

- **Country:** Moldova, officially the Republic of Moldova (*Republica Moldova*). Moldova used to form part of the Soviet Union, but has been a sovereign state since 1991. Until that time, it used the education system of the Soviet Union. The first 'national' education act was introduced in 1992. This was modified substantially in 2005 due to the country's adoption of the Bologna process.  
**Note:** The area of Transnistria in the east of the country is a self-proclaimed independent state recognised by very few other countries. Although it is formally under Moldovan control, the central government holds little sway. The accreditation of institutions in this area is problematic.
- **Responsible for education:** the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, [Ministerul Educației, Culturii și Cercetării](#).
- **EU membership:** Moldova is not an EU Member State. The country signed an association treaty with the European Union in 2014. It is not a formal candidate for membership.
- **Bologna process:** Moldova has been a member of the Bologna process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) since 2005. A new education act ([the Education Code 152/2014](#)) to bring the country's higher education system into line with European standards came into effect in 2014. See also the page about Moldova on the [EHEA website](#).
- **International treaties:** Moldova ratified and implemented to the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999. The country has cooperation agreements with 25 countries in the field of education. Under the terms of an agreement with Romania, the *bacalaureat* (secondary education) diplomas of both countries are considered equal and there are schemes for young people from Moldova to study in Romania.
- **Compulsory education:** ages 7-18.
- **Language of instruction:** in principle, Romanian, but the law makes allowance for instruction in minority languages such as Russian, Ukrainian or Gagauz.
- **School year:** starts in September, 33-35 weeks of class in total.
- **School exams:** schools generally award secondary school diplomas in July.
- **Academic year:** starts in September, two 15-week semesters.

Flow chart: education system Moldova



0 Duration of education

## Evaluation chart

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

| Foreign qualifications   | Dutch equivalent and NLQF level  |     | EQF level |
|--|--|-----|-----------|
| <i>Certificat de studii gimnaziale, certificate of lower secondary education</i>           | 3 years of general secondary education (the level has not yet been determined) | -   | 2         |
| <i>Diplomă de studii profesionale, diploma of vocational education</i>                     | <a href="#">MBO</a> diploma, qualification level 3 or 4                        | 3/4 | 3/4       |
| <i>Diplomă de bacalaureat, baccalaureate diploma</i>                                       | <a href="#">VWO</a> diploma  | 4+  | 4         |
| <i>Diplomă (de studii superioare) de licență, diploma of licence (of higher education)</i> | <a href="#">HBO</a> or <a href="#">WO</a> bachelor's degree                    | 6   | 6         |
| <i>Diplomă (de studii superioare) de master, master's diploma (of higher education)</i>    | <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 or 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.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

### Primary education

Primary education in Moldova (*învăţămîntul primar*) starts at the age of 7 and lasts for 4 years (Years 1-4). Classes are taught by generalist teachers. At the end of this phase, pupils sit tests in calculus and their native language (Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian or Gagauz), and additionally in Romanian if this is not their native language.

### Secondary education

Secondary education comprises 2 phases:

- Lower secondary education (*învăţămîntul gimnazial*) starts at the age of 11 and lasts for 5 years (Years 5-9).
- Upper secondary education (*învăţămîntul liceal*) starts at the age of 16 and lasts for 3 years (Years 10-12).

### Lower secondary education

Pupils receive lower secondary education at a *gimnaziu*. At the end of this phase, they sit a national exam in 3 subjects: mathematics, their native language and by rotation: history, foreign language, geography, biology, chemistry and physics. If Romanian is not their native language, they sit an additional exam in Romanian. On completion of this phase, pupils transfer to general upper secondary education or a form of [vocational training](#).

- [Duration](#): 5 years.
- [Content](#): a wide variety of subjects, ranging from mathematics to languages and social and scientific subjects. 80-85% of the subject cluster consists of compulsory subjects, the rest are elective subjects.
- [Diploma](#): *Certificat de studii gimnaziale*, the certificate of completed lower secondary education.

