

The education system of

# Ukraine

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Ukraine. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Ukraine for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

### Disclaimer

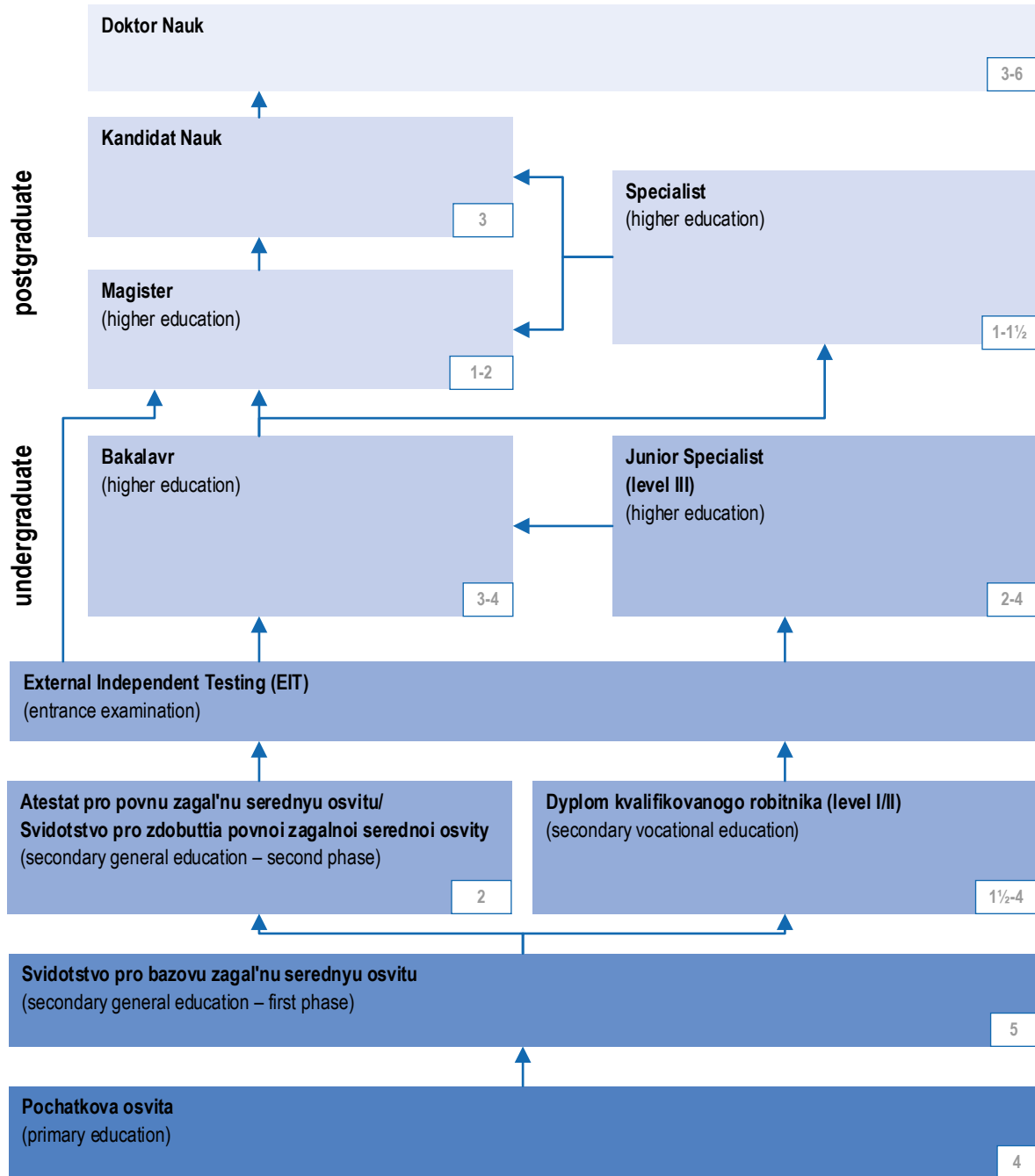
We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.

