

The Education System in Portugal



4.1: Portugal Overview:

Portugal officially the Portuguese Republic is a country located on the Iberian Peninsula, in southwestern Europe. It is the westernmost sovereign state in mainland Europe, being bordered to the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north and east by Spain.

Portugal is the oldest nation state on the Iberian Peninsula and one of the oldest in Europe, its territory having been continuously settled, invaded and fought over since prehistoric times. It was inhabited by pre-Celtic and Celtic peoples, visited by Phoenicians-Carthaginians, Ancient Greeks and ruled by the Romans, who were followed by the invasions of the Suebi and Visigothic Germanic peoples. After the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, most of its territory was part of Al-Andalus.

Portugal has left a profound cultural, architectural and linguistic influence across the globe, with a legacy of around 250 million Portuguese speakers, and many Portuguese-based creoles. It is a developed country with an advanced economy and high living standards. A member of the United Nations, the European Union, the Schengen Area and the Council of Europe (CoE), Portugal was also one of the founding members of NATO, the eurozone, the OECD, and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

4.2 How is the education system organised?

The Portuguese educational system is divided into different levels of education, essentially sequential. It starts in pre-school education, with an optional attendance cycle from 3 to 6 years old. It continues with Basic Education, which comprises three sequential cycles:

- the 1st cycle of 4 years (expected age of attendance, from 6 to 10 years old);
- the 2nd cycle of 2 years (expected age of attendance, from 10 years to 12 years old), corresponding to ISCED 1;
- and a 3rd cycle with a duration of 3 years (expected age of attendance, from 12 years to 15 years of age), corresponding to ISCED 2.

This is followed by Secondary Education, which corresponds to a cycle of three years, (expected age of attendance, from 15 to 18 years of age), corresponding to ISCED 3, and which includes five types of courses:

- Scientific-Humanistic Courses
- Professional courses
- Specialized Art Courses
- Courses with own plans (Scientific-Technological Courses)
- Youth Education and Training Courses.

ISCED 4 corresponds to post-secondary non-tertiary education, while ISCED 5 corresponds to a short-term Higher Education program. Higher Education is structured according to the principles of Bologna and is aimed at students who have successfully completed Secondary Education or who have a legally equivalent qualification.

ISCED 6 comprises Degree programs (or equivalent) and ISCED 7 includes Master's programs (or equivalent). Finally, ISCED 8 comprises PhD programs (or equivalent).

4.3 What is the compulsory school age?

In Portugal there is a compulsory education regime, currently compulsory education goes up to the 12th year or 18 years.

Pre-school education is compulsory from the age of 5. Its universality implies for the State the duty to guarantee the existence of a pre-school education network that allows the enrolment of all children covered by it and to ensure that this frequency is carried out on a free basis in the educational component.

Children and young people aged between 6 and 18 are considered of school age, and students in need of special education are also covered.

It should be noted that the guardian has the duty to enrol the child in public schools, private and cooperative schools or in education and / or training institutions recognized by the competent entities. The student has an obligation to attend classes.

Compulsory schooling ceases with the obtaining of the diploma of a secondary education course or, regardless of obtaining the diploma of any cycle or level of education, at the time the student turns 18.

4.4 What is the process of registering my child for school?

The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic established that foreigners who are or reside in Portugal have the same rights as the Portuguese citizen, including those referring to education. In addition to guaranteeing a fundamental right of minors, it is about providing conditions for integration for immigrants and their families, promoting social cohesion. The children of foreign citizens residing in Portugal are entitled to the same rights as Portuguese citizens in terms of universality and free compulsory education. The Constitution also specifically states that the State must ensure the children of immigrant's adequate support for the realization of the right to education.

To register your child, go directly to the nearest school to the residence, if you do not know where to find the educational institutions, please consult your municipality or parish to get more information.

4.5 What documents do I need to present when registering my child for school?

- Declaration of permanent residence or declaration of local parish council verifying the residence of the student
- Passport photo
- Passport and / or Birth certificate
- Certificate or statement or declaration from embassy of the country of origin that mentions the level of education that the student has reached to make school equivalences (starting from 1st cycle) https://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Equivalencias/2006_portaria_699.pdf

