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## Present-day Higher Education System in Turkey

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Today the educational system of Turkey is a full-fledged structure which is analogous to the European educational system and allows the training of qualified specialists in different areas.

The educational system in Turkey:

- Preschool education (Anaokulu);
- Elementary education (İlköğretim);
- Secondary education (Ortaöğretim (Lise));
- Technical Schools (Training colleges) (Meslek Yüksekokulu (Ön Lisans));
- Universities (Higher education) (Lisans);
- Advanced degrees (Lisansüstü).

Preschool education is usually optional. It is children's education from the age of 3-5 that lasts from 1 to 3 years. Education is carried out as preparation for school.

Turkish elementary (İlköğretim) and secondary (Ortaöğretim (Lise)) education consists of a 12-year term which is divided into 3 stages: elementary schools, secondary schools and vocational schools. Elementary education (İlköğretim) takes 8 years: 4 compulsory years at elementary school and 4 years at secondary school or "Imam Hatib school" (schools with a focus on Islamic studies). Elementary education is intended for pupils from 6 to 14.

Whereas secondary education lasts 4 (+1) study years, some educational institutions have one preliminary year for studying English or fundamental subjects. Secondary education can be received at general education schools or at educational institutions with professional or technical specialization.

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Educational institutions for secondary education may include:

- Vocational schools on technical specializations, tourism, health service, education science. After graduation students can enroll in field-oriented higher educational establishments without preliminaries;
- “Anatolian lyceums” with foreign languages specialization: these are quite famous lyceums «Anadolu», «Galatasaray», «Kadıköy Anadolu Lisesi», «İstanbul Lisesi» where the amount of foreign language classes exceeds the norm of common programs;
- Lyceums with enhanced studying of natural sciences «Fen Lisesi»: definition of the word “Fen” includes such subjects as Math, Physics, Chemistry and Biology;
- “Imam Hatib” lyceums: the program of these educational institutions provides enhanced Islamic studies;
- Fine arts lyceums: these educational institutions are aimed at the development of students’ talents in arts from early age;
- Special private lyceums – “colleges”. In Turkey Colleges are private schools with high tuition fees and competitive selection of candidates; teaching of some subjects at these educational institutions is provided in foreign languages. [1]

In Turkey it is possible to get higher education at Universities, Institutes of Technology, Higher Educational Institutions, Vocational colleges, as well as at police and military academies.

### **System of admission to Universities in Turkey**

In Turkey Universities do not screen students, except in the case of art departments, and students choose educational institutions by themselves, depending on their amount of points on the final state examination.

YKS is a common name of higher education examination process. YKS includes two stages:

1. TYT (Basic examination – first stage of YKS): applicant must get at least 180 points in order to participate in the second stage.
2. AYT (Test – second stage of YKS) is a difficult test which is instrumental in admission to a University. In order to choose a University freely, students must get at least 180 points out of 500. [2]

After the exam the points are calculated: lyceum diploma band score + TYT scores (40%) + AYT scores (60%). After that, if the student has the required amount of points, he or she can choose a maximum amount of 24 universities.

Except of these exams, there is another, which is called YÖS and intended only for foreign students (they do not pass YKS exam).

### Technical schools (Ön Lisans)

Students graduating from professional lyceums can apply to university based Technical schools without passing exams, whereby those graduating from other lyceums must pass the default exam “TYT” and receive the required points for admission. Education at Technical schools lasts 2 years. There is one extra year for studying foreign languages in some educational institutions. After graduation from Technical schools finalists can pass DGS (transfer exam) in order to continue education at other higher educational establishments of the country.

### Bachelor’s degree (Lisans)

Bachelor’s degree in Turkey can be received after 4, 5 or 6 years of education. Those wishing to enroll at 4,5,6 year term education must be graduates of lyceums and also pass TYT and AYT, that is to go through the main stages of YKS. Receiving a Bachelor’s degree takes 4 years.

The education term depends on the chosen specialty:

4 year-term training programs	5 year-term training programs	6 year-term training programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fundamental and natural sciences</li> <li>▪ Engineering and industrial technological sciences</li> <li>▪ Agricultural sciences</li> <li>▪ Social studies</li> <li>▪ Educational sciences</li> <li>▪ Humanities</li> <li>▪ Art and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Veterinary sciences</li> <li>▪ Dentistry</li> <li>▪ Pharmacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Medical science</li> </ul>

### Master’s degree (Yüksek Lisans)

There are 2 types of Master’s degrees, with or without thesis (2 or 1,5 years respectively). If the student plans to study for a Post Graduate Degree, he or she must choose a Master’s Degree which includes the preparation and defense of a thesis.