### Copyright



With the exception of images and illustrations, the content of this publication is subject to the Creative Commons Name NonCommercial 3.0 Unported licence. Visit our [copyright page](#) for more information on the reuse of this publication.

Flow chart: education system Ukraine



0 Duration of education

## Overview of diploma evaluations

What is the Dutch equivalent of the most common Ukrainian qualifications?  
Common diplomas are the diplomas that Dutch higher education institutions receive regularly when Ukrainian students register for a degree programme.

Common diplomas	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level		EQF level
<i>Dyplom kvalifikovanogo robitnika/</i> Qualified worker (level I)	MBO diploma, level 1 or 2	1/2	1/2
<i>Dyplom kvalifikovanogo robitnika/</i> Qualified worker with <i>Svidotstvo pro bazovu zagal'nu serednyu osvitu</i> (level II)	HAVO diploma for its general education component	4	4
<i>Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu/Certificate of completed secondary education</i> <b>Since 2019:</b> <i>Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity/Certificate of completed general secondary education</i>	at least a HAVO diploma	4	4
<i>Dyplom molodshjogo spetialista/</i> Junior Specialist diploma (level III)	approximately 2 years of HBO	5	5
<i>Bakalavr</i>	HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of WO	6	6
<i>Specialist</i> (4 years)	HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of WO	6	6
<i>Specialist</i> (5-5½ years)	HBO master's degree or at least a WO bachelor's degree	7/6	7/6
<i>Magister</i>	HBO master's degree or approximately a WO bachelor's degree	7/6	7/6

Please note:

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. [EQF](#) = European Qualifications Framework.

## Education system Ukraine

---

- The EQF/[NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- You can find information about Dutch equivalent qualifications at [education system the Netherlands](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or work in the Netherlands.

## ■ Introduction

### **Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has been an independent country.**

The past few decades have seen Ukraine go through a period of political and economic turbulence, and it goes without saying that these types of developments have had repercussions on the country's education system. Initially the country experienced a brain drain, as all the best academics left to work at universities and research institutes in Western Europe and America. These developments now seem to have stabilised. At the same time, there is greater leeway and space for private initiatives in a general sense, including in higher and other forms of education.

The Ukrainian Law on Higher Education came into force in 2002, introducing changes to the education system that until then had been centrally organised and uniform. It brought diversification and decentralisation, the founding of new education institutions (including private institutions), changes to the curricula and the advent of a parallel academic degree system. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for these changes.

The recognised higher education institutions are supervised by an Academic Council of university governors. Individual institutions are led by a rector. In the case of private institutions, supervision is the responsibility of the owners/founders. It is also common practice for a Board of Supervisors to be appointed.

Ukrainian higher education has a unitary system in which the distinction between university education and higher professional education is often not clear. Some study programmes contain elements of both higher professional education and university education. An example is the primary education teacher training offered at universities.

The language of education is officially Ukrainian, although some programmes also are offered in Russian or English for foreign students.

Education is compulsory for 9 years: 4 years of primary education (children aged 6/7-10/11) and the 5 years of the initial phase of basic secondary education (children aged 10/11-15/16).

The academic year runs from 1 September to the end of June.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

### Primary education

Primary education (*pochatkova osvita*) takes up the first 4 years of formal education. In addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, verbal skills and social skills, time is also spent on physical education, art, music and nature.

### Secondary education

Secondary general education is normally given for 34 weeks of the year. The school week consists of 27-38 hours of instruction. The school year starts on 1 September, and runs until the start of June. The basic curriculum for secondary education is determined by the government, and also contains a number of compulsory subject areas in the exact sciences, social sciences and humanities.

