

FACTSHEET

Higher Education

Estonia

Access Qualifications

General secondary education qualifications

The general access requirement for higher education studies is the *Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* (Certificate of General Secondary Education) or a corresponding qualification.

The *Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* is awarded after 12 years of study, including 9 years of basic education and 3 years of general secondary education. Until 1995 the name of the Certificate of General Secondary Education was *Keskkooli lõputunnistus*. In the 1988/1989 school year the transition from 8-year to 9-year basic school, as well as from 11-year to 12-year secondary school took place at schools where the language of instruction was Estonian.

Since 1997 the *Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* has been issued together with the *Riigieksamitunnistus* (State Examination Certificate). Effective 2009, the State Examination Certificate is not issued in paper format. The certificate is available in electronic format through the official state portal *eesti.ee*.

Since 2003 graduation the Certificate of General Secondary Education and the transcript of grades (*hinneteleht*) are issued as two separate credentials.

Exception regarding year 2020 graduation

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, state examinations in 2020 are not mandatory to be graduated from a secondary school, and the *Gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus* (Certificate of General Secondary Education) obtained in 2020 gives access to higher education without the *Riigieksamitunnistus* (State Examination Certificate).

In 2020, students can take two state examinations on a voluntary basis: in Estonian or Estonian as a second language, and in Mathematics. The state examination in English is not held in 2020. The results of the state examinations taken on a voluntary basis serve only to meet the admission requirements established by the higher education institutions in Estonia.

Vocational secondary education qualifications

General secondary education can also be obtained at a vocational secondary school (*kutseõppeasutus*) where it is combined with vocational education.

Those who have finished basic school and complete a programme leading to vocational secondary education are awarded *Kutsekeskhariduse lõputunnistus* (Certificate of Vocational Secondary Education). Studies for obtaining vocational secondary education on the basis of basic education last a minimum of three years and include general secondary education courses. The students are not required to take state examinations upon completion of vocational secondary education programme.

The former qualifications of vocational secondary education giving access to higher education are:

- *Lõputunnistus kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta* (Certificate of Vocational Secondary Education Based on Basic Education)
- *Lõputunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta* (Certificate of Vocational Secondary Education Based on Basic Education)

FACTSHEET

Higher Education

Estonia

- *Diplom* (Diploma of Specialised Secondary Education)
- *Lõputunnistus kutse- ja keskhariduse omandamise kohta* (Certificate of Vocational and Secondary Education)
- *Lõputunnistus keskerihariduse omandamise kohta* (Certificate of Specialised Secondary Education)