In terms of level, the *Certificat de studii gimnaziale* is comparable to 3 years of general secondary education.

### Upper secondary education

Pupils receive upper secondary education at a *liceu*.

- [Duration](#): 3 years.  
Note: In some cases, part-time upper secondary education may be available. If this is the case, this phase takes an additional year to complete (Year 13). Until 2011, the upper secondary education phase took 2 years, and the graduates received the *Attestat de studii medii de cultură generală*.

- Content: pupils select a profile from art (*arte*), social (*uman*), science (*real*) or sport (*sport*). They take both general and profile subjects. 75-80% of their time is spent on compulsory subjects, the rest on elective subjects. At the end of this phase, they sit the national baccalaureate exam, the *examenul de bacalaureat*. This exam, which is administered by the National Agency for Curriculum and Evaluation, covers at least 4 subjects: the native language, 1 foreign language, history or mathematics (depending on the selected profile) and 1 elective subject. Pupils for whom the language of instruction is a minority language sit an additional exam in a 5th subject: Romanian.
- Diploma: *Diplomă de bacalaureat* (baccalaureate diploma), which provides access to higher education.

In terms of level, the *Diplomă de bacalaureat* is comparable to a VWO diploma.

Note: If pupils do not sit the *bacalaureat* exam or fail it, they are awarded a *Certificat de studii liceale* (the certificate of completed upper secondary education). This does not grant admission to higher education, but does give access to vocational training.

### Secondary technical vocational education

After 9 years of primary and lower secondary education, pupils may elect to transfer to a vocational school (*scoală profesională*), college (*colegiu*) or excellence centre (*centru de excelență*). There, they have a choice of:

- secondary technical vocational education;
- post-secondary technical vocational education.

### Secondary technical vocational education

Programmes in secondary technical vocational education (*învățământul profesional tehnic secundar*) take 2 or 3 years. The 3-year programme includes general education. At the end of these 2 or 3 years, pupils are awarded a *Certificat de calificare* (qualification certificate). This does not grant admission to higher education. However, on completion of such a programme pupils can transfer to Year 12 of a school that offers general education only (*liceu*).

### Post-secondary technical vocational education

Programmes in post-secondary technical vocational education (*învățământul profesional tehnic postsecundar*) take 3, 4 or 5 years, depending on the content of the programme and the pupil's previous education. At the end, pupils are awarded:

- a *Diplomă de studii profesionale* (diploma of vocational education).  
Note: Until 2016 this diploma was called *Diplomă de studii medii de specialitate* (diploma of specialist senior secondary vocational education).

The *Diplomă de studii profesionale* (diploma of vocational education) grants admission to higher education, only to study programmes in the related fields (Education Code art. 63).

In terms of level, the *Diplomă de studii profesionale* (Diploma of vocational education) is comparable to an MBO diploma with qualification level 3 or 4, depending on the duration and specialisation.

This diploma allows pupils to continue to higher education in the specialisation of the vocational education. If they so desire, pupils can also sit the *bacalaureat* exam to obtain the *Diplomă de bacalaureat*, which grants access to all higher education.

## ■ Admission to higher education

The *Diplomă de bacalaureat* grants admission to higher education. Since 2017 the *Diploma de studii profesionale* also grants admission to higher education, only to study programmes in the related fields.

Students compete for places on the basis of their *bacalaureat* exam results. Some specialisations, such as art or journalism, also require aspiring students to sit an entrance examination.

## ■ Higher education

Moldova does not have a binary system; there are no separate institutions of higher professional education, like there are in the Netherlands. It is also often unclear from the study programme or diploma name whether the qualification is academic or professional in nature.

### Types of institutions

Higher education in Moldova is provided at universities, academies and institutes. Universities offer a wide spectrum of study programmes and levels. Academies offer study programmes in a single broad field, such as economy, the arts and public administration. Institutes focus on a specific field, such as management or criminology. Many study programmes can be studied full time or part-time.