### First phase of secondary education

After completing 4 years of primary education, pupils enter the first phase of secondary education, which has a duration of 5 years and concludes the period of compulsory education. This period concludes with an exam, after which the Certificate of Completion of the first phase (basis) of secondary education (*Свідоцтво про базову загальну середню освіту/Svidotstvo pro bazovnu zagal'nu serednyu osvitu*) is issued. Since 2019, this diploma is called: *Свідоцтво про здобуття базової середньої освіти/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya bazovoyi serednoyi osvity* (Certificate of basic secondary education).

The level of this certificate is comparable to 3 years of general secondary education in the Netherlands.

### Second phase of secondary education

The second phase of secondary education lasts no more than 2 years. At least fifteen subjects are examined. The final certificate from secondary education includes a list of grades containing all the subjects taken by the pupil and the results obtained. The number of subjects varies between seventeen and twenty. At the end of the second phase, a certificate of completed secondary education (*Атестат про повну загальну середню освіту/Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu*) is awarded. Since 2019, this diploma is called: *Свідоцтво про здобуття повної загальної середньої освіти/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity* (Certificate of completed general secondary education).

In terms of level, the *Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity* is comparable to at least a HAVO diploma.

Also, pupils have to sit the 'Independent external assessment' to gain access to a higher education institution. It is held as a competition. The best candidates are selected.

### **Secondary vocational education**

Until 1991 Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, and vocationally-oriented programmes were provided as part of secondary education with a professional focus. Since independence in 1991, these programmes have formed part of short-term or other forms of higher professional education.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many institutions that provide vocational education (such as училища/*uchylyshcha*) were upgraded to the status of 'colleges' (коледжи/*koledzhi*) and are authorised to award the *Junior Specialist diploma* (диплом молодшого спеціаліста/*dyplom molodshogo spetsialista*) and bachelor's diplomas (диплом бакалавра/*dyplom bakalavra*).

There is no clear connection between the name (type) of an institution and the level or quality of the programmes it provides. Programme content and the final certificate/diploma issued are what determine the quality of the programme. For example, education institutions may offer both bachelor's and *Junior Specialist* programmes, alongside programmes for secondary vocational education.

### **Levels in vocational education**

Vocational education has different levels. These are reflected in the respective qualification levels, the specialisation levels, and educational levels. Each type of vocational education institution has its theoretical and practical components. This is reflected in the qualification diplomas, such as Qualified Worker or Junior Specialist. A graduate of a vocational education institution who successfully passes the qualification examinations is awarded the qualification diploma of *Qualified Worker* of the appropriate category in the selected specialization field. A graduate who completed a course of study at an accredited higher vocational school or vocational center of a specific accreditation level may be awarded the qualification degree of *Junior Specialist*.

Technical and vocational education is offered at 3 levels in Ukraine:

Level I: першого ступеню/*pershogo stupenyu*

Level II: другого ступеню/*drugogo stupenyu*

Level III: третього ступеню/*tret'ogo stupenyu*

Depending on the level and type of study, these programmes lead to one of the following titles:

- Qualified worker/диплом кваліфікованого робітника/*dyplom kvalifikovanogo robitnika*; or



- Junior Specialist/диплом молодшого спеціаліста/*dypлом molodshogo spetsialista*.

**Vocational education: level I**

Vocational education level I programmes have been developed in order to quickly meet the demands of the industrial and service sectors. In principle, anyone with an incomplete school certificate (*svidotstvo pro bazovu seredniu osvitu*) can be admitted to this type of vocational education. The programmes take no longer than 1 year. At the end of a programme, students take a vocational competence examination, and a diploma with the title of Qualified Worker (*диплом кваліфікованого робітника/ dypлом kvalifikovanogo robitnika*) is awarded.

In terms of level, the *dypлом kvalifikovanogo robitnika/Qualified Worker* (level I) is comparable to an MBO diploma at level 1 or 2, depending on the specialisation.

