

UK Education System

The education system in the UK is divided into four main parts, primary education, secondary education, further education and higher education. Children in the UK have to legally attend primary and secondary education which runs from about 5 years old until the student is 16 years old.

The education system in the UK is also split into "key stages" which breaks down as follows:

- **Key Stage 1:** 5 to 7 years old
- **Key Stage 2:** 7 to 11 years old
- **Key Stage 3:** 11 to 14 years old
- **Key Stage 4:** 14 to 16 years old

Generally key stages 1 and 2 will be undertaken at primary school and at 11 years old a student will move onto secondary school and finish key stages 3 and 4.

Students are assessed at the end of each stage. The most important assessment occurs at age 16 when students pursue their GCSE's or General Certificate of Secondary Education. Once students complete their GCSE's they have the choice to go onto further education and then potential higher education, or finish school and go into the working world.

Our overview of the education system in the UK is divided into five main sections:

Primary Education

Primary education begins in the UK at age 5 and continues until age 11, comprising key stages one and two under the UK educational system. Please visit the [British Council page](#) for more information on primary education.

Secondary Education

From age 11 to 16, students will enter secondary school for key stages three and four and to start their move towards taking the GCSE's - learn more about secondary education in the UK and what it will involve. Primary and secondary education is mandatory in the UK; after age 16, education is optional.

Further Education

Once a student finishes secondary education they have the option to extend into further education to take their A-Levels, GNVQ's, BTEC's or other such qualifications. UK students planning to go to college or university must complete further education.

Higher Education

Probably the most important subject area on this site, this explains more about the higher education system in the UK and how it works for international students. Most international students will enter directly into the UK higher education system, after completing their home country's equivalent to the UK's "further education."

Entry Requirements

Each level of education in the UK has varying requirements which must be satisfied in order to gain entry at that level - learn more about the education entry requirements for the UK.

UK Degree Online

With online programs growing in popularity, this means the availability of top-notch online programs is also on the rise. If you want to obtain a UK accredited degree without having to relocate to the United Kingdom, choosing to study online is a good option for you. Getting a UK accredited degree online allows you to fit your studies into your schedule and save money on travel costs while having access to a variety of top programs.