As of 2019, there are:

- 17 state-run institutions;
- 9 recognised and accredited private institutions.

Regarding the [accreditation](#) of private institutions, the same rules apply as for state-run institutions, except their funding methods are different. Students pay roughly the same amount in tuition fees.

### Reforms

In 2005, Moldova began reforming its higher education system. As a result, all institutions of higher education (both private and state-run) are now legally obliged to follow a 3-cycle structure:

- Cycle I: *Licență*
- Cycle II: *Master*
- Cycle III: *Doctor*

The number of students has dropped off gradually over the past few years due to the shrinkage of the population.

## ■ University education

The usual diplomas that students can obtain through higher education are the following:

- *Diplomă de licență*
- *Diplomă de master*
- *Diplomă de doctor*

### **Diplomă de licență**

- **Duration:** 3 or 4 years, 180 or 240 [ECTS](#).  
Technical and technology study programmes and those in the arts, law, engineering, agriculture and double majors take 4 years. Social and humanities study programmes last 3 years.
- **Content:** institutions are free to set their own curricula within broad state-sanctioned frameworks. Study programmes conclude with final examinations and a thesis defence (scientific research or project report).
- **Admission requirements:** a *Diplomă de bacalaureat* or a *Diplomă de studii profesionale* in a relevant specialisation.
- **Diploma:** *Diplomă de studii superioare de licență* (Diploma of licence of higher education). The diploma grants admission to master's programmes. Until 2016 the name of the diploma used to be *Diplomă de licență*, and sometimes with the addition of *învățământ superior* (higher education).

In terms of level, the *Diplomă (de studii superioare) de licență* is comparable to a HBO or WO bachelor's degree, depending on the nature of the study programme.

### **Diplomă de master**

- **Duration:** 1½ or 2 years, 90 or 120 ECTS. Both durations are equally common. The total duration of a bachelor's programme followed by a master's programme is always at least 5 years (300 ECTS). A 3-year bachelor's programme is always followed by a 2-year master's programme. A 4-year bachelor's programme is followed by a 1½-year master's programme.
- **Content:** institutions are free to set their own curricula within broad state-sanctioned frameworks. Study programmes conclude with final examinations and a thesis defence (scientific research or project report).
- **Admission requirements:** a *Diplomă de licență*.
- **Diploma:** *Diplomă de studii superioare de master* (master's diploma of higher education). Until 2017 this diploma was named *Diplomă de master*, master diploma. This grants admission to doctoral degree programmes if the marks obtained are sufficiently high.

In terms of level, the *Diplomă (de studii superioare) de master* is comparable to a HBO or WO master's degree, depending on the nature of the study programme.

### **Diplomă de doctor**

Students are able to pursue doctoral degrees at the universities' doctoral schools.

- Duration: officially 3 years (180 ECTS).
- Content: research, and writing and publicly defending a doctoral dissertation.
- Admission requirements: a master's diploma with an average mark of at least 8.0.
- Students are awarded a *Diplomă de doctor* and the title *Doctor in științe*. The *Diplomă de doctor* grants admission to post-doctoral programmes.

### **Integrated study programmes**

Integrated study programmes (*studii superioare integrate*) are available for medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and architecture. In essence, such programmes are combined bachelor's-master's programmes lasting 5 or 6 years (300-360 ECTS).

At the end of the programme, students are awarded a *Diplomă de licență – studii integrate*. This diploma has had different names over time:

- *Diplomă de licență* (possibly including the name of the discipline);
- *Diplomă de studii superioare universitare de licență*;
- *Diplomă de studii superioare universitare*;
- and other variants.

## ■ Assessment systems

In Moldova, institutions of secondary and higher education use a 10-point system, with 5 being the minimum pass mark and 10 the highest mark. Higher marks are more common than in the Netherlands.