## PhD degree (Doktora)

A student in possession of a Bachelor's or Master's degree can receive a PhD degree. If a person has a Master's degree with a defended thesis, the PhD degree takes at least 8 semesters of education and 12 at most. If a person has a Bachelor degree only and wants to enter a PhD program, it takes at least 10 semesters and a maximum of 14. [3]

## Languages of tuition

At pre-university courses education in Turkey is provided in English, French, Arabic (for those who study Arabic, literature and theology), Albanian (for those who study Albanian and literature), Bosnian, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Classical Greek, Greek, Armenian, Farsi, Georgian, Chinese, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, German, Korean, Japanese, Polish. [4]

There are some Universities in Turkey which have special status and languages of tuition. Those are:

- Galatasaray University (Tuition language is French);
- Turkish-German University (Tuition languages are Turkish and German);
- Istanbul's Turkish-Japanese Science and Technology University (It is in the process of building, tuition language will be English).

It should be emphasized that in Turkey there are two types of educational programs in English: horizontal and vertical programs. A *horizontal program* means that students can get education only in one language, in English or in Turkish, depending on the person's choice. It cannot be ruled out that the student can choose both language programs. A *vertical program* means that education is provided 70% in Turkish and 30% in English. [5]

## Statistics of Higher Education in Turkey

Today there are 206 universities in Turkey, 129 of which are state-funded, 72 – private, 5 – private vocational training schools.

In 2016 the amount of prospective students, who applied to Universities by passing preliminaries reached 2.255 million and of those without preliminaries – 78,000. At the same time, in 2016 the total announced number of vacant places in higher educational institutions for distance learning was 852,000, the number of students who took those places was 792,000. [6]

The number of state and private universities depends on a region. It means that 27 universities out of 129 are located in the Central Anatolian Region (İç Anadolu Bölgesi); 27 Universities are located in the Marmara Region (Marmara Bölgesi); 16 in the Eastern Anatolia Region (Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi); 15 in the Aegean Region (Ege Bölgesi); 20 in the Black Sea region (Karadeniz

Bölgesi); 14 in the Mediterranean Region (Akdeniz Bölgesi); 10 in the Southeastern Anatolian Region (Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi).

The Marmara Region takes the leading position based on the number of private Universities (44 higher educational institutions). There are 17 private Universities in the Central Anatolian region, 5 in the Mediterranean Region, 3 in the Aegean Region, 2 in the Southeastern Anatolian Region, 1 in the Black Sea Region.

There are 5 private vocational training schools in Turkey and all of them located in the Marmara Region.

In the 2017-2018 educational year there were 7.56 million students graduated from Turkish universities. 6.964 million studied at state universities and 596,000 at private universities. At the same period the following number of students studied at:

- Vocational-training schools – 2,768,757;
- Bachelor's programs – 4,241,841;
- Master's programs – 454,673;
- PhD programs – 95,100. [7]

Besides higher educational institutions which are located in Turkey, there are some Turkish universities, which are situated abroad and connected with the governments of countries where they function. Those are Ahmet Yesevi University in Kazakhstan and Manas University in the Kyrgyz Republic.

It should be mentioned that some Turkish universities have their own branches abroad. Those are the biggest Turkish universities:

- Okan International University (Branch in Miami);
- Middle East Technical University (Cyprus);
- Nisantasi International Campuses Of Higher Education (London);
- Bahçeşehir University (Berlin)

### **Tuition free and fee based education at Turkish universities**

At state vocational training schools on-campus education for citizens of Turkey is free, for foreigners it is fee-based with a strong requirement of passing the YÖS exam (in this case tuition fee depends on a training program and department). On-site and off-site training in state voca-

tional training schools is fee based (from 1000 to 2000 TL or about \$250 per year). There are different types of off-site training.

At private vocational training schools education is fee based, but the cost depends on points which are received by students when they apply to an institution. On the basis of this the following discounts are possible: 100 %, 75 %, 50 %, 25 %. For foreign students education is fee based (from \$2000 to \$3500) and YÖS exam is not obligatory.

Bachelor's degree at state Universities for citizens of Turkey is free, for foreign students it is fee-based with the requirement of passing the YÖS exam (tuition fees depend on a field of study and university). On-site and off-site training at state universities is fee-based (from 1000 to 2000 TL per year, approximately \$250)

At private universities Bachelor's degree has the same conditions, as at private vocational training schools: education is fee-based, tuition fee depends on points and discounts are also possible at rates of 100 %, 75 %, 50 % or 25 %.