**Vocational education: level II**

Vocational education level II is given at both vocational schools (*училища/ uchylyshcha*) and specialist technical colleges (*технікуми/technikumu*). Programme length is dependent on students' entry level. The *Svidotstvo pro bazovu zagal'nu serednyu osvitu*, or 9 years of primary and secondary education, serve as the minimum admission requirement. The length of these programmes varies from 1-3 years. Students with an *Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity* can complete the programme in 1-1½ years.

Graduates are awarded the title of *Qualified Worker* (*диплом кваліфікованого робітника/dypлом kvalifikovanogo robitnika*), which entitles the bearer to practice a profession.

In principle, students who combine vocational education with upper general secondary education (years 10-11) may take the entrance examinations for admission into university.

In terms of level, the *dypлом kvalifikovanogo robitnika/Qualified Worker* (level II) is comparable to a HAVO diploma for its general education component.

In Ukraine, level III professional programmes are part of higher education and are discussed in [University and higher professional education](#).

## ■ Admission to higher education

During the last grade of secondary education an independent external assessment takes place. The choice of subjects is up to the pupil and depends of the higher education programme that he wants to follow. In principle, each higher education institution is entitled to set its own entrance requirements. The *Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity* and the results of this 'Independent external assessment' serve as the basis for admission to higher education.

## ■ Higher education

Higher education is provided at universities, academies and institutes, technical schools, colleges, conservatories (i.e. musical academies). All of these institutions offer both professionally-oriented and academic programmes.

The Ukrainian Law on Higher Education (2002) describes 4 levels of accreditation for higher education institutions:

1. Higher education institutions of the first accreditation level award the qualification of *Junior Specialist*;
2. Higher education institutions of the second accreditation level award the qualification of *Junior Specialist* and /or Bachelor;
3. Higher education institutions of the third accreditation level award Bachelor's, *Specialist* and Master's qualifications;
4. Higher education institutions of the fourth accreditation level award *Junior Specialist*, Bachelor's, *Specialist* and Master's qualifications. Some fourth-level institutions also offer *aspirantura (Kandidat Nauk)*.

The accreditation level of a higher education institution is determined in part by the types of programmes offered.

The III or IV level of accreditation depended on the results of the accreditation procedure which is laid down in (Article 43 Decree of Ukraine 'On Education'. Institutes may operate independently, but sometimes fall under the auspices of a university or academy. Conservatories often specialise in a single area, such as music or visual art.

Colleges fall under the second accreditation level, and provide higher vocational education programmes. They are sometimes part of a higher education institution with accreditation level 3 or 4.

Institutions for technical or secondary vocational education with accreditation level 1 are called *technikums* or *uchilishes*. Like the colleges, they are sometimes part of a higher education institution with accreditation level 3 or 4.

Ukraine currently has over 350 state-run higher education institutions. There are also many private institutions, where programmes in law, management and finance are strongly represented.

## ■ University and higher professional education

The following degrees are issued by universities and higher professional institutions:

- **Junior Specialist:** short-term higher education, it is incomplete higher education - *молодший спеціаліст/molodshyi spetsialist* (Junior Specialist);
- **Bachelor:** first cycle of higher education, *бакалавр/bakalavr* (Bachelor);
- **Master:** second cycle of higher education, *спеціаліст/spetsialist* (Specialist) and *магістр/magistr* (Master);
- **Candidate/Doctor of Science:** third cycle of higher education, *Кандидат наук/kandydat nauk* (Candidate of Science) and *доктор наук/doktor nauk* (Doctor of Science).

University curricula generally span 36 weeks a year, and the academic year begins on 1 September, normally lasting until June. Students typically have 27 hours of classtime each week. The academic year is usually made up of two semesters, each lasting 5 months.

### Junior Specialist

According to the Law on Higher Education, the *Junior Specialist diploma* is regarded as incomplete higher education. Second and third accreditation level programmes with a professional focus are provided by a *Tekhnikum* and/or an *Uchilishe*, colleges.