The A-F scale is commonly used as well. The conversion into numbers is laid down by law and is as follows:

| In letters | In numbers |
|------------|------------|
| A          | 9.01-10.0  |
| B          | 8.01-9.0   |
| C          | 7.01-8.0   |
| D          | 6.01-7.0   |
| E          | 5.0-6.0    |
| FX         | 3.01-4.99  |
| F          | 1.0-3.0    |

### ECTS

Moldova uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). This system has been introduced gradually from 2005. 1 ECTS credit represents 30 hours of work.

For more information about the ECTS, consult the [ECTS Users' Guide](#) published by the European Commission.

## ■ Qualification frameworks

Moldova's qualification framework, the *Cadrul Național al Calificărilor din Republica Moldova* (CNCRM), was adopted in 2010. Like the European framework, the CNCRM consists of 8 levels. Some levels of the Moldovan system vary from the European system:

- CNCRM level 3 = upper secondary and secondary vocational education (in some cases with access to higher education);
- CNCRM level 4 = post-secondary technical and vocational education;
- CNCRM level 5 = post-secondary non-tertiary technical vocational education.

More information can be found in this report: [National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2012-2015, Moldova](#).

## ■ Accreditation and quality assurance

Moldova has an accreditation system for both institutions and study programmes. The *Agencia Națională de Asigurare a Calității în Educație și Cercetare* (ANACEC, [National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research](#)), is responsible for quality assurance. ANACEC was founded in 2014. Its remit is to implement government policy, prepare standards and accredit both higher and vocational education institutions and study programmes. Accreditations have a term of validity of 5 years. Many study programmes are currently still awaiting accreditation. In such cases, the accreditation of the institution will suffice.

Prior to the foundation of ANACEC, institutions were accredited by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research. In the current situation, the accreditation of institutions is still subject to ministerial approval.

Note: The accreditation of institutions in Transnistria is problematic. Transnistria is a self-proclaimed independent state.

## ■ Checking documents

### Secondary education

At least the following documents are required for the assessment of a secondary education diploma:

- The document attesting completion (such as the *Diplomă de bacalaureat*).
- The list of marks for Years 10-12 of secondary education.

The format of the *Diplomă de bacalaureat* applies nationwide.

### Higher education

Newer diplomas (bar coded as of around 2008) are written in both Romanian and English. They are accompanied by a diploma supplement (from 2005 onwards), which is also written in both Romanian and English. Some older diplomas are bilingual as well. They are accompanied by a list of marks.

### Verification

Secondary and higher education diplomas can be verified on the [Verificarea Actelor de Studii](#) (study certificate verification) website of the Ministry of Education. This applies only to diplomas with bar codes on the bottom left and right. Both numbers must be entered (the registration number of the diploma is on the bottom left, the diploma number on the bottom right). This will return a summary of the diploma details.

### Diploma supplement

All institutions of higher education supply a diploma supplement. This provides an overview of completed exams, marks and ECTS credits obtained. The document

is available in both Romanian and English. More information on the diploma supplement (DS) is available on the [Europass website](#).

### 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 institutions of higher education

- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research has an [overview of recognised state-run and private institutions](#) (in Romanian only) and an [overview of the accredited study programmes](#) (in Romanian only).
- The [Agenția Națională de Asigurare a Calității în Educație și Cercetare](#) (ANACEC) has an [overview of recognised study programmes](#).

## ■ Useful links

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, [Ministerul Educației, Culturii și Cercetării](#), including the [Direcția Cadrul Național al Calificărilor](#) (National Qualifications Framework Department). This is also the [ENIC Moldova](#).
- Moldovan government verification website: [Verificarea Actelor de Studii](#) (study certificate verification).
- The [Agenția Națională de Asigurare a Calității în Educație și Cercetare](#) (ANACEC, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research) is responsible for quality assurance in Moldova.
- ANACEC published the [document with the current education law](#) (in English).

## ■ 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.
- **Graduate programme:** A higher education programme after completion of a bachelor's degree. See also the description in the Nuffic Glossary: [graduate](#).

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- **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](#).