Terms of education at Master's programs at state universities depend on the field of study. Education at Master's programs with defense of a thesis is free, for admission the ALES exam is obligatory (Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavı). Tuition at Master's programs without thesis defense is fee-based, ALES exam is not obligatory. All Master's programs at private universities are fee-based, admission terms are the same as at state universities. Costs for fee-based Master's degree programs range from 7500 to 18,000 TL per year (approximately \$1200-\$3000).

### **Leading Turkish Higher Educational Institutions and fields of study**

According to the annual number of applicants and universities' rankings, in 2014 the 20 leading universities of Turkey were:

1. Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniversitesi).
2. Marmara University (Marmara Üniversitesi).
3. Ankara University (Ankara Üniversitesi).
4. Abant İzzet Baysal University (Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi).
5. Dokuz Eylül University (Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi).
6. Ege University (Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi).
7. Gazi University (Gazi Üniversitesi).
8. Akdeniz University (Akdeniz Üniversitesi).
9. Hacettepe University (Hacettepe Üniversitesi).
10. Istanbul Technical University (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi).
11. Anadolu University (Anadolu Üniversitesi).

12. Yıldız Technical University (Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi).
13. Adnan Menderes University (Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi).
14. Middle East Technical University (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi).
15. Uludag University (Uludağ Üniversitesi).
16. Selçuk University (Selçuk Üniversitesi).
17. Karadeniz Technical University (Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi).
18. Eskişehir Osmangazi University (Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi).
19. Bosphorus University (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi).
20. Sakarya University (Sakarya Üniversitesi).

Among these universities, the biggest number of foreign students study at Anadolu, Istanbul and Middle East Technical Universities.

Also it is possible to pick out the most popular training programs at Turkish universities. In 2014 those were:

1. Legal studies (Hukuk).
2. Medical science (Tıp), including nursing (Hemşirelik), psychology (Psikoloji), dentistry (Diş Hekimliği), nutritional science (Beslenme ve Diyetetik), physiotherapy (Fizyoterapi ve rehabilitasyon).
3. Architectural studies (Mimarlık).
4. Computer engineering (Bilgisayar Mühendisliği); Mechanical engineering (Makine mühendisliği); Industrial engineering (Endüstri mühendisliği); Electric engineering (Elektrik-Elektronik Mühendisliği).
5. Business management (İşletme); Economics (İktisat (Ekonomi); International relations (Uluslararası İlişkiler); Social studies (Sosyoloji).
6. Turkish language and literature (Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı). [8]

11 universities in Turkey are listed in the QS World University Rankings which estimate higher educational institutions according to 6 criteria: research, teaching, employers' opinion and career potential, number of foreign students and teachers.

University	Position in the QS rate
Bilkent University in Ankara (Bilkent Üniversitesi)	421-430
Koc University in Istanbul (Koç Üniversitesi)	431-440
Sabancı University in Istanbul (Sabancı Üniversitesi)	461-470

Middle East Technical University in Ankara (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi)	471-480
Bosphorus University (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi)	491-500
Istanbul Technical University (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi)	601-650
Hacettepe University in Ankara (Hacettepe Üniversitesi)	751-800
Ankara University (Ankara Üniversitesi)	801-1000
Çukurova University (Çukurova Üniversitesi)	801-1000
Gazi University (Gazi Üniversitesi)	801-1000
Istanbul University (İstanbul Üniversitesi)	801-1000

### **Cooperation between Russian and Turkish Higher Education Institutions**

A lot of Turkish universities have centers and special units which are engaged in Eurasian, Russian and Central Asian research. Almost all universities have departments of Russian language and literature. Also there are partnership ties between Russian and Turkish universities. The following list gives examples of such higher educational institutions:

1. Middle East Technical University has a Research Center for Black Sea and Central Asia countries, a Center for Eurasian studies and a Department of modern languages where Russian is studied. The University cooperates with the following Russian educational institutions: Innopolis University, Siberian Federal University, RUDN University, Southern Federal University.
2. The Istanbul University has an Institute of Eurasia and a Department of Russian Language and literature. The university cooperates with Saint Petersburg State University.
3. At Ankara University there are a Research Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies and a Russian language and literature department. This department cooperates with Kuban State University.
4. There is a Center for Russian Studies at Bilkent University.
5. At Atatürk University there are a Eurasian Silk Road Universities Application and Research Center, a Middle East and Central Asia – Caucasus Research and Application Center, a Department of Russian language and literature. The university cooperates with Voronezh State University, Don State Technical University and Voronezh State Agricultural University.



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