This accredited professional qualification is not part of the bachelor's-master's degree structure. In Ukraine, the Junior Specialist counts as a mid-level professional qualification.

The qualification is issued for a range of fields, including paramedic professions, education, administration and technology. In principle, holders of a *Junior Specialist diploma* qualify for entry to relevant university bachelor's programmes. Exemptions of 1-2 years may be granted if the higher education programme is comparable.

The standard admission requirement is the *Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu/Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity*.

Sometimes students are admitted who have a *Svidotstvo pro bazovu zagal'nu serednyu osvitu*. In practice, however, these students complete a much more intensive programme, as it also includes every subject from secondary education. The programme usually takes 2-4 years to complete.

In terms of level, the *Diplom molodshogo spetsialista (Junior Specialist diploma)* is comparable to approximately 2 years of higher professional education (HBO), depending on the duration and specialisation of the study programme.

### **Specialist**

University *Specialist* programmes vary in length from 1-1½ years. Programmes in medicine, veterinary or pharmacy have a duration of 4-5½ years. If the programme is preceded by bachelor's degree, it will only take 1-1½ years.

The final diploma provides a professional qualification, and the certificate itself specifies the particular field to which the qualification applies, for example Teacher of English. This diploma can be earned in any field of study. The specialisation is always stated on the diploma, to which is appended a list of subjects and a grade list. These programmes conclude with a state examination and/or a thesis defense. *Specialist* programmes span over 400 fairly in-depth technical and other specialisations.

Traditional *Specialist* programmes concentrate on professional practice, but in principle also grant access to the initial phase of an academic PhD, or *Kandidat Nauk*.

In terms of level, the 4-year *Specialist* programme is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or 2 years of university education (WO) in a relevant discipline, depending on the specialisation and programme content.

In terms of level, the 5-5½ year *Specialist* programme is comparable to an HBO master's degree, or at least a WO bachelor's degree.

### **Bachelor/Bakalavr**

*Bakalavr* programmes have a duration of 3-4 years (or 2-3 years on the basis of the *Diploma of Junior Specialist*) and are, in theory, available in all fields of study. The initial years take a broad orientation, with particular emphasis on subjects such as social sciences, economics, history, a foreign language and natural sciences. In some cases students complete a short thesis (not required) or project towards the degree.

Upon successful completion, students receive a state diploma with an appendix (*dodatok*) listing all subjects, hours, marks, practical training and marks awarded

for the final examination and thesis or project. This certificate qualifies students to enter the labour market or go on to either a *Specialist* programme or an associated research-oriented *Magistr* programme.

The bachelor's programme is offered by higher education institutions with accreditation level II, III and IV.

In terms of level, the *Bakalavr diploma* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree or approximately comparable to 2 years of university education (WO), depending on the specialisation and programme content.

### **Master/Magistr**

*Magistr* programmes take off where *Bakalavr* programmes end, and have a duration of 1-2 years, 1-3 years in medicine. A *Specialist* diploma is also sufficient qualification for enrolment.

*Magistr* programmes are by and large research-oriented. They conclude with a state examination and students' defense of their thesis.

The diploma is issued with an appendix (*dodatok*) listing all subjects, hours, grades, practical training, as well as the grades awarded for the final examination and thesis or project, and qualifies students to take doctoral entrance exams.

Although the duration of some *Magistr* programmes is 1 year longer, they confer the same rights as a *Specialist* programme. The *Magistr* is more research-oriented, however.

In terms of level, the *Magistr diploma* is comparable to an HBO master's degree or approximately comparable to a WO bachelor's degree, depending on the specialisation and programme content.

### **Doctoral tracks**

There are 2 doctoral tracks in Ukraine:

- *Kandidat Nauk*, literally 'Candidate of Science'; and
- *Doktor Nauk*, or 'Doctor of Science'.

