

## **The Education System of Cyprus**

The Education system in Cyprus consists of the following stages:

### **Pre-Primary education:**

Pre-Primary Education is compulsory for all children between 4 8/12 – 5 8/12 years old. Children are also accepted over the age of 3. This level of education aims to satisfy the children's needs for the development of a wholesome personality in an experiential environment which enables them to recognize their capabilities and enhance their self-image.

### **Primary Education:**

Primary education is compulsory for all children over the age of 5 8/12 and has a duration of 6 years. The aim of Primary Education is to create and secure the necessary learning opportunities for children regardless of age, sex, family and social background and mental abilities.

### **Secondary Education:**

Secondary General Education offers two three-year cycles of education – Gymnasio (lower secondary education) and Lykeio (upper secondary education) – to pupils between the ages of 12 and 18. The curriculum includes core lessons, interdisciplinary subjects and a variety of extracurricular activities.

Instead of the Lykeio, pupils may choose to attend Secondary Technical and Vocational Education which provides them with knowledge and skills which will prepare them to enter the workforce or pursue further studies in their area of interest.

### **Higher Education:**

At present, public and private universities operate in Cyprus.

#### **Public Universities**

1. The University of Cyprus
2. The Open University of Cyprus
3. The Cyprus University of Technology

#### **Private Universities**

1. European University- Cyprus
2. Frederick University- Cyprus
3. Neapolis University- Cyprus
4. University of Nicosia- Cyprus

### **State Higher Education Institutions:**

Higher education in Cyprus is also provided by a number of State Higher Education Institutions, and an even greater number of Private Institutions of Higher Education, none of which has university status. The State Institutions of Higher Education, offer vocational programmes of study with a duration ranging from one to three academic years. These programmes do not provide access to second cycle programmes. The apolyterion or equivalent qualification, is a prerequisite for access to the programmes offered by State Higher Education Institutions and candidates for entrance to a particular programme are ranked according to their performance in the Pancyprian Examinations.

### **Private Institutions of Higher Education:**

Currently, 25 Private Institutions of Higher Education are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture some of which have branches in other cities in Cyprus, besides Nicosia. Private Institutions of Higher Education do not have university status but they offer both academic and vocational programmes of study at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

### **Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

The competent body for quality assurance and accreditation of the programmes offered by Private Institutions of Higher Education is the Council for Educational Evaluation-Accreditation (Symvoulío Ekpedeftikis Axiologisis Pistopiisis, SEKAP), which is a member of ENQA. At present, a number of programmes offered by the Private Institutions, have been evaluated and accredited by SEKAP. These programmes fall into the following categories:

- Academic and Vocational programmes of study lead to the following qualifications: Certificate (1 year), Diploma (2 years) and Higher Diploma (3 years). For access to these programmes the apolyterion or equivalent qualification is a prerequisite.
- First cycle programmes (4 years), lead to the award of a Bachelor Degree. For access to these programmes the apolyterion or equivalent qualification is a prerequisite.
- Second cycle programmes (1 to 2 years) lead to the award of a Masters Degree. The prerequisite for access to these programmes is the Ptychio, or Bachelor, or equivalent qualification.

### **Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications**

The competent national body for the recognition of higher education qualifications is the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Degrees (Kypriako Symvoulío Anagnorisis Titlon Spoudon, KYSATS). KYSATS recognizes equivalence, or equivalence-correspondence for

first cycle titles, or just equivalence for postgraduate titles (second or third cycle). KYSATS may also recognize joint degrees.

### **Quality Assurance Agency**

The establishment of a Quality Assurance Agency has been approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus. The aim of this Agency is to promote quality assurance in both the public and the private institutions of higher education, through various measures which include external accreditation and development of internal quality culture. These efforts are in line with the Berlin Communiqué, the ENQA Standards and Guidelines on QA, as accepted by the Bergen Communiqué and the Agreement on Quality Assurance in the EU.