

Education in Scotland

Scotland has a long history of universal provision of public education, and the **Scottish education system** is distinctly different from other parts of the United Kingdom.

Traditionally, the Scottish system has emphasised breadth across a range of subjects, while the English, Welsh and Northern Irish systems have emphasised greater depth of education over a smaller range of subjects at secondary school level.

Following this, Scottish universities generally have courses a year longer (typically 4 years) than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK, though it is often possible for students to take more advanced specialised exams and join the courses at the second year. One unique aspect is that the ancient universities of Scotland issue a Master of Arts as the first degree in humanities.

The majority of schools are non-denominational, but as a result of the Education Act 1918, separate Roman Catholic state schools were also established. Catholic schools are fully funded by the Scottish Government and administered by the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. There are specific legal provisions to ensure the promotion of a Catholic ethos in such schools: applicants for positions in the areas of Religious Education, Guidance or Senior Management must be approved by the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, which also appoints a chaplain to each of its schools. There is also one Jewish state primary school.

Qualifications at the secondary school and post-secondary (further education) level are provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which is the national awarding and accrediting body in Scotland, and delivered through various schools, colleges and other centres. Political responsibility for education at all levels is vested in the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Education and Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Departments.