### **Candidate of Science/Kandidat Nauk**

The prerequisite for admission to a *Kandidat Nauk* programme is a *Specialist* or *Magistr* diploma. The programme – or *aspirantura* – comprises lectures, seminars and research, takes three years to complete, and is concluded with the public

defence of a dissertation. Dissertations deemed satisfactory by the dissertation council result in conferral of the *Kandidat Nauk* diploma.

### **Doctor of Science/Doktor Nauk**

*Doktor Nauk* is the highest possible academic title. Admission is extremely selective and highly restricted. The Ukrainian Higher Attestation Commission decides on admission based on the level of advancement shown in the dissertation, which must resolve a fundamental scientific problem.

The curriculum focuses entirely on research. The *Doktor Nauk* is a prerequisite for any professorial appointment. In cases where the research and dissertation for a *Kandidat Nauk* demonstrate outstanding quality, a *Doktor Nauk* diploma may be conferred directly after a *Kandidat Nauk*. There is no equivalent qualification in the Netherlands.

In 2010 an English version of this diploma (Doctor of Philosophy – PhD) was introduced for foreign students.

## ■ Assessment systems

Until 2000, the Ukrainian education system used a 5-2 assessment scale. In 2000 this system was replaced by a 1-12 scale, with a 4 as minimum passing grade.

Numerical grade	Description	Definition
10-12	<i>Vidminno</i>	Outstanding
7-9	<i>Dobre</i>	Good
4-6	<i>Zadovil'no</i>	Satisfactory
1-3	<i>Nezadovil'no</i>	Unsatisfactory

- *Залік (зараховано)/Zalik (zarachovano)*: Satisfactory/pass (for some subjects or exams).
- Study loads are usually not expressed in ECTS.

## ■ Bologna process

In 2005, Ukraine became a member of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the common system for higher education in Europe for which the foundations were laid with the 1999 Bologna Declaration. The Ministry of Education has stipulated that Ukrainian education must be entirely remodeled according to the bachelor's-master's degree structure by 2010. For more information on the current state of affairs, please see the [website of the European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#).

## ■ Qualification frameworks

Work is currently still underway on a complete national qualifications framework that includes qualifications that are not part of higher education.

## ■ Accreditation and quality assurance

Ukraine has no official system for ranking education institutions. Accreditation of government and private institutions is organised by the State Educational Unit “Educational and Methodological Center on the questions of education quality”, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for producing an overview of the quality of higher education in Ukraine.

All higher education institutions, including private institutions, are subject to a mandatory evaluation procedure. Some accredited denominational institutions providing higher education also receive government funding. The accreditation procedure is held once in 5 years by HEIs of Ukraine. This means that the list of accredited HEIs and recognised higher education programmes is dynamic. For information on the current state, please contact the [Ukrainian ENIC](#).

## ■ International treaties

Ukraine signed and ratified the Lisbon Convention in 2000.

## ■ Checking documents

The diploma of secondary education (*Atestat pro zagal'nu serednyu osvitu* or, since 2019, *Svidotstvo pro zdobuttya povnoyi zahalnoyi serednoyi osvity*) is awarded with a list of the subjects studied. These must both be submitted.

For higher education, students must submit the certificate (*Dyplom*) and a list of subjects along with a sworn translation. The diploma issued is an official document displaying the Ukrainian coat of arms. See also [examples of these documents](#) on the [Osvita website](#).

### **Diploma Supplement**

The Diploma Supplement (DS) was introduced in Ukraine in 2011, simultaneously with the Ukrainian (national) diploma supplement. Unlike the Ukrainian (national) Diploma supplement, it is not compulsory and it is issued upon the request the student.

More information about the Diploma Supplement (DS) is available on the [Europass website](#).

## ■ Overview of higher education institutions

Actual information about the status of institutions can be obtained through the [Ukrainian ENIC](#) and/or [its list of Ukrainian HEIs](#).

## ■ Useful links

- [Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine](#)
- [ENIC Ukraine](#)