

FACTSHEET

Estonia

Higher Education

Types of higher education institutions

There are two types of higher education institutions in Estonia: *ülikool* (university) and *rakenduskõrgkool* (professional higher education institution).

Universities

A university is an education, creative, research and development institution of higher education that has been granted the right to organise studies and award academic degrees at the first (*bakalaureus*), second (*magister*) and third (*doktor*) cycles in several fields of study. At universities it is also possible to obtain professional higher education.

Estonian public universities are relatively autonomous. In addition to organising the academic life of the university the competence of universities extends to opening new programmes, establishing admission terms and conditions, deciding about the structure, electing the rector, approving the development plan and the budget, and making restricted decisions in matters concerning assets.

In 2020 there are six public universities in Estonia:

Eesti Kunstiakadeemia (Estonian Academy of Arts)
Eesti Maaülikool (Estonian University of Life Sciences)
Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)
Tallinna Tehnikaülikool (Tallinn University of Technology)
Tallinna Ülikool (Tallinn University)
Tartu Ülikool (University of Tartu)

and one private university:

Estonian Business School

Professional Higher Education Institutions

Professional higher education institutions (*rakenduskõrgkoolid*) provide higher education of first and second cycles. Master's programmes have been provided by professional higher education institutions since 2004. Until 2011, master's programmes were provided in co-operation with a university (except in the fields of theology, national defence and public security).

Professional higher education institutions are legally more restricted in their activities and the approval of the Ministry of Education and Research is required in order to open new study programmes and to establish the terms and conditions for admission.

State professional higher education institutions are financed by the state.

Private professional higher education institutions provide programmes mainly in the fields of social sciences (economics, international relations, and law), business administration, theology, and fine arts.

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In 2024, there are 7 state professional higher education institutions in Estonia:

Eesti Lennuakadeemia (Estonian Aviation Academy)
Kaitseväe Akadeemia (Estonian Military Academy)
Sisekaitseakadeemia (Estonian Academy of Security Sciences)
Tallinna Tehnikakõrgkool (TTK University of Applied Sciences)
Tallinna Tervishoiu Kõrgkool (Tallinn Health Care College)
Kõrgem Kunstikool Pallas (Pallas University of Applied Sciences)
Tartu Tervishoiu Kõrgkool (Tartu Health Care College)

and 4 private professional higher education institutions:

EKBL Kõrgem Usuteaduslik Seminar (Theological Seminary)
EELK Usuteaduse Instituut (Theological Institute of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church)
Eesti Ettevõtlikuskõrgkool Mainor (Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences)
Eesti Metodisti Kiriku Teoloogiline Seminar (Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary)

Professional higher education programmes have replaced vocational higher education programmes (*kutsekõrgharidus*) and diploma-study (*diplomiõpe*) programmes of the former higher education systems.

Until 2016, there were two state vocational education institutions - *Tallinna Majanduskool* (Tallinn School of Economics), *Võrumaa Kutsehariduskeskus* (Võru County Vocational Education Training Centre) - offering professional higher